

# Top 10 reasons to visit Finland

## 1. Finnish Way of Living

The Finnish way of living is an extraordinary combination of love of nature, down by earth behaviour, practical innovations and democratic values. Equality, openness and ecological values have there a good basis. Even though Finns today are strongly information technology oriented and well educated, their heart is longing to freedom and nature. Find your ways to pick your pieces of this setting - and just relax.

gether with friends and even for business negotiations. In a winter time, a Sauna visit may be combined with ice swimming.

## 4. Nature

Finns adore nature. A Finnish dream has not been wealth and fame in a course of history, but rather “a red cottage with a garden of one’s own” – gladly by a lake with a good distance from a next door neighbour. Luckily we have more than 60



Photo: Päiviikki Karhula

## 2. Food

Fresh food and organic products are easily available in Finland. At the summer time market places are full of fresh vegetables, berries, mushrooms, and fish. Local specialities in restaurants most often include fish, reindeer and wild berries. Enjoy your meals!

## 3. Sauna

Why would you sit naked in a heated room with a group of colleagues? Why not? The sauna is a Finnish tradition for bathing, spending time to-

gether with friends and even for business negotiations. In a winter time, a Sauna visit may be combined with ice swimming.

## 5. Design

Marimekko, Iittala, Aarikka and Pentik may be the most familiar brand names of Finnish design. However, there are plenty of innovative young designers whose products you may find at museum stores, Kauppatori market place or Design

Forum. 2012 will be a Year of Finnish Design, which will guarantee that there will be plenty of design –related events and arts and crafts sales.

## 6. Cultural festivals

Finland has a great number of summer festivals, the biggest being music festivals. Some of them include curiosities like a competition on wife-carrying or air-guitar playing. Most famous festivals include Helsinki Festival, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Pori Jazz, Kuopio Dance Festival and Midnight Sun Film Festival. Festivals.fi gives you a picture what is going on during your visit.

## 7. Archipelago

By some definitions Finnish archipelago is largest in the world by the number of islands. The number of islands covering also smaller ones (over 0,5 ha) is about 18 000. Sailing and summer cottages give way to enjoy sea life during the summer time. If you don't have access to either of them, don't worry. You can spend an enjoyable evening and get a great view of the archipelago by taking a ferry from Helsinki or Turku to Stockholm.



Photo: Päiviikki Karhula

## 8. Sports

Finns value sports and they are patriotically proud about it. Finland just won a world championship

in ice-hockey. It made people spontaneously party overnight, take a leave from their job for a day after; 70 000 people gathered at Helsinki market place for festivities. You can open a lengthy discussion of ice-hockey with a question: "What is ilmaveivi?"

## 9. Location

Finland has a longstanding history as a hotspot between East and West. Having been under Russian and Swedish rule, the Finns have firmly kept their own culture, but adopted as well good part of pieces from the neighbouring countries.

Helsinki is nicely located offering smooth connections to Saint Petersburg (Russia), Tallinn (Estonia) and Stockholm (Sweden). Overnight trip to any of these directions is easy to fit into the travel plans in Finland.

## 10. People

Finns have had a reputation of being somewhat shy, silent and reserved people. Once the ice is broken, you can find that they are hard-working, innovative and warm-hearted people with a good sense of humour. In the end you may find that your most loyal, genuine and long-standing friendships are with Finns.

- Päiviikki Karhula