About Finland

Shortly about Finland

Finland, a member of the European Union since 1995, counts about 5.3 million inhabitants and with a surface area of roughly 338 000 km² is the fifth largest country in the EU. With almost 200,000 lakes and dense forests that account for two thirds of its surface area, Finland is a northern country of great natural beauty. This page focuses on the attractive Finnish capital, Helsinki. Details on sites outside of Helsinki are in the Beyond Helsinki page.

Helsinki, the Capital

The city of Helsinki was founded in 1550 by King Gustav Vasa of Sweden and has been the capital of Finland since 1812. The capital enjoys a unique architecture that beautifully amalgamates the old with the new while reflecting influences from both the East and the West. Following a colourful history, Helsinki today is a bustling centre of Finland's cultural and business life with a population of 0.6 million. In 2011, a quality of life survey run by British Monocle magazine ranked Helsinki as #1 in the world due to reasons such as a low-crime rate, top-notch education, well run city services and a food-culture that is constantly developing. An efficient public transportation system makes getting around Helsinki quick and easy.

In short, Helsinki is large enough to provide all services that a major conference may require, yet small enough to make delegates and their families feel at home during their stay.

Helsinki Metropolitan Area

Together with the neighboring cities of Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen, Helsinki forms the so-called Helsinki Metropolitan Area (also known as Greater Helsinki) with a population of over one million. Over the past decades the area of Greater Helsinki has gained a reputation as an exciting, clean and safe host destination to numerous international events. In this respect, Helsinki has a lot to offer: excellent conference and exhibition facilities, pleasant hotels in various price categories, a well-organized public transportation system and lots of opportunities for leisure activities.

Getting Around in Helsinki

The public transport system in Helsinki, operated by HSL, is efficient and easy to use. Of great help in getting around is the so-called Journey Planner http://www.reittiopas.fi/en/. All HSL public transportation tickets can be used to hop on buses and trams, to get on the underground and on the local trains and even to board the ferries going to Suomenlinna.

Should you need to travel within Greater Helsinki (trips to neighbouring cities Espoo, Kauniainen or Vantaa) you will need to a buy a so-called regional ticket or a regional multi-day ticket, all fares are listed here. When buying from a vending machine, just select a regional ticket instead of a Helsinki (single-zone) ticket.

An attractive option is the Helsinki Card which gives you unlimited travel within Helsinki for 24hrs, 48hrs or 72hrs (including the ferry to Suomenlinna) plus free entry to many tourist attractions. The Helsinki Card also entitles its holder to some discounts including reduce fare on Finnair’s City Bus (to/from the airport). The card can also be bought online. An optional Helsinki Card Region enables travel within Greater Helsinki.

More information on the web

Visit Helsinki: http://www.visithelsinki.fi/en
My Helsinki: http://www.myhelsinki.fi/
Visit Finland in Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/VisitFinland