

Helsinki, Finland

Presentation by Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

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Finland

within Europe



Finland Area: 130,559 sq mi.
About twice the size of Florida.

Border countries:

- Norway.
- Sweden.
- Russia.

830 mile border with Russia closed since 2023.



Finland is mostly flat.
Some mountains in NW part.

More than 180,000 lakes.

75% of land is boreal forest (conifers like pine, spruce).
Deciduous trees found only in the far south.

Lapland Province
Above Arctic Circle.
1/3rd Finland's land.
Only 176,000 people.

More reindeer than people.
Ice Hotels.
Ice Bars.



Native woodland animals: Bear, elk, wolf, wolverine, lynx, reindeer.



Brown Bear

River fish: Salmon, trout, siika (whitefish).



Salmon

Sea fish: Herring.



Baltic Herring

Population: 5,626,414 (2024).
Vast majority of people are found in the south.

The northern interior areas remain sparsely populated.

1.1 million people live in and around Helsinki.



Nationality

Noun: Finn(s).

Adjective: Finnish.

Ethnic: 91% Finnish background.

Others: Russian, Swedish, Estonian, Romani, Sami.



Elk (Moose)

Two Official National Languages:

Finnish: 86% of pop.

Swedish: 5% of pop.

Also spoken at home:

– Russian 2%.

– Others 7%.



Highway signs
in Finnish
and Swedish

Religions: Lutheran 67%,
Orthodox 1%, other 2%,
none 31% (2022 est.).

**Two-thirds of Finns are
members of the Lutheran
Church of Finland.**



**But less than 10% attend
church at least once a month.**

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Finland/People>

**English: Compulsory subject in
Finnish schools many years.**

– Vast majority of population
speak some English.

– 70% high-level of English.

**English is widely used in
business, education, media.**

**Foreign films and TV are
subtitled, not dubbed.**

Median Age: 43.3 (USA 39.1).

Population growth: 0.2% (Slow).

Urban population: 86% of total
population (2023).

Citizenship by birth: No.

At least one parent must be
Finnish.

Dual citizenship: Recognized.

Capital: Helsinki.

– Helsingfors in
Swedish.

– Of around 200
world capitals,
only Reykjavik,
Iceland, is more
north than Helsinki.



Government type:

Parliamentary republic.

Head of state:

President Alexander
Stubb (since 2024).

**Directly elected by
people. Six-year term.**

Second term permitted.



Foreign Policy
Defense
Approve Laws

Head of government:

Prime Minister

Petteri Orpo

(since 2023).

Appointed by parliament.

– Leads the government.

– Develops government policy.

– Represents Finland in EU.



Legislature: Unicameral

Parliament. Eduskunta in

Finnish, Riksdagen in Swedish.

– 200 seats, all directly elected.

– 4-year terms.

– Currently

46% women.



Government (109)	
•	National Coalition Party (46)
•	Finnish Party (46)
•	Swedish People's Party (10)
•	Christian Democrats (5)
Opposition (90)	
•	Social Democratic Party (42)
•	Centre Party (22)
•	Green League (15)
•	Left Alliance (11)
•	Movement Now (1)
•	Independent (1)
•	Voiceless (1)

Flag: Blue stands for Finland's lakes. White for the snow.



Time Difference: UTC+2.
7 hours ahead of NY.

Internet country code: .fi

Phone country code: +358

Member:

EU. Joined 1995 after referendum.



Schengen. Passport-free to other Schengen states.

NATO. Joined April 2023, after Russian invasion of Ukraine.

History - 1

12th C to 1809: Finland was a province and then a grand duchy under Sweden rule.
1809: Russia conquered Sweden.



Swedish empire included today's Sweden, Finland, Northern Norway, Estonia and Latvia - but not Denmark or Southern Norway.

History - 2

1809: Finland (eastern Sweden) became part of Russian Empire.
1866-68: Finnish famine (crops lost due to freezes) kills 15% of Finland's population.
Late 1800s: Independence movement.
1917: Russian revolution. Finland declared complete independence Dec 6, 1917. (National Day is Dec 6.)

History - 3

1918: One-year Finland civil war. Anti-communist Socialists defeated Communists.
WWII: Finland was officially neutral. But:
– Allowed German troops into Finland.
– Fought with Nazi Germany against Allies.
– Sept 1944, switched and joined Allies.
– Paid reparations to Soviet Union (US ally).
1947 Paris Peace treaty signed by Finland says Finland was "ally of Hitlerite Germany".

History - 4

Post-WWII: Finland transformed from farm/forest economy to a diversified industrial economy and welfare state.
1995: Joined EU.
1999: Joined the Euro single currency.
2023: Joined NATO after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finland views Russian foreign policy as a threat.
– **Parliament NATO vote: 188 to 8.**

Economy

Real GDP (purchasing power parity): \$314 billion (2024).

Real GDP per capita: \$55,600 (2024) (34th in world) (USA \$85,810).

Public Debt: 61.3% of GDP (2017).

Military Spending: 2.4% of GDP (USA 3.4%) (2024).

Currency: Euro €.

24% sales tax (14% on food) is built into prices.

Like Norway and Sweden, Finland is a nearly CASHLESS society.

Cards (incl US cards) work everywhere. Even tiny purchases. Even taxis, buses.



August 2025, 23-days in Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki – 3 different currencies, ZERO cash needed.

Sauna Culture:
Finland has over 3 million saunas. For 5.6 million people!
Found everywhere – homes, cabins, public places.



Traditionally a wood stove heats the sauna between 176–212°F.

Highest coffee consumption in the world!



Finns consume 26.5 pounds of coffee annually per person – about four cups a day.
Coffee breaks are part of Finnish culture. Plus cold climate.
Finnish labor laws give workers two 15 minute coffee breaks a day.

<https://hawaiicoffee.com/most-caffeinated-countries/>

Highest consumption of milk in the world!



Finns drink 950 pounds of milk per person per year. One quart of milk weighs 2.2 pounds. So 950 pounds = 432 quarts of milk per year per person. **More than one quart per person per day.**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_milk_consumption_per_capita

Most heavy metal bands per capita!



Finland has the most heavy metal bands per capita in the world (84.5 per 100,000 people), followed by Iceland and Sweden at around 52 per 100,000 citizens.

Most popular Finnish heavy metal band: Nightwish – 1996 to present.
Worldwide sold 10,000,000 records.

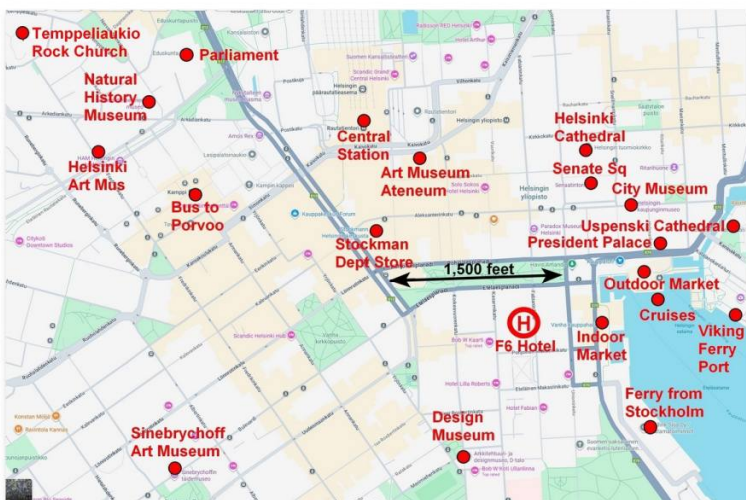
World's happiest country!
Since 2020 #1 in UN's annual World Happiness Report.



Factors: Resources for life's needs. GDP per capita. Healthy life expectancy. Social support. Freedom to make life choices. Generosity. Positive attitude. Corruption perception. Lack of worry. Institutional trust.

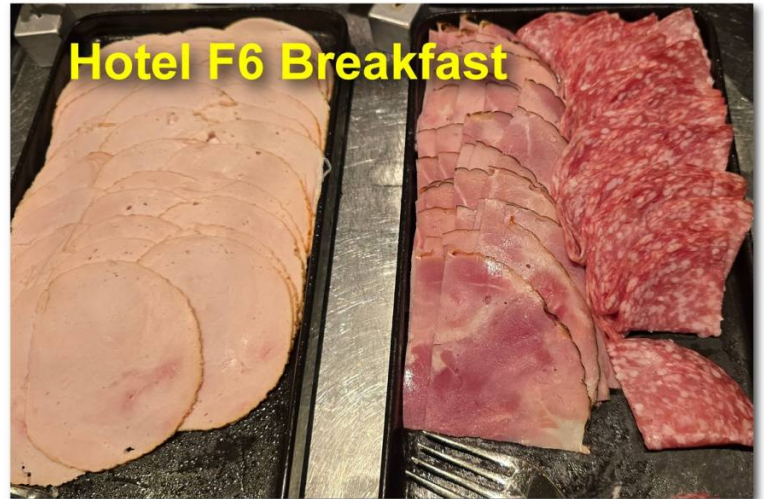
<https://data.worldhappiness.report/table>

Time to Take a Look at the Sights of Helsinki



Helsinki has all major hotel chains. We chose Hotel F6 for price (\$1,400 six nights incl breakfast), quality (five star), and location (heart of old city).

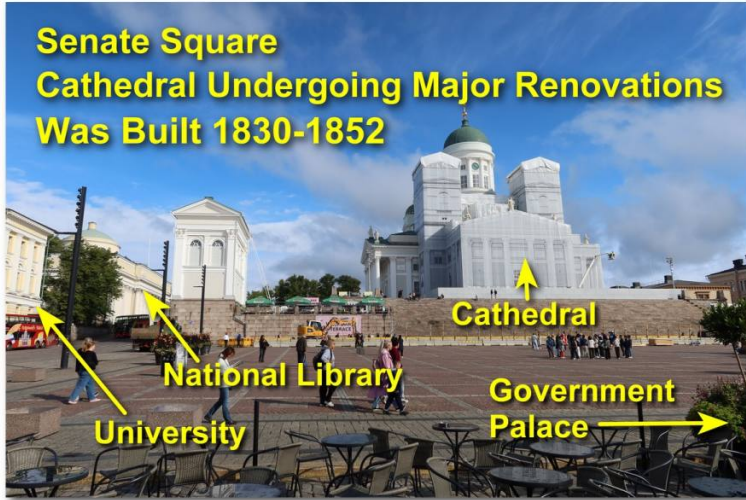
August is peak tourist month in Europe and esp. Finland.



Senate Square – Neoclassical architecture. Helsinki's main square. Dominated by four buildings designed by Carl Ludvig Engel (1778-1840):

- Helsinki Cathedral.
- Government Palace.
- Main building of Univ of Helsinki.
- National Library of Finland.

**Senate Square
Cathedral Undergoing Major Renovations
Was Built 1830-1852**



**University of Helsinki
Main Building - 1832**



**National Library of Finland
1844**



**Senate Square
Government Palace - 1822**



**Today: Office of Prime Minister
and the Cabinet**

**Helsinki Cathedral
Begun: 1830. Finished: 1852.
Designer: Carl Ludvig Engel.
Tribute: To Tsar Nicholas I of
Russia.
Was known as St Nicholas'
Church until Finland achieved
independence in 1917.**

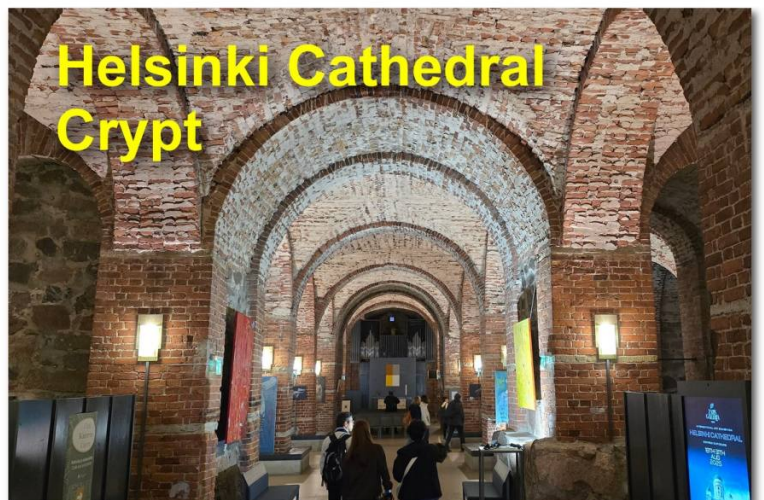
**Helsinki Cathedral
August 2025:
Major
renovations.**



Helsinki Cathedral



**Helsinki Cathedral
Crypt**



Presidential Palace

**Built 1820. Designed by CL Engel.
Overlooks Market Square**

The Presidential Palace is one of the three official residences of the President of the Republic of Finland.

Serves as President's Office, too.



**Presidential Palace - 1820
Helsinki**

Helsinki City Hall Kaupungintalo

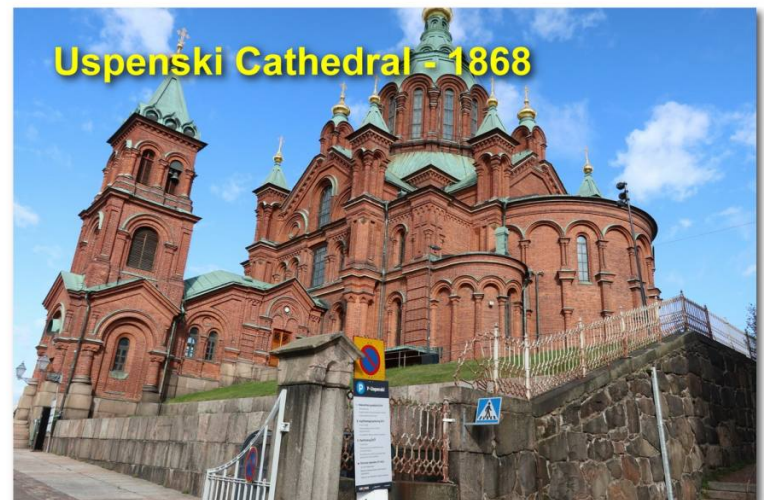
- Completed 1833.
- Designed by Carl Ludvig Engel, the designer of Senate Square, Cathedral, Govt Palace, National Library, etc.



Helsinki City Hall - 1833

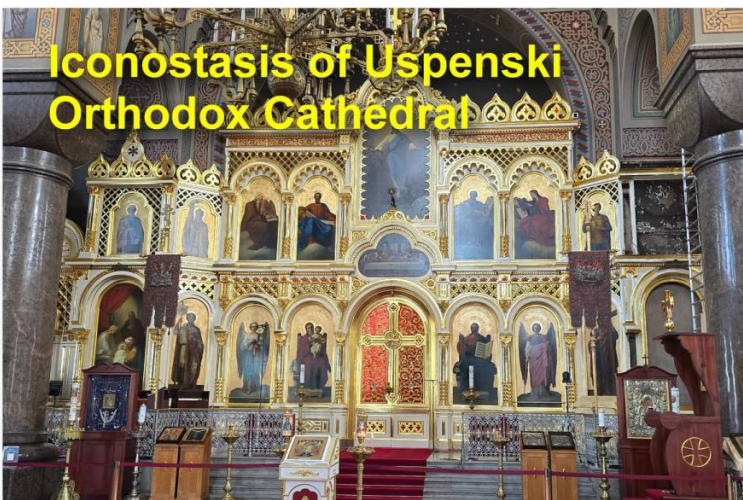
Uspenski Cathedral Orthodox Church of Finland Consecrated 1868.

Eastern Orthodox is one of three main Christian doctrines (others are Catholic and Protestant). 300 million adherents worldwide.



Uspenski Cathedral - 1868

Iconostasis of Uspenski Orthodox Cathedral



Kauppatori - Market Square

- Booths sell traditional market foods, as well as handicrafts and souvenirs.
- Cafe tents are heated in winter.
- Local ferries and sightseeing cruises originate here.



Kauppatori - Market Square
City Hall

Food and Crafts Market (Tents)



Kauppatori - Market Square
Prices in Euros.
Metric weights.
Country of origin usually noted.



Herne = Peas.
Suomi = Finland.

Litra is pre-metric Finnish measure = 500 grams (about one US pound).



There are tables to sit if you buy lunch

Vendace is small freshwater whitefish



Easy way to try reindeer.



The cherries come all the way from Canada



Makea Mansikka = Sweet Strawberries
Suomi = Finland



Beets

Golden Beetroot

Chioggia Beetroot



Old Market Hall Vanha Kauppahalli
Next to Market Square.

- Since 1888.
- Generally open 8am to 6pm.
- Merchants sell cheese, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruits, cakes, coffee and tea.
- Many cafes for lunch or snacks.





**Art Museum Ateneum
Atheneum**
Grand 19th-century art museum with Finnish works from the 1700s onwards, plus some international pieces.

Reminder: Many museums in Finland are CLOSED MONDAYS!



**Art Museum
Ateneum**



Art Museum Ateneum



**Albert Edelfelt
Finnish
1887**



**Paul Cezanne
French
1879-1882**



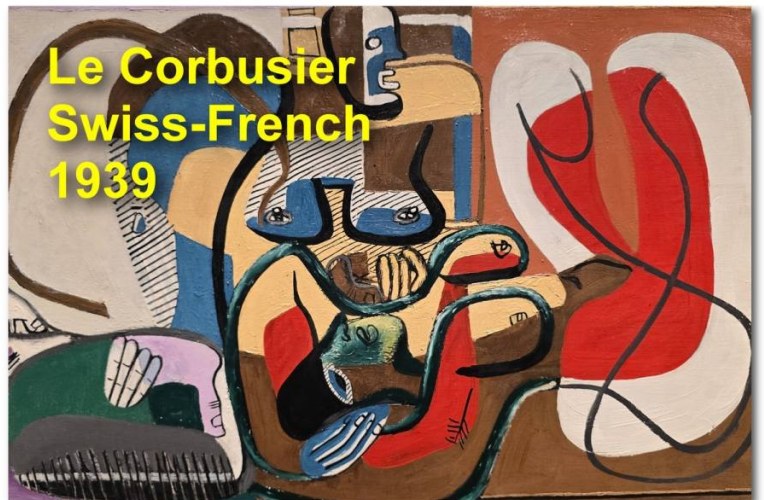
**Antti Faven
Finnish 1913
Portrait of
Jean Sibelius
Finnish
Composer**



**Sam Vanni
Finnish
1952**



**Max Ernst
German
1960-1961**

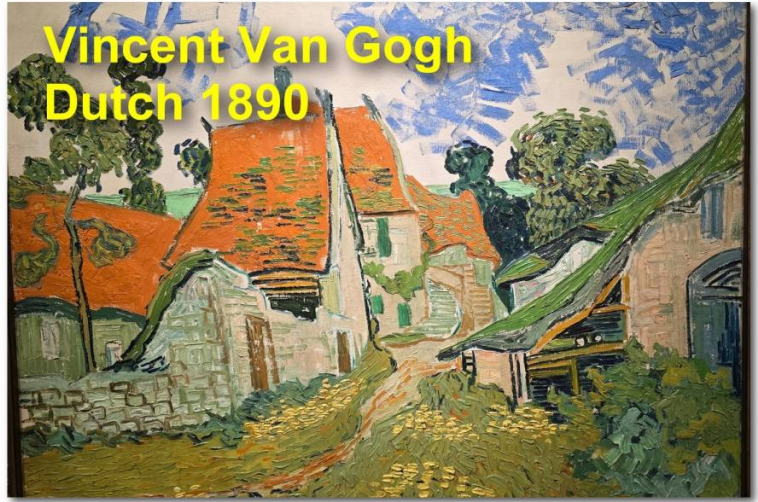


**Le Corbusier
Swiss-French
1939**

**Robert Eckman
Finnish 1868**



**Vincent Van Gogh
Dutch 1890**



Helsinki Central Station - 1919

- 850 commuter trains and 100 long-distance trains each weekday.
- One of the best-known works of Finnish architecture.
- Some say it's the most beautiful railway station in the world.
- The Lantern Bearer granite statues designed by Emil Wikström.

**Helsinki Central Station
1919**



**Helsinki
Central
Station
1919**

Lantern-bearer Statues



**Helsinki Central Station
Restaurant**



Helsinki Central Station is also an underground shopping and dining hub – protected from winter snow, cold, lack of daylight.

**Helsinki Central Station
Shopping**





Hesburgers

Finnish fast-food chain.
 Largest hamburger chain in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.
 Market share larger than McDonald's.
 Also operates in Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine.
 473 stores. **McDonald's 43,000 worldwide.**
 8,000 employees.



Shopping

Helsinki City Museum Next to Senate Square.

Open 7 days. Free.

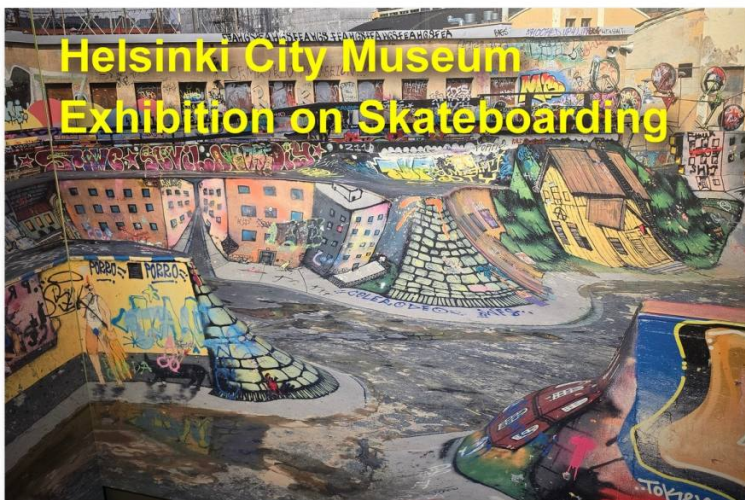
- Cultural, material, and architectural history of city and its residents.
- 400,000+ artefacts.
- 1,000,000 photos.



Helsinki City Museum Sederholm House 1757



Helsinki City Museum



Helsinki City Museum Exhibition on Skateboarding



RIKOSPAIKKA HELSINKI

BROTTSPLATS HELSINGFORS | CRIME SCENE HELSINKI | 1927-1931

Crime

Helsinki City Museum



Helsinki City Museum



Helsinki Art Museum (HAM)
Helsinki has several modern art museums. We will visit: **Next slides**
HAM Helsinki Art Museum. →

We did not visit:
Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma →
Kunsthalle Helsinki →



Helsinki Art Museum (HAM)



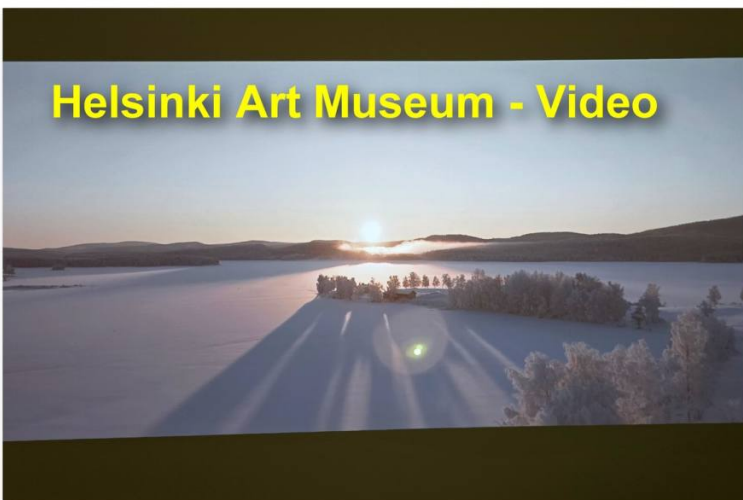
Helsinki Art Museum



Helsinki Art Museum



Helsinki Art Museum - Video



Helsinki Art Museum - Video



Finnish Museum of Natural History
National botanical, zoological,
geological, and paleontological
collections and research.

- 5 permanent exhibitions on 4 floors.
- Finnish nature. Worldwide wildlife.
Much more.

Separate Kaisaniemi Botanical
Garden.

Natural History Museum



Spotted Seal



Pikeperch



Eurasian Brown Bear



Finland's National Animal

Arctic Fox



Wolverine

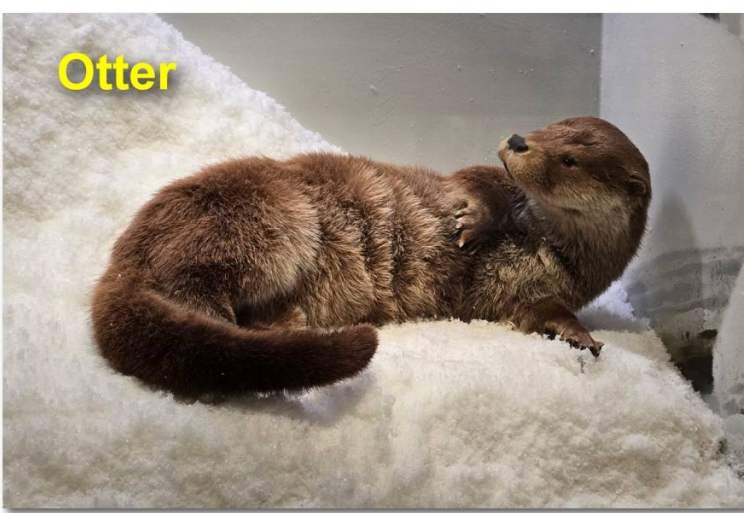


Forest Reindeer



In US we call them caribou.

Otter



**Moose
In USA called Elk**



**Museum claims to have one of
every nesting species in Finland.**



**Museum claims to have one of
every nesting species in Finland.**



European Bison



**Temppeliaukio Church
aka Rock Church**

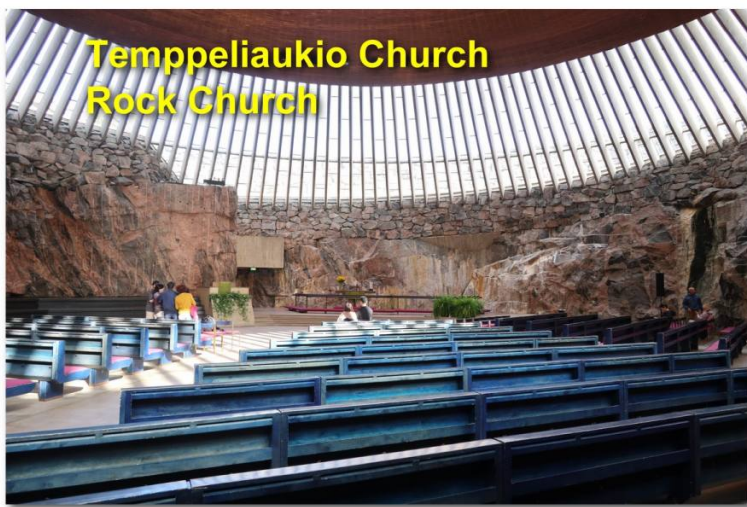
- Lutheran church designed by architects and brothers Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen.
- Opened 1969.
- Built directly into solid rock.
- Great acoustics for concerts.
- Natural light from skylight.

**Temppeliaukio Church - 1969
Entry**



Temppeliaukio Church





Islands Cruise
One of several tourist cruises from Market Square. Helsinki archipelago.
– 1½ to 2 hours. *Around*
– Seasonal. *US\$33*
– There are also ferries.



Islands Cruise



Islands Cruise



Islands Cruise



Back at Helsinki Port



**Sinebrychoff Art Museum
Sinebrychoffin taidemuseo**

- Mansion left to the nation in 1921 containing an important collection of Old Masters and furniture.
- Building constructed in 1842 by Russian businessman Nikolai Sinebrychoff.

Sinebrychoff Art Museum



Sinebrychoff Art Museum



**Gerard ter Borch
Dutch 1665**



Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch



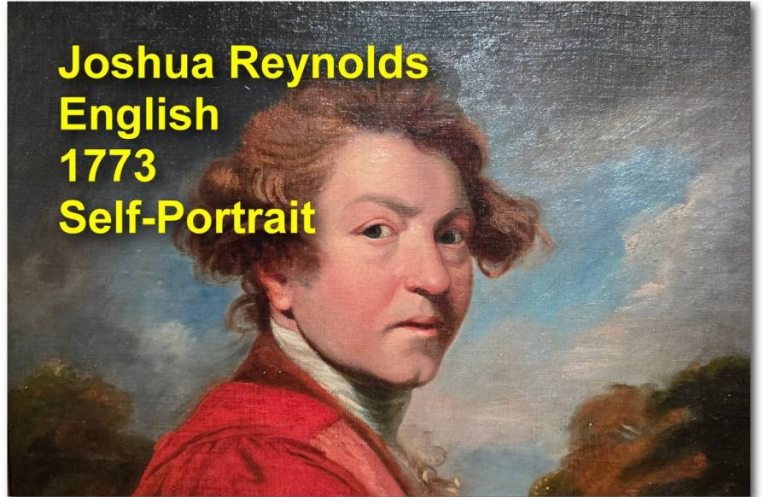
Lucas Cranach the Elder
1525



Giovanni Tiepolo
Italian - 1718
Rape of the Sabine Women



Joshua Reynolds
English
1773
Self-Portrait



Jan Brueghel
Flemish



Sinebrychoff Art Museum



Sinebrychoff Art Museum



Cornelis de Vos
Two Sisters
Flemish
1610-1615



Two Other Major Helsinki Museums

Seurasaaari Open-Air Museum

Seasonal – only May-September.
88 17th-20th C Finnish cottages,
farmsteads, and manors.
4 miles outside Helsinki.



National Museum of Finland

Closed for renovations.
Reopening 2027 (est).
Prehistoric artifacts, medieval
treasures, and icons in Finland's
most important cultural history museum.



Trams and Buses

Use HSL App - Google or Apple.
Put in credit card number.

Find routes.

Buy tickets. Timed. €3.20 for 80
minutes in Zones A-B centre.

Also Bolt and Uber - use their
App. Roughly €10 city centre.



Miscellaneous Helsinki



You can easily spend \$80 per person for dinner.
Or you can do it for a lot less.



Robert's Coffee is
Finland's answer to
Starbucks.

**Three Blacksmiths Monument
1932**



**Ylioppilasteatteri Theatre
Theatre School
1926**



**Stockmann Dept Store
Finland's largest:
50,000 m2 = 540,000 sq ft**



**Day Trip
from Helsinki
to Porvoo**

**Porvoo city located on
south coast of Finland.**

Founded 1347.

30 miles east of Helsinki.

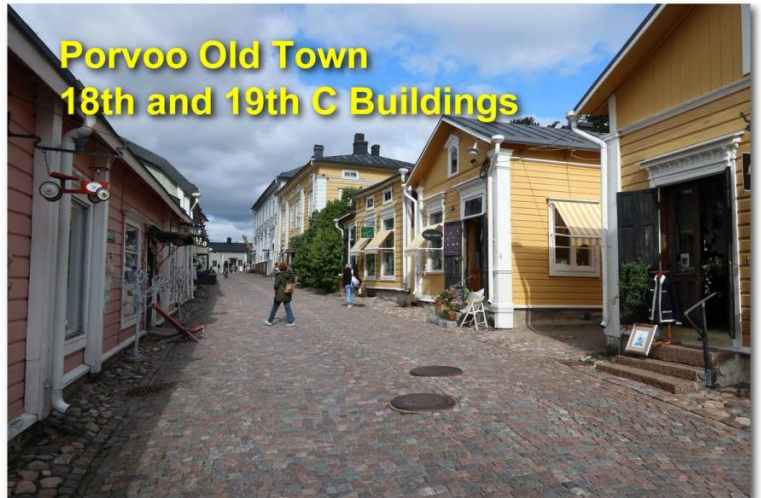
**Old Town: Well-preserved
18th and 19th C buildings.**

15th C cathedral.

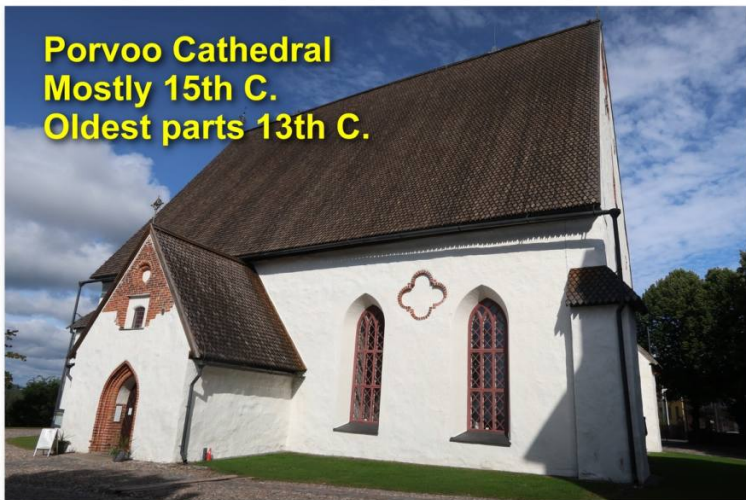
**63% Finnish speakers, 27%
Swedish speakers, 10% others.**



**Porvoo Old Town
18th and 19th C Buildings**



**Porvoo Cathedral
Mostly 15th C.
Oldest parts 13th C.**



**Porvoo Cathedral
Mostly 15th C.
Oldest parts 13th C.**

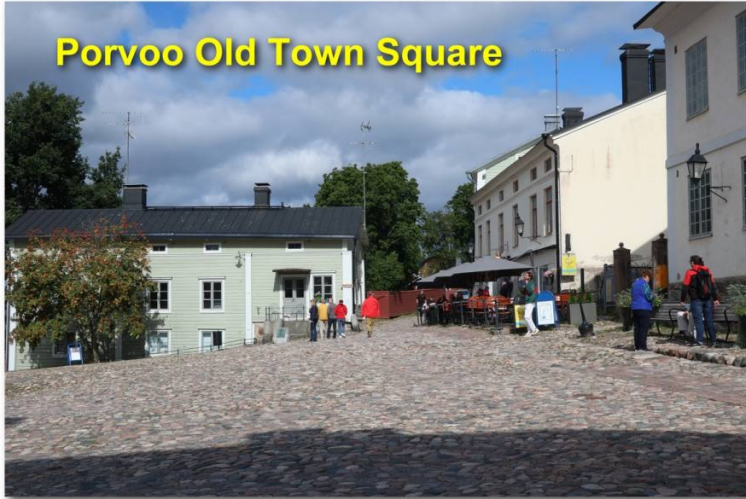




Porvoo Small Church - 1740
Used for marriages,
Christenings, funerals



Bishop's House
Old Town, Porvoo



Porvoo Old Town Square



Porvoo Old Town



Porvoo Museum
Holm House
1763



Porvoo Museum



Porvoo Museum
Old Town Hall
1762-1764



Porvoo Museum
Old Town Hall
1762-1764

Porvoo Old Manor House



THE END
Of Our Visit to
Helsinki, Finland

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