Nature, Recreation and Sport in Helsinki
Nature, Recreation and Sport in Helsinki
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Areas in Helsinki

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Helsinki km²</th>
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<td>Sea area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land area</td>
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<td>3,091</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Helsinki Urban Facts

Map by Helsinki km² Helsinki Region km²

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Metropolitan Area

Helsinki Region

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Source: City of Helsinki Urban Facts
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Helsinki is Finland’s only metropolis. The urban image is complemented by nature, which runs between settlements and embraces the city in the form of fields and forests. Bays and headlands, islands and islets off the coast enrich the scenery. Nature is an inherent part of everyday life and leisure time pursuits for the people of Helsinki. Summer activities include various excursions into the great outdoors, fishing, picking berries and mushrooms or just enjoying the natural landscape. On hot summer days, the city’s numerous beaches attract swimmers and sunbathers. In winter, recent years have also seen a tremendous increase in winter swimming. Many destinations are also firm favourites with visitors to Helsinki.

Nature, Recreation and Sport in Helsinki comprises statistics, short articles and stories describing Helsinki as the home of the active outdoor people and as a great travel destination. The publication contains six chapters, the first of which tells about urban nature, the urban landscape and vegetation, the second takes us from the land to the sea, shores and archipelago. The theme in chapter three is leisure and hobbies, and international benchmarking shows Helsinki residents as particularly standing out as literature and exercise enthusiasts. The fourth theme is sports, both as a hobby and competitively. Chapter five of the publication tells about Helsinki as a tourist destination and presents a range of popular sights in the city. Last but not least is some key statistical information about Helsinki and the people who live there.

Jointly produced by four departments of Helsinki City – Sports Department, City Office’s Tourist and Convention Bureau, Environment Centre and Helsinki Urban Facts – the publication is primarily aimed at the general public and media representatives attending the 10th IAAF World Championship in Athletics held in Helsinki in 2005. Sanna Ranto from City of Helsinki Urban Facts is responsible for the editorial work. A list of contributors appears on the first pages of this publication.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone contributing to the production of this publication.

Helsinki, June 2005

Leila Lankinen
Acting information manager
Nature in Helsinki

Seasonal changes and daylight variations

Green Helsinki

Landscape and geology

Flora and vegetation

Wild animals

Nature protection

The air is clean

Helsinki citizens value urban nature
Seasonal changes and daylight variations

Helsinki lies at a latitude of 60 degrees north, which means it experiences distinct climatic variations between seasons. Although the sea moderates fluctuations in temperature, making winters and summers more temperate in Helsinki than inland, a high of +31.2°C was recorded in the capital in summer 1975 and a minimum of -34.3°C in the winter of 1987.

The length of daytime in Helsinki also varies greatly across the year. Around Christmas, there are barely six hours of daylight, but in return, around Midsummer the nights never really get dark – just a few hours of twilight. And actually Helsinki ranks high among other European capitals when it comes to the number of hours of sunshine per day averaged over a year.

Snow lies permanently in central Helsinki for an average of 95 days a year. The average date for the first snowfall is 14 November and for a lasting snow cover 21 De-
December. The greatest depth of snow ever recorded in central Helsinki was 71 centimetres in 1976.

**Green Helsinki**

Although Helsinki is the most densely populated part of Finland, it has many green areas: 6,600 hectares of parks, forests or recreational areas covering over one-third of the city's land territory give Helsinki's residents 118 square metres of green area per capita. In addition, the city owns 6,737 hectares of recreational areas outside Helsinki itself. These areas are there for the benefit of Helsinki citizens for outdoor recreation and exercise. The largest of these out-of-town recreational areas lies in the Nuukskio National Park, which is situated less than 30 km from the city centre.

The green areas in Helsinki are predominantly natural forest area, and thus typically do not resemble European-style parks. The oldest forests in Helsinki, which have not been touched for over half a century, lie in the northern districts.

*The predominant tree along the Helsinki coast is the pine.*
Landscape and geology

The topography of the Helsinki Region represents typical Finnish southern coast: small barren hills of rounded rocks alternate with clay-bottomed valleys. The coastline is very indented, with a mosaic of headlands, coves and islands. Many former islands in Helsinki are now integrated into the mainland and bays have been filled in, thus straightening up the shoreline in places. Helsinki’s average altitude is 11 metres above sea level, the highest point being 62 metres.

The natural landscape in Helsinki and Finland has been shaped above all by the last Ice Age. The enormous weight of the ice pushed down the earth’s crust, which has been gradually rising ever since the ice started to melt over 12,000 years ago. Even today, the land is still rising in Helsinki, by 2.5 millimetres a year. Following the Ice Age, the Helsinki Region was submerged deep under water, and gravel and boulder belts of the ancient shoreline can be seen in many places tens of metres above the present sea level. The area features many

- Glacial erratic boulders, reminders of the Ice Age, can be found in many places in Helsinki.
Nuuksio National Park is popular with hikers from Helsinki.

Less than 63 kilometres from central Helsinki lies Nuuksio National Park, an almost untouched nature reserve of 63 square kilometres. The area is from time to time extended as part of the Natura Programme. The City of Helsinki owns extensive areas in Nuuksio.

Nuuksio National Park lies on a lake upland. Its biodiversity is based on the combination of a southern location in Finland and a varied topographic profile. Granite cliffs and hills rounded by the ice ages alternate with ravines and valleys, which conceal verdant groves. There are 76 small lakes and ponds in the area.

The national park is home to 103 endangered or specially monitored species of animal, plant and fungus. It is most famous for its flying squirrels (Pteromys volans), which make up one of the largest populations in Finland. This species is under special protection in Finland and the EU.

The 63 kilometres of signposted trails offers attractive hikes through the woodlands of Nuuksio, but walking across country with a map and compass is allowed, too. There is a national bicycle route running right through the park, and cross-country and alpine skiing, horse-riding, angling and mushroom and berry picking are popular pursuits. Several nature events for youngsters are arranged annually. Camping facilities including chalets and saunas enable overnight stays, and guided tours are arranged for tourists.

More information about hiking and Finnish national parks:

www.outdoors.fi
Web pages of Nuuksio:
www.outdoors.fi/page.asp?Section=5131
Service number to Nuuksio: +358 (0)9 0205 64 4790

Flora and vegetation

The Helsinki Region lies in the European zone of mixed deciduous/coniferous forest. Thus, we find, for example, oaks among the various native deciduous tree species, but not beeches. Northwards, this mixed forest gradually changes to more coniferous forest. The Helsinki Region has many southern plants not found farther north. Another factor enriching the local flora is its location between the eastern continental vegetation zone and western maritime zone. Bogs are typical for the zone but have for the most part been drained, a few small ones have been preserved as sites of special natural interest.

In all, over a thousand species of wild plants grow in the Helsinki area, which is a surprising number this far north. The proportion of indigenous species among the plants in an area is a good indicator of the natural state of a habitat, because alien species usually need man-made environments such as fields, gardens, yards or parks to survive. In Helsinki, the proportion of native plants is still relatively large, around 40 per cent. On the outer islets, it varies between 80 and 100 per cent.

Examples of glacial erratics. Some of these boulders originate from southeast Finland or Russia. They were transported long ago by the ice, before being deposited at their present locations.

The bedrock of Finland is one of the most ancient in the world. Rock types in the Helsinki Region are gneisses, schist rocks and granites that represent the deep roots of a mountain belt that stood here two billion years ago. The soil in Finland formed chiefly during and after the last Ice Age. The main types of soil in Helsinki are till, clay and sand.

Nuuksio National Park

Less than 30 kilometres from central Helsinki lies Nuuksio National Park, an almost untouched nature reserve of 39 square kilometres. The area is from time to time extended as part of the Natura Programme. The City of Helsinki owns extensive areas in Nuuksio.

Nuuksio National Park lies on a lake upland. Its biodiversity is based on the combination of a southern location in Finland and a varied topographic profile. Granite cliffs and hills rounded by the ice ages alternate with ravines and valleys, which conceal verdant groves. There are 43 small lakes and ponds in the area.

The national park is home to 70 endangered or specially monitored species of animal, plant and fungus. It is most famous for its flying squirrels (Pteromys volans), which make up one of the largest populations in Finland. This species is under special protection in Finland and the EU.

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Examples of glacial erratics. Some of these boulders originate from southeast Finland or Russia. They were transported long ago by the ice, before being deposited at their present locations.
Most common native trees in Helsinki
- Norway spruce (Picea abies)
- Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris)
- Silver birch (Betula pendula)
- Downy birch (Betula pubescens)
- European aspen (Populus tremula)
- Grey alder (Alnus incana)
- Black alder / Common alder (Alnus glutinosa)
- Rowan / Mountain ash (Sorbus aucuparia)
- Norway maple (Acer platanoides)
- Goat willow / Great sallow (Salix caprea)
- Bird cherry (Prunus padus)

Wild animals

With its large forest-dominated green areas, Helsinki is home to many wild animals. 46 species of mammals have been observed in the city, but the majority are passers-through. Large predators such as the wolf (Canis lupus) and lynx (Lynx lynx) have paid visits to the capital, and brown bears (Ursus arctos) live permanently not far out of town. However, the chance of spotting any of these animals is remote. On the other hand, smaller predators residing in the city, such as the fox (Vulpes vulpes), badger (Meles meles), ermine (Mustela erminea), weasel (Mustela nivalis), and the alien species mink (Mustela vision) and raccoon dog (Nyctereutes procyonoides), are regularly seen. Occasionally pine martens (Martes martes), those dwellers of the coniferous forests, can be spotted, too. The European elk (Alces alces) and other members of the deer family, are quite often seen in Helsinki’s forests. These animals sometimes cause problems for road traffic by venturing out onto the roads. Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) hide more discreetly in the woods. Brown hares (Lepus europaeus) are seen in almost every park, as are foxes, squirrels (Sciurus vulgaris) and hedgehogs (Erinaceus europaeus).

A recent bat survey commissioned by the City of Helsinki found nine of Finland’s eleven species of bats in the city. Even the whiskered bats (Myotis mystacinus/brandtii), which prefer old forests, thrive in Helsinki. The northern bat (Eptesicus nilssonii), Finland’s most common bat species, can be observed, for example, catching insects around street lamps in inner Helsinki.

Helsinki is home to a variety of 120 nesting bird species: sea birds, wetland birds, forest birds, field birds, and even typical wilderness species. Only species that require marshes, lakes or large woodlands for their habitats are absent. The black woodpecker (Dryocopus martius) may be spotted splitting old wood even quite near the
Vanhakaupunki bay lies in the geographical centre of Helsinki. Where River Vantaa empties into the bay, the town of Helsinki was founded in 1550, and there are still some fields that have been cultivated since the 16th century. North of the bay, where the University of Helsinki has its research farm, there is a stretch of countryside with cows grazing the waterfront meadows. The area also includes an arboretum.

The area around the Vanhakaupunki rapids is a beautiful historical milieu. No traces of the old town can be seen any more, but the rapids are flanked by striking old industrial mills. For over one hundred years, the bay has been a popular spot with bird watchers: excursions were already being arranged in the early 19th century. Today, the area with its lookout towers and network of paths is a favourite among local bird watchers.

The Vanhakaupunki nature sanctuary is an EU Natura 2000 zone. This 316 hectare area alongside a shallow coastal bay surrounding the estuary of the River Vantaa, comprises extensive reed beds, shore meadows, forests and open water. Within the Natura 2000 zone is Helsinki City’s largest protected area, the 258.2 hectare Viikki–Vanhakaupunki Bird Wetland. 288 bird species have been spotted in the reserve.

Birds nesting in the Vanhankaupunginlahti reserve include the citrine wagtail (Motacilla citreola), bearded tit (Parus biarmicus), water rail (Rallus aquaticus), lesser spotted woodpecker (Dendrocopos minor), great reed warbler (Acrocephalus arundinaceus) and bittern (Botaurus stellaris). Besides being a nesting area, Vanhakaupunki is also an important stopover site for migrating birds. On a good day in May, an experienced bird-watcher may spot up to a hundred species.

The rapids are a favourite spot for fishing. The bay is the habitat of both sea and freshwater species. The River Vantaa is an important spawning area for many species of fish, and many migrating species swim up the river to their spawning grounds in the autumn. For decades, fish could not pass the rapids because of the dam, but in the 1990s, the rapids were altered to allow the passage of fish. Trout and salmon are among the species spawning in the River Vantaa.

For further information in English: www.gardenia-helsinki.fi/viikkinature

A favourite spot with birdwatchers and hikers: the wetlands of Viikki.

The bearded tit.
city centre. Last winter, several three-toed woodpeckers (*Picoides tridactylus*) were reported, and two white-backed woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos leutotos*) – Finland’s most endangered forest bird species. Even the eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*) and the long-eared owl (*Asio otus*) may be heard hooting in the city. Roofs in inner Helsinki provide homes for nesting herring gulls (*Larus argentatus*), lesser black-backed gulls (*Larus fuscus*) and common gulls (*Larus canus*). Among newcomers are the conspicuous barnacle geese (*Branta leucopsis*). These geese, which mainly nest in the Arctic tundra, can now be seen by the hundreds in the autumn grazing park lawns in Helsinki.

Ten birds most commonly nesting in Helsinki

- White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
- Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)
- Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)
- Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
- Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone*)
- Great Tit (*Parus major*)
- Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
- Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)
- Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)
- Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)


### Nature protection

Helsinki has 40 nature reserves covering a total of over 400 hectares. Most of them are quite small, less than one hectare. The aim of the reserves is to safeguard biodiversity and the natural heritage. They are also important for research and education, and for visitors.

The nature reserves comprise a good cross section of environments native to Helsinki: forests, swamps, wetlands, eskers, islands and islets. Whereas most reserves out in the islands are protected owing to their birdlife, other reserves focus on vegetation or geological features. Many reserves have scenic values, too, and some even cultural and historical values.

Some of Helsinki’s nature reserves are important nationally, for example three of its reserves are listed on the EU’s Nature 2000 Network of Protected Areas. Helsinki also has some protected small-scale natural habitat types such as coastal meadows, beaches and hazel bush groves. Many of these have remained almost in a pristine state on islands owned by the Finnish Defence Forces, where the public has not had access.

A few habitats of plants enjoying protection have been preserved in Helsinki, such as the sites where the handsome-flow ered restharrow (*Ononis arvensis*) grows.
There are only nine such habitats in Finland. Also, 31 natural monuments are protected, mostly trees but a few geological sites, too. The most interesting ones are probably the potholes in the Pihlajamäki district. The larger pothole has a diameter of seven metres and a depth of eight metres. They were ground into the bedrock by rocks stirred by the melting waters of the inland ice. Dating back over 50,000 years, they are the oldest known of their kind in Finland.
The air is clean

By international comparison, the air is very clean in Helsinki. The last few decades have seen strategic actions by the municipality to improve air quality in the city. Combined heat and power (CHP) production means efficient energy production. Over 90 per cent of buildings are linked to the district heating system. Additionally, desulphurization units in power stations and the increasing use of natural gas and low-sulphur oil and coal mean that the concentration of sulphur dioxide is very low in the air we breathe in Helsinki.

Comprehensive public transport reduces air quality problems particularly in inner Helsinki. Improved combustion technologies and fuels have already resulted in a steady decrease in carbon monoxide in the air over the last fifteen years. Thanks to the use of unleaded petrol, lead emissions have also been reduced to a fraction of earlier readings. The concentration of these substances in the air in Helsinki is clearly below the maximum recommendations issued by WHO.

However, some problems remain. Nitrogen oxide emissions from transport are one, and suspended particles in the air another, especially in spring. To reduce the effects of ice on the roads during the winter, the streets and roads are gritted or salted. Moreover, vehicles must be fitted with winter tyres, most of which are studded. In the springtime, after the snow has melted, dust particles from the road surface are often stirred up into the air. This problem is tackled by sweeping the streets as early as possible using modern street cleaning equipment.

Air quality in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area is indicated by means of an air quality index based on international and national recommendations. Over 90 per cent of the time, air quality in central Helsinki is good or satisfactory. Less than 0.2 per cent of the time, the air quality is poor or very poor – primarily in springtime, when there is dust in the air.

Helsinki citizens value urban nature

In the year 2000, a poll was carried out on environmental attitudes among Helsinki citizens. It revealed that 92 per cent of respondents felt urban nature is important.

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**Monthly variation in air quality in a busy street in central Helsinki in 2004**

![Monthly variation in air quality in a busy street in central Helsinki in 2004](Source: Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council YTV)

**Concentration of particles (PM10) in the air in selected European capitals in 2003 (annual means)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>PM10, annual mean, µg/m³</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki (4)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copenhagen (2)</td>
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<td>London (11)</td>
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<td>Stockholm (4)</td>
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<td>Prague (11)</td>
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Source: Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council YTV; EEA, AirBase database
to them. Even small elements of nature may have great significance for their quality of city life, and green areas are associated with many pleasant things: they make areas more attractive, improve air quality and reduce noise and pollution. Urban nature appears to have psychological dimensions, too, since citizens reported that green areas invigorated them and offered them aesthetical experiences. Many underlined the importance of a moment of tranquillity in the bustle of the city. Moreover nature is often linked with exercise as well. Closeness to nature and good opportunities for exercise considerably improve an area’s appeal and its inhabitants’ feeling of well-being.

Environmental issues have come to play an essential role in the attitudes and values of Helsinki citizens, and environmental protection is today a social value as well. According to the poll on environmental attitudes, three-quarters of the people in Helsinki thought environmental protection was a matter of major concern, alongside the bringing down of unemployment. All social classes agreed on this point, with young people, in particular, underlining the importance of environmental issues.

During the 1990s, many practical steps, such as waste recycling, had become a part of everyday life for city residents. Today, 86 per cent of households in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area recycle paper.

Restharrow Ononis Arvensis has only nine habitats in Finland, one of them is in Harakka island, near the Helsinki City centre.

Further information sources on the internet

- City of Helsinki Environment Centre: [www.hel.fi/ymk](http://www.hel.fi/ymk)
- Information about Helsinki’s parks and green areas at the websites of the Public Works Department: [www.hkr.hel.fi/english/greenareas](http://www.hkr.hel.fi/english/greenareas)
- Finland’s environmental administration provides information about nature and environment: [www.ymparisto.fi](http://www.ymparisto.fi)
- Finnish Meteorological Institute weather services: [www.fmi.fi/en](http://www.fmi.fi/en)
- Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council, YTV, monitors air quality in Helsinki. It has a real time monitoring service at [www.ytv.fi/english/air](http://www.ytv.fi/english/air)
- Helsinki was the first European capital to complete a comprehensive plan for sustainable development. This programme, approved in summer 2002, sets the targets and actions for ecological, social and economic sustainability until 2010. Local Agenda 21 in Helsinki: [www.hel.fi/ymk/agenda](http://www.hel.fi/ymk/agenda)

**Nature, Recreation and Sports in Helsinki**
The Helsinki archipelago is full of life

City residents in the islands

Recreation in the islands and seaside

Fish and fishing

Beach life

The state of the Baltic Sea is important to Helsinki citizens
The Helsinki archipelago is full of life

The area of Helsinki incorporates 500 square kilometres of sea, with over 300 islands. While only 50 of these islands are over three hectares, more than half are small islets of less than half a hectare.

Over time, the islands have been sculpted by the forces of nature. More recently, a few have even been shaped by man. Some 20 kilometres offshore towards the open sea, the vista of larger islands and narrow sounds and bays fringed with varied vegetation gradually changes to open seascapes dotted with small barren islets. Although these outer islets have few or no trees, the rocky clefts and hollows, fertilised by sea bird droppings, may display surprising floral splendour.

Most of the islands support stands of forest. Pine trees growing on rocks or sands are common, but groves of deciduous trees are seen, too. The islands off the southern coast of Finland display a great variety of species, and almost 700 species of vascular plants have been found growing in the archipelago zones. Earlier, some islands were used as pasture, which has led to distinctive localities of vegetation between the rounded cliffs and rocks. Some islands have been or are still military areas, which has allowed them to remain relatively untouched by people.

Birdlife is abundant in the archipelago. Species nesting on the outer islets include eider (Somateria mollissima), wigeon (Anas penelope), mallard (Anas platyrhynchos), goosander (Mergus merganser), tufted duck (Aythya fuligula), the common tern (Sterna hirundo) and various members of the seagull family. Wagtails (Motacilla alba), wheatears (Oenanthe oenanthe) and oystercatchers (Haematopus ostralegus) are common on rocky islets. The lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus), which used to be the predominant seagull in offshore Helsinki, has gradually been outnumbered by the herring gull (Larus argentatus).

In spring and autumn, Helsinki is also visited or flown over by large flocks of migrating birds. The reefs and shoals of the archipelago provide good resting places. During the last few years, seals have increased in numbers in the Baltic Sea, and if you are lucky, you may spot the head of a grey seal (Halichoerus grypus) in the water just next to the city centre.

City residents in the islands

For centuries, people in Helsinki have turned to the sea for their livelihood – and for recreation. In the 19th century, shipyards and wharfs were established on some islands, and on others summer villas. In the late 19th century, many islands were turned into public recreational areas where anyone could go to relax, practise sports or even go Saturday night dancing. Some of these “people’s parks” also had an edu-

Elisaari island in the archipelago west of Helsinki is a public recreational area owned by the City of Helsinki.
Only ten minutes by waterbus from central Helsinki, the twin islands of Pihlajasaari are the most popular summer islands in the city. The long beach on the north side of the western island attracts many swimmers and sunbathers, while on the smaller island there is a nudist beach. Pihlajasaari has a restaurant, a kiosk, rental saunas and boat moorings.

A short bridge connects the two islands, which together measure 23 hectares. The topography of the islands is varied: in many places smooth, rounded rocks and small bays provide secluded spots. The rounded rocks on the south side are home to many nesting bird species. The vegetation consists mostly of pine forest.

Waterbuses to Pihlajasaari leave every hour from Merisatama just west of Kaivopuisto park and from Ruoholahti. Return ticket, adults €4.50. Islandkeeper: tel: +358 (0)9 630 065
cational mission, and today, the Seurasaa-
ri Outdoor Museum and the Korkeasaari
Zoo carry on this tradition.

Nowadays, the seaside and the archi-
pelago are an important part of Helsinki’s
identity. The islands and the meandering
coastline with bays and headlands pro-
vide excellent opportunities for outdoor
recreation all year round. A guiding prin-
ciple in Helsinki has been to keep shores
and waterfront public, and little land has
been earmarked for private use. In fact, in
recent years, industry and harbours have
begun moving out, leaving increasing ex-
tents of sea-front for housing and recrea-
tional purposes.

The City of Helsinki owns over half of
the number of islands, and a majority of
these islands are for public recreation. Ap-
proximately one-tenth of island areas is tak-
en up by privately owned summer cottag-
es. The state owns the greatest proportion
of land area in the archipelago, about half
of the island’s land area is used by the mil-
itary, and thus access is restricted.

Recreation in the islands
and seaside

Fishing and swimming are popular in Hel-
sinki. Various kinds of fish can be caught
– and eaten. Boating is also very popu-
lar in summer. The city has around 11,000
mooring places, one-third of which are
rented to the public by the Helsinki City
Sports Department, the remainder being
leased to yacht and boat clubs. The ma-
ajority of visitor marinas are administered
by yacht clubs.

In winter, when the sea freezes over and
the ice is thick enough, the people of Hel-
sinki take to walking, skating and skiing, for
instance between the islands. Many enjoy
ice fishing through a hole drilled in the ice,
and recently ice yachting has become pop-
ular. However, great care should always be
taken when walking on the sea ice, because
currents weaken it and ships break it. Any-
one going out on the ice should follow ex-
sting paths or ski trails in the snow.

The valley of the River Vantaa is another
popular zone for outdoor recreation. Sev-
eral paths and trails follow its course as it
flows through the city’s green areas, which
in parts are protected nature areas. In winter, ski trails run along its banks and, conditions permitting, on the ice, too.

**Fish and fishing**

In hardly any other European capital is fishing as popular as in Helsinki. Almost one-third of the citizens go fishing at least occasionally, either in Helsinki or elsewhere. It has been estimated that recreational fishermen from Helsinki catch a total of 2.8 million kilogrammes of fish and 266,000 crayfish a year.

Fish caught off Helsinki’s waterfront are generally considered healthy and good food. The quantity of fish caught by hook and line almost equals that caught by nets, a clear indication of how many recreational fishermen there are. In fact, Helsinki and the waters of nearby municipalities are among Finland’s most important angling areas.

In 2004, over 10,000 fishing permits were sold in Helsinki. The number of recreational fishermen is, however, much larger, because no permit is required for angling or ice fishing (i.e. fishing through the ice). Lure fishing is also free for anyone under 18 or over 65. There are estimated to be 50,000 recreational fishermen in the Helsinki sea area, who catch a total of over 600,000 kilogrammes of fish a year.

The sea areas in Helsinki are home to around 60 species of fish, including some introduced species, such as rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri), lake trout (Salmo trutta lacustris) and asp (Aspius aspius). The most important game fish is perch (Perca fluviatilis), followed by roach (Rutilus rutilus), zander (i.e. pike-perch, Stizostedion lucioperca), brown trout (Salmo trutta) and pike (Esox lucius).

The Vanhakaupunki rapids at the mouth of the River Vantaa are a particularly popular spot for fishing. A special permit is required for the rapids, which are the place for which most permits are sold in Helsinki. The rapids used to be harnessed by a power station, but since restoration in the 1990s, trout and salmon have started swimming upstream again.

Although the River Vantaa, which runs through extensive farming areas upstream, appears muddy in Helsinki, it is actually relatively clean – 34 species of fish live in its waters. Annual fish catches from the river

*Recreational fishing is popular in Helsinki but there are only a few professional fishermen in the city.*
Harakka Island

Harakka is a very special little island: it represents an outer archipelago environment even though it is situated just a stone’s throw off the waterfront of the city centre. It is just nine hectares of rock and sparse vegetation, but has a varied wildlife. The island used to be a garrison area closed to the public, and that is why its distinctive environment is well preserved. Today, the island is a recreational area of the City of Helsinki.

The flora of Harakka Island is a blend of wild species from the outer archipelago and plants escaped from gardens. For its size, Harakka has the most varied flora of all Helsinki, with over 300 different vascular plants, including one species of restharrow (Ononis arvensis), which is only known to grow in nine places in Finland.

Birdlife on Harakka is varied, and is easily observed because many of the birds are used to human presence. The island is an excellent example of nature conservation close by an urban zone. In spite of large numbers of visitors, plants and birdlife thrive as long as visitors are properly guided. Nesting birds include the common gull (Larus canus), oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus), barnacle goose (Branta leucopsis), lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus), eider (Somateria mollissima), redshank (Tringa totanus), goosander and red-breasted merganser (Mergus merganser/serrator), and arctic and common tern (Sterna paradisae/hirundo).

Harakka’s Nature Centre provides not only information but also various activities for children and adults. It arranges guided tours, exhibitions, outings, courses and free outdoor schooldays for school children and kindergartens. The island also has an Artists House and an artists’ society, the Harakka Association. Almost thirty artists have their ateliers on the island.

Public access to Harakka is by waterbus, from the Kaivopuisto jetty near Café Ursula, from mid April to late September. Use the semaphore to call the vessel. Fare €3 for a return ticket. For boat timetables in English, see www.merenkavijat.fi/yhteysvene.htm. In winter, the island can usually be accessed across the ice.

Nature Centre open: 4 May to 30 September, Tue–Fri 10–17, Sat–Sun 12–16.

Information in English: www.harakka.fi
Helsinki City Environmental Centre’s pages on Harakka in English: www.hel.fi/ymk/sve/organisation/Harakka_eng.html

Nature Center in Harakka Island arranges adventure outings for children.
are as high as 100,000 kilogrammes, with perch, rainbow trout, roach and pike topping the list.

Ten most commonly caught fish in Helsinki sea area
- Perch (Perca fluviatilis)
- Roach (Rutilus rutilus)
- Zander/Pike-perch (Stizostedion lucioperca)
- Trout (Salmo trutta)
- Pike (Esox lucius)
- Salmon (Salmo salar)
- Rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri)
- Powan (Coregonus lavaretus)
- Burbot (Lota lota)
- Bream (Abramis brama)

Beach life

In summer, the northern sea warms up, and the smooth, flat rocks and numerous little beaches provide good opportunities for sunbathing and swimming. The City of Helsinki not only maintains its 26 public beaches, keeping them tidy, but also continuously monitors water quality. Many of the beaches have a lifeguard. Besides these public beaches, the hundred kilometres of coastline and the archipelago offer numerous alternative swimming opportunities. The River Vantaa also has some nice swimming places, too. The most popular mainland beach is Hietaniemi, in the Töölö district, and those most frequented in the archipelago are on the islands of Pihlajasaari and Uunisaari. A pleasant alternative in central Helsinki is the famous Uimastadion outdoor swimming pool.

Swimming is a popular pastime in Helsinki, and even the ice in winter does not deter the most enthusiastic swimmers from having a dip. Ice swimming has many devotees who regularly go to special winter swimming places where the water is kept free of ice. There are 13 such spots in
Helsinki. The popularity of ice swimming has grown tremendously these last few years. The first Winter Swimming World Championships were held in Helsinki in 2000.

Water quality at beaches in Helsinki is good. With modern wastewater purification, the average microbiological quality has been maintained at good levels at all beaches in the city ever since 1995.

The state of the Baltic Sea is important to Helsinki citizens

The residents of Helsinki are concerned about the state of the Baltic Sea, and there is widespread opinion in favour of protecting the quality of the water. Over a hundred million people live in the area around the Baltic Sea, which is under very heavy pressure from municipalities, agriculture and industry. Unfortunately, the exchange of water with the Atlantic through the Danish Sounds is by no means sufficient to reduce the effects of eutrophication.

The quality of the sea water around Helsinki started to improve in the 1970s thanks to reduced local loading resulting from improved sewage treatment. Today, 95 per cent of phosphorus and 80 per cent of nitrogen in wastewaters are removed, and the waters in Helsinki only receive occasional loads. Nonetheless, the bays are still overfed with nutrients, because sediments slowly release stored substances. In July and August, blue-green algae may bloom strongly in the Gulf of Finland, if the summer is very warm.

Further information sources on the internet

In English and Swedish if not otherwise stated

- The Katajanokka visitors marina, in the heart of Helsinki, has 120 moorings administered by the City of Helsinki. For further information in English, Swedish and German: [www.isomursu.fi](http://www.isomursu.fi)
- Helsinki City Environmental Centre monitors water quality at the city’s public beaches. Current conditions can be viewed at the centre’s website: [www.hel.fi/ymk/eng/customer_service/beaches.html](http://www.hel.fi/ymk/eng/customer_service/beaches.html)
- Finnish Maritime Administration: [www.fma.fi/e](http://www.fma.fi/e)
- Finnish Yachting Association: [www.purjehtija.fi](http://www.purjehtija.fi)
- Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute: [www.rktl.fi/english/fish](http://www.rktl.fi/english/fish)
- Finnish Tourist Board, information about fishing: [www.visitfinland.com/fishing](http://www.visitfinland.com/fishing)
- Internet Portal for some fishing tourism services: [www.fishinginfinland.com](http://www.fishinginfinland.com)
Leisure and hobbies

People in Helsinki read and exercise a lot

Nature interests Helsinki residents

Exercise and sport hobbies are popular

Ice hockey draws largest audiences
People in Helsinki read and exercise a lot

A leisure time survey carried out in 1999–2000 shows that Finns spend on average a quarter of their day (6 h 29 min) on leisure activities. One-third of that time was spent watching television (2 h 16 min), the following two favourite pastimes being social life with friends (49 min) and reading (46 min).

Internationally, Finns stand out as readers and exercisers: 76 per cent exercise weekly. Moreover, they spend more time reading than any other nation in Europe. Libraries are popular: in Helsinki citizens borrow on average 17.8 books annually from the 37 municipal libraries (year 2003). In the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, 79% of residents had read at least one book during the previous six months, while 68% had visited a public library. Interestingly as many as nearly one-fifth had written poetry, short stories or novels themselves!

A special library for detective novels opened in Helsinki in 2005.

Library loans per resident in selected European (EU-15) capitals

Proportion of inhabitants who exercise or do sport at least once a week
Leisure time activities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area

% Activity/pursuit
91 take exercise at least once a week in summer
87 take exercise at least once a week in winter
76 read a newspaper daily
71 listen to music daily
69 watch TV daily
66 are engaged in handicraft
46 listen to music at concerts
35 are engaged or have been engaged in recreational dance
34 are engaged in photography
23 are or have been a member in a drama club or in an amateur theatre
19 are engaged in visual arts
17 are engaged in drawing and painting

Persons aged over 15 years


Visits to cultural events during the previous 12 months in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area 2002

% Persons aged over 15 years
66 had been to the cinema
56 had visited an art exhibition or an art museum
52 had visited historical monuments in Finland
51 had gone to a concert
46 had gone to the theatre
31 had visited a cultural history museum or local museum
18 had seen a classical ballet performance
16 had gone an opera
10 had gone to a folk dance performance


Nature interests Helsinki residents

Allotment gardens and plots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hectare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment gardens</td>
<td>1,916</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plots (number of grovers, approx.)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabins</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The city’s allotment gardens are very popular and many people even spend their summers there – some plots have a small cottage. There are almost 7,000 allotments in Helsinki, with a total area of 150 hectares.

Source: City of Helsinki Public Works Department

Central Park is popular with outdoor enthusiasts all year round.

Allotment gardens and plots

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Central Park is popular with outdoor enthusiasts all year round.

Nature, Recreation and Sports in Helsinki
The traditional Finnish legal concept of everyman’s right allows free right of access to non-inhabited land and waterways, and the right to collect natural products such as wild berries and mushrooms, no matter who owns the land. These rights also generally apply to foreign nationals, with certain exceptions related to local boating, fishing and hunting rights.

Everyman’s right means that access to the land and temporary camping is free of charge, and does not require the landowner’s permission. People taking advantage of these rights are nevertheless obliged not to cause any damage or disturbance.

Berry and mushroom picking

Collecting the fruits of the forests – mushrooms and berries – is a tradition dating very far back and is still a popular outdoor pursuit in Finland. Towards the end of the summer and in the autumn, forests offer a rich harvest. 37 edible species of berries can be picked, but most people prefer the more common berries: mainly blueberries, lingonberries, cloudberries and cranberries. Wild berries are very healthy food, with high contents of vitamins, minerals and flavonoids.

Finnish forests are estimated to yield a total of 500 to 1,000 million kilos of berries every year, i.e. an average of 100–200 kilos per Finn. However, only a fraction of this amount is actually picked, although two Finns in three report they go berry picking each year (in 2002). Depending on the species, between one and ten per cent of berries are picked, allowing the average Finn to consume 8.3 kilos of wild berries annually.

There are hundreds of edible mushroom species in Finland. The estimated annual mushroom harvest of Finnish forests is somewhere around 1,000 million kilos, i.e. around 200 kilos per inhabitant. As with the wild berries, pickers prefer to collect the more common mushroom species. In 2002, 45 per cent of Finns reported they went mushroom picking.

Berry and mushroom picking is not just a way of stocking the larder with a welcome supplement of vitamins for the winter months, it is also an excellent way of getting oneself out-of-doors and exercising – and enjoying the tranquillity of the nature.

See more at the website of Arctic Flavours Association:

www.arctic-flavours.fi (English, Swedish, German, French and Russian)
Exercise and sport hobbies are popular

On aggregate, Helsinki residents exercise up to 85 million times a year. Over one-third exercise more than five times a week. The popularity of doing sports and exercise as a hobby has steadily grown during the past ten years. If the yardstick by which to measure enough exercise is three brisk walks or similar activity per week, leading to a raised pulse rate and some sweating, it is estimated that 60 per cent of Helsinki residents get enough exercise.

The most popular forms of exercise are walking and cycling. Women do more walking and swimming, whereas team sports are more popular with men. Although no major differences seem to exist between male and female exercise frequency, women tend to exercise more, while men tend to exercise more intensively.

With three-quarters of children and adolescents participating in two or more forms of exercise, they engaged in a larger variety of sports than adults did. Football and swimming were the most popular. Whilst sports and exercise among children is more a social activity, a large proportion of adults exercise on their own. Over half of children exercise in a group, and half do so in a club. Children and adolescents are also the most frequent visitors to various sports facilities.
Central Park of Helsinki

With its 1,100 hectares, Keskuspuisto — Central Park, begins near the Olympic Stadium in the heart of Helsinki and stretches northwards for 10 kilometres all the way to the city boundary, making it the largest single green area in Helsinki. Central Park offers nature, sports and outdoor recreation.

In southern part of the park stand some of the city’s most important sport buildings in the spacious and green Töölönlahti bay area: the Olympic Stadium, the Kisahalli sports hall, the old ice stadium, the swimming stadium and the football stadium. Northwards from there extends the green park with its forested areas.

Central Park has around 100 km of paths and trails, some of which are cleared of deep snow in winter, while others are turned into ski tracks. Besides being a very pleasant area for jogging and biking, Central Park has two sports centres for indoor and outdoor pursuits. The log cabins and cafés of the park are popular with hikers. Paloheinä Ski Centre in the northernmost parts of the park is the most popular cross-country ski venue in Helsinki. Skis and other winter and summer sports equipment can be hired there, and from the Töölönlahti bay rental centre, too.

Central Park is a good example of the rich and varied nature of the Finnish south coast region. The park is largely forested (around 700 ha), but also has fields, hills and rivers. Wildlife is rich and varied, with many species of forest birds in particular. In spring, the park displays an abundance of the bright white wood anemone (Anemone nemorosa). The forests are predominantly old, with spruce (Picea) being the most common tree. Other notable natural features in Central Park are stands of aspen (Populus tremula), ash (Fraxinus excelsior), hazel (Corylus avellana) and larch (Larix decidua). The northern part of the park contains an old forest in which there are four nature reserves with total area of 38.12 hectares.

Mammals living in Central Park include elk (Alces alces), badgers (Meles meles), foxes (Vulpes vulpes), arctic and brown hares (Lepus timidus/europaeus), weasels (Mustela nivalis), raccoon dogs (Nyctereutes procyonoides), and muskrats (Ondatra zibethica). In the nesting season, the park is filled with birdsong. Bird species nesting in the park include the black woodpecker (Dryocopus martius), goldcrest (Regulus regulus), Eurasian jay (Garrulus glandarius), tits (Paridae), dunnock (Prunella modularis), garden warbler (Sylvia borin), wood warbler (Phylloscopus sibilatrix) and red-breasted flycatcher (Ficedula parva).

More Information in English and Swedish:

www.hel.fi/keskuspuisto

Recreational centre in Töölönlahti, sports equipment rentals:

www.suomenlatu.fi/toolonlahti/

The River Vantaa near the Ruutinkoski rapids in the northern part of the Central Park.
Exercise frequency among adults and children in Helsinki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Exercise Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years olds</td>
<td>5 times a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3–4 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–18 years olds</td>
<td>6 times a week or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4–5 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2–3 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise means at least half an hour of exercise or sports.

Source: Helsinki Exercise Survey 2001–2002

Ice hockey draws largest audiences

Ice hockey draws the largest audiences in Helsinki, football ranking a close second. Watching sports matches is more popular among men than women: 77 per cent of men had been to a game or competition during the previous 12 months, compared with only 41 per cent of women. Almost every other Finn goes to a match or championship at least occasionally.

Proportion of men and women having been to various sports events during the previous 12 months in Helsinki

Further information sources on the internet

- Map of outdoor recreation areas with routes and trails in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area: kartta.hel.fi/ulkoilukartta
- Sports equipment rentals available at Töölönlahti Recreational Centre and at Paloheinä Cross-country Skiing Centre: www.suomenlatu.fi
- The City of Helsinki arranges nature trips on various themes all year round in the city and its surroundings. The most popular destinations are the island of Harakka and the Vanhakaupunki bay area. For further information about nature tours: www.gardenia-helsinki.fi and the Helsinki City Environmental Centre: www.hel.fi/ymk
Sauna

Finnish sauna culture has long traditions. It is estimated Finland has over two million saunas, 1.3 million of which are in dwellings (in 2003). This means every other Finnish home is equipped with a sauna. The sauna plays a central role also in Finnish city life. In Helsinki, 20 per cent of households have a sauna of their own. However, just about every block of flats has a communal sauna for use by the residents of the building. Today, more and more individual flats have their own small electric saunas in the cities, too.

Sauna is an essential part of the Finnish summer, and all summer cottages have their own sauna. Midsummer sauna is particularly significant for Finns. Saunas are usually built right next to the sea or lake, allowing one to take a dip in the fresh cool water. One of the traditions is to pick fresh birch branches, which are then used to beat the body, thus improving blood circulation. Countryside saunas are nearly always heated with wood, whereas most city saunas are electrically heated.

Many Finns spend their summer holidays in their summer cottages. Typically, these cottages are close by one of the 187,999 lakes in Finland or on the seashore. In 2003, Helsinki citizens owned a total of 40,883 summer cottages, in other words 14 per cent of households in the city owned one. In Finland as a whole, there are 7,999,333 summer cottages, of which over 733,000 are in Helsinki.

Two famous public swimming pools in Helsinki, both equipped with saunas:

Yrjönkatu indoor swimming pool
Yrjönkatu 21, tel. +358 (0)9 310 87401, Closed in August 2005. Built in 1928, Yrjönkatu indoor swimming pool is the oldest public pool in Finland. The interior is a fine example of classicism, with Roman-style baths. Swimming is allowed with or without a swimming suit. There are separate times for men and women.
Further information in English: www.hel.fi/liv/eng/yrjonkatu.html

Uimastadion (Swimming Stadium sauna)
Hammarskjöldintie 8, tel. +358 (0)9 310 87854, open 9 May–11 Sept, Mon–Fri 6.30–20.00, Sat–Sun 9.00–20.00.
Built in 1947, the Swimming Stadium, with a swimming pool and sport facilities and a public sauna, is located near the Olympic Stadium in the Töölöntahti bay area.

There is even an island in Helsinki known as Sauna Island, i.e. Saunasaari in Finnish. With four different wood-heated saunas and some wood-heated hot tubs, the idyllic Saunasaari Island in Helsinki’s archipelago offers an unforgettable experience, where one can enjoy a sauna in a tranquil natural setting – just next to the city centre. The waterbus trip from the Kauppatori market square takes 20 minutes. Saunasaari primarily receives groups and companies, but in summer, trips for the public are arranged as well.

For further information in English and German:
www.saunasaari.fi

Most hotels in Helsinki have saunas for use by guests. There are also public saunas in Helsinki open to everyone. The Helsinki City Tourist Office website presents traditional and modern saunas in the city: www.hel.fi/tourism/EN (choose services).

For comprehensive information on the sauna, please consult the following sites:
◆ The Finnish Sauna Society: www.sauna.fi (in English)
Sites maintained by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs:
◆ virtual.finland.fi/People/way_of_life.asp (in English)
◆ www.info-finlande.fr/fo/visu.php3/Msg_26_0_387_1_7 (in French)
◆ virtual.finland.fi/People/DE (in German)
◆ virtual.finland.fi/Info/espanja/sauna_01.pdf (in Spanish)
◆ virtual.finland.fi/Info/russian/sauna.html (in Russian)
Sports and exercise

Sports is a wide concept

Sports facilities
Sports is a wide concept

The terms sports and exercise mean different things to different people. In Finland, exercise and sport is regarded as fundamental and they should be available to everybody. Helsinki City thus views their provision as basic services. Exercise is beneficial for both the individual and for society because regular exercise improves people’s wellbeing and performance both at home and at work – whilst also preventing illnesses.

Beyond its beneficial impacts on the body and mind, exercise has important social effects: it brings people together. Exercise can be an instructive hobby, it creates opportunities for meaningful leisure, offers new experiences and fosters social interaction. The effects of social wellbeing are particularly important to children and adolescents.

The majority of sports facilities in the capital have been built by the City of Helsinki, which also gives direct financial support to one out of two local sports clubs. The promotion of health and personal performance is considered important enough to warrant support from the society. Besides direct financial support, the authorities promote sports and exercise by providing free or low cost facilities.

Various sports clubs and associations provide the majority of organised exercise opportunities in Helsinki. There are about 800 sports associations in Helsinki, most of them are not very big and only 15 have over a thousand members. Yet, total membership is nearly 100,000 people. One in three inhabitants of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area is active in a sports association, and sports and exercise are, in fact, the most common theme for associations in the region and the whole country. Every other child or adolescent in Helsinki belongs to a sports club of one form or another and associations play a very im-

### Sport facilities in Helsinki in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Facilities</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor sports facilities</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyms and similar</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness centres and similar</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance studios</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halls for racket games</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised indoor sports facilities</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and ball games halls</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyms for martial arts</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice halls</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling alleys</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor fields/courts</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball game fields</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor ice rinks – natural ice</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor ice rinks – artificial ice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball and volleyball courts</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis courts</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports grounds (for athletics)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish baseball fields</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country sports facilities</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation areas</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf courses</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienteering areas</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slopes for skiing and tobogganing</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor sport areas</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ski-jump hills</td>
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<td>Cross-country skiing centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boating sports facilities</td>
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<td>Air sports areas</td>
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<td>Water sports facilities</td>
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<td>Other swimming pools</td>
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<td>Other swimming places</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor trails and routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitness trails</td>
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<td>Nature trails and hiking trails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity oriented routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific sports facilities</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarding/rollerblading ramps</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse riding facilities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting ranges (outdoor)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock climbing sites</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velodrome</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog parks</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play parks for children</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play parks where the city organises guided activity</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or unknown</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 2,562

Sports facilities included here have been approved by the Ministry of Education.

Source: National Sport Databank in Finland, www.sport.jyu.fi/ in English and Swedish; Helsinki City Sports Dept., Public Works Dept. and Social Services Dept., Urban and Regional Indicators of Statistics Finland
important role especially in the leisure and well-being of young people.

Around a hundred different branches of sports and exercise are pursued in sport associations in Helsinki. Their activities are largely based on unpaid voluntary work, thus offering inexpensive opportunities for exercise.

Sports facilities

Finland has a very dense network of constructed sports facilities, with 29,000 different facilities for five million people, nationwide, that is one for every 180 Finns. Municipalities own three-quarters of these facilities. In 2004, Helsinki had 2,562 sports facilities, i.e. one for every 218 residents, which means that residents have fairly easy access to sport grounds, outdoor recreational areas and indoor sport halls, etc. The city aims to locate facilities near to residential areas. In 2003, the number of recorded visits to indoor sports facilities maintained by the city was almost three million.

Hiking trails network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiking trails in Helsinki</th>
<th>km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal hiking trails</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor trails</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness trails</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski trails</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle ways</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Helsinki City Sports Department

Further information sources on the internet

- City of Helsinki Sports Department: [www.hel.fi/liv/eng/english.html](http://www.hel.fi/liv/eng/english.html)
- National Sport Databank in Finland: [www.sport.jyu.fi](http://www.sport.jyu.fi)

Skiing

People have used skis for thousands of years in northern Europe. In winter, it was the easiest way to get around when there were no roads. Today, skiing is a sport pursued in many different ways. Engaging just about every muscle in the body, cross-country skiing is an excellent and cheap way of working out – and of enjoying the outdoors in winter.

Skiing is, in fact, the third most popular sport among Finns, and its popularity seems to be growing. In 2002, the country had 732,000 people interested in skiing, which means around 14 per cent of Finns go skiing regularly. Skiing in Helsinki is also becoming more popular, in 2002 13 per cent of the city residents used the city’s illuminated and well maintained trails.

Cross-country skiing can be done in many ways. Some people prefer deep pristine layers of snow, others like well laid out trails. Such trails total 30,000 km in Finland, with around 300 km in Helsinki alone, where trails can be found in many parts of town. At the Paloheinä Ski Centre in Central Park, skiing equipment can be rented. Many Helsinki residents have access to a trail near their homes, even in inner Helsinki, where the trails of the Central Park are near.

For more information about skiing and equipment rental: [www.suomenlatu.fi](http://www.suomenlatu.fi)
Nordic walking has rapidly become a popular form of exercise in Finland. Enthusiasts currently total 1,033,000, which means 18 per cent of Finns go Nordic walking regularly. Its popularity comes from its simplicity and efficiency. Anyone can learn Nordic walking, and it is not expensive. Like cross-country skiing, it exercises a large proportion of muscles in the body.

Another advantage of Nordic walking is that it can be done just about anywhere. In Helsinki, you can spot Nordic walkers not only in parks and forests, but on streets and roads, too. Nordic walking poles can be rented at the Paloheinä Ski Centre and in a sports gear centre by Töölönlahti bay in the heart of Helsinki. Instructions for use come with the walking poles.

More information in English and Swedish: [www.suomenlatu.fi](http://www.suomenlatu.fi)

### Recreational areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreational areas</th>
<th>Helsinki, hectares</th>
<th>Estimated number of visits to these areas</th>
<th>in 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of recreational areas</td>
<td>4,535</td>
<td>1,039,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green areas owned by the City of Helsinki</td>
<td>6,737</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which recreational forests</td>
<td>6,285</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Nuukso lake upland</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of visits to these areas in 2003</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Helsinki City Sports Department

---

### Winter Swimming

When the lakes and sea freeze over, large holes are cut in the ice to allow Finns to take a refreshing dip into the water. Usually, but not always, winter swimming is done after a sauna. ‘Winter swimmers’ wear sandals or woollen socks to prevent their feet from freezing in the snow on the way to the water. Once in the water, the hardiest will actually swim, while the less brave will just dip themselves.

Those who are used to winter swimming say that there is no better way to relax, refresh oneself and improve one’s tolerance to stress. Winter swimming improves blood circulation and it is believed to prevent winter colds and flu. In other words, winter swimming is actually an ideal hobby for those of us who catch cold easily!
Tourists in Helsinki

A number one tourist destination in Finland
A number one tourist destination in Finland

Each year, an estimated 10 million tourists visit Helsinki, the majority of whom stay only for the day. Since 2000, annual overnight stays have averaged around 2.5 million, of which roughly 60 per cent are by foreigners. Helsinki is Finland’s number one tourist destination – for business travel even more so. More than one-third of tourists choose Helsinki as their principal destination in Finland.

What tourists appreciate in Helsinki and southern Finland is the unpolluted environment, the feeling of security, tidiness and friendly people. Wildlife tourism and adventure holidays are growing steadily: one in five tourists chooses this kind of holiday today. Fishing, hiking and cycling are the top pursuits, but swimming, walking and boating, plus various kind of adventure events, are popular as well. In winter, cross-country and downhill skiing and snow mobile safaris are major attractions. However, although this kind of active tourism is most common in the northern parts of the country, culture-oriented tourists tend to head for the cities in the south to enjoy their architecture and cultural events in Southern Finland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Million</th>
<th>Share of overnight stays in Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>35 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overnights spent by purpose of visit: business 53%, leisure 45% and other 2%.

Further information sources on the internet

★ The Helsinki City Tourist and Convention Bureau offers visitors a broad selection of useful information, and brochures. All brochures can be downloaded from this website, [www.hel.fi/tourism](http://www.hel.fi/tourism), which also features a useful calendar of events, a wide range of tourist information about sights and services, and the Helsinki Newsletter. Members of the press can receive free usernames and passwords to access our image bank, which features thousands of high-quality photos of Helsinki. Go to [www.aineistohotelli.com/helsinginkaupunki](http://www.aineistohotelli.com/helsinginkaupunki). Usernames and passwords can be ordered by e-mail from tourist.media@hel.fi.

★ Helsinki’s intent is to take environmental issues into account when arranging mass events. For the World Athletics Championships, a handbook for eco-efficient mass events has been compiled, and will be available for other major championships and mass events as well. For further information: [www.dipoli.hut.fi/ymparisto/ecomass](http://www.dipoli.hut.fi/ymparisto/ecomass).

★ Finnish Tourist Board: [www.mek.fi](http://www.mek.fi).

Some annual sports events in Helsinki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Number of participants in 2004</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Type of event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki City Run</td>
<td>2 631</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>half marathon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naisten Kymppi – Women’s 10 km</td>
<td>around 14 000</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>run/jog/walk for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki Cup</td>
<td>816 teams from 17 countries; 20 000 spectators</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>junior football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki City Marathon</td>
<td>6 830</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>marathon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki International Horse Show</td>
<td>100 competitors; 45 000 spectators</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>horse-riding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tall Ship’s Race in Helsinki.
An unusual place to stay in Helsinki is the camping site next to Rastila metro station, just 10 minutes from the city centre. The site has 165 caravan spaces, over 100 places for tents, plus a few cottages and log cabins. In addition to accommodation services, the camping site offers a restaurant, saunas, a beach, winter swimming, and bicycle and kayak rentals. Rastila Camping is the most popular camping site in Finland.

The history of Suomenlinna is strongly linked to the history of the Baltic Sea Region, and the marks of history are still very visible in the area. Construction of the fortress began in 1748, when Finland was still the eastern part of the kingdom of Sweden. In a war in 1808, the fortress surrendered to the Russians, and a year later Finland became a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire. During the Russian period, Helsinki became the capital city, and Suomenlinna became a large Russian garrison. After Finland’s declaration of independence in 1917, Suomenlinna became a Finnish garrison in 1918.

Surprisingly, the fortress has suffered little damage from wars and political change. Furthermore, because of its continuous use as a garrison, the island maintains much of its original appearance. Today, 250-year-old Suomenlinna is one of the five UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in Finland.

Suomenlinna is one of Finland’s most important tourist sights, with over half a million visitors each year. To Helsinki residents, it is an important recreational area. On summer weekends, especially, the ferries to Suomenlinna are crowded with locals going for a picnic by the sea or for a walk on the eight kilometres of ramparts on the islands.

The colourful history of the fortress has given the islands a characteristic flora, and bird life, too, is varied. Towards the end of summer, swarms of migrant butterflies flying in across the sea can be seen.

Today, Suomenlinna is the home of 800 permanent residents, who enjoy basic amenities such as a shop, a post office, a school and a church on their islands. Ferry services to and from the Kauppatori Market Square operate once or twice an hour all year round. In addition to several museums, the summer theatre and the shops for artisan products, the island has a number of very popular cafés and restaurants, and even a small brewery.

Further information in English and Swedish:
www.suomenlinna.fi & information about Ehrensvärd Society guided tours at www.suomenlinnatours.fi

Contact information
Rastila Camping, Karavaanikatu 4, 00980 Helsinki
tel: +358 9 321 6551, fax: +358 9 344 1578
e-mail: rastilacamping@hel.fi
Reception open: 28th May–28th August 2005: 24 hours, other times 8.00–22.00

For further information in English or Swedish:
www.hel.fi/liv/rastila/rastila.html
With 1.3 million visits in 2004, Linnanmäki Amusement Park is Helsinki’s and Finland’s most popular tourist destination.

Visits to main Helsinki attractions in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linnanmäki Amusement Park</td>
<td>1338000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress</td>
<td>626000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temppeliaukio Church</td>
<td>558000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kortesaaari Zoo</td>
<td>547000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uspenski Cathedral</td>
<td>478000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ateneum, National Gallery</td>
<td>312000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki Cathedral</td>
<td>257000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino RAY</td>
<td>255000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki Festival</td>
<td>246000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Life Helsinki</td>
<td>234000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art</td>
<td>182000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Museum of Finland</td>
<td>115000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of Art and Design</td>
<td>112000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linnanmäki Museum</td>
<td>109000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attractions with over 100,000 visitors

In 2004, the Tourist Information Offices of the City of Helsinki helped some 380,000 visitors. Young “Helsinki Help” guides patrolling in the streets also assist tourists.

Top ten visitor nationalities in Helsinki in terms of overnight stays in 2004

United Kingdom: 102,000
Germany: 98,000
USA: 77,000
Sweden: 66,000
Russia: 58,000
Japan: 38,000
Italy: 32,000
China: 29,000
Netherlands: 29,000
Norway: 20,000

Other countries account for 33.7% of all 1,527,896 overnight stays made by foreigners.

What tourists did during their holiday in southern Finland 2002

- Saw historical sights: 80%
- Enjoyed nature: 75%
- Enjoyed nature: 75%
- Saw real life of people: 65%
- Visited museums: 60%
- Took a boat trip to another Baltic Sea country: 50%
- Took part in a cultural event: 40%
- Sports: 30%

Source: Baltic Palette II (2002): Market analysis II
First IAAF World Championships in Athletics were held in Helsinki

From the outset of the Olympic Games in Athens, in 1896, athletics have been an important part of the event. The first European athletics championships were held in 1934, and soon other continents, too, started to arrange similar events of their own. The IAAF World Championships, however, came along only in 1983, when they were held in Helsinki. These first IAAF World Championships in Athletics were attended by a total of 1,572 athletes from 153 countries. Altogether, 27 nations won medals, with 14 winning gold medals.

The king of these championships was young US sprinter Carl Lewis, who won the 100 metre and long jump events and anchored the US in the 4 x 100 m relay for an overwhelming victory and a new world record of 37.86 seconds. Among other stars of the week were power-pack Czechoslovakian 400- and 800-metre winner Jarmila Kratochvilova, and Mary Decker from the USA, whose strong finish earned her gold in both 1,500 and 3,000 m races.

Steve Cram winning the 1500m in the World Championships in Helsinki 1983.

The women’s team from the GDR, including 18 year old long jumper Heike Daute, were a class of their own and took eight golds. West Germany surprise winner over 800 metres Willi Wülbeck, whose winning time 1 min 43.65 secs still remains the national record of Germany – and of Helsinki’s Olympic Stadium. Among other surprise winners were 19-year-old Soviet pole vaulter Sergei Bubka.

The men’s marathon was won by Australian Rob de Castella with a time of 2 hours 10 mins 03 secs, still the fastest time ever on Finnish soil. In the pioneering women’s marathon, Norway’s Grete Waitz took the gold.

Finland’s Arto Bryggare was awarded a silver medal in the 143 m hurdles event, and Martti Vainio earned a bronze over 8,000 m. Finland’s star moment was when Tiina Liljak gained a gold in the javelin with her winning throw of 70.82 metres.

Helsinki Cup

July in Helsinki sees the Helsinki Cup, an international football tournament for children and adolescents. The event gives young Finnish players an opportunity to gain international experience and meet fellow sports enthusiasts from other parts of the world. A key principle of the Helsinki Cup is to give all players in the team an equal opportunity to play in the game.

The first Helsinki Cup, in 1976, gathered 211 teams from five different countries. During its 30 years of existence, the event has grown steadily, and in 2004, 816 teams from 17 different countries took part. Over the years, teams from 52 different countries altogether have played in the tournament, which has been praised not only for its untiring promotion of football for youngsters, but also for its work against ethnic and racial prejudices.

Helsinki Cup [www.helsinkicup.fi] in English, Swedish, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese
The 1952 Olympic Games were undoubtedly the most important sports event ever held in Finland. Taking place so shortly after the Second World War, these games were of great importance to Finland both culturally and psychologically.

Life was harsh in Helsinki in 1952: sugar and coffee, for example, were rationed, and war indemnities were being paid to the Soviet Union. At the time, Helsinki’s population was 384,521. The first traffic lights in the city were installed in time for the Olympics, and luxuries such as Coca-Cola and chewing gum reached the war-stricken country. The games put Finland on the map of the world for many people, while for Finns it was the first time that many met a foreigner.

A new airport, Helsinki-Vantaa, was inaugurated for the occasion, and so was the new harbour terminal, today still called the Olympic Terminal. Helsinki had originally hoped to host the Olympics in 1940, but the war intervened. Constructed in the 1930s, the Olympic Stadium is still an important venue for major competitions. Many other facilities were also built for the Olympics, such as the Swimming Stadium, the Velodrome, the Rowing Stadium and the Tennis Palace.

The Helsinki Olympics were held during politically uncertain times: the Korean War was at its height and the Cold War at its coldest. Nevertheless, the Helsinki Games brought together competitors from 70 nations, more than any previous games. The Soviet Union participated for the first time, and Germany and Japan took part again, for the first time since the war. Among the participating nations, 43 received medals with 27 winning gold medals. 70,000 foreign spectators came to Helsinki to watch the games.

Among the athletes, Finns still remember Emil Zátopek (1922–2000), one of the greatest runners of the 20th Century. “The Locomotive” or the “Bouncing Czech”, as he came to be known, established his reputation by winning the 5,000 m, the 10,000 m, and the marathon during those 1952 Olympics in Helsinki.

More about the Olympics in Helsinki in English: [www.urheilumuseo.org](http://www.urheilumuseo.org)

![Spectators on their way to the Olympic Stadium in 1952.](image-url)
Special features and characteristics of Helsinki

A small but competitive metropolis

Young and well-educated people live in Helsinki

Public transport moves the city dwellers
Characteristics of the economy in Helsinki, the Helsinki Region and Finland in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Helsinki Region</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average income per income earner (state taxable, 2003), €</td>
<td>26 321</td>
<td>27 454</td>
<td>20 874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of national GNP, 2002, %</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP per capita, when EU25 average is 100 (1998–2002, purchase-power-weighted)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate in 2004 (employed 15–64 year olds / all 15–64 year olds)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate, 2004, %</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men in the labour force, %</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in the labour force, %</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business premises in 2003</td>
<td>35 600</td>
<td>66 500</td>
<td>255 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs in 2003, total</td>
<td>371 000</td>
<td>658 300</td>
<td>2 263 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of all Finnish jobs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sufficiency of jobs, 2003, %</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary production (SIC A-B), %</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing (SIC C-F), %</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (SIC G-Q), %</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trade, transport, business activities (SIC G-K), %</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public services (SIC L-Q), %</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sector (production of goods, services and information content), %</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Helsinki Urban Facts; Statistics Finland

A small but competitive metropolis

The Helsinki Region is Finland’s only metropolis, and by international standards a relatively small one. However, it is home to almost a quarter of Finland’s population and accounts for over one-third of its gross national product and almost one-third of its jobs.

On a European scale, Helsinki has a small population for a capital. Nevertheless, Helsinki is a prosperous and competitive city. In 2004, the European Competitiveness Index listed the Helsinki Region as Europe’s number one in terms of competitiveness and creativity. This is largely the result of continuous investment in re-

Although the bicycling season starts only in April and ends in October, biking is a popular means of getting around and taking exercise in Helsinki. The city authorities provide a system of “city-bikes” in town that anyone can borrow.
Helsinki was founded at the mouth of the Vantaa River.

Helsinki moved to its present location on the southern peninsula.

The construction of the Suomenlinna Fortress started.

Finland became a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire.

Helsinki became the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

University moved to Helsinki from Finland’s previous capital city, Turku.

Regular steamship service started between Helsinki and St. Petersburg.

The fortress of Suomenlinna bombarded by the British and French navies.

Opening of the Helsinki-Hämeenlinna railway line.

Opening of the first public library in Helsinki.

Completion of the National Theatre building.

Finland became an independent state.

Air services to Tallinn and Stockholm started.

Inauguration of the Olympic Stadium.

Helsinki hosts the 15th Olympic Games.

Population of Helsinki exceeded 100,000.

Completion of the National Museum building.

Finland joined the European Union.

Helsinki is one of the European Cities of Culture.

10th IAAF World Championships in Athletics held in Helsinki.


Milestones in the History of Helsinki

Search and development: over 40 per cent of Finnish R&D takes place in the region.

Helsinki is a centre of highly specialized business, and the information sector is especially vibrant. Private service industries account for every second job in the area. Helsinki also plays a major role as a centre of administration and logistics, characterised by a strong higher education sector and a lively cultural life.

Between 1995 and 2002, the Helsinki Region was one of Europe’s fastest growing regions, with double the overall EU average gross value added per capita. Production growth in the Helsinki Region averaged 6.5 per cent during those years. In future, growth is forecast to slow down as in most other major urban regions, nonetheless Helsinki is expected to remain among the fastest growing metropolises in Europe for the coming few years.

Young and well-educated people live in Helsinki

Helsinki has a relatively young age structure. It has a large number of people of working age compared with the numbers of children and elderly people. Today, the 25–29 year olds make up almost 10 per cent of the city’s population, making them the largest age group. As a result, Helsin-
Characteristics of the population of Helsinki, the Helsinki Region and Finland in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population 1.1.2005</th>
<th>Helsinki</th>
<th>Helsinki Region</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>559,046</td>
<td>1,224,257</td>
<td>5,236,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection of population for 2010</td>
<td>572,648</td>
<td>1,301,228</td>
<td>5,309,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of the national population</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (persons per sq km of land)</td>
<td>3006</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy, years (Helsinki 1996–2000; Finland 2004)</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men, %</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, %</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of working age (15–64 year olds), %</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish-speaking, %</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish-speaking, %</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language-speaking, %</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign nationals, %</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families among households, 2004, %</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with children among families, (children under 18), %</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-person households, %</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their percentage among population</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–44)</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic dependency rate 2004 (&lt;15 and &gt;64 year olds / 15–64 year olds)</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>0.499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finland is a bilingual country, with Finnish and Swedish as official languages.

Finnish-speaking, % 86.7 88.0 91.9
Swedish-speaking, % 6.2 6.5 5.5
Foreign language-speaking, % 7.1 5.5 2.5
Foreign nationals, % 5.2 4.1 2.1
Families among households, 2004, % 48 57 60
Families with children among families, (children under 18), % 40 45 42
One-person households, % 49 41 39
their percentage among population 25 19 18
Fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–44) 47.4 57.3 58.1
Demographic dependency rate 2004 (<15 and >64 year olds / 15–64 year olds) 0.394 0.473 0.499

Public transport moves the city dwellers

70 per cent of the city’s residents commute to work by public transport to the city centre, and of all trips made in motor vehicles in inner Helsinki, 60 per cent are made on public transport. Commuter trains, the metro and trams together account for over 50% of the transport system, which is very good for the environment and air quality in the city. Estimates suggest the production of electricity for rail transport accounts for just two or three

Gross value added growth and projected growth in selected European metropolises (% per annum)

International passenger traffic in Helsinki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passengers year 2004</th>
<th>Million</th>
<th>Source: Helsinki City Urban Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Via Helsinki–Vantaa Airport</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>of which 73% international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Port of Helsinki</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>98% to/from Sweden or Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via Helsinki Main Railway Station (2003)</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>of which 85% on commuter trains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of people having a higher education in selected European capitals in 2001

(Qualified at levels 5-6 ISCED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average EU-15</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of inhabitants satisfied with public transport in their city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of 31 cities</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trips made in Inner Helsinki, by means of transport in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Transport</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On public transport</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On foot, by bicycle or moped</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By car</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other means of transport</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per cent of total emissions into the air from transport and traffic in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Besides transport over land, Helsinki residents also have good sea transport services. The ferry to the Suomenlinna fortress islands operates all year round, and in summer, there are 15 scheduled waterbus services daily. International ferries depart daily all year around to the Estonian capital of Tallinn and to the Swedish capital of Stockholm. And in summer, there are also regular services to St. Petersburg, Rostock and Visby.

Road traffic in Helsinki is relatively safe: in a comparison between 170 European cities in 2001, Helsinki had the third least number of people seriously injured or killed in road traffic.
Further information sources on the internet

In English and Swedish if not otherwise stated

- City of Helsinki: [www.hel.fi](http://www.hel.fi) (In English, Swedish, German, French and Russian)
- City of Helsinki Urban Facts provides statistics and information about Helsinki: [www.hel.fi/tietokeskus](http://www.hel.fi/tietokeskus)
- Guide Map of Helsinki and the Metropolitan area: [kartta.hel.fi](http://kartta.hel.fi)
- Journey Planner gives public transport routes and timetables for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area: [www.reittiopas.fi](http://www.reittiopas.fi)
- Statistics Finland is the central statistical office in Finland: [www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi)
- Virtual Finland provides comprehensive information about Finland: [virtual.finland.fi](http://virtual.finland.fi) (English, French, Germany, Spain, Russian)

Sources

- City of Helsinki Public Works Department, [www.hkr.hel.fi](http://www.hkr.hel.fi).
- City of Helsinki Sports Department, [www.hel.fi/liv](http://www.hel.fi/liv).
- City of Helsinki Tourist and Convention Bureau, [www.hel.fi/tourism](http://www.hel.fi/tourism).
- Finnish Meteorological Institute, [www.fmi.fi](http://www.fmi.fi).
- Helsinki City Planning Department, [www.hel.fi/ksv](http://www.hel.fi/ksv).
- Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council, YTV, [www.ytv.fi](http://www.ytv.fi).
- National Sport Databank in Finland, [www.sport.jyu.fi](http://www.sport.jyu.fi).
Nature, Recreation and Sport in Helsinki