



# HELSINKI

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## Food Capital Helsinki

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***The New Nordic Cuisine emerges in the Finnish capital with design-flavoured themes.***

Pure, clean, local, creative and playful are epithets that describe the Helsinki food scene today.

The city's gourmet restaurants are rooted in the Nordic traditions and classic gastronomy, applying seasonal products from wild Finnish nature and from specialised small producers. A local foods movement is evident in a quest for Finnish roots to find the purest and best ingredients. A dynamic grassroots foods movement has produced happenings where anyone can become a gourmet chef and restaurateur for a day, and citizen-cultivated gardens produce local foods in the city centre.

As a result, Helsinki is a new captivating destination for international gourmets, where foodies with a taste for the original find rewarding experiences.

The staples of Finnish cuisine are the produce of the country's vast forests, thousands of lakes and local farms. Fish, berries, mushrooms, wild herbs, reindeer and game come from Finnish nature; meat, roots and vegetables are produced by local farms, many of them organic. The selections of breads from dark and hard-crusted rye bread to other traditional Finnish breads made from a variety of grains are some of the most diverse in the world.

***A Cuban style pop-up restaurant in Helsinki on Restaurant Day 19 May 2012***

The Finnish cultivated berries, including the seasonal strawberries, are famous for their exquisite taste. Local wineries produce wines and fine liqueurs from Finnish berries. Dishes and food preservation and preparation methods reflect east and west.

Helsinki, the World Design Capital of 2012, adds a design-angle to the city's culinary scene. In one of the Design Capital's major programmes, food and design meet in a rough former abattoir, whose buildings are being turned into an urban concentration of restaurants and other food enterprises, while preserving the meat-cutting identity.

The revitalisation and new uses of the Abattoir are part of Helsinki's commitment to build food into one of the cornerstones of the city's identity and attractions, adding to the city's role as the centre of Finnish food and first-class gastronomy.

**World Design Capital Helsinki 2012** highlights the possibilities of design to shape cities and societies. The year's programme consists of more than 300 programme items, which look at ways to improve life with processes inherent in design. [www.wdchelsinki2012.fi](http://www.wdchelsinki2012.fi)

## At the roots of the best Finnish food

In the heart of Helsinki a wood-burning oven bakes the original Finnish rye bread, and a smoke oven prepares fish and meat. On offer are both local and organic foods from small Finnish producers cultivated with respect to nature and produced from pure raw materials, honouring the best of Finnish traditions.

The Eat&Joy Kluuvi Market Hall, together with its sister outlets the downtown Farmer's Market and shops at the Helsinki international airport, offers delicacies from more than 500 small producers from across Finland, including wild reindeer, salmon, artisan cheeses, berry jams, fish roe, hand-crafted beer and cider, mushrooms, breads, smoked specialities, artisan chocolates and seasonal fresh produce.

The stalls carry additive-free, hand-made sausages from about a dozen makers. Grains cultivated from original Finnish varieties are ground on the premises in the mill room. Beef and non-pasteurised, non-homogenised milk come from kyyttö forest cows (the original breed of Finnish livestock). Cultured and fermented foods add to the selection of healthy foods.

## Helsinki Menu offers a culinary tour of the city

Helsinki restaurants honour Helsinki's bicentennial as the capital of Finland in 2012 with special Helsinki Menus that reflect the city's past and present.

The brewery restaurant Suomenlinnan Panimo in the fortress islands of Suomenlinna echoes the history of the fortress, much influenced by the Russian era that began in 1809. The restaurant's *Seafront Barracks 1870* Helsinki Menu opens with *zakuski*, Russian hors d'oeuvres featuring miniature blinis and local seafood items.

Helsinki Menu is a voluntary initiative by Helsinki chefs since the year 2000. The chefs are free to create a culinary image of their city and its culture. Close to 20 Helsinki restaurants annually offer a Helsinki Menu, many of them seasonally.

Sami Piskonen / Helsinki Menu



*The first course of the Helsinki Menu at Suomenlinnan Panimo*

## On the gastronomical map of the world

"Our cuisine is intended to surprise and offer experiences not found at most other restaurants," declares Restaurant Chez Dominique of Helsinki, which has held two Michelin stars since 2003. The flavours originate from the Nordic and French cuisines. One menu to invoke impressions of Finland started with marinated Baltic herring with rossini caviar, followed by Finnish organic vegetables; milk-fed reindeer, ceps and tastes of the Finnish forest; and Finnish wild berries pavlova.

Four other Helsinki restaurants have earned Michelin stars. Demo prides itself in hand-crafted foods. Uomo focuses on local foods, small producers, exoticism, world tastes and wild nature, featuring on its August menu lobster and rose; foie "Burger"; confit salmon "Thai"; and cep chocolate. Olo declares its most important spice to be first-class raw materials. Postres surprises with imagination. Design is a key part of the dining experience.

Many other Helsinki restaurants offer unique dining experiences. For example, Juuri serves traditional Finnish dishes in tapas form. A21 Dining matches a Nordic tasting menu with complementary miniature cocktails. Gourmet foods can be found in surprising locations: the Linnanmäki amusement park features a complex of restaurants, Kattila, which represents four of Helsinki restaurants' Michelin stars.

## A day as a restaurateur



*Nippon BBQ vs Pita Pockets on Restaurant Day 19 August 2012*

Restaurant Day is a food carnival where anyone can open a pop-up restaurant, bar or café for a day. Ideas for restaurants are as diverse as their executors. The ideas can involve coffee and cakes at the docks, treats from the trunk of a van, or a six-course dinner in one's living room. Personality and fun are crucial. In summer, popular spots have included parks, courtyards and street corners. In winter, restaurants have been set up in homes, offices and other indoor spaces.

Restaurant Day carnivals have been organised in Helsinki and elsewhere in Finland four times a year since May 2011. Their popularity has increased rapidly. The 6<sup>th</sup> Restaurant Day on 19 August 2012 attracted nearly 700 pop-up restaurants in Finland, most of them in Helsinki.

The Restaurant Day was initiated in Helsinki but the concept has spread to other parts of the world including a large number of European countries, the USA, Canada and Japan.

[www.restaurantday.org](http://www.restaurantday.org)







Finnish berries and berry liqueur

J.P. Laakio / Taste of Finland

## Gardening inside the city

The Abattoir's central courtyard abounds with gardening bags and boxes, most of them placed on green islands lined by parking spaces and many on the parking spaces themselves. The city gardens are a living reminder of the Abattoir's new and developing culinary role in Helsinki. Some bags and boxes are cultivated by the local Helsinki Wholesale Market businesses, but most of them belong to Dodo, an urban environmental association active in city gardening, which allots the bags and boxes to citizens.

More Dodo city gardens can be found in undeveloped, waterfront sites of Kalasatama. Many of the gardens occupy unconventional places in Helsinki. Some of them enliven an abandoned railway turntable yard, which awaits re-development as part of the new Pasila commercial and housing complex. City gardening is spreading into suburbs with the help of support from the local communities and guidance from Dodo. The trendy Suvilahti cultural centre adjacent to Kalasatama will be home to Dodo fruit trees and berry bushes.



Tero Rajakallio / City of Helsinki

Dodo's city garden in Kalasatama, Helsinki



Erno Launis / Abattoir

A picnic at the Abattoir

## Abattoir turned into a culinary oasis

A former meat processing hall named Kellohalli ("bell hall") is now a new centre of urban culture and cuisine. Kellohalli, preserving the unrefined look, is a venue for pop-up and short-term restaurants, food festivals and other food-related events including workshops and culinary schools. The Kellohalli events in the autumn of 2012 are part of the food and design programme of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012.

Kellohalli is located in the core of the former Abattoir adjacent to the Helsinki Wholesale Market at the edge of the Kalasatama district of Helsinki. The Abattoir consists of a series of red-brick industrial buildings, which form the centre of a city-supported programme to turn the site into a concentration of culinary culture in Helsinki. The buildings, grouped around a central courtyard, will house restaurants and various food-related businesses from production to retail.

A meat cutting and packing business, still in operation at the site, will provide the best cuts for the restaurants, and the wholesale operations will provide other foods direct from producers. The gate building is the new home of a traditional Helsinki meat retail business and an adjoining bistro.

The Abattoir re-development is part of the far larger development of Kalasatama from former freight-harbour and industrial uses for 8,000 jobs and housing for 20,000 residents. The Abattoir will build food into one of the cornerstones of Kalasatama's identity.

## Helsinki's food culture strategy

Helsinki has defined a food culture strategy. The main points are:

- Organic foods for children: 50% of the foods at city-run day-care centres should be organic by 2015. Day-care centres and schools should support organic foods in their curricula.
- Development of the Helsinki Wholesale Market area into a centre of good food. Development of the existing indoor and outdoor markets. Development of new local foods markets.
- Food as part of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012.
- Cultivation of food in the urban environment. Composting and recycling of the resulting bio waste.



Mikael Kaplar / Studio Point

*Cruise ships at the Port of Helsinki*

## Environmental impact of cruise ships contained

The Baltic Sea is the third most popular cruise destination in the world after the Caribbean and Mediterranean seas. Helsinki is an increasingly popular port destination, and ship calls are expected to come close to 300 in 2012, bringing to Helsinki up to 400,000 international cruise passengers.

To reduce the environmental impact of the Baltic cruise business, the Port of Helsinki accepts the ships' wastewater and conducts it into the city wastewater treatment system free of charge; according to international regulations, ships can discharge wastewater untreated into the sea in international waters.

The acceptance of wastewater from cruise ships is part of the Baltic Sea Challenge, a campaign declared by the cities of Helsinki and Turku to protect the Baltic Sea through voluntary actions and by challenging other players to join the campaign.

International cruise companies which are members of the European Cruise Council now discharge wastewater ashore at Baltic ports where adequate port facilities are available.  
[www.balticseachallenge.net](http://www.balticseachallenge.net)

## Helsinki developed with citizen feedback

Helsinki invites citizens to brainstorm on the future of Helsinki and how the city should be developed. An online think tank, *Influence Helsinki*, was open for residents to post their ideas and comment on others' ideas for three weeks in early summer 2012. Visitors, people from other communities and businesses were also invited to contribute. The think tank received close to 1,500 entries.

Helsinki Mayor **Jussi Pajunen** comments, "The think tank supports the work of Helsinki decision makers. The views and ideas will be used in the planning of City services."

A new Helsinki City Council will be elected in the municipal elections held nationwide in Finland on 28 October 2012.

## Baltic Sea nations step up preparedness for oil spill disasters

The Gulf of Finland of the Baltic Sea is one of the busiest coastal regions of the world, on a par with the English Channel and Singapore. A great many of the vessels passing through the Gulf of Finland are oil tankers serving an increasing number of oil terminals on the gulf. Oil shipments from these terminals are estimated to amount to 200 million tonnes (about 1.4 billion barrels) in 2012 and increase to nearly 250 million tonnes (1.8 billion barrels) by 2015, signifying a 10-fold increase over two decades. As a result, the probability of an oil disaster at sea has increased significantly.

To prepare for a potential oil spill, the Baltic Sea nations organise an annual operational marine response exercise, Balex Delta, in compliance with the decisions of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM). Finland was the lead country to organise and conduct the 2012 exercise, held in the Gulf of Finland off the coast of Helsinki at the end of August simulating a large-scale tanker accident.

The 2012 Balex Delta was larger than ever before, involving over 20 oil-spill response vessels and 50 other vessels, and some 500 people from Finland, the other Baltic Sea nations and the European Union. The City of Helsinki rescue services participated in the exercise on a broad scale.



Helsinki City Rescue Department

*An oil spill exercise in Helsinki*

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