



Helsinki

# Marketing and sales materials

## Helsinki – the world's most sustainable travel destination

Helsinki has been listed as the world's most sustainable travel destination by two internationally recognised bodies.

Reaching the top is not easy: it has required hard work and long-term efforts by a wide range of organisations in Helsinki. Now is the time to celebrate Helsinki's great achievements and spread the word about sustainable tourism through different channels.

This document is designed to be used in businesses' sales and marketing processes. Businesses can use the ready-made key messages to share information about the sustainability performance of the tourism industry in Helsinki in a consistent and agile manner on different platforms. The purpose of the content is to arouse consumers' interest in sustainable tourism and create a credible image of Helsinki as a trendsetter for sustainable tourism.

**When your organisation says that it is part of a network in the city that is the world's most sustainable tourism destination, you benefit from Helsinki's international visibility and its appeal as a pioneer in sustainable tourism. The world's most sustainable tourist destination is not just a title – it gives you a competitive edge.**

Helsinki

## Demonstrably the most sustainable city in the world

In 2024 and 2025, Helsinki topped the GDS-Index ranking, which measures the sustainability of travel destinations, and in 2025, Helsinki was the world's first big city to receive the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. Helsinki was awarded Visit Finland's Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label in 2026.

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS) standards are among the most reliable criteria for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations and are used to evaluate the sustainability and responsibility performance of different destinations across the world. To evaluate the sustainability of 100 destinations, the index uses 77 indicators across four key areas: environmental sustainability, social sustainability, supplier sustainability, and tourism destination management and planning.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standards allow destinations and businesses to measure and develop their sustainability performance in tourism operations. The criteria include more than 280 questions covering all aspects of sustainability, including environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability as well as sustainable governance. The GSTC is the world's strictest set of criteria for assessing the sustainability of travel destinations.

The Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label is a recognition awarded by Visit Finland that requires either GSTC certification or that at least 51 percent of the region's tourism businesses have completed the STF program. Helsinki meets both criteria. The program's seven-step path offers businesses and destinations a comprehensive toolkit for adopting responsible practices. It is a program open to all operators in the Finnish tourism industry and free of charge, which adheres to international sustainable tourism standards, such as the criteria of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The program is regularly audited by a third party.

Achieving the sustainability goals set out in the Helsinki City Strategy in 2021 has required determined cooperation between various stakeholders in the city, as well as a strong commitment to the wellbeing of the environment, people and local businesses. The achievements prove that, in Helsinki, sustainability is not just a green claim used for marketing purposes but part of the structure and everyday life of the city.



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### Short key messages

Main headlines, social media graphics, hero text for websites and newsletters, and elevator pitches

- 1. Helsinki: the world's most sustainable travel destination – Fact!**
- 2. Helsinki – a trendsetter in sustainable tourism**
- 3. Helsinki is a sustainability leader**
- 4. Helsinki wins a gold medal in sustainability**
- 5. In Helsinki, sustainable tourism is not a promise – it's reality**



### Medium-length content

Newsletters, websites, social media posts, captions, sales brochures and flyers

#### 1. Helsinki is demonstrably the world's most sustainable travel destination

In 2024 and 2025, Helsinki was ranked first among more than 100 travel destinations in the GDS-Index, which measures the sustainability of tourism. In 2025, Helsinki was the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. In 2026, Helsinki was awarded Visit Finland's national Sustainable Travel Finland label.

We are proud to be part of the development of sustainable tourism.

#### 2. We are part of sustainable tourism in Helsinki

Helsinki's long-term development efforts on sustainable tourism were rewarded in 2024 and 2025 with the top score in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS). The index assesses the sustainability of 100 destinations according to 77 indicators that cover aspects such as environmental and social sustainability.

There is cause for celebration this year too: Helsinki was the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which defines the world's strictest set of standards for measuring the sustainability of travel destinations, uses more than 280 criteria to evaluate operations from the perspectives of environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability and sustainable governance.

Our company has been awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland label and signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

In Helsinki, sustainable tourism is not a promise – it's reality.

## Medium-length content

Newsletters, websites, social media posts, captions, sales brochures and flyers

### 3. Proud and sustainable from Helsinki (local retailer)

Helsinki has received the recognition it deserves as the world's most sustainable travel destination, taking top spot in the GDS-Index ranking in 2024 and 2025. In 2025, Helsinki was the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. The year 2026 brought a new achievement: Visit Finland's national Sustainable Tourism Finland (STF) label.

Best of all, we are part of this development. Let's celebrate!

### 4. Enjoy the best food that sustainable Helsinki has to offer (restaurant)

In 2024 and 2025, Helsinki placed number one – among more than a hundred cities – in the international GDS-Index ranking, which evaluates the sustainability of travel destinations. In 2025, Helsinki was the first big city in the world to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certificate. In 2026, Helsinki continued its success by earning the national Sustainable Travel Finland label.

We contribute to the development of sustainable tourism through everyday choices that support the environment, community and local cuisine.

### 5. Hop on and enjoy sustainable travel (travel)

In 2024 and 2025, Helsinki placed number one in the world in the GDS-Index ranking, which evaluates the sustainability of travel destinations across the globe, and we are proud to have played a part in this achievement. In 2025, Helsinki also became the first big city to be granted the Green Destinations GSTC certification, which has the strictest criteria of any certification system in the world. The year 2026 brought a new achievement: Visit Finland's national Sustainable Tourism Finland (STF) label.

In Helsinki, we have worked towards more sustainable tourism for a long time, and now it is time to celebrate our incredible achievements.

### 6. Sustainable accommodation (hotels)

Don't just stay in Helsinki, stay in the most sustainable city in the world!

In 2024 and 2025, Helsinki topped the GDS-Index ranking, which evaluates the sustainability of travel destinations, and in 2025, it became the first big city to be granted the international Green Destinations GSTC certificate. These achievements can only be reached through long-term cooperation, and we are proud to have been a part of it. In order to continue its important work on sustainability, Helsinki received the national Sustainable Travel Finland label in 2026.

We have been awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland label and we are committed to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. When you choose to stay with us, you choose sustainable city culture.

## Long texts

Articles, blogs

### 1. Helsinki is officially the world's most sustainable travel destination

Helsinki has reached three significant milestones in sustainable tourism, ranking number one in the world in the international GDS-Index in 2024 and 2025 while becoming the first big city in the world to receive the Green Destinations GSTC certificate in 2025. The year 2026 brought a new achievement as Helsinki received Visit Finland's national Sustainable Tourism Finland (STF) label.

#### Reaching the top of the GDS-Index ranking requires hard work

Thanks to the City of Helsinki's Tourism and Destination Management Unit and various organisations and businesses in the city, Helsinki has gained the visibility it deserves for its sustainability efforts.

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS) compares the sustainability performance of more than 100 travel destinations using 77 indicators in four categories: environment, social sustainability, economy and destination management. Answering the sustainability performance questions requires extensive and carefully coordinated collaboration between various units in the city administration and businesses in Helsinki.

Helsinki scored top points (92.43), particularly in environmental performance, support for local businesses and long-term destination management.

#### Helsinki is a trendsetter in sustainable tourism

In 2025, Helsinki was awarded the Green Destinations GSTC certificate, an indication that the city is developing sustainability performance in a holistic, persistent and transparent manner.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standards are a set of criteria that include more than 280 items covering all aspects of sustainability from the perspectives of environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability as well as sustainable governance.

Achieving the certification requires full compliance with the criteria.

The holder of the first Green Destinations GSTC certificate in the world for a big city is leading the way for other cities over 500 000 inhabitants. Hats off to Helsinki.

#### Helsinki is part of Finland's sustainable tourism network

Helsinki was awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label by Visit Finland in 2026. This recognition is the result of long-term efforts. Helsinki has been a pilot destination in the STF program since 2018.

The STF label requires either GSTC certification or that at least 51 percent of the destination's tourism businesses have completed the STF program's seven-step path. The program offers concrete digital tools for adopting sustainable practices and adheres to international GSTC standards. A third party audits the program regularly. Special thanks, therefore, go to Helsinki's tourism businesses, whose active participation made the label possible.

The STF label complements Helsinki's range of sustainability certifications and strengthens the city's position as the world's most sustainable travel destination.

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## Material bank

Logo, images, certificates, brand facts

Helsinki's media bank offers a comprehensive selection of materials to support marketing. In addition to images and videos, the link includes press and publication materials, Helsinki's brand and marketing guidelines

<https://materialbank.myhelsinki.fi/>

Logos related to the topic can be found here.

