

You represent Helsinki, a city that is aiming to become the world's most sustainable travel destination



Learn at least this content:

In customer service situations, you may get asked how sustainable tourism is in Helsinki and what sustainable options there are, which is why it is good to learn this material properly. You can influence customers to make responsible and sustainable choices during their visit.

Sustainable development – what it means

Sustainable development is continuous directed social change at global, regional and local levels, the aim of which is to ensure good living conditions for present and future generations so that the carrying capacity of nature is not exceeded.

In practice, this means that we take all aspects of sustainability (ecological, financial, social, cultural, ethical) into account in our daily life and work and make sustainable choices by, for example, supporting local business and products, switching to renewable energy, sorting our waste and enabling accessible services.

Make an effort in your workplace

Helsinki is committed to the [Sustainable Travel Finland](#) (STF) programme (not a certificate) managed by Visit Finland. In order for Helsinki to prove its sustainability, the companies operating here must be sustainable.

How is sustainability verified at your company, what measures have you taken, what will you do next

Does the company have a sustainability certificate and if so, which one

Does the company have an STF label or is it on the way there Who is the person responsible

Is the company in the Think Sustainably service



Helsinki

Recommend and encourage, visitors can make an impact

Recommend to visitors:

- [Companies](#) that have been awarded the STF label
- [Companies](#) in the Think Sustainably programme
- Favour sustainable companies, services and products (be active and find companies that are profiled as sustainable, such as vegan restaurants, restaurants that use wastage, restaurants that offer local and organic food, handicraft shops, flea markets)
- For experiencing local life and meeting local people: Market halls and market squares, cafés, Oodi and other libraries, public saunas
- For exploring areas outside the city centre, nature and maritime Helsinki: Munkkiniemi, Lauttasaari, Lammassaari, Haltia, Uutela, Vallisaari

Instruct visitors on how they can have an impact:

- Provide information on what responsible choices can be made in your company
- Exploring Helsinki on foot, by bicycle or by public transport (a compact, safe city)
- Drinking clean tap water
- Favouring STF-labelled or Think Sustainably companies
- Favouring local services (e.g. guided walking tours subject to a fee)
- Sorting waste, taking bottles and cans to recycling machines that can be found in every shop (tell the visitors about the Finnish system for recycling bottles and cans)



Helsinki – a sustainable tourist destination

- The City of Helsinki aims to be most sustainable tourist destination in the world by 2026. Read more: [Helsinki tourism operators](#) and [Tourism sustainability in Helsinki](#).
- Helsinki is committed to the [Glasgow Declaration for the international tourism industry](#), according to which emissions from tourism will be halved by 2030 and carbon neutrality will be achieved by 2050.
- The sustainability of tourism is measured using the Global Destination Sustainability Index ([GDS](#)). In 2023, Helsinki ranked 4th out of more than a hundred other destinations. The top 3 cities were Gothenburg, Oslo and Copenhagen.
- Helsinki aims to obtain the [Green Destination](#) certificate in 2024 and the [Sustainable Travel Finland](#) label by 2025.
- Helsinki promotes social and ethical responsibility: Helsinki ranked 2nd in the European Commission's "[Access City](#)" competition in 2022 and 3rd in the Commission's [European Capitals of inclusion and diversity](#) 2023 competition.
- Inclusive tourism has been an area of development in recent years, [Inclusive Tourism Study and Action Plan 2023](#).
- Helsinki [actively monitors](#) its residents' views in relation to tourism and reacts if, for example, excessive tourism affects opinions negatively.
- Helsinki won the [European Capital of Smart Tourism Award 2019](#) awarded by the European Commission.
- Tourism in Helsinki employs many young people, immigrants and unemployed people.

Useful information: Sustainable Finland & Helsinki

Finland and sustainable development

- Finland is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of [Agenda2030](#), as are all 193 other United Nations (UN) Member States.
- Finland rose to number one in the country comparison of sustainable development (Agenda2030) in 2021. [Finland's ranking](#).
- Finland's biggest challenges relate to combatting climate change, making consumption and production methods more sustainable, and stopping the loss of biodiversity.
- [Finland is striving to become carbon neutral](#) by 2035, the EU by 2050.
- Visit Finland has set for [tourism in Finland the goal](#) of being the Nordic country with the most sustainably growing tourism and Finland ranking among the most sustainable destination countries.
- The seven-step programme verifying responsible tourism in Finland is [Sustainable Travel Finland](#), controlled by Visit Finland. Similar national programmes exist in Norway, Slovenia and Switzerland.
- Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for six consecutive years (2023) in the World Happiness Report that measures six key factors for happiness: social support, income, health, freedom, generosity and absence of corruption. [World Happiness Report](#).



Helsinki and sustainable development

- **Strengths:** high-quality and equal learning opportunities, cultural and leisure services, good healthcare, well-functioning infrastructure and clean nature.
- **Challenges:** reconciling urban growth with climate change mitigation and adaptation, circular economy and biodiversity protection. [Helsinki sustainable development](#).
- Helsinki is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of [Agenda2030](#) and the city is ranked 3rd in the European Cities SDG Index.
- Helsinki aims to be **carbon neutral by 2030**. The most significant emissions are caused by: Heating, traffic and electricity. [Helsinki's climate goals](#).
- The goal is to stop using coal altogether by 2029.
- Coal-fired plants will be replaced by, for example, electric boilers, heat pump and cooling plants and bioenergy heating plants. Electricity will also be produced with solar power.
- Helsinki Airport is carbon neutral. The Helsinki Airport solar power plant is now the largest airport power plant in the Nordic countries. [Finavia](#).
- The Port of Helsinki is aiming for carbon neutrality in its own operations [by 2025](#).
- According to [a comparison of modes of transport](#) carried out between Finnish cities, Helsinki has the most actively used public transport and the lowest percentage travelling by car. Walking has increased in almost all cities, including Helsinki.
- An example of new construction technology and how social responsibility and communality are taken into account: [The Airut city block in Jätkäsaari](#).
- Recycling has been made possible for city residents, and [recycling centres](#) have shops where people can purchase “upcycled” products (13 shops + an online shop). Helsinki Airport also has a shop selling recycled products.

