FINLAND
Insider tips from the land of the midnight sun

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About Me and Finlandinsider

Suomi-Finland...What is that?

Suomi means ‘Finland’ in ‘Finnish.’ My name is Jefferson. Yes, you heard right, like Thomas Jefferson (the third President of the United States). I am an expat living in a tiny country village in Vesilahti, Finland.

I think I have it real good. Why?

Everything is so clean around me. Country air, E.L.N.L. (Extreme Low Noise Level), and according to annual surveys by the Berlin-based organization Transparency International, Finland is top-ranked among least corrupt countries in the world. Having traveled to over 20 countries prior to moving to Finland, and having worked in the United States; I still think the Northern climate with it’s definite four seasons makes Finland a unique traveling pleasure.

Determined to live in Finland and raise our children here. My dream has come true.

Our family -Left to right:
Me, Tomi, Aura and Rosa(covering her eyes)

Enter Reality!

For me, as a foreigner, I have significant obstacles to overcome. Language, culture, and, hey...like any average person, I need a livelihood. Overcoming these is what I will tell you about in the following story.

After selling our small row-house, I purchased an empty lot and decided together with Aura to build a house like our Finnish neighbors!

Every family needs a home, so, might as well build a house (With help of the bank). All our neighbors are either school teachers or builders by profession. A joke of course! Aura is a school teacher. She teaches kindergarten through 5th grades at a local school here in Vesilahti.

Our triple store house in 2009

Many Finns try to build their own house in Finland as much as possible without hiring professional services like a bricklayer or carpenter/builder. This is a DIY country. The reason is simple. Labor costs for professionals in Finland are high. With the help of friends, supportive relatives, and a local retired carpenter, we built the foundation for our house. !!Phew!! The top half (Where the grey blocks end) is a ready-built or pre-fab part. Our bottom floor is an apartment. The upstairs/attic was left hollow -to be built later as you’ll see next.

Our upstairs/attic is complete end of 2012

Life is great...! And it only gets...!
...We'll Everything Did Not Go As Planned!

Back in 2004, I was politely terminated from my 9-5 job as an Test Engineer in a large electronics firm. With a B.S. in Engineering, and years of previous work experience in that field. Then... it came to my mind... "Jeff... Do you want to trust in that 9 to 5 job for the rest of your life? To work day-in-and-out for the boss, while the bosses boss chooses his own work hours. Plus, who wants to keep all their 'Eggs in one "Job Basket"?"

Being the determined person that I am, I looked for "on-line" opportunities. Some on-line businesses looked appealing, so I joined this and that. Pretty soon, I had the credit card limit at maximum. Ouch! Made hundreds, even thousands of "virtual" dollars, and then...sadly...lost all my money in the end. However... most of us learn through experience. Experience is our most powerful teacher.

My brain was learning the whole time during (it seemed like) endless searching for that right "on-line" or "work-from-home" business opportunity. So it was back to school for me...educating my way toward a different future. Then I found an e-book which inspired me to "Do what I love" while getting paid.

To Think It Is Possible?

The e-book guided me in writing web-pages that work. It was an easy read. The book inspired me to start with 'Myself' so-to-speak, and helped me realize that I have valuable information which others can benefit from. After the read, I decided to start an 'off-line' business in the yard/landscape service sector, and offer to grind out tree-stumps with a small stump grinder.

Ok, this was my first attempt in getting away from the 9 to 5 rut. I thought: "I'll do something I love, like working outdoors among trees. That would be fun! Plus, I get to travel around and see Finland." Yes, I love that combination. So it never feels like a job.

Dawning of Success

Getting ready-to-buy customers to my jepp.fi web-site was not instant. Creating web-pages with quality information took time. In my case, it took five weeks, or 20 pages. The end result: Traffic to my pages, plus, I did not have to chase after people trying to get-a-sale, People contacted me for work. Ahh, isn't that what we all would like in our small businesses. And, best of all, I did not pay for expensive yellow-page adds. The 20 or so pages that I originally wrote in 2004 still score very well with the search engines in 2012. Hey, this is working! Life is great, I am getting online orders, making money, and off to work I go! "This is easy", I thought... Life can only get better...until...

...Another setback follows!

In 2006, while working my yard service business, I had an accident. After a long day of hard strenuous work, the last tree was to be felled. It was only a small tree, but requiring a special cut to fell it properly. Saw Saw,,crackkkk Uh Oh!--The tree went the wrong way and hit a high power line. Like in 007, explosions and fire! Wow, what a scene!

I was standing under the tree at the time. Personally, I suffered no immediate injuries, but my eyes took a beating and the "strain-of-the-moment" encouraged the onsetting of a disease called Retinoschisis affecting the nerve tissue in the eye. Hoping that I will not go blind...depression sets in. :-(

At the doctor's office

"Am I going blind", I asked the doctor? Doctors in Finland are quite educated, and right up-to-par with current medical technology. I got a simple answer from him. Here are the Doc's words of wisdom: "Just keep on doing what you like." -In other words...Just go back to work. The Doctor also did mention to stay away from lifting heavy objects. So, it is time to re-think my future, and think up of an occupation where I am lifting less heavier objects like chainsaws and logs.
I thought: "What would I do if it were my last day to live on earth? "What would my activity look like? Answer: Something I really like doing -- while spending time with my family. If I start doing my yard business part-time, what am I going to do with the rest of my time?

About finlandinsider.com?

With Finlandinsider I would like to show what Finland looks like from the inside. Finland is to those 'living outside' of the country perhaps cold, mysterious, unknown... for those living 'Inside Finland' an idea of what to try...like the best pizza in Vesilahti...and I really mean that... or how get the best sauna experience while going to Tampere's 'Rauhaniemi' sauna. This "Doing the Sauna thing" the Expert Way, takes work, but sooo worth it! Plus, you get a fantastic feeling at the end of the sauna routine.

What Food in Finland would you try?

What food would You try. Yes, we have McDonalds in Finland. The most healthy fast- food in Finland comes in between dark Finnish rye bread. Fast food at Hesburgers'. -the Finnish version of McDonalds. There is even a Pizza Hut. You can find all kinds of food in Finland. Hundreds of varieties of breads, 10 varieties of milks.

A plethora of potatoes. Fruits and vegetables from all over the world are also available. If you happen to be stopping through Helsinki to catch a ferry to Sweden or Estonia be sure to give yourself an extra hour to try some fresh fruits and vegetables, or sip freshly roasted coffee at the market hall.

Lettuce, red beets, smoked salmon with potato sauce, carrots, and Karelian pie. June is the time to get ready for healthy wild food in Finland straight from mother earth. The warm summer sun springs green shoots from the ground. Here is how to identify and pick wild foods.

These very reasonably priced foods are found in abundance in Finland and eaten frequently.

- Potatoes -- a popular food
- Karelian Pie -- a small bread made of potato dough originally from Karelia in Eastern Finland.
- Breads -- Rye bread is very popular, along with a variety of whole wheat, oat, and barley combinations. Crisp cracker bread like Finn Crisps is also popular.
- Hot dogs -- there's pork, beef and even deer available for all occasions

Typical Sweet Yummy Tasty Summer Delight

The Finnish strawberry season begins in July. Decorating the center of the slightly moist and flaky pastry are luscious strawberries. The taste -- not too buttery, oily, nor too sweet, simply savory! Strawberries on top of thickened vanilla sauce tips the balance scale to a less overpowering sweet side. Take a look at a simple Finnish dessert you can eat fresh strawberries or raspberries with.
The ‘Strawberry Danish pastry’ everyone says ‘Yes’ to.

A Raspberry Danish Vadelmaviineri found locally

Similar to the strawberry Danish except...the center is filled with raspberries instead of strawberries. Yep, the bakeries produce these year round.

Fresh Food in Finland from the Bottom of a Lake

How to make Finnish lake crayfish palatable? (This one is actually ready to be eaten.)

First you have to catch the crayfish, so look for the cleanest lake in the area. Get the pot of water boiling to a real good boil.

Clasp the living crayfish using tongs or your fingers use caution please. Place the crayfish swiftly into the boiling water.

Test the color of the boiling crayfish to see if it has turned red. Once it is completely red it is ready!

Typical Finnish Foods Fresh - Finnish Fish by the roadside.

Typical Finnish Foods while driving on road 12, 40 km north of Tampere, that fish sign caught my attention “Again”! It’s that yellow sign with black letters which says...? “Smoked Fish” At Kalakeidas they smoke the fish on the spot. Sell it to ya...freshly smoked.

See the Kalakeidas fish food stop in Google maps

Worth trying is:

- Sea salmon, Merilohi caught in the ice-sea, higher in fat then the Finnish trout. Kirjalohi
- Finnish Rainbow trout Kirjalohi, caught in Finland.
- Zander Kuha

Fresh Fish Shop opening times: Mondays thru Sunday 9am - 8pm Make sure to call them before going!
Mobile number: 358(0)50 542 0528
Out to sea for typical Finnish Foods

On a ferryboat trip from Stockholm, Sweden to Turku Finland, we decided to eat at Grill-House on Silja Galaxy. A bit pricier restaurant in our ferryboat.

I ordered the arctic shark. Locals choose slightly smaller ferryboats, like ours here, the Silja Galaxy- over the larger Silja Euroopa Less crowded for one reason. Better service. They even claim...better food. Silja Galaxy has more exquisite restaurants than Silja Euroopa.

The cream sauce and thin crispy shelled hashed potatoes...really tasty. Excellent mushrooms with a plain consistency! Ahh...mild tasting white shark meat...distinctively shark. The sweet sparkling white wine fit perfectly with the meal. A few leaves of fresh spinach. Probably the best meal I have had on a ferryboat in Finland. 27 euros for this meal -A High price but very worth it.

Typical Finnish foods -
A tastebuddy healthy treat!

My Finnish inlaws live long lives. Is cooking habits the reason why? Aura knows about cooking home-made food without those unhealthy fats. Our Ryynimakkarra sausage is partly filled with Ryyni(Finnish) coarsly ground barley and pork.
Hulled barley significantly lowers the percentage of unhealthy fats. Our hot-dog is a low-fat pork feast. Amazing!! Sautéed onion in olive oil. Red beet salad has Red beets vinegar, salt and sugar with some eggs mayonnaise/sour cream. On the Plate: Lettuce, Rye bread and Finnish Squeaky Cheese *Leipäjuusto*.

Recipe: Fry the sausage in a pan without oil. Cook barley for 2-3 hours in a pot, adjusting cooking time according to grain type. Add half beef and half lamb, about a 50/50 balance. Mix meat and porridge together. Stuff the skins with meat mixture. Boil sausage and bake them in the oven.

Try eating this sausage with potato salad too!

**Typical Finnish foods Aura’s Mom Prepares - A Distinctful Home-Made Taste Unique to Her Personality**

Granny Mumma -- That is what Tomi and Rosa call her grew up in Kuusamo, near Lapland, hence her food seasoning is very Northern Finnish. She does add some healthy extras to her cooking.

Flower in the background shows us the coloring of our food. The plate has small meat-balls. Taken from the freezer she chipped off meat directly into boiling pot of water.

Homemade black currant juice *Mustavinimarja herukka mehua*. Sliced semi-sweet pickles *Zuchini Kesä kurpitsa* thinly sliced, mild in taste and has the texture of a squash.

What is in the meat sauce? Ground beef, smashed tomatoes, garlic, basil, water and Lovage plant leaves. Mumma happenend to find some Lovage plant (*Levisticum officinale*) around the yard and added Lovage leaves for some extra meaty flavor. Oat creamy, rice flower and salt. Sliced and sautéed cabbage with a bit of sugar and rapeseed oil. The health benefit of rapeseed oil is that it contains a balance of Omega oils, manufactured by pressing out saturated not-so-healthy fats. Because the sauce has a bit of sugar in it when you eat potatoes with the sauce in combination with the dill pickle the taste gets harmonious balanced out between slightly sweet and sour taste. The cabbage is mild and of balanced consistency. Not too soggy or crisp, with a mild sweet taste. Potatoes are fresh and firm, with home made berry juice.

Since Mumma has had over 50 years experience cooking, there is no substitute for her chef’s skill.

**Typical Finnish Foods Summer Favorites at Juhannus When the Sun Does Not Set**

Get 24 hours of daylight light in Finnish Lappland in the middle of June.

During June 21 we celebrate *Juhannus* in Finland, and we live about 1000 km south of Lappland and get 19 hours of daylight.
While your at the shop get a disposable grill *kertäkäyttögrilli* from the grocery store. Fits eight sausages. 3 Grills for 5 euros.

*Makkara hot dog’s on our disposable grill*

While Oma and Opa visited us this Christmas we drove from Tampere to Hyvinkää where we had a Christmas meal at an ABC chain service station. You can stop to get gas, shop at a grocery store, or eat fast food, sometimes there are *Hesburger* fast food hamburgers at these service stations. Along with our main dish of food came salad from the salad bar, and creamy mushroom soup.

*Typical Finnish Foods Celebrating Christmas at an ABC Service Station*

Our buffet style meal cost 9,90 euros. When you are hungry, take a larger helping of food. It is acceptable to take a good helping on the first go ...One go is acceptable. This is not an all-U-can-eat buffet, and that goes for most lunch food.

Our June meal in Finland with Makkara hot-dog

Picture of my plate has only one *Makkara* -a bland hot-dog. Two types of potato salads.

Try some yummie makkara with 100% meat then go for *Wilhelmi A-luokka* The standard slightly cheaper Makkara tasted less meaty, has less meat, fills your tummy nevertheless.

Aura thinks that Wilhelmi and *Kabanossi* are the best. Rosa says that Wilhelmi tastes like a hot-dog or german Bratwurst.
Our typical Finnish Foods included...

• Rudebager casserole
• Reindeer
• Cream potatoes
• Baked Potatoes or Rice
• Beef
• Game (Rabbit, Moose), or mini sausages
• Finnish roasted / brewed Coffee, milk, water or Kotikalja (Malty drink with real low alcohol content)
• Top it off during Christmas with most popular Finnish Christmas beverage the whole family can enjoy.

Finnish Crepe Pancakes Recipe
Typical Finnish Dessert Or Snack

Traditional Finnish crepe pancakes are thin and moist. Fry them up the size of your palm, or as large as a standard size frying pan.

Tasty Tip: After hiking in the woods you feel hungry. Time to make a an open fire. This Finnish food tastes great after preparing it over an open fire in a special pan lättypannu. Make some batter and bring it with you on your hiking trip. Finnish crepe pancakes normally contain wheat flour. For those seeking a wheat free alternative, here is our recipe using barley flour. You may need to play around with mixture ratios, depending where you live. This recipe also works with wheat flour.

Crepe Pancakes Recipe

• 8 dl water (3.4 Cups)
• 3 eggs
• 1 dl skimmed milk powder (.42 Cups)
• 5 dl wheat flour (2.1 Cups)
• 1 tsp. salt
• 1-3 tbsp. sugar
• 4-5 tbsp. oil, or butter (do not use Olive oil)
• We are using 2,5 dl (2.1 Cups) barley flour and 2,5 dl dark gluten free flour with seeds.

Directions:

1. Melt the butter and let it cool.
2. Mix everything together: Butter, Water, Eggs, Flour (you may want to gradually add the flour while stirring), salt and sugar (optional). Beat the eggs and whisk together in a bowl. Test the batter...since...you may want to add milk to thin out the mixture. Let the batter sit for 15 - 20 minutes
3. Heat up a large frying pan. Get it real hot! After the pan is hot enough, throw on some butter or oil. Sizzle!! Since we are using and iron pan getting an optimal temperature is tricky. You may need a
bit more butter at first.
Frying Finnish crepe pancakes in a heavy iron pan.

Buttering the pan

4. Pour on a .75 dl (.3 Cups) ladle full helping into the pan to fry the crepe. Sizzle!!

The first pancake

The first pancake may not turn out right. Look at the edges of the batter Bubbles immediately start forming on the surface. Usually starting at the sides.

See the small bubbles near the sides below!!

Holes indicate it is time to flip our crepe

Spread the batter thinly, and evenly over the pan. The same way french crepes are fried.

Tilting the pan

Texture of the pancake crepe
Tilt the frying pan to help spread the batter evenly across the iron surface. Once the surface bubbles are visible, flip the crepe over. Make sure the batter is firm before flipping, otherwise you get this...

Our first one

Ooops!! Do not worry...there is plenty more batter... and this is just our first one.
Stir the batter occasionally for de-clumping. If the frying pan is too cool, bubbles may not appear, sometimes 1 centimeter to 3 centimeter bubbles form as trapped air under the pancake. If this occurs, turn up the heat.
Hint: If you want to use less butter/oil use a non-stick pan. A healthy option is to use a Duramic pan.

6. Fry until golden brown, then flip em over.

If the side lifts off, but it looks like the center of crepe is going to tear, then add butter on the sides...Lift the sides up and let the butter melt into the center of the pan. Then try lifting again.

Well browned on both sides. -Yep, they are done! Savory or zesty? Add carrots, spinach, or nettles. Finely graded raw carrots give Finnish crepe pancakes a more savory taste. For spinach, buy ready frozen spinach. Let it thaw to use in the batter.
For nettles...If you like the color of the nettles in you pancakes: Boil the leaves then drain the water. Repeat twice.

Collect the nettles before mid summer since after this, the leaves are tough and have less minerals. Store the nettles in the freezer and use them again later.
Or... if you prefer making the nettles invisible, but present in the batter. Allow the leaves to dry. Hand-crumble them into the batter before frying it up.

How to eat Finnish crepe pancakes:

Serve them immediately since they cool off fast. Strawberry or apple jelly makes them into a sweet dessert. Sprinkle sugar on top. Spread your choice topping over the Finnish crepe pancakes. Ice-cream perhaps? Roll them up and dip them in melted chocolate. Enjoy these crepes like American pancakes: Stack them serving them with syrup or molasses on top.

Our Finnish Crepe Pancake is ready

Our’s...We ate our Finnish crepe pancakes for a sweet evening snack, with a glass of cold milk.
Expert Finnish Pulla Recipe

Here's a pictorial Finnish pulla recipe by an expert. This quick and easy pictorial guide guarantees success in making Finnish pulla. Follow the recipe and mixing process for hand-made pulla bread making for small parties or serving at local Cafe’s.

Finnish pulla is sweet bread from Finland. A firm bun lightly sweetened. This is eaten all the time and almost everywhere in Finland. It is one of the most popular Finnish foods to have with a cup of coffee - an equal to the Coffee and Doughnut in America.

A common Finnish pulla recipe may take 2 - 4 hours, from start to end.

In this Finnish pulla recipe, Aura shows you how to produce real Finnish pulla in record time---1 1/2 hours without using milk or eggs! Baking pulla several times a week, Aura's expert advice will guide you step-by-step to perfecting your own skill in making this favorite Finnish food.

Have all Your Ingredients Ready

- Fresh yeast (hilva), sugar, cardamom, margarine and flour, 250 ml (one US cup)
- measuring cup, small and large bowls.
- Get your favorite pulla ingredient list from food.com.

Note from Aura:
“For this recipe, in my experience, I have found that a good substitute for egg and milk, is using pure water. When you use water the pulla stays fresh longer. Of course using condensed, dried milk powder does the same trick, if you want to use milk.”

Directions

Place the margarine in small bowl and put in the microwave, or warming oven to melt. While the margarine melts, crumble in the yeast, add 3,5 dl (1 1/2 cups) of sugar, measure 4 cups of warm water into the large bowl, grind about one tablespoon of cardamom in and stir.
Stir the mixture

Measure 8 cups (250 ml) of flour and stir in gradually using your hand. It is less messy and more hygienic to use a rubber or latex glove.

Add 8 cups of flour

Work in the flour

Next, add two more cups of flour and work in the flour. By this time the melted margarine is ready. Add this into the dough and continue mixing. Continue working in flour.
Dough sticks to glove

“While kneading, always keep one hand out of the bowl.” -Aura

Add melted margarine

Knead the dough with your right hand while turning the bowl in a clockwise motion with your left hand. Keep kneading and swirling the dough. The dough also turns inside the bowl.

“Do this to make the dough elastic.” -Aura

Dough with oily surface. Turn the bowl with your left hand

The surface of the dough is oily and slippery. Now is a good time to add 1-2 cups of flour. Keep swirling and kneading until all the flour is well blended in and the dough easily comes off your hands.

Add more flour

...keep kneading...
...until the Finnish pulla dough is ready! Look, no sticky dough on her glove!

Then put on an air tight lid, place the bowl on top of the stove. Turn the oven on. This warms up my dough inside the bowl.

Dough in bowl on top of warm stove

Since this is a large batch it has taken 30 minutes so far and a total of 40 minutes including preparation time.

While the dough is rising, (approx. 30 minutes) you can do other activities. No need to babysit the bowl. I fixed mushroom soup for lunch.

After the lid pops open, it is time to work with the pulla dough.

Pulla Dough is Ready for Work

What the Finnish pulla dough looks like when it’s ready to be worked

Time to turn out the dough

Pulla dough moved to the table for work

Pulla dough is on the table
Knead the dough until the surface texture is silky smooth

Divide the batch in half. Work the other half first. Knead the dough into a long shape roll and then cut it into smaller pieces.

Divide the Finnish pulla dough

Roll the pieces to a near perfect round balls.

After dividing Finnish pulla dough, roll it

Place them on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. That way there is no need to wash the pan afterwards. For this Finnish pulla recipe, the baking parchment paper can be reused.

Brush up on your egg spreading skills!

Brush with egg

Press a hole in the middle with a small plastic cup. Push down hard enough since the dough springs back rather quickly.

Stamp your pulla with the base of a cup
Fill the hole with vanilla cream and jam.

*Fill with vanilla cream and jam*

Aura’s Time Saving Tip: “No need to allow the pulla to rise for a second time on trays as many recipes instruct. Simply let them sit on a pan as each tray awaits to be baked in the oven, which is between 12 to 15 minutes/tray depending on your oven.”

Sprinkle with sugar and bake at 225 C (435 degree F) for 12-15 minutes per pan.

*Sprinkle with pearl sugar*

Use Dan Sukker or equivalent pearl sugar for this Finnish pulla recipe. This ensures that the crystals will not melt as the sweet bread is baking in the oven.
Blueberry Finnish pulla up close

Christmas Finnish Pulla Gingerbread

Form gingerbread cookie dough into stars

Place the stars on top of the pulla balls

Layer with egg, sprinkle with pearl sugar then bake.

Finnish Christmas pulla is ready

Ahh! The smell of fresh Finnish pulla! A vanilla cream and jam pulla about to go down the hatch!

With our Finnish pulla recipe, the sweet bread stays fresh for 2 days at room temperature. Put the warm Pulla in a plastic bag (3 days fresh), or freeze them.
Finnish Cheese Attraction in Jalasjärvi on our drive back to Tampere - Buy fresh cheeses below store price

Finnish cheese attraction in Jalasjärvi on our drive back to Tampere - buy fresh cheeses here at discount prices. Santa Clause’s official cheese attraction. This is it! Located also at the cheese factory is an inviting restaurant with an open fireplace. If you are driving from Tampere to Seinäjoki then stop to shop for exquisite Finnish designed products and watch how Finnish cheese is made.

On our drive back from Seinäjoki to Tampere, the three of us try out some fresh cheeses. Well aware that we can get more for our money, we purchase a good supply at the Juustoportti rest-stop with their discounted prices. So we’ll buy a handful of gourmet cheeses for our new years eve party. Let’s go inside to see... As a prelude to buying locally made cheese at this Finnish cheese attraction, we decide to first browse around a bit... at the Pentik shop. “Got to have that Reindeer for Christmas honey”!! --With 6 antler candle stick-holders. While on the theme of Finnish Reindeer... There is a pillow by Pentik ...A perfect gift idea from Finland.

Hmm? ...useful wood product for grinding up seasonings or herbs.

Walls with shelves full of Finnish Pentik designed, bowls, plates, napkins, glass-ware, lamps display everything you need for your kitchen.
Pentik design

Seconds 2 Laatua -- A veevery important Finnish phrase to remember while shopping in Finland. Of course, if you buy something that is 2 laatua and for some reason you want to return it. Sorry! No go.

Nicely designed ceramics at the Marimekko shop

Aura is pointing to the legendary popular money-change or coin purses that Marimekko is well known for producing. Looking for classy Marimekko Finnish designer handbags? Here's where you'll find one.

Finnish designed hand bags

Now we'll say 'good-bye' to bag shopping and 'Hello' to Food shopping!
Something is smelling cheezy! Aura knows how to spot a deal and save money.

She points to the cheeses that are produced at this Finnish cheese attraction mini cheese factory. Yep honey, take a picture...2.95 Euros for one of those cheese pucks. You save over a euro per puck.

The box with the best deals!

A typical money saving tip when shopping:

If you see half empty display's like the above, it does not necessarily mean they are low on stock for that product. Most likely the popular item was stocked the same day, and people bought them fast enough within the day...meaning...the shelve did not have enough time to restock...hence...it is a high volume product, which is in demand, the quality is probably good, and the price is even better.

...foods at Juustopportti

Reindeer meat

This canned "braised reindeer" has a picture of a reindeer with antlers...Ready to learn a new Finnish word... Poro is Reindeer. You see... Finnish is easy to learn! A popular berry in Finland: cloudberry Lakka Cloudberry jam tastes especially good on top of hot porridge.

Lakahillo cloudberry jam on the shelves

Tip: Here is what to eat those cloudberries with!

Squeaky cheese

Leipäjuusto Finnish squeaky cheese. Squeaks in the mouth when you chew it! Also sold at Juustoportti. This cheese is very mild, almost bland.

Serve it with coffee and pineapples. Put a couple pieces in a mug and pour on the coffee. Put a chunk of it on bread with dill pickles and ham on top.
Cheese production in Finland

Cheese making in Finland? See it here at the Finnish cheese attraction. Here is a picture of the cheese factory production floor at Juustoportti in Jalasjärvi.

How to make Finnish cheese

- Milk is collected locally, pasteurized and the cream is removed
- The milk gets transformed into solid cheese mass coagulated
- Cheese mass is cut into curds. The curds settle into moulds.
- The cheese is squeezed and extra whey separates.
- The cheese is salted to produce the skin.
- The excess cream is churned into butter. Nothing goes to waste. Smart!

Finnish cheese attraction food

Try their pizza. Even when Tomi takes a second glance at this picture, he says: "I want that pizza"! It is thin crusted and appears to be stone baked. They use a type of 'Fondue' style cheese by Valio on the pizza.

Great pizza!

To Aura’s delight, gluten-free pizza is also available. One week later at our 'New Years Eve' party

Selection of cheeses from Juustoportti

A show of cheeses for our snack include:

Tilsit: a mild tasting firm cheese.
Kelarimies: buttery and salty tasting... has potential as a pizza topping.
Goat & Paprika: milder, softer with bits of paprika.
Goat Gruyère: Personally my favorite cheese at the Finnish cheese attraction.

This is a strong smelling and strong tasting cheese, resembling parmesan. The cheese takes over 6 months for ripening in an open cellar, made from lactose free homogenized goat’s milk, with a whopping fat content of 29%. Since Goat Gruyère is my favorite... how about...usage? Serve it with other cheeses! Eat it with a salad or pasta dish. Tastes good with warm dishes. This cheese is medium soft, with 1.4% salt content. Smell: a combination smell between nut, vanilla and cream. Goat Gruyère won an award at the Wine Expo as being the best goat cheese.
Producer’s recommendation:

Eat Goat Gruyère with the following beer & wines:
**Copper colored beer type and these nutty flavored wine’s:**
- Vicarage Lane Marlborough (527747) white wine
- Chateauneuf-du-Pape (6911) red wine
- Lindemans Shiraz (006152) red wine

We ate our selection of cheese’s with red and green grapes, while nibbling on some 100% rye bread.

Spoting a deal food shopping in Finland!

The upside down yellow label shows that this cheese is on sale.
Here it is -50% off normal price.

**Finnish cheese attraction information**

What is there to see, do, shop, and how about conveniences?
A cheese cellar
Cafe where lunch is served/Restaurant --a-la-carte
A store where you can buy fresh local Finnish made cheese
Marimekko shop
Pentik shop
Meeting rooms/Invalid wc bathroom toilets and ones for children as well
A24h Neste -car/truck and a Neste D-piste for your petrol needs
The TopMan shoe store

For Navigational purposes here is the address:
Keisarintie 145
61710 Pentinmäki
Open each day from 7 am to 10 pm
Sundays from 8 am to 10 pm

Finnish cheese attraction summer opening hours:
Daily from 7 am to 11 pm
Sundays from 8 am to 11 pm
Phoning from within Finland. 06-456 6900
The Finnish "Way of Thinking", About Finnish sauna

Finnish sauna bathing culture - An insider view on the art of an authentic Finnish sauna. Developing Your Sauna "Thinking Cap"

Inside a Finnish sauna.

I'll share with you the Finnish "Way Of Thinking" as you are taking a Finnish sauna.

In Finland the sauna is an expression of physical health. It is a cultural habit friends and family share together. It's a place to get clean rather than just a room to sweat in.

Let me help you be connected to Finnish sauna culture in Finland. Sooo... before entering the sauna, hang your clothes up on the wall.

Finnish sauna - Take a shower before going into the hot room. There is a separate room to change in. It could be large or small. Hang your clothes up so they don't get wet.

...there is a separate room to for washing up. At a public sauna that may be a shower cubicle, at a home sauna an 'open shower' with a door to the hot room. The hot-room shown (Center). Showers are on the left of the hot-room.

Adjust your thinking

Think relaxing thoughts to yourself like: "All my cares and worries are left outside that sauna door." Picture all the muscles in your body relaxing and loosening up.

In Finland, being in the sauna room means everyone has equal value. Weather you are a child or adult, highly educated or an ex-convict. Everyone has the same status in the sauna.

Accept an unhurried and sociable attitude. Remember that it takes hours for skilled people to heat up a Finnish smoke sauna. As does, making birch twig whisks along with that special touch.

The key is to keep a slow and relaxed attitude while taking a real Finnish sauna and when the sauna routine is over until the day ends. When you wake up after a good nights sleep, you feel like a new person.

Finnish Sauna Health Benefits

Applying expert Finnish sauna methods reaps rewards: Brings inflammation down. After surgery, a wound on my body was inflamed. With the combination of ice-swimming and sauna visits, it shrunk back to normal size.

Helps with breathing problems like asthma. The extreme hot and cold, gives lungs a good work out.

!!--Reduces Stress!! --Yep! A friends blood-pressure lowered temporarily after sauna and ice-swimming.

Relieves muscles tension and soreness due to hard physical work. Try a hot sauna after chopping wood all day.

Cleanses and softens the skin.
The hot room is therapy for depression or anxiety. Quite often I have arrived for sauna and ice-swimming "In- the- pits" After a good 3 hours of doing sauna with ice-swimming...the car drive home...Bliss! And the great sauna after effects last for hours to follow.

Smell Therapy? The scent of wood combined with smoke relax both mind and body. The classic smell of a smoke sauna. Birch branches of the vihta also add additional therapeutic smells. For more smell, try adding scented oils.

Helps Motivate You! After sauna your appendages feel lighter and your entire body becomes relaxed. Your mind can focus better on 'now' and "where you are." helping to motivate you.

Increases the testosterone level in Men. Watch out women! :-)

The Lakeside Sauna Landscape

Go from the sauna room’s hot steam and back to the lake, again and again, until you get a head rush.

Dipping in the lake for a swim is part of the Finnish sauna routine. If the lake is frozen, take along a friend for safety reasons. Always remember to keep your head above the water!

Layout of an old farmhouse with a lakeside sauna during the early 20th century.

The sauna was built within the premises of farm buildings. The wooden decking and lounge areas with outside furniture are a modern addition.
Lounge outside the Vammala smoke sauna building. Finnish sauna essentials include...outdoor weatherproof tables and chairs. Sit in the sun before or after a dip in the lake

**Food and Sauna**

About 30 meters from our exemplary Sastamala smoke sauna is this...

Let’s go in...

Perfect for roasting up some wild boar, game, pancakes...They will even custom order for your group. Just let them know what you want to eat.

**Tip(s)!**

Eat full meals after having sauna, so you don’t get a bloated feeling if you are hungry during the sauna routine...Snack!

Replace Lost Salts due to sweating by eating Dill pickles. Whole dill pickles taste good, or try them in a salad.

**After Sauna Snack Food Ideas**

Cucumber, Tomatoes, Sliced Turkey on top of Rye Crisp bread.

Super simple salami sandwhich

Serve them just like this. Get locally produced, fresh Finnish kotimaiset tomatoes. They taste best! Make up a Greek salad with green olives. Another natural way to replenish salt after taking a sausage.

Our after sauna low temperature cooked Salmon meal prepared without cooking oils.
New potatoes come into season in late June and go well with French bread with real butter and salami slices on top. Grilling during, or after your sauna gives you that extra summery feeling/smell of being out in nature.

My first year in Finland, we ate traditional Christmas food with a Christmas sauna. First, everyone in the family did sauna, then we partook of a feast. What a delight! My favorite foods with a Finnish sauna are: Pizza with bacon, and pineapple toppings. Hotdog (Makkara), Tikku leipää. And I must admit that a very low alcohol beer relieves thirst.

An after Sauna Snack

**Pancakes with plum jam**

![Pancakes with plum jam]

**French toast with prune jam!**

![French toast with prune jam]

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**Preventing 'After Sauna Chills'**

Avoid after sauna chills. In the Finnish winter time as you get ready to end your ice-swimming/sauna routine. Do a final warm-up in the sauna rather than cooling off in the lake. Since...after sauna chill's leave you with a cold feeling lasting for hours. No Fun!

**In the summer...**

A swim in a lake is a great way to cool off after your real Finnish sauna routine. Get clean with some environmentally friendly soap and shampoo washing off with lake water. Then dry off.

If you sense you are getting cold while swimming, come out and get back into the sauna briefly and wash off there instead. Or, soak up some sun while laying on a rock.

Beware!...You can get the after sauna chills in the summer too. If in doubt, just get warm by washing off inside the sauna! After bathing dress, then go outside.

**The Finnish Smoke Sauna**

The original Finnish sauna was a hot room inside a wooden hut. That’s all. The modern Finnish sauna is a derivative of the smoke sauna. The Finnish smoke sauna is a chimney free sauna room.

Smoke escapes the room after the sauna stove has been burning for hours. Then, prior to using the sauna, smoke is released out of the sauna room chamber through ventilation or sauna door. Some modern smoke saunas in Finland have a dome-shaped rock stove.

The smoke sauna offers you a gentle steam and steady burst of heat compared to wood burning or electric saunas. Naturally, the inside walls of a smoke sauna are black, however when in a newer smoke sauna, the walls will appear lighter and cleaner.

Remember, there are no chimneys in the smoke sauna, so smoke just hangs around in the chamber soaking into the walls, chairs, and ceiling.

Take a look at yourself in the mirror after you have been in the smoke sauna. You may be left with some black marks.
The Finnish Home Sauna

A small wooden-hut style room, wooden benches to sit on and a bucket of water for ladling over the hot rocks to create steam. The Finnish home sauna is like Pasi's sauna. You will see these kinds of saunas in most Finnish homes.

Turn the electric stove's knobs (or push button) the electric resistors heat up the stones. The electric stove requires no smoke flue, hence the Finnish home sauna is found inside other buildings structures. All you need is a room with a chimney flue forsmoke ventilation.

You find these types of saunas in hotels, homes and public swimming halls. They can be electric or wood-burning with rocks on top of the stoves surface.

Tip: How to improve the steam of your Finnish home sauna? Try changing the style of the sauna stones.

Feeling the Heat in a Modern Finnish Sauna

Imagine the thermometer behind your seat indicates 80 celcius (176 Fahrenheit). You are sitting on wooden bench in a wood paneled 20 square meter (215 cubic feet) room. To your left is a 18 x 18 inch window leading to the crisp freezing outside. You are dying to open that window up and let the air in to cool you off. Gasp!! Below, a blazing fire roars inside the sauna stove. The stove top rocks store loads of heat on top of the stove heater.

You reach for a bucket of pre-heated water, scooping out the water you pour two ladles onto the stones sloooowly. The steam gently hits you over a longer period of time. instead of as a sudden 'heat wave' crash. Steam rises, filling the air... the dry hot room fills with moisture... the air thickens, and it feels much hotter... and your breath shortens. After a minute the humidity and intense heat die down. Beyond this brief feeling of penetrating hot discomfort, around the corner you await...an endorphic induced high. That is the kind of heat in a real Finnish sauna.

The Finnish Public Sauna

At the turn of the 19th century before electricity and modern sewage existed, the more highly populated areas had public saunas. They are still in operation today and well worth a visit.

Today you can reserve a sauna for your family at an indoor swimming hall, where there are also public saunas. These Finnish public saunas have sections for men and women, and separate sauna structures provided to hold 20-50 people.

Wash up, get a massage, or chiropractic adjustment while doing a Finnish sauna at a Tampere spa. That is the basic Finnish sauna level.

A Blissful Sauna Practice

Where will you learn to get a better Finnish sauna experience, than at a Spa, or hotel? To learn the expert habits, go where the experts frequent.

In Tampere, you can attend the Rauhaniemen Kylpylä public sauna bath where you find the 'local regulars' go every day/week to do sauna, or ice-swimming avanto in the wintertime.

A Finnish Sauna Vacation

Stay for a day, a week, or more. It's a travel package with a sauna.
A Finnish sauna vacation packet includes accommodations, sauna, fishing and visiting the local points of interest. Here is an example of a Finnish sauna vacation with a Finnish smoke sauna half an hours drive from Tampere.

Sastamala's 'Mieli Aitta' is about 50 kilometers from Tampere, Mieli Aitta has a smoke sauna with lodging with accommodations up to 6 people at the Farmhouse Bed and Breakfast. The vacation villa holds a group up to 14.
What to See in the Area?

You can rent out the Mieli Aitta Smoke sauna if you wish.

Two 'Very old' churches (Pyhä Olavi(1515) and Holy Mary's (Pyhä Marian) in Karkku are within walking distance along with two different cafes located a few kilometers from each other.

Aitta Kahvila Cafe, is an old granary converted into cafe near the Holy Mary's church in Karkku, while the Mieli Aitta cafe is on the Mieli Aitta property near Sastamala’s Pyhä Olavi church.

Coming in from the outside, you step back in history as you view an authentic, rural Finnish village. The smoke sauna and villa are surrounded by this 6500 year old village. Talk about old!!!

Weather-faded gray sides of this 'seasoned' smoke sauna.

A Finnish vacation with a smoke sauna. A look at Mieli Aitta’s smoke sauna. This two story sauna gives out a warm gentle soft heat.

Finnish Sauna Atmosphere

The mother of all Saunas -The Finnish Sauna Atmosphere around a Smoke Sauna. The atmosphere created around you makes that smoke sauna extra enjoyable.

Insiders suggest going as far into the countryside in Finland for an optimal smoke sauna to really experience the Finnish sauna---at its ultimate!.

The closer you are to nature, and the more time you spend in that surrounding, the more refreshed you feel in mind, body and spirit. Your health improves.

Unique, Crazy and Fun Finnish sauna types

- Dugout Sauna Corsu sauna
- Ice-sauna
- Herbal Sauna Yrttisauna
- Tent sauna
- The portable transportable sauna on wheels.
- Sauna in a bus. Take a sauna while traveling by bus.
- The Finnish boat sauna.
- The snow sauna
The Best Sauna in Finland - Finnish Ice Swimming Sensation for Everyone

The best sauna in Finland with ice swimming? Here is a sauna to tell your friends all about. The Tampere Rauhaniemi sauna is a public sauna in Finland surrounded by scenic landscapes. It’s a large sauna that is easily accessible with a flat path stretching from the sauna buildings to the beach area. Temperatures of the saunas help give you a good sauna experience. The Best Finland sauna with ice swimming sensation has a large and small sauna.

Lakeside view of the large sauna

The large sauna seats up to 70 people. When water is poured onto the stones, the large sauna feels hotter than the smaller one.

An older couple stopped to chat with me when I took these pictures. Some time into the conversation, I found out that they had driven over 180km’s from Helsinki to Tampere, to enjoy best sauna in Finland with ice-swimming. The lady went into the large sauna once, then into the icy water. She finished her sauna and ice-swimming after about 10 - 15 minutes. If someone’s prepared to drive 180km’s one way...that sauna must be the best Finland sauna.

Based on visiting over 40 different saunas in Finland, take my word that Tampere’s Rauhaniemi kylpylå sau-

na steam is excellent. Especially when you follow Finnish experts’ advice on how to take your sauna.

So rather than pick any old sauna in Finland and go into any hole in the ice. Plan your vacation around Tampere, Finland.

You will want to try this sauna over and over until you get it right. Over and over? Yeah, you heard me. Practice using this great sauna to get the perfect sauna buzz. A wonderful feeling of well-being. Let your natural endorphins in the body do their job.

Just ask older gentlemen who visit Rauhaniemi every day. What do the locals get out of it?

Here is how Locals do "The Best Sauna In Finland." Get Ready to Feel Refreshed.

After you have changed into your bathing suit, go outside. Yes, it is cold! Walk down the green mat to the lake. As fast as you can, jump into the water and out. Brrrr! Walk into the large sauna. You have just passed the hardest stage of "avantouinti," or ice-swimming with sauna.

Congratulations!! Rewards do come to those who follow the "ice-swimming" method.

Now you are on your way toward the large sauna room.

You may want to take a shower now, or at the end of your sauna experience. Rinse your feet off and take a seat pad with you on the way. Use the foot cleanser to rinse your feet off your feet. Use a colorful seat pad with you on the way into the large sauna room.
Inside the best sauna in Finland -
The Rauhaniemi Kylpylä sauna

The stove and steam room temperatures play huge roles in getting a really good sauna experience. And I say really good, because each time you do sauna it counts as an experience on its own.

When the sauna room temperatures are too high, or you have too little fluid in your body, you are in danger of spoiling your sauna experience. You miss feeling refreshed and may feel like vomiting. To avoid becoming dehydrated, you should drink enough water before going in.

Seat selection at the "best sauna in Finland" is key
Prevent top bench burning

Sitting on the uppermost benches exposes your ears, face and neck to more heat, causing stinging coming from the steam. Locals love that steam, so water is continuously poured onto the hot stones. Steam hits you faster when sitting on the stove side of the sauna.

Wise Sauna users in the best sauna in Finland

wear knitted hats to prevent stinging. A wool hat protects you from burning your head. Looks kind of cool, don’t you think? Use waterproof slippers on your feet to give you a better grip when you’re walking down over ice and/or snow.

Sitting near the sauna stove

Top bench seating near the sauna stove exposes your body to very intense bursts of heat. Your body feels hotter faster, but then, because the steam moves rapidly upward, life becomes bearable again quite quickly!

Ouch, hot!! Try to avoid sitting near the far corners near that door.

Top Bench seating near the entrance sauna door? Heat can really cause you pain. So be careful! where you sit Given you are at Rauhaniemi as a first-timer, those seats are for folks who really like it hot!
Sitting away from the sauna stove at the best sauna in Finland.

If you suddenly feel too hot you can always move to a lower level bench. So if you’re up high and a wave of heat hits hard—quickly move to a lower level bench. The locals might smirk, but that’s their problem! Try moving up or down bench levels. Start sitting at a lower level at first.

To fine tune 'heat wave timing' or 'time at which heat impacts the body', adjust your sauna room seating position from front to back and vice versa. Moving around seating positions helps regulate how hot or warm you feel.

Sauna stove near windows

Sandwich yourself at a top bench between window and the sauna stove. You experience bursting waves of heat which come and go quickly.

Moving away from the upper corners near the stove increases your exposure to waves of heat. The heat seems to last longer than when you’re sitting in the corners nearer the stove.

A word of advice for first-timers at the best sauna in Finland: Use bench seats in the middle of the sauna, on a medium level bench.

Let yourself get warm enough before going back outside under the ice. That may require you to stay in the heat of the sauna just a little longer, Yeah OK it hurts, or you feel some pressure in your head. Try keeping your body exposed to heat until you cannot bear it anymore. Then go out.

Hot enough...

...in the best sauna in Finland? Ready? Because out we go for a 'Dip under the Ice'

Again -- Follow the green mats into the water. These electrically heated mats prevent your warm feet from bonding to snow and ice.

Drop off drinks into wooden lockers on your way to the lake.

Ohh, you can already see some ice on the left side as you are facing the ice hole.

At the best sauna in Finland.
-follow the green mat into the lake.
The icy entry-way is partly underwater. Use handrails to stabilize yourself in case there is ice on the ground and steps. -- B... B... B... but it looks sooo cold--Yes, that is the point. You want to go from cold to hot back and forth. Ready...and...WAIT! No need to jump, just walk into the lake. Oh, ...the bubbling is not coming from a scuba-diver. That is to keep the ice from freezing over.

After you please! Once you are in the water, keep your head above water and exit walking up the stairs. The longer your body is exposed to icy water, the higher temperature differences your body experiences. Stay in as long as possible, head above water. Swim around, keeping the body from the neck under water.

Can You Feel the Head Rush?

No worries, you can try again, if that rush did not quite happen. Warm up well in the sauna. Get as hot as you can. If you are cold coming out of the water, stay in the sauna longer, then come out to go ice-swimming. Locals at the best sauna in Finland spend minutes swimming around in icy water. Sure, they are used to it, but they warm up well before and after. Benches looking out to the lake, where you can sit and cool off after ice swimming. What do you mean, cool off? How about that icy water?

Now before getting warm again, stay outside and relax by sitting down at these benches. If the water did not cool you down sufficiently, sitting outside will - it can easily be negative twenty! Perhaps a minute or two after ice-swimming. Because...

Cooling down at the best sauna in Finland is just as important...

...as Warming up. -- and is vital to a good sauna experience. Sit down on the bench and talk to your friend. Cooling off gives your body another opportunity to work its natural wonders. You may feel light-headed at this time. When you get cold, go warm up inside the large sauna. Repeat the warming up and cooling down, until you feel light. Sauna, then ice-swim, sauna again then ice-swim. However, being light-headed, or getting a rush is not a rule-of-thumb.

Now, I usually get cold and warm up three or four times. There is no magic number. After a final ice-swim, warm up before entering showers and getting dressed. Going directly from ice-swimming to showers...Brrrr! You may be left with a chill that last over an hour. Do a sauna to get warm before showering off. Large sauna is more intense, you can try a...
Small Sauna Warmdown At the Best Sauna in Finland

After repeating large sauna warm ups and and ice-swimming cool downs, consider warming down inside the small sauna. Sit on a lower bench.

This small stove, in this sauna room uses bricket style stones to create ideal amounts of steam.

View from a hot corner. Try sitting on lower benches, gradually working your way up to top corner benches. This may take several visits. Both far-end corners produce the most intense experience. Both large and small saunas follow similar thermal principles. Once water is poured on and if feels too hot, move to a lower bench.

Two windows with a view of outside benches and large sauna room. The small sauna has less space on lower level benches. Door to exit. When you’re about to go out, it is good etiquette, to ask the question. “Shall I throw on more steam?” in Finnish “Heitänkö löylyä?” Then if everyone says “Heitää vaan”, or “Kyllä”, pour on some water onto the stove before you leave. They may even think you are a local.

Rauhaniemi’s best sauna in Finland Tip...?

Get to Rauhaniemi Kylpylä right when it opens and you will have a huge sauna to yourself. Throw on some steam! Remember: Having a great Finnish sauna experience takes practice.

Pine trees decorating the backround, of the Rauhaniemi Kylpylä landscape. An overview of the best sauna in Finland and bathing area.
The best sauna in Finland opening season and times

The best time to go for ice-swimmers is of course -- The cold season. The more snow and ice, the more exotic and Christmas wonderlandish looking Rauhaniemi is. Even without the snow and ice, when water temps are between +2 and +4 you get a real feeling of well-being after taking a the sauna the way locals do.

Ice swimming season

October 1 to April 30. Mondays, Wednesday, Fridays 3 pm to 7.30 pm. Tuesdays Thursdays 3 pm to 8 pm : Weekends 1 pm to 7.00 pm.
**Summer season** May 1 to September 30, Weekdays 3 pm to 8 pm. Weekends 1 pm to 7.30 pm.

Shops in Finland -another large shopping center

If Ideapark is not big enough for you consider shopping at the Itäkeskus shopping center in Helsinki. -one of the biggest shopping centers in Finland and carries over 300 stores.

**Lets go inside Ideapark's Old-town section**

My favorite section in Ideapark is the 'Old Town' section built using red bricks and antiquated roof parts. There you will find lots of nice little cafes, restaurants, art, handwork, and metal crafts shops.

**Shops in Finland Under a Single Roof and in One Building**

The largest selection of shops in Finland under one roof dubbed Northern Scandinavia’s largest shopping center. Ideapark in Lempäälä, Finland. Shops cover popular Finnish, as well as international products. 180 different shops, 20 different cafes and restaurants to try out. This Finnish shopping center giant makes shopping possible in many Finnish popular stores, while traveling the minimal distance.
Local bakery **Cafe Aitoneipas** red tables and chairs, with a large wall-clock hanging on the wall. If you begin walking at this point straight in about 20 meters you turn your head to the right and see **Captain Hook** at the restaurant section of the old town.

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**Fun for Children at the best shops in Finland.**

Take your kids to kid care and then walk around alone with your spouse. Do some shopping just as a couple. Don’t worry, the kids are playing and having fun while you are looking for that perfect gift, designer clothes, or food for your trip. Indoors is a giant Jumping Castle for your kids to play in, while you sit down and relax with a massage.

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**When to go to Ideapark and how long to stay? Walking the halls of Ideapark**

When I need to get shopping done in a hurry, I shop weekdays between 7 pm -9 pm when there is far less people traffic. During weekdays, Ideapark closes at 9 pm.

No need to rush through Ideapark. Plan to spend at least 3 hours there. The longer the better. Folks park their RV’s, and stay the whole weekend since there is parking for RV’s as well. Best of all...parking is free.

Large light saucers evenly reflect light downward, illuminating walkways, creating the modern Finnish Ideapark look. While patches of different shades of brown stone floors reflect light back up.

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**Plenty of lockers**

Large lockers to store belongings you want to keep with you at Ideapark, but not as you are shopping.

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**Where is Ideapark located?**

Driving time and distances from larger Finnish cities:

- From Tampere: 17.6 km or about 15 minutes drive
- From Helsinki: 164.6 km or about 1.5 hours drive.
- When you drive from Helsinki to Tampere, you drive right past Ideapark.
- From Turku: 150 km or around 1 hour 45 minutes.
- Address: Ideaparkinkatu 4 37570 Lempäälä

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Try their food... tasty beer battered onion rings for starters, chicken wings the way you want them with a healthy helping of veggies and dip. A broad kids menu, and American style coleslaw. My favorite thin crusted pizza is in the old section.

Vacation idea: During a rainy or snowy day in Finland, Ideapark keeps you sheltered inside where you find popular and trendy shops in Finland.
Driving in Finland Experiences, Pictures and Favorite Routes

In my 12 years of driving in Finland, this country is the most easy, interesting, and fun (in the wintertime) to drive through. Northern Finland is much less populated than the south of the country. Between 25% to 30% of Finland’s population live in the southern part of the country, concentrated around towns and cities like: Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo, and Tampere...which means... as you drive through Helsinki which takes an hour or so, you’ve just driven past one third of Finland’s population.

- **Finnish roads get repaved frequently due to harsh winter weather conditions and usage.**
  - Finland has high standard, high quality paved roads. You'll see lots of road construction in the summer.
- **Driving in Finland is relaxed compared to downtown Manhattan driving:**
  - Finns are shy, and "generally speaking" like keeping distances. Hence, drivers keep away from following close to your bumper (except young drivers). Most avoid overtaking other vehicles speeding at 150 km/hour.

Approaching a car from the rear end. Driving in Finland...yes, Finns Do drive on the right side of the divided road.

- **Interesting to see while driving the country.**
- a variety of wild animals like: deer, moose, fox, rabbits. One caution about spotting Finnish Please follow this tip if you spot a moose while driving in Finland.
- lots of lakes, thick and sparse forests. Like this drive in the fall along a country road. I discovered a bridge in Vesilahti along Suonolantie

Pictures from the above drive. Google Street view left this out, but I’ll show you what it looks like in the next four pictures. These photos are taken from a small bridge as I am crossing between two bodies of land.

A Finnish farmhouse
Parked on the bridge

Panning to the right of the bridge...Parked on the bridge. The bridge connects to the opposite side, where the red farmhouse is.

Panning to the right, more lakeside scenery... **Lakeside scenery** around Suonolantie, Vesilahti. On a bridge in early fall when leaves on birch trees are turning yellow.

A final view from the bridge. The forest’s edge. The sky is white, the lake is completely calm. Not a soul around...in the distance, an orange flag floating above water. -a fisherman’s net. (Look carefully at the center right in the photo you can see the flag)

Suonolantie Suonolan road in Vesilahti

Want to drive where I have been? Type in... Suonolantie 300, Vesilahti. Then, once you get there, type in Takamaantie, Vesilahti. That should bring you to the bridge I am on.

Safety tip for driving in Finland in the fog:

Know where the fog light switch is on your dashboard. Use fog lights in the morning and at dusk.
See funny signs while driving in Finnish Lapland like these typical Finnish roadsigns: a red triangular caution sign with a reindeer symbol inside. The black area is Lapland. It basically means... watch out for reindeer!

A fun road sign you’ll see while driving in Finland. -The Moose Zone

Boundary sign for the moose fence

Is this a 'Moose-on-the-loose'? This sign means... the edge of the protective moose fence terminates 200 meters from this point forward. When you see this sign, consider keeping the speed of the vehicle 80 km/hour tops. -especially at dawn and dusk.

Insurances

The basic minimum vehicle insurance that you must have while driving is called liikenevakuutus. This is similar to bodily and property damage insurance. This type of insurance covers the other person’s vehicle, and personal damages. It does not cover damages to your own vehicle. If you want insurance which covers for damage to your vehicle, you need additional insurance called kasko. This is much like collision repair coverage insurance.

Driving in Finland with a vehicle registered in another EU country

When your vehicle is registered and insured in another EU country, you are able to use the vehicle up to 90 days upon entering Finland. Driving longer than 90 days requires one to register the vehicle in Finland, pay tax and to take out insurance in Finland.

General information about traffic & road signs

Driving in Finland is very similar to southern Europe's driving. A yield sign, is a yellow triangle with a red border. The red outline around a triangle usually indicates that it is a warning sign. Oh, and sorry, no right turning on red, like in the United States. Remember to yield to person on the right, if there is no stop light/sign for the other vehicle. What nonlocals and tourists have the most difficulties with are the names of the signs in Finland. In some areas, roadsigns include names in Finnish and Swedish languages.

Driving in Finland safety tip:
As your car is approaching an intersection, force yourself to view the right side of the intersection at the oncoming traffic. Look to see if there is a stop or yield sign for the right oncoming traffic. If it is a yield sign, it is always good to slow down. If there is no yield or stop sign, then slow down and stop, if needed. In this case, the oncoming traffic has right-of-way.
Tip about understanding names on road-signs in Finland:

You see a road sign with the name of a town or area. Most commonly, the very first line from top to bottom, left to right is the Finnish name, use this name for navigating to your destination. Like this... In this case the top line is the Finnish name, the bottom, Swedish. Turku in Finnish, ÅBO is Swedish.

Dual language signs

Wikipedia is for those curious and wanting more information about road signs in Finland, and what they look like.

Parking a car

Parking sometimes requires a small white parking stub, and a thin, blue plastic clock to indicate the time one parks. In the photo, the blue and white arrows pointing at the lower part of the windshield show the location on top of the dash, inside the car.

Make sure the clock and the stub is visible, and the time on the clock is set according to arrival time. The thin blue clock,(see the blue arrow) is always good to have in the car, since it gets used lots while parking a vehicle in city. If you are not sure a clock or parking stub is needed, look at the windshield of other parked vehicles.

How to use the parking clock

Safety items to consider while driving in Finland.

Use headlights all the time, and even when the vehicle is parked along the side of the road, while the engine is idling.

In towns and cities: If you are approaching a bus which is parked off to the right side and driving below 60 km/hr, and the bus signals as it pulls out in front of you, yield to the bus.

All passengers of the vehicle must have their seat-belts fastened while driving in Finland. Children under age 12 and shorter than 1,5 meters need their own seat or booster chair. Younger children(toddlers & babies) need a special baby seat which is positioned on top of the vehicle's rear seats, with the child's head facing the opposite direction.

If you drink two beers and drive, most likely the level of alcohol in your body is over the allowed limit. Rule of thumb: If you have to drink, consume less than one beer, then wait two hours before driving. Or better yet... Assign a designated driver.

Following the speed limits within +5km/hr/limit is still ok, but driving over 10km/hr/limit can get you a fine.

I don’t think you wanna get a ticket in Finland.

Rule-of-Thumb...Speed as little as possible. If you get a fine, the police balance the fine quantity against your income and offense.

Driving in Finland - countryside driving

If you approach a horse trotting along the side of the road, slow down, but no need to drive below 50 km/hr. Finnish horses are less shy than their owners.
Most minor roads directly off the highway are well paved and taken care of. In northern Finland, Lapland and eastern Finland there are non-asphalted and poorly marked roads. If you are using these road, be sure to have a good map, GPS navigation system, and plenty of fuel.

**Winter driving in Finland**

Make sure the vehicle has studded metal spikes whiles driving on snow or ice. This provides a greater degree of safety while driving under harsh winter weather conditions.

*A studded winter tire*

For wintertime driving in Finland, be sure to have a blanket with you, in case of a breakdown. Keep a shovel in the trunk, with a bag of sand. That way, if you get stuck in the snow, here is what to do:

---Get out, and turn off the engine. Relax, take a deep breath! Shovel away the snow and ice from underneath the car. Then remove snow & ice away from each wheel. Most importantly is removing snow & ice away from the side of the tire facing the front of the vehicle.

In other words...clear the snow and ice away from the front of the vehicle, by removing sections about 1 meter long x 50 cm wide x 2 centimeter deep strip toward the forward direction of each wheel.

Removing ice is important, since, once you start driving forward again, you want gravity to pull the vehicle down. Removing the ice creates a small valley in front of the vehicle, and helps get the momentum up as you are initially attempting to dislodge the vehicle for the first time. It works!

After the digging ceremony, sprinkle sand on top of the strips you dug out. It’s best to have dug out strips along the forward path for all wheels instead of just the power wheels.

**How to fuel up at the gas / petrol stations**

Most gas / petrol stations are highly automated. Here is how to tank up in Finland: First, insert the debit/visa card, type in a pass code, hit a few buttons, grab the nozzle, insert nozzle into the gas tank, and then squeeze the trigger. Easy!

Tip: Not all automated pumps accept foreign cards. So it is best to keep cash with you while driving in Finland. Make sure before pulling up to an automated gas/petrol station’s pump to read that it accepts cash setelli. That word setelli is usually written on the side of the pump.

Not all fuel stations accept cash. If you want to pay with cash, to be on the safe side, find the fuel pump that says: Kassa, cashier’s desk on it. Tank up first, then pay for you fuel inside. Phew!

Automobile fuel in Finland is unleaded. It is helpful to notice the colorful hoses of the automated fuel pumps. Black is for diesel, average price: 1.80 euros/liter. 95 octane is the green hose. 97 and 99 octane are more expensive between 1.30 - 1.50 euro/liter.

Many fuel-up stations also have cafes and shops, for eating/shopping. Lunch is served during the noon hours, also being the cheapest time during the day to eat. These gas and shop stations are attractive to Finns as they can also read daily Finnish newspaper for free. Many use the fill up stations to eat out, and as a meeting place. Use the 24 hour gas & shop station like ABC to fill up any time of the day. Otherwise, smaller gas / petrol stations are open between 7 am and 9 pm.

If you ever have an emergency, like an accident call the police at 112. According to law, you are to ‘help out’ at the scene of the accident. In case your vehicle breaks down, and you need to get towed, AL Autoliitto, claims to have a co-operation with AAA U.S.A. Non-members can dial 0200-8080 and pay 1.95 €/min + the phone net charges, enabling you to find the nearest towing/repair services.
Money Saving Tip:

Save hundreds of euros by driving in Finland between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm. If your car happens to break down in the night, after Autoliitto is no longer servicing, and you need help. Beware!!

The emergency operator will connect you to a private towing company. The minimum charge for towing/servicing from Autoliitto partners is 200 euros per pop. Ouch!

Food and eating

Why not pack a lunch. If stopping at the nearest gas / fuel station is what you want to do for lunch, be prepared to spend at least 10 euros per adult per stop. For a family of four, that is 40 euros per stop. Well over 100 euros per day. Expensive!

Instead, consider making a take-along lunch and stop along the side of the road to eat. Pasta in the super fast and easy to use outdoor Trangia outdoor stove cooker. -all you need are matches, gas, and water.

Even good for popping popcorn in. A dab of fuel goes into the removable center brass container. Strike a match, where the flame is, and...Ready! Heats up water in minutes, so soup is ready in a jiffy.

Need travel information for tourists about Finland? Travel maps, free travel guides? To get hard copy information about attractions, accommodations, sights,

buy tickets for events both locally/regionally, and in Lapland...

Drive 20 km’s towards Helsinki from Hämeenlinna on the Helsinki-Tampere highway E12. Stop at a large gas / fill up station called Linnatuuli. This structure is built over the highway. Here you will find free printed information covering all of Finland.

Linnatuuli address: Helsingintie 1426, 12400 Janakkala: location on a map

While driving in Finland and you come across small towns/villages, drive to the center of the town and look for the municipality office building kunnanvirasto.
Driving routes with scenic landscapes of Finland

Here are a few scenic driving routes with driving directions.

Driving in Finland along the archipelago - a short one day trip.

Begin this trip at the southwest tip of Finland in Turku. The Archipelago trail Saariston Rengastie is a route covering one of the most beautiful archipelagos in the world with incredible sea landscapes, beaches, grandiose nature, museums and yacht ports.

There are over 250 kilometers of road, 12 bridges, nine ferry boat crossings taking you from island to island. This stretch of road is open between June 1st - August 31st. By car this route takes one day to see. See ferry schedules at (www.fma.fi).

Along the way, as you stop in different municipalities, pick up free information about local restaurants, hotel accommodations.

Here is a breakdown of the route: Turku--->Pargas--->Nagu--->Korpo--->Houtskär--->Iniö--->Kustavi--->Taivassalo--->Askainen--->Merimasku--->Naantali--->Turku

Start off in Turku and head south to Kaarina. The drive takes you on highway 110. Head to Pargas. Take a detour of 6 kilometers to see the Kuusisto Castle ruins attraction.

From Pargas drive another 11 km’s to the next ferry landing called Lillmälö. You will pass by the Satmarks Cafe, (beach with volleyball) and the Lenholm conservation area. The ferry crossing from Lillmälö to Prostvik takes 10 minutes. Once in Prostvik, drive 15 km’s to get to the center of Nagu.

From the center of Nagu it is 14 km’s to the Pärnäs ferry landing. From Pärnäs your goal is to reach Korpo, where you find the Solaterra watchtower located in Rumar. -worth visiting. The Galtby Ferry Landing takes you from Korpo to Kittuis. -a 30 minute ferry ride to Houtskär.

Once you are in Houtskär stop by the archipelago museum and see an old wooden church from 1703. It is 14 km’s from Houtskär to the ferry landing of Mossala. You will take two different smaller ferries. It will take an hour to get to Dalen and the center of Iniö is another 3 km.

In Iniö there is a saw & wind-mill tourist attraction. Drive 6 km from the town center of Iniö, to another ferry crossing, which connects to the Kannvik inter-island ferry landing. From Kannvik to Kustavi it takes another 25 minutes by ferry.

Once you arrive in Kustavi’s Heponiemi landing, it is 17 km’s to Taivassalo, and a 22 km drive from Taivassalo to Merimasku. In Kustavi you may want to see the Isokari lighthouse. In Taivassalo keep driving on road 192 toward Askainen, where you absolutely must see the Louhisaaari Manor in Masku.

The Naantali Harbor. Moominworld is within walking distance.

On route from the village of Merimasku to the center of Naantali it is 11 km. and puts you close to the summer residence of the Finnish president called Kultaranta. -also worth a visit.

For more exact driving directions, I recommend buying a map to take along on the drive in the city of Turku, or use a navigation device.

A drive in Pirkanmaa -- Route 66, see two national parks in one day, stop at a lookout tower, see the Toriseva Cliffs around a small, long, and very deep lake in Finland. At the end of this trip, go on a 4 km hike at the Helvetinjärvi National Park.

Driving in Finland - worthwhile routes: Explore the Finnish version of the U.S. Route 66. For one, there is less traffic along this route than on the major highways like E63, or E12 (3).
Recommendation:

If you want to enjoy driving in Finland with less traffic, avoid the major E marked highways, and instead use the old highways or alternate major roads to get from point A to B. Route 66 is a classic example of this.

Driving in Finland - worthwhile routes: Drive in the northern direction towards Ruovesi and Virrat. As you drive past Ruovesi road 66 also called Mustajärventie, turn to the left toward the Seitseminen National Park. After visiting the park, get directions for the Riutaskorven Virkkistysmetsä, or Riuttanen, at the visitor center. Go birdwatching, or on a short hike to view a lake from the Haukijärvi tower. Next, drive north back up to Virrat, then head back south toward Ruovesi. Along the left side of the road you will see the Toriseva cliff attraction, where you can stop and see the 'deep-long-n-narrow lake' and have coffee and fresh pastries at the Toriseva Cafe. The trip ends after following route 66 further south until you see signs for the Helvetinjärvien National Park. You will access the park at the east side. You could start off your journey in Tampere as well.

Short scenic "driving in Finland" insider drives.

Drive near Savonlinna

30 km southwest of Savonlinna there is a 45 minute drive from Sulkava to Lohilahti. First you need to drive to Sulkava, Etelä-Savo then head on road 534 going northeast. After a few kilometers turn right on road 438, also called Vekarantie, this heads south. Keep driving through Rauhaniemi ---> Ruokoniemi. Then stop in Lohilahti or turn back before getting to Lohilahti. The road turns into Lohilahdentie. For a navigational device use the following address: Sulkava, Etelä-Savo as your source, and Lohiladentie 2, as your destination. Once you arrive in Lohilahti there is a cafe to buy food.

Driving in Finland, near Helsinki

70 km route near Helsinki through the countryside of Vihti. Take this scenic route which starts from the metro Helsinki area and goes through Vihti to Helsingintie along road 120, also known as the Vanha Poisintie. This is a 70 kilometer route, which starts in the city and then turns into interesting countryside driving in Finland. For navigational devices: Let’s say if you are starting off in Helsinki, for your destination, type in Hauhulan-tie 548(street name), Nummi-Pusula(city), southern Finland.

Drive across Lake Päijänne. -The largest body of water in Finland.

Here is one of our favorite "driving in Finland" short routes. A drive across lake Päijänne, which stretches for about 3 km over the lake. (A long stretch across water). There is a small lighthouse and a cafe for a pleasant stop along this drive. You can even drink the water from the lake...if you dare!

Driving in Finland from Porvoo to the southeastern Finnish coast

Take this drive from Porvoo to the area called Rösund. In Rösund there is a road called Båtviikintie. This trip takes about 50 minutes covering a distance of 45 kilometers to the coastal scenic stretch ending in a residential area. For this destination, type in Båtviikintie(street) Perjanä/Rösund(area) for navigational devices, and off you go.
A guide to what is attractive about Finland?

Here, is where you will find what is attractive about Finland. General information like: Finnish people, the culture. Or the land like features, for example national parks in Finland, and what there is to offer.

Finnish man riding near a field on his old red bicycle!

What might be attractive about Finland to you? Is it art, architecture, design, festivals, music, or simply nature.

Why live in Finland or travel there?

Here are a few reasons 'Why?

• Discovery of new places and quaint villages. Each with their own little differences, even in the little village where we live, we discover new little sights regularly.
• Finland’s different regions and Finland’s special people group like the Sámi people living in Finnish Lapland.
• Discover how bilingual Finland is when you travel through the Swedish speaking areas. This gives greater understanding of culture and language.
• Experience and do things as never before. You might tell your friends: "You’ve been there, and done that," You might find you’d like to live in Finland because you’d have a higher quality of living.

Beware, when visiting Finland. You may not want to leave to go back home too soon. The more we have traveled around and discovered secret places in Finland, the more we realize how much more is left to be discovered.

The numerous "secret places" in Finland may keep you from returning home---like it's simplicity, uncluttered space, and various outdoor activities. You’re bound to say Afterwards. Wow, I never expected that! In short, this guide will help you gain a perspective of what aspects are attractive about Finland, from an insider’s view.

Attractive in Finland & What You'll find attractive about Finland.

Scenic Finland - what regions in Finland are like. - southern Finland, coastal Finland, east, northern and Lapland.

Finnish culture -what Finnish people are like.

Finnish design - simple & intriguing

Languages used in Finland - I dare you to try using it!

Moose, the brown Bear and more... - Video See a Moose being lured!

Trees, moss, mushrooms and berries of Finland - Common trees, berry types and a bit of information about mushroom picking.

National Parks in Finland -what makes these attractive about Finland, starting from the largest to the smallest.

Ruska - A colorful short time during the Fall/Autumn season

Education in Finland - Take out a DVD from the library for free.

Finnish Architecture - What colors and basic designs to expect.

The ‘northern lights’ in Finland - see dazzling pictures of the Aurora Borealis.

The colors of ‘dusk’ & ‘dawn’ in Finnish Lapland during the long winter.
Scenic Finland

For anyone interested in outdoor activities among virgin nature, Finland has opportunity for hiking, cycling, rowing, canoeing, camping, or sports, like rock climbing. Visually attractive about Finland are the large rocks with smooth tops.

Some rocks are polished by the waves of the sea, like those in the archipelago. They offer a place of rest for wildlife of the sea and air. Rocks, and cliff formations in the typical Finnish wooded forests are good for climbing on. These have jagged sides, and gradual, mild slopes ideal for family hiking trips. Picture on the bottom. A view of the Toriseva attraction in Virrat. An easy walk from the parking lot to the cafe.

We begin our journey starting from the very southern tip of Finland.... the Åland Islands Achvenanmaa near Turku, include thousands of islands. This is a Swedish speaking area with an autonomous government. Åland is great for fishing and hiking. Exploring the unexplored...I hear (hush hush!) there are hidden treasures beneath the waters in the Finnish archipelago. You probably need to find insiders to take you on a treasure hunt in the sea.

The west coast of Finland is flat with few lakes.

Finland has a one-of-a-kind west-coast with real beaches like Yytteri in Pori. Yyterri’s got six kilometers of Sahara-like fine sand and dunes for walking, with decent wind-surfing on open sea. The Yyteri beach is located at the Gulf of Bothnia. The west coast is also windy. Take for instance, the northwest city of Kokkola, where Aura lived while she was studying. She claims that it’s windy there all the time.

Attractive about Finland - lot’s of green forests, water, and plenty of open fields of southern Finland.

Picture yourself flying in a helicopter. Looking down, you see dark green woods comprised of spruce trees, and patches of lakes, dark blue in color. This blue-green effect in southern Finland is visible particularly while flying by airplane into Finland, approaching land. See the same blue-green effect while on a summer cottage at a lake, or driving across this bridge in Valkeakoski. A picture of the Sääksmäki Suspension Bridge.

The Sääksmäki Suspension Bridge, Sääksmäen silta

Blue Water contrasted with Green Forest. Traveling north of Tampere... let’s say your on your way to Kuusamo, or better yet, on your way to Rovaniemi, Lapland, to see Santa. Lapland has mountains which are treeless. Should we say: they look like large bald hills.
The Four Seasons Adds Spice to Life

Attractive about Finland - The four distinctive seasons. Experience the Finnish winter shivering snowy months with lots of ice. On the contrast, the summer season: warm, dry, with occasional July showers.

Fall in Finland, indistinguishably follows after it’s name. Leaves on trees fall to the ground. The country displays it’s true colors at Ruska time, with bursts of orange, yellow, red and brown, followed by a season when the weather toggles between snow and rain.

The cold winter approaches in October, bringing cooler temperatures with snow. The snow usually begins melting early in the new year. By the month of May most of the snow in southern Finland has melted.

Finnish Culture

Attractive about Finland - the Finnish culture! Finland remains strongly independent, especially after signing a peace pact with Russia in the late 40’s. Today, Finland is a member of the EU. One could politely say... that people in Finland do what they want, and no one gets in the way.

People in Finland are generally:

- Tough with natural resilience.
- Confident and self-sufficient
- Courageous

Relating to others:

- They seldom initiate a conversation with a stranger, unless their personality is very outgoing. Try speaking English to a Finn and see what happens!
- Finnish children tend to be shy, a characteristic picked up by their upbringing and environment.

Stress-free is the key, when it is time to take a holiday vacation, from the everyday rhythm of work. Life ceases, for the Finn. The ultimate stress free time of year in Finland is in July, when business slows down. This is a prime time to be at a summer cottage enjoying living "in nature"!

Tip: Reserve you summer cottage in Finland well in advance. At least 3 to 6 months before coming to Finland.

A venture into the woods. Go canoing for days while catching and frying fish over an open fire. Go on a Brown Bear Safari -stay far away from civilization where you can find genuine quietness. -a place to contemplate and reflect on life... on the contrary, overnight in a 4 or 5 star hotel where all the modern conveniences are available. Yep, you can do this in Finland.

Finnish Design

The aesthetically appealing, eye-catcher along the side of the road, is attractive about Finland. Rough design illuminated by colored lights is the left picture, cutout 20 meter high cliffs along the E4 Helsinki highway in the night...alive with light.

Next are the same cliffs, during the day, gray rock with nothing to see! Who would of thought of blasting out a granite mountain, building a highway through it and lighting it up as a night-time 'drive-thru' spectacle. From personal experience, this sure does help break the monotony of driving at night.
Attractive about Finland are Finland's fine designs like the special glass designs of Iitala, or the popular Kalevala koru jewelry manufacturer of Nordic themed designed jewelery. I am particularly fascinated with the snake ring.

**Stoney surface of Finland - Finland's natural rock design.**

Attractive about Finland are the amazing rocks in fields weighing between 5 kg's (11 pounds) and 5,000 kg's (11,000 pounds). For those who have seen, you'll know what I mean. While traveling along a country road, all of a sudden you notice a pile of rocks in the middle of field next to an old red farmhouse. You may be wondering... "How did that get there"? Answer: The countryside landscapes are laden with rocks. Once the rocks were out of the way, the farmer could plant his field.

Out shopping for Finnish designed products to take home? Try:

- **Dishware** - Plates, bowls and anything related to eating with and serving foods.
- **Textiles** - Everything made of yarn or thread. Textiles are produced using weaving looms.
- **Finnish handwork and hand crafts** are taught in schools, appreciated, and passed on to the next generation. Getting a look at the way Finns create designs is worth a trip through the old-town section inside shops in Finland's IdeaPark mall.

So the farmer just moved the rocks into a pile into the middle of the field. What makes rocky old **graveyards** attractive about Finland since theses may spook you!

Finland has different areas where, back long ago, people piled rocks together in order to form a grave, or mark a burial place, used especially before the mediaval times, but also later, as places of worship. People left gifts to the spirits to get good fortune for the harvest and health. These burial places are called Kalmisto. Those ancient graveyards which are of historical significance, are marked with a sign.

Rising rocks between Finland and Sweden...

...are what you can see near the city of Vaasa, and it's the first World Natural Heritage site of the land. What makes the Kvarken Archipelago attractive about Finland is that the land rises 8.5 millimeters (.33 inches) each year and creates 1 square kilometer (.39 square miles) of new land.

The Kvarken Archipelago has thousands of islet, with more popping up each year. Visiting this particular tourist attraction reveals to you a classic example of the stony surface of Finland’s western coast. See pictures of the rocks at Kvarken.

**Language**

Learning Finnish language benefits.

Hold your seat! No need to sweat learning the language perfectly for a short trip to Finland. Many Finns are happy to communicate with you in English. At least while traveling in Finland as a tourist, I would not put pressure on yourself to learn the language. However... it is attractive to the Finnish people as they watch you, the non-native speaker attempting to learn Finnish!!

Attempting to learn the Finnish language is like getting a huge feather in your hat. It takes you further than you think. I was encouraged, as others cheered me on, while learning the basics during my first few months of Finnish language school.

Generally speaking, try using spoken communication to Finns while shopping, getting services, working with elderly folks, or at almost any general, day to day level. As my boss would say... “Practice speaking Finnish courageously!”

**Moose and Bears!**

The shoulder of a moose is around 2 meters above ground level. If you have ever seen the massive body of a moose running along the roadside, you soon understand why there are red-yellow moose warning signs all over Finland. When you are driving, keep a watch out in the mornings and at dusk, since moose are on the move.
If you happen to be unable to avoid a moving moose target, try to collide into the hind of the body. Then call 112 for notifying emergency authorities.

Attractive about Finland is it’s wildlife

Bears: Every once in a while in the news you will hear of a bear attack. One word of caution! If you get near the bear cubs then mamma bear gets angry. It is best not to get in between. Normally, the bears in Finland are timid, and run away from humans. In Finland, there are at least 1000 brown bears, the bear minimum; most bears are in eastern Finland. The brown bears find their way into Finland from Russia.

Wolves: There are between 200 - 300 gray wolves in Finland. Wolves are an endangered species and usually pose no threat to humans.

The Raccoon dog nyctereutes procyonoides, which may come across while in the forest on a hike. While driving you may see a fox, like I did on a couple of occasions. Video of a Finnish fox eating gooseberries in someones yard.

Trees, Moss, Lichen and Berries

Over 80 percent of Finland’s land area is forest. The most forest covered country in Europe. The most commonly found of the roughly 30 tree species in Finland are: Spruce, Birch and Pine. In Finnish Lapland, there are Scots pine along with dwarf and mountain birch. You will notice the further north you travel the trees appear more and more stubby.

From southwestern Finland, around the coast toward Helsinki spanning east to the Russian border there is a belt, or, the central European mixed forest zone. In this zone you will see maple, linden, oak and an even ash species.

The larger part of Finland is comprised of a needle woods zone which has dry sand. This is a damp area in which pine trees are dominant. You will notice that in the spruce congested forest, birch will grow as well. The two trees kind of battle against each other in the forests.

Attractive about Finland, as crazy as it sounds, are mosses and lichen. There are over 1000 types of lichen and 800 different mosses from Lapland to the southern coast. Mosses and Lichen are typically found in the billowy bubbly looking spruce needle woods.

Hiking becomes an interesting and enjoyable experience while being exposed to the variety of natural attractions inside the forests. Here I got a good look at beard moss as I was climbing a tree. Auras says: This is a sign of clean air.

Attractive about Finland are the wide variety of mushroom. Finland is the spot for mushroom lovers, with hundreds of mushroom species. Get a peek at which Finnish mushrooms you can eat, which to avoid, how to
handle, and which Finnish mushrooms are the tastiest. Berries...Enjoy walking through the forests while picking berries. Locals do this regularly.

Popular types of Finnish berries and what you can do with them:

- Pick blueberries by the side of roads or in the forest. Good for blueberry pie, good for making juice and syrup with.
- Cloud berries Rubus chamaemorus. Eat with squeaky cheese.
- Crowberry Empetrum nigrum, a blueberry look-alike.
- Cowberry or Lingonberry Vaccinium vitis-idaea.

Wild strawberries.

Popular berries grown in gardens:

- Black currant Ribes nigrum, red currant, and white currant.
- Strawberries.
- Northern Highbush Blueberry Vaccinium corymbosum. Pensasmustikka.
- Gooseberries (green, white, red.)
- Sea-buckthorn Hippophae L., Tyrniä in Finnish. Grows wild or in gardens.
- Blackberry -- Rubus fruticosus, Karhunvatukka.

Any of these berries can be made into jam, marmalade, juice, kiiseli, pies, pastries, pulla eat them fresh with yogurt or muesli. Examples of use: Strawberry/rhubarb jam on bread, toast, porridge, or yogurt. Bake a luscious blueberry pie. You can buy a juicer, dump any of the berries in and makes some great juice. Though not a berry, rhubarb from the garden makes another tasty pie.

Finnish ruska

What is attractive about Finland is seeing the colors during the fall time, particularly at the time they call "Ruska". This is the time during the year when colors in Finland are most spectacular.

Upon viewing Finland from the eye of a bird, you would look down and see vast spruce tree tops, patches of swamps, and lakes. When temperatures drop and nights turn frosty, get ready for some spectacular colors.

Usually the difference between the temperatures from the furthest point north in Finland, and the remotest southern point is between 5 to 10 celcius. Which brings us to a...

rule-of-thumb about temperatures drops.

A typical scenario locals rave about:
When the weather begins to get colder, and you live in Tampere, southern Finland. In the fall when the days are noticeably shorter and someone says: "Did you hear that it went below freezing in Lapland already." What that person really means is: Beware, because in a week or two it will be freezing here in Tampere too.

If you are in Lapland during the colorful Ruska time, or any other part of Finland you will soon see the unique color of tree and shrubs as the freezing cold helps to remove the chlorophyll in the leaves. Here are the colors: Orange and bright orange, dark to light brown, deep red, green(chlorophyll still present), yellow.
Finland Pictures - nature Trips in Vesilahti During Summer and Fall

Enjoy this collection of Vesilahti Finland pictures. Picture locations are within 20km distance of each other.

End of July in Vesilahti Finland. A sunset in the sky at 9.30pm Koskenkyläntie.

Amazing cloud formation in Vesilahti Finland. An evening sky at 9.35pm Koskenkyläntie.

Over-the-treetop blue sky in Vesilahti Finland. Panning to the left of the previous picture. Two birds are in the sky.

These tree are lit up red by the sun. The sun is behind me and it is almost 10pm at night. July driving in Vesilahti along Koskenkyläntie. Farmers fields on either side of the

Now we go on into the woods about 13km drive from here to visit where Tomi spent a weekend with the cub-scouts. We will take a short trip around a pond while we are there.

Finnish poleball being played at local cub scout meeting in June 2008. The one who wraps the ball around 5 times w
Tomi and I begin our trip around Black Pond (Mustalammi). We start off by taking the Cub Scout path. On our way we meet some really inventive Finnish kids!! This hurls heavy objects into the air.

On the other side of the pond is a dock where the Cub Scouts camped out.

The final ceremony. Apple bobbing game, story telling, and singing of silly songs. Tomi and his cub mates win a competition in ‘clean-up.’—a lollipop was his prize.

On we drive for some Vesilahti Finland pictures of Laukko Horses.

On a country road in Narva, Vesilahti. Same pine tree as before. Sun is rising from the left.

Tomi and I begin our trip around Black Pond. Here is some lush green grass growing along the side of the pond. We follow a very narrow path around the edge of the pond.

Tomi walks over a small wooden bridge. This stream is only a few feet wide. Beware when walking near streams and swampy areas! There may be soft clay. We spot some of those on this trip. (Not shown in the picture)
Panning to the left side of the pine tree....A farmers field. Sun is out of our eyes on the right.

Laukko Horses - Horses slowly edge their way closer to me as I am enjoying the scenery. The Laukko horses are friendly!

Winter - time Pictures


Pictures in January -Hues of blue, beset with white snow. We live 5 kilometers from where the children attend school. (Tomi 8 and Rosa’s 6 ) The country school has 37 children. During the weekdays I drive them to school, and pick them up at noon. Here is what our drive looks like. First we drive across this open road, enter into a wooded area, keeping our eyes open for white-tailed deer.

The ‘prairie like’ road

Today, the snow is attractive, glistening white. The trees demand our attention. So I have to get some pictures. Our first stop! -off to the left of the road is a scene one sees in dreams or movies. Do you like taking pictures in January, or any cold time of the year. Want to show them off? This scene looks like from the movie ‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe : December 2005’ -Narnia series, when Lucy Georgie Henley, discovers the secret closet and enters the winter wonderland scene.
Snow caked spruce. The weight of the snow causes the branches to bend downward. Here is a picture what the winter looks like in southern Finland. Lapland, is only 1,500 km north of this picture looks like this, except the trees are 40% smaller.

After a 6 minutes drive, the landscape is wooded. We drive in and out of patches of forests, through breaks in the fields. Into the forest we go, around bends and sharp winding narrow roads. Almost at the school. It is 12.00 noon.

It is noon!
The sun is trying to peek through the other side of the woods. Got the camera pointed at the peaks of a small patch of spruce trees.

_Spruce tree tops_

More pictures in January at home after picking up the kids from school...a view from our front yard.

_Back home_

Rosa admires the snowy scene. The birch patch on the right are spectacular to see in January.

_Clear blue sky in the background._

The average low temperatures in Finland during January are between -9 °C (16 °F). Comparable to that of the city of Des Moines, Iowa, U.S.A.
Tip: When taking pictures in January, the weather in Finland is freezing cold. Here is a way to keep from damaging your camera.

Make sure you let the camera cool off in a camera bag for 10 minutes, before exposing the lens to the cold. A large zip-loc bag also works.

I usually transport my camera bag (camera in the bag) directly from room temperature directly to the cool trunk of the car. Drive for 25 minutes, take the camera out and begin taking pictures.

The colder it is outside, the longer you let the camera cool inside the bag. That way when you pull the lens cover, you avoid getting water in the lens. The same goes when transporting the camera into a warm environment from the bitter cold.

Winter-time activities for the family.

The cold weather usually does not stop us from being outside. Here, a friend is giving the kids a snowmobile tour. Going round and round in the same tracks. A snowmobile trailer ride in an open field for children.

Snowmobile riding

Three kids get a ride in the homemade snowmobile trailer.

Cross Country Skiing Pictures in January

Cross-country skiing is very popular in Finland. You can ski for hours or even days on the marked/maintained cross-country paths. Where we live - Southern Finland. The best seasons for cross-country skiing is from January to March. When going to visit Santa in Lapland, ski from December to April. That is almost 6 months of skiing. Tomi stays on the trail.

Staying on the track

Cross-country trails in Finland are usually pre-formed. They are the same paths/trails used for hiking during the warm season.

Cross-country trails connect between the same origin and destination. It is easy to know where you are going when following the marked paths.

Our pictures in January show a family friendly trail. Of course there are more demanding cross-country trails for expert skiers.
Off the track!

Ice-skating and hockey fun in the evening with Tomi and Rosa at school.

On a Sunday evening at 7 pm we decide to go ice-skating to work on our hockey shooting skills! We have the whole ice rink to ourselves. And it is free of charge.

After 2 hours of ice-skating and shooting, daddy is worn out. This is a simple and inexpensive way to give your children an evening activity, and let out some stress before beginning the week. It is polite, to keep an eye out for other skiers, if you happen to loose your balance and get off-track! And walkers walk to the side of the track’s, preventing damage to the track.

Outdoor with friends

After skiing and snowmobiling -- Our neighbors and nearby village folks take a snack-break sausages roast.

Tomi left - Rosa is ready to shoot the puck!

Rosa aiming to score...!
Education in Finland

95% of all the people can read and write. Everyone can attend free public school. Private elementary schools are quite rare, but they too offer a cost-free education. All the kids attending, get a free warm meal. Most little kids go to child care and most moms work outside the home.

Almost 100% of the families have at least one computer at home with an internet connection. Finnish children like to play computer games, watch TV, play outside, ski, skate, play hockey and football, bike and swim. Most of the schools have a school library and all the municipalities have at least one library. Getting a book from the library is free and you can take out as many books, CD’s and videos as you like at one go.

Most children start to learn a foreign language in 3rd grade. Most commonly it is English, German or Russian. In the 7th grade everyone starts to study Swedish (or Finnish, if they go to a Swedish speaking school). Those who are interested, can study yet another foreign language from 8th grade on. Kids must go to school for 9 years. Senior high is optional. After 9 years of school there is a choice to go to community college level or senior high if they want to study at the university.

Architecture in Finland

Here is what to expect:

Modern Nordic with a touch of classic style...Modern Finnish style...Romantic (National Romantic)...

The countryside color harmony in Finland. -a visually pleasing experience.

You may not notice this at first visit, often people build private houses out in the woods far ways drive off the main roads.

In the country side where we live in southern Finland, there are rules to building a house. It is important that colors match the environment. For instance, if there are fields near house, the houses match the yellow fields. So the building codes direct houses to be painted yellow.

The same goes for the outside look of the structure, and it's surface. That is slightly different from the dark red which is commonly used to paint country houses and barns in the Finnish countryside. Many older farms-houses are painted with a traditional red from the early 1900.

Attractive about Finland -traditional farmhouse structures in the Finnish countryside.

easy to manufacture the paint at home, basically, this red paint is a do-it-yourself paint, that everyone used to paint their house with. And some still do! The 'red' color is popular in the Finnish countryside today.
Before modern Finland as we know it today, and even before the Russian rule (1809-1917), Finland was under the rule of Sweden (1150-1809). Cities along the coast like Porvoo or Turku were basically made of wood. And as history goes, these wooden city centers were burnt down time after time.

Architecture of Finland in the cities includes a combination of styles. When you see the architecture styles in city of Helsinki, or Tampere you get the feeling that Finland looks modern, even to the extent one could say: “Space Age like” The architectural styles in Helsinki are influenced by Carl Ludvig Engel, a German architect. Other architectural styles in Finland are Jugend and Art Nouveau. Finnish building quality is high, for obvious reasons, since the building must undergo severe temperature differences, between warm summers, and the cold frost in the winter. Generally speaking, Finnish building structures are built to last.

Take a look at a few building styles by popular Finnish Architects...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Architect</th>
<th>Building and Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alvar Aalto</td>
<td>Finlandia Hall, Helsinki</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Modern Finnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johan Sigfrid Sirén</td>
<td>Parliament House, Helsinki</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Combination neoclassicism/early twentieth century modernism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Bryggman</td>
<td>The extension of the - Åbo Academy University library</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Nordic Classicism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Northern lights as seen in Finland

Finnish Lapland, geographically, covers the top one-third part of Finland and considered everything above the arctic circle. The city of Rovaniemi is in Lapland, where the sunshine shines for a whopping 130 minutes in January. Yep, this is where Santa Clause’s Village is with Santa Clauses’ main post office.

Attractive about Finland is the seeing the Northern Lights Aurora Borealis. Do a search in Google, and see for yourself this fantastic light. Auroras appear in the sky as arcs or cloudy spots, and, streaks in the sky. A long reddish streak may indicate an approaching Aurora phenomenon. Auroras appear as movement which brightens, or flickers suddenly.

The reason that you should go to Finnish Lapland to see the lights is that it is 10 times more frequently occurring than in southern Finland. Or 1000% chances higher you will see this wonderful display in Finnish Lapland compared to southern Finland. Once we saw the Northern Lights in southern Finland from our back yard. Getting away from streetlight and vehicle lights is easy while living in the the Finnish countryside. And seeing the Northern Lights happened when I did not expect it to happen. We hopped in our car and drove to the nearest field and enjoyed the violet green and red night sky colors.

Yes, I really want to see the 'Northern Lights' LIVE-Ok, then...

...In (January and March) there is a small village in Lapland called Kilpisjäri, located at the very northwestern tip of Finland. According to research the best time to see the phenomenon is between 9 and 10 pm from January through March. Go with local experts who have experience in finding this phenomenon. There are short expeditions called Revontuliretket you can take with a guided tour, sip some warm berry juice while trudging in the forest with snow-shoes for an hour. That is quite a trip!

Tip! If You really want to try to see them by yourself. Since the Northern lights in Lapland tend to occur every other night,(and that is not science) check the weather conditions for clear night skies. Plan a hike off a country road with snow-shoes. The Aurora Borealis can be seen in most parts of Lapland. The best times for Northern Lights viewing are September and October, and again between end of August and April.
National Parks

The Torronsuo National Park showing the wet & soggy area in the center of the park.

Attractive about Finland - the National Park’s. walk, hike, trek, ski. At most national parks there are places to stop and sit to make an open fire, and overnight for free. Many of the trails in Finland have wooden shelters with roofs for more friendly overnighting as compared to camping in tents. In other words, no need to sleep under the stars, since these wilderness huts/outdoor shelters protect you from the rain/snow. Check the exact location of these wooden huts beforehand on the maps of the particular national park.

National Park Maps also show you the location for camping and for making open-fires. Everything is free to use. Remember though...take the garbage with you in consideration of the next person to use the facilities.

Remember to observe the following: Make open fires and set up camp only where permitted. Usually the spots are marked. Also leave your hunting rifle behind, and no off-road vehicles allowed.

There are 37 national parks across Finland. Lemmenjoki park located in Inari and the Kittilä region in Lapland are one of the biggest and best known for their unique, untouched nature.
The Colors of Lapland in the winter!

In Finnish Lapland, let’s say if you are in Levi, Lapland, Rovaniemi or Kittilä in mid-December. The following is what is attractive about Finland. Get up at 7 am, and take a look outside your cottage window. There is no daylight as such, until after 10 am. The temperature is 25 degrees Celsius below zero. (minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit) On a clear day, you’ll see a full moon hovering in the sky over the very deep snow, illuminating the fells tall Lapland hills and the short, slender northern spruce. The skylight consists of colorful combinations of light-blue, dark-blue and hues of gray. Like out of a Sci-Fi movie! Perhaps a walk on the moon? According to Finland.fi this blue-grey transitional period is very common in Lapland and less common in southern Finland. Experience these wintertime colors of Finnish Lapland. 1.5 hours just before dawn of the day, and again shortly after the sun disappears.

Finland's National Parks - An overview of the best parts and driving directions

What special features national parks in Finland offer, and what makes each of the 35 parks different. Find out which you may want to take trip to.

Following is a description of the parks, starting from northern Finland, which has Finland’s largest parks, working our way down to the south.

National Parks in Finland locations from north to south of Finland.

Lemmenjoki - uppermost north
Urho-Kekkonen - uppermost northeast
Pallas-Yllästunturi - uppermost northwest
Pyhä-Luosto - northeast of Rovaniemi.
Oulanka - near Kuusamo/Russian border.
Riisitunturi - close to Kuusamo.
Syöte - southeast of Rovaniemi.
Bothnian Bay National Park - Perämeren Kansallispuisto - northwestern coast near Kemi.
Rokia - in the center of Finland.
Hildenportti - center/eastern east of Kajaani.
Tiilikkajärvi - 2 hr drive south of Kajaani.
Salamajärvi - south-central Finland.
Patvinsuo - southeast of the center of Finland.
Koli - 6 hr drive northeast of Tampere.
Pyhä-Häkki - 1.5 hr drive north of Jyväskylä.
Petkeljärvi - 1.5 hr east of Joensuu.
Kolovesi - 3 hr east of Jyväskylä.
Kauhaneva - 3.45 hr north of Helsinki.
Helvetinjärvi - 1.5 hr north of Tampere.
Leivonmäki - 1 hr drive south of Jyväskylä.
Linnansaari - 45 min northwest of Savonlinna.
Seitsemäni - 1.5 hr north of Tampere.
Lauhanvuori - 3 hr northwest of Tampere.
Isojärvi - 1.30 hr east of Tampere.
Puurijärvi - 1.20 hr southwest of Tampere.
Päijänne - 1.5 hr northeast of Hämeenlinna.
Reposvesi - 1.50 hr east of Lahti.
Kurjenrahka - 45 min northeast of Turku.
Torronsuo - 1hr southwest of Hämeenlinna.
Valkmusa - near Kotka.
Liesjärvi - 2 hr drive south of Tampere.
Nuksio - near Helsinki.
Itäinen - Suomenlahti out on an island not too far from Kotka.
Tammisaari Ekenäs - south coast.
Saaristomeri - south of Turku.

General Information

Most of the parks which I have listed have long and short trails. Here, I mention the shorter trails, and approximate time you may need to walk the trail.

Overnight accommodation is free when you take your own sleeping bag and are willing to overnight in a wooden shelter in which there is no running water or standard plumbing, and no mosquito netting. Otherwise, many of the parks have shelter for rent.

Wet things you will find at National Parks in Finland. In Finland, the word suo is directly translated into the English, and means, bog, or swamp. You will notice some Finnish words end in suo. For example: Patvinsuo. (The name of one of the national parks in Finland). Or Suomi(Finland), swamp-land has the word suo in the beginning.

A swamp basically is a flooded forest, a wet area. But you can walk on it. However, most of the time you will notice wooden walking platforms "duck board" built as a walkway over wet areas, so you will not sink in.

A bog or mire: Usually wet and spongy to walk on. (I would not recommend trying) could be a wet area containing shrubs and herbs, and even contains splotches of forest in the middle of a mire.

Find out if the Visitor Center is open. Leave no room for chance!

Tips for fast search results:

Most parks have visitor centers from which you may want to get information upon arrival to the park. I recommend to first to obtain most recent opening hours for visitor centers by copying and pasting the name of the center found in this text into your favorite search engine.

Save time and money planning your trip.

Though I have personally driven to a handful of these parks myself, getting to the final destination might be miserable, if you have not planned out the route, or you are spontaneous soul like me. I cannot stress the amount of wasted time/fuel. :-& So, that is why...

...I have Directions Links where I use Google maps/Via Michelin to give you driving directions all the way to a hiking trail or visitor center. Use these links for a number of functions like...

- Calculate the time/fuel your trip will take to the park.
- Enter your own starting point address.
- Get a concept of where the park is on a map.
- Enter information for you navigational GPS device. (this is somewhere near the link)
- Find out what cities/towns are closest to a park.

Example of use: You can use the directions links to trace out the final two or three roads of your journey onto your hard copy map, or just print out directly from Google/Via Michelin. Why only the last few roads? Because those are the trickiest.

Tip: If in doubt, use Google street view to see where your final destination is. Always check that the street you are turning onto is actually a street one can drive on.

If you have a navigational device, the municipality of each park is listed, so please use the information provided to get you there. Otherwise for more detailed information go to www.luontoon.fi. 
Note: Some parks include video links about the park or related to the park.
**Lemmenjoki National Park**

**Lemmenjoen Kansallispuisto**

Lemmenjoki National Park is located in the uppermost northern tip of Finnish Lapland, close to the Norwegian border. This is a great park to walk in if you want to be alone for a long time. It’s possible to camp inside the park, to find a romantic place to set tent.

**Largest Park**

Measuring 2,850 square kilometers, Lemmenjoki Park is the largest national park of Finland and one of the largest of Europe. It gets its name from the Lemmenjoki River, which separates two slabs of Finnish tundra (Joki means ‘river’ in Finnish).

**Camping Inside the Park**

The park is divided into different zones in order to protect the wilderness. Follow the detailed park maps to set up tent and in the designated overnighting areas. You can use rent-free huts for overnighting (autiotupa) or rental huts.

**Things to Do**

Lemmenjoki National Park is great for hiking. There are both marked and unmarked trails. Short and long trails for longer hikes. Visit the village called Njurkulahti where there is a hotel and camping grounds for overnighting. From here you can rent canoes from local companies.

If you’d like to join the current wild food trend, then you can go berry and mushroom picking in Lemmenjoen National Park without restriction. Among others, you can find blueberries, crowberries, cloudberries and lingonberries there.

You can also take a boat trip along the Lemmenjoki River and enjoy the fantastic scenery, go swimming or Fishing in the River. Make sure to purchase a permit. You can buy this from tourism enterprises in the area. In the winter, consider going on a Husky safari along the frozen banks of the Lemmenjoki river.

**Park History**

The history of Lemmenjoki National Park probably goes back into prehistoric times, as river valleys have been favored places for human settlements for thousands of years. In the 1800s, the Sami people moved into the area with their reindeer, making reindeer herding a common activity in the region.

If you are a gold-hunting enthusiast Lemmenjoki National Park may be the place to give it a shot. In the early 1900’s there was a real gold rush. Today, gold diggers are still active inside the park every summer, finding gold nuggets of up to 50 grams.

**Location**

Lemmenjoki National Park is way way up north, 30 kilometers southwest of Inari and 120 kilometers northeast of Kittilä. If you are driving, you’ll meet the park halfway between Levi and Inari.

Finnair offers cheap round-trip flights from Helsinki to Ivalo. From Ivalo take a bus to Inari. From there you can take a mail/shuttle taxi to the park to the village of Njurkulahti.

Getting there by car: Drive to the village of Njurkulahti. That is where you will find information about the park in the summer. Address: 99800 Enare, Finland. Or use: Inari (area), Njurkulahti (city), Lappi, Finland.

**Urho Kekkonen National Park**

**Urko Kekkosen Kansallispuisto**

Measuring 2,538 square meters, Urho Kekkonen National Park is the second largest national park of Finland (after Lemmenjoki National Park). It is located up north, in Finnish Lapland near the Russian border and is crossed by the Suomujoki river.

The vast area of the park covers broad mires, magnificent fells and backwoods, making it an inviting place for visitors to hike during all seasons.

**Park Highlights**

Urho Kekkonen National Park is one of the most favourite spots for those who want to see the famous Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis). Named after the Roman goddess of the dawn Aurora and the Greek name of the wind Boreas, the Northern Lights appear at night as a beautiful green and red glow.
Things to Do

The park is one of Finland's most popular places for hiking. Around 180,000 hikers visit it each year. The western side of the park has marked trails, which are very suitable for inexperienced hikers. Advanced hikers are welcome to make long and demanding hikes in the park's wilderness zones. If you want to go on some hiking trails, Saariselkä is where you can start.

There are 42 huts inside the Urho Kekkonen National Park. Most of them are free and open, so you can take them when you find them unoccupied. Some of them are closed and need to be booked. Reservations are handled by the Koilliskaira Visitor Center.

Most hikes start from one of the two visitor's centers, Koilliskaira Visitor Center in Tankavaara or Savukoski Visitor Center in Savukoski. Both have a permanent exhibition about all aspects of the park, and of course they are great places to get more information about things to do.

The park has 200 km of maintained ski trails, making it great for ski trips that can last up to 2 weeks if you can manage to bring enough food, water and equipment with you. In Saariselkä is a popular ski and sports center, considered to be the most northern holiday resort of the EU.

Urho Kekkonen National Park has some 110 bird species so it attracts quite some bird watchers. Apart from the park's signature bird that can be seen circling the sky, the golden eagle, common birds to see are the brambling, the willow warbler and the common red-poll. Good trails to take for bird watching are the 6 km Kuukkeli nature trail and the 1 km Urpiainen nature trail, including its observation towers.

There are many opportunities for fishing in the park, but you'll need a permit for this. The permit system is quite complicated, so it's best to check with the Koilliskaira Visitor Center in Tankavaara.

Park History

The history of Urho Kekkonen National Park goes back thousands of years. The shores of the Kemijoki River have been populated since the end of the last Ice Age. The Sami people have been living in this area for many centuries. Reindeer herding is still one of their main sources of income.

Getting There

Saariselkä is 30 kilometers south of Ivalo, Inari. Get to Saariselkä (road 4) via E75. Address: Kiehinen Custom er Service, Kelotie 1, 99830 Saariselkä(town), Inari(area), Finland.

Pallas Yllästunturi National Park

Pallas-Yllästunturi kansallispuisto

Pallas Yllästunturi National Park is the third largest National Park in Finland. The fells unique mountainous scene of Finland are for viewing and hiking.

Fells like the ones at the Pallas- Yllästunturi National Park look like this, and they are lots of these vast cool landscapes at this park. The highest fell is called Taivaskero, which is 200 meters shy of 1000 meters.

If you have a love for trees, this is where you can see both the northern and southern tree species in Finland.

Locals recommend trying to see a series of fell landscapes. There are four visitor centers which you can visit in one day, which pretty much sums up every thing you would want to see in the area, including the history of the area. Here are the four:

1. Start your trip at the Kellokas Visitor Center in Ylläs, Address: Tunturintie 54(road), 95970 Äkäslom polo(city), which is in Kolari(region) in Finland.

2. On the next leg drive to the Pallastunturi Visitor Center: Address: Pallastunturi Visitor Center, FI-99330 Pallastunturi, Finland, or navigate to Pallaksentie(road), Muonio(city), Lappi(region), Finland.


4. 99490 Kilpisjärvi, or navigate to Käsivarren-tie(road), Enontekiö(city).

Recommended scenic driving route to Kilpisjärvi from southern Finland in the summertime: Helsinki-->Tampere-->Seinäjoki-->Kokkola-->Kuopio-->Oulu--> Tornio-->Muonio-->Kilpisjärvi.
**Pyhä-Luosto National Park**

**Pyhä Luoston kansallispuisto**

Pyhä-Luosto National Park is located near Kemijärvi, Pelkosenniemi and Sodankylä (Lapland). The highest area is called Ukko-Luosto, with a 514 meters peak. What is interesting is that Sami people lived in this area in the 1600 century, and trees are over 400 years old.

**Things to see and do**

Visit Europe's only small-scale operating amethyst mine, where you can dig up some amethyst with your own shovel. It is an easy walk to the mine in the warm season, and possible to visit in the wintertime as well.

Here are driving directions to the Amethyst mine in Sodankylä/Luosto. Follow Ukko-Luostontie until the end and you can park at the end of the road and hike to the Lampivaara Amethyst mine. From there, hike for 2.5 kilometers to the mine.

Address: Ukko-Luostontie 200 (road name 200 meters from the intersection, Sodankylä/Luosto (city) 99555 (zip)

Other things to do: If you like bird-watching, nearby to Pyhä-Luosto is the Sakkala-Aava bird watching tower.

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**Oulanka National Park**

**Oulangan kansallispuisto**

This national park is located in Kuusamo, Salla, further south than the above parks, but still in Lapland, so you get to enjoy similar Lapland look and feel. It is 270 square kilometers in area, with one of the best hiking trails in Finland.

The park is very diverse, having high peaks (fells) and low rivers, including mires like other parks have. -a unique Finnish park.

See the Oulanka Canyon, the Jyrävä Water-falls, streams that gently swerve in between pine and spruce, and swinging bridges.

Go white water rafting, take a 6 day hiking trip on an 80 kilometer stretch at the large Bear Trail pieni Karhukierros. The trail starts at the village of Juuma, takes hikers past the Jyrävä water fall (8 - 10 meter drop), then circles back around. A good one day hiking experience for intermediate level hikers.

If you do not have a chance to see the Oulanka Canyon by hiking on the Karhukierros, no worries. While driving on the Käylä-Salla road, there is a stop called Savilammi or Savi Pond. From this stop it is a three kilometer hike to the canyon.

Most people first go to the visitor center which is in Kiutaköngäs to view the waterfalls. Type in your own source for driving directions to Kiutaköngäs. Or navigate to this address: Liikasenvaarantie 132 (road), Kuusamo (city), Pohjois-Pohjanmaa (area), Finland.

Things to do: Pick mushrooms in the fall or walk to the Niskakoski rapids where there is a hanging bridge.

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**Riisitunturi National park**

**Riisitunturin kansallispuisto**

The Riisitunturi National Park is in Posio (Lapland) - This park is particularly interesting since it has open areas for viewing the pine and spruce forests against the lower lake level. Most of the park is around 300 meters above sea level.

This park has a very exceptional view over the Kitkajärvi lake. The shortest hiking trail is 4 kilometers and the longest over 30 kilometers making this park ideal for longer hiking and camping trips.

Recommended: Go on the round-trip hike, or circular trail called the Riisin Rääpäsy Trail. This 4 kilometer trail takes three hours. Most importantly, it takes you up high for a magnificent view over the lakes below. Driving directions to the entry point of the Riisin Rääpäsy Trail, where you will also find a hut for trail information. Navigate to a city called Viitaranta (city), which is Lappi. From there you are 3 kilometers away from the entry point of the park.
Syöte National Park

**Syötteen kansallispuisto**

This park contains **old-growth forests**. Meaning: there are plant species which thrive within the forest unique to that region, and would normally not grow if the forest had been logged. The park contains rare animal species such as the **golden Eagle** aquila chrysaetos, or the **Siberian flying squirrel** pteromys volans.

At Syöte there are a series of forests, located at nearly 300 meters in altitude, some even contain bogs. In fact, a very large percentage of the Syöte National Park contains mires and even **occasional springs**.

Basic driving directions: Syöte is located in Lapland and the Ostrobothnia region of Finland. Coming from direction Oulu, take road 20 past Pudasjärvi and drive about 30 kilometers. At the 30 kilometer mark there will be signs to the park.

Coming from Kuusamo, which is located northeast of Syöte, drive to Taivalkoski. Then get on road 863 to Posio. After driving for 19 kilometers, get on road 862 at the village of Virkkunen. Keep driving 19 kilometers until you see signs to Syöte.

Walk for a day or do some more extensive hiking at Syöte. Of the 120 kilometers of marked trails, short trails range from 500 meters to 4 kilometers like the Ansapolku trail. This trail starts at the visitor center where you can also see wooden sculptured animals.

Drive all the way to Pärjänkievarintie where you will find a sign for the visitor center. Need information about the old growth forests? About 3 kilometers north of Syöte, is the Vattukurun luontopolku, a 2-kilometer trail starting at the Syöte Tavalkoski road 862.

Bothnian Bay National Park

**Perämeren Kansallispuisto**

Bothnian Bay National Park (sometimes also called by its Finnish name, Perämeri National Park) is located in Finnish Lapland, in the northern corner of the Bothnian Bay right off the coast of Kemi. The park consists of some 30 moraine islands and reefs, and is great for boat trips of one or two days – though boaters need to be experienced.

**Unique Nature**

The area’s history has made Bothnian Bay National Park into a unique and wonderful piece of nature. During the last Ice Age, glaciers pressed the earth hundreds of meters down into the sea. Since then, the earth’s crust has slowly risen and the first island has appeared above sea level around the year 1000 AD.

Ever more islands and reefs appeared above water, and they are still rising today, which means the landscape is ever changing. The youngest islands are reefs with hardly no plants, while the oldest have a thin layer of forest on them. In the high summer, meadows thrive on the shores of many islands.

Since their emergence from the sea, the islands have been used by hunters and fishers as seasonal bases. Especially when land harvests were poor, many people moved to the islands. They also brought livestock with them, who grazed freely and so created the typical pastures and dry meadows.

**Things to Do**

As mentioned, the islands are a great destination for sailing or motor boating excursions of one or two days. As the archipelago is windy and has large waves, boats must be sea worthy and able to resist extreme conditions. The water is shallow in most areas, in any case under 10 meters.

The park is home to over 60 bird species, so it’s a great location for bird watching. Especially the Sarvi islands are recommended.

Angling and ice fishing are allowed throughout the park as ‘everyman’s right’, except the grey seal protection area and some nesting areas. Lure fishing is only allowed when you have the corresponding permit from the Province of Lapland.

Swimming is allowed on the islands, even when there
are no official beaches. The islands' shores are generally shallow and rocky. Vähä-Huitturi Island and at the north-end of Pihlaja island have sandy shores. Berry and mushroom picking in the park are unrestricted. You may be able to find Arctic brambles on the islands.

**Getting There**

The town of Kemi is the point of departure for the islands of Bothnian Bay National Park. Outside the winter season, the islands can only be reached by boat. In the winter, when there's ice, the islands closest to the mainland can be reached across the ice by ski or snowmobile. The outer islands cannot be reached across the ice as the Kemi-Tornio deep water channel is kept ice free.

Alternatively, you can book a cruise on the famous Sampo ice breaker. Until 1987, this vessel cleared the path through the frozen waters in the area, after which it was turned into a tourist cruise ship. More information is at www.sampotours.com.

The nearest visitor center is Kalajoki Marine Nature Center located in Kalajoki. It's a two hours drive south of Kemi. The address: Jukupolku 5, 85100 Kalajoki. The center offers information about the area in the form of multimedia presentations, exhibitions, a library and an auditorium where nature films are shown. There are several sections for children, including a playing corner. Entrance is free, except for themed group tours.

**Rokua National Park**

**Rokuan kansallispuisto**

Located smack in the middle of Finland - If you are looking at a map of Finland, and fix your gaze at the middle of the country, that is where Rokua National Park is located.

**Lichen** - a combination of a fungus and algae abundantly grow in this park. So do watch your step, when you walk on a soft forest floor - bed of lichen combined with moss, as the bed can easily tear apart. That is why Nordic walking, and off-roading is a 'no no' at this park. The same goes for the moss a plant, usually green in color. Types of mosses: Iceland moss Cetraria nivalis, and Porojäkälä reindeer moss.

Attractions: Fishing and swimming at the sandy bottomed lakes, such as lake Saarinen or underwater ice-diving at lake Saarinen in Rokua. Frreeezzing!!

Perhaps you want to get a scenic photo to take home with you, then go to the Pookivaara hill, the highest point in the park, where there is a sheltered hut lookout tower, 200 meters above sea level.

120 km’s southward of Rokua... for those who like old forests with a decent hiking trail nearby for the family or a group. Try walking at the over 150 year old forest in Talaskangas. Careful, these are small roads.

Navigate to Talaksentie 1000 (road, 1 km from an intersection), Vieremä (city), 74200 (zip), drive to the end of the road.

**Hiidenportti National Park**

**Hiidenportin kansallispuiston**

Hiidenportti is located around 90 km's southeast of Kajaani in a municipality called Sotkamo. The park area covers 45 square kilometers.

**Hiidenportti Trails** are an easy walk, since the scouts use em. The one trail to hike is a short 3 to 4 km trail called the Hiidenkierros. This is a circular trail taking you through the Hiidenportti gorge.

Access the parking area to see the main attractions of the park, starting your walk at the Palolampi parking place. Begin walking east from the parking lot and follow the path toward Hiidenportti. From there, the path turns downward toward the ravines. You will notice the stairs, then the path curves back around.

Address of Palolampi information center for navigational purposes: 86 Hiidenportintie (road), Sotkamo (city).
Tiilikkajärvi National Park

Tiilikkajärven kansallispuisto

Travel west to east between Iisalmi and Nurmes on road 87 after Rautavaara, head north on road 5850. This gets you to the Tiilikkajärvi National Park.

The park is characterized as having the landscape combination of both northern and southern Finnish nature. If you are looking for a real swampy Finnish lake, two thirds of the entire park area consists of swamp. A historical attraction at lake Tiilikkajärvi, is a stone memorial monument called the Täyssinän rauhan rajapyyki. This huge old stone was set at the peace Treaty of Täyssinä 400 years ago, when lake Tiilikka served as the border between Russia and Sweden.

Plan to spend 3 to 5 hours hiking the nature-lover’s Uiton kierto, a 7 km trail which circles around two lakes. This trail gives you access to a scenic beach called "Russian Sand" or Venejänhiekka.

Caution!

Bring snake bite antidote with you, just in case. There are only two kinds of snakes in Finland. The one spotted at this beach is poisonous.

By car, get to the Uiton kierto hiking trail from the Sammakkotammi parking place and information center. Also accessible in the winter. Address: Valtimontie 1038(road), Rautavaara(city).

This address is approximate. You should see signs for the park near this address.

Salamajärvi National Park

Salamajärven kansallispuisto

Salamajärvi is in central Finland, Keski Suomi. Looking at the map, this park is located south of the center of Finland, 115 km’s southeast of Kokkola(west coast). Or drive 15 km’s from Kinnula heading southwest toward Salamajärvi on road 7520.

Salama is the word for lightning in Finnish. In, English, Salamajärvi means lightning lake. Yep, see trees struck by lightning. -one of the attractions. On the other hand, for nature lovers, the pine forests and swamps along with a bird-watching tower are a must-see.

The largest Reindeer species are in this park. In the 1980’s, specialists re-introduced the Finnish Forest Reindeer Rangifer tarandus fennicus into this area. The adult sometimes weighs over 100 kg. The best time to view these animals is at the end of may.

To get information about the trails and how to find the southern entrance of the park drive to the Koirasalmi nature information hut from Kinnula like this. Or drive 2.5 hours from Seinäjoki to the Koirasalmi information hut like this.

And if that is not enough nature for one day, you may want to take a six kilometers drive southeast of the Salamajärvi National Park to the Salamaperä Nature Reserve Salamaperän luonnonpuisto.

Patvinsuo National Park

Patvinsuo kansallispuisto

Patvinsuo is located in northeastern Finland (Karelia) about 30 kilometers from the border of Russia, 80 kilometers northeast of Joensuu, or 40 kilometers, southeast of Lieksa.

The attractive features of the Patvinsuo National Park are: Swamps, old forest wood, sandy beaches with clear water of lake Suomu Suomunjärvi, over 27 meters deep lake with good fishing. There are bears in the park which may be hard to spot since they usually avoid people. When walking about 200 meters west of the Suomu Nature Information Hut, you will find a pine tree over 100 years old. This special tree is historically attractive, since it contains the dates of the deaths of various forest rangers carved out into the tree.

This park contains 80 kilometers of trails. Start either short or long hiking trips from the Kurkilahti parking place.

Driving directions to the park from Lieksa(city) Urheilukatu 3(road), to Suomuntie(road), 81650 Lieksa. Once at Suomuntie after entering the park, from the border of the park, drive about 700 meters to get to the Kurkilahti parking area.
**Koli National Park**

*Kolin kansallispuisto*

The park is 30 square kilometers (12 square miles) in size, and located west of the Patvinsuo National Park, 50 kilometers north of Joensuu. A hilltop viewing experience. Koli has a famous view by a lake not to miss. Be on top of the Ukko-Koli hill during sunset on a clear day in July looking to the east across lake Pielinen. Enjoy seeing and touching white quartz rock. Explore Pirunkirkko - a 34 meter (112 feet) long and averages 1 to 7 meters (3.3 to 23 feet) high cave. How about snowboarding in Loma-Koli in the winter. Ukko-Koli, Akka-Koli and Paha-Koli are photogenic areas of Finland, so be sure to bring a camera along to take lovely photos of scenic sunset in August from a height of 250 meters above sea-level.

Koli contains the highest point in Southern Finland, which is 347 meters above sea level. Most who visit the park start off hiking at the Ukko-Koli parking place, close to the scenic view across lake Pielinen. This is where you can find short hiking trails starting at 2.5 kilometers all the way up to 40 kilometer hikes.

Driving directions to the Ukko-Koli visitor center in Lieksa/Koli from Tampere or use your own source, or navigate to: Ylä-Kolintie 39(road), Lieksa/Koli(city) Zip. 83960

**Pyhä-Häkki National Park**

*Pyhäs Häkin kansallispuisto*

Pyhä-Häkki is located in the lower central part of southern Finland. This is a small 13 kilometer (5 square miles) park - a 70 kilometer drive north of the city of Jyväskylä.

Finnish Virgin Forest - See forest where no man has laid an ax to fell trees. The park contains the oldest forest in southern Finland with trees dating back 250 years when Finland was still under Swedish rule. The old forest attracts rare insects, birds, and plant species. The Pyhä-Häkki National Park is remote, and the grey color of the ancient dried standing canopyless pines and spruces makes walking in the forest a romantic experience.

The oldest trees are about 500 years old and have survived countless generations and forest fires. Two types of mires worth seeing are the herb-rich hardwood-spruce swamps, which is mainly comprised of spruce, and the Dwarf-shrub pine bog, mainly pine trees. If you want to see spruce mires, this is your park. Go sightseeing in the woods to see a very large Finnish pine tree. According to Finnish standards, the 26 meter (85 foot) tall, 288 centimeters (113 inches) circumference ancient pine tree, is one of the tallest in Finland. The tree started growing upward in 1518. Although this ancient tree died in 2004, the park has another largest tree for viewing. Start off a short one hour walk at the 3 kilometer long Maastomäki Nature trail. Along the trail is where you will see the old forest and large trees.

For navigation devices use: Viitasaarentie 2119(road), Saarivjärvi(city) 43100(zip)

**Petkeljärvi National Park**

*Petkeljärven kansallispuisto*

Drive east about 90 kilometers of Joensuu to get to the Petkeljärvi National Park. It is 15 kilometers southeast of Iломantsi in northern Karelia and 5 kilometers from the Russian border.

Petkeljärvi is good for short day hikes with trails and ridges for easy walking. The pine forests contain sparse vegetation and two-thirds of the park is water. If it is water you like then...at the Kuikkalampi area there are lakes which have clear water. The lakes are best seen while hiking on the 6.5 kilometer circular trail called Kuikan Kierros, leading through forest and duck board paths above the soft miry ground.

Driving directions for use with a navigator: Petkenjärventie 61(road), Iломantsi(city). Navigate to the end of the road, and park at the parking lot to get more information.
Kolovesi National Park

Koloveden kansallispuisto

Good for one day trips with families, and canoeing trips for up to 7 days. This is a 3.5 hour drive east of Jyväskylä, or an 80 kilometer 1.5 hour trip southwest of Joensuu.

Kolovesi National Park has a scenic and peaceful canoeing area, since no motorboat traffic is allowed in the park. That is rare even in Finland. If you want to get a peek at the Saimaa ringed seal Saimaanorpa, this is your chance. It is best to see the seals by boat in June, since this park is closed from March to the end of May. The Ukonvuori, Havukkuvuori and Vierunvuori cliff paintings are an attraction in the park. The cliffs are best viewed by sailboat, canoe, or kayak. The ancient dwellers of the area painted images of people and monsters on the cliffs.

Recommended:

Go here in the summer while there is plenty of day and night light. Consider renting a canoe for a weekend to travel along the Kolovesi Seal Trail Norppareitti. Launch the canoe at Kirkkoranta. (eastern entrance)

Here is map for canoeing routes at Kolovesi called Norppakartta to help with planning your trip. Right click on your mouse to zoom in. Drive to the Kirkkoranta boat launch parking area by navigating to the following address: 6910 Enonkoskentie(road), Savonlinna(city). At this address you will be at the road junction to the Kirkkoranta road. Follow the road to the edge of the water. (with your canoe). If all you want is to hike, go on the 3.3 kilometer long Nahkiaissalo Nature Trail, located in the southeastern park area.

Here are sample driving directions from Joensuu up to 3 kilometers from the starting point of this trail. Once at 6308 Enonkoskentie(road), Savonlinna(city), follow the signs to get there. (Type in your own source if need).

Kauhaneva- Pohjankangas National Park

Kauhanevan- Pohjankangas kansallispuisto

The Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas Park is 57 square kilometers (22 square miles), located in Karvia western Finland. The park is 140 kilometers northeast of Pori(2.5 hour drive), 130 kilometers northwest of Tampere(over 2 hour drive), and 105 kilometers northeast of Seinäjoki.

The landscape around Karvia has hills, swamps, lakes and forest. See the contrast between a clean pine forest and bogs where thick vegetation grows on top of water. In the case of the Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas park, the soft turf is deep, so remember to walk on the paths instead of on top of the vegetation, or you will sink in. For a safe short day hike, use the 2 kilometer long wooden duck board path around the Kauhalammi pond. Access this walk at the Nummikangas northern, or the Salomaa southern parking lot. Both lead to the walking trail.

Why not overnight at the park while traveling nearby? Set up a tent or camper near Kauhalammi or Salomaa where there are dry bathroom wc’s,outdoor toilets you can use) and wells for drinking water.

Entering the park from the south -from Tampere or Parkano. Drive to Karvia(city) which is in Satakunta. Drive through Karvia on road 274 for 8 kilometers towards Kauhajärvi heading northwest. After this look out for the Kyrönkaan kesätie. This road is a south to north road, and will lead you to the Salomaa parking area.

Tip:

Visit two parks in a day! The Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park is close to the attractive Lauhanvuori National Park, which has the highest peak/hill in western Finland, and unique quartz stones. Here are directions for driving between Kauhaneva and Lauhanvuori.
Helvetinjärvi National Park

Helvetinjärven kansallispuisto

Helvetinjärvi is located in Ruovesi. -a 50 square kilometer area in the Pirkanmaa region, near the Seitseminen National Park. You can see both parks in the same day.

Facts which makes this park an attraction: The park has deep crevices in its bedrock, narrow opening that resembles a gorge (EU, Canyon U.S.), plus, there are forest ponds and small and lakes with sudden drop-offs.

The Helvetinkolu Gorge, which is located northeast of Lake Iso Helvetinjärvi, is what is most attractive, since it’s opening is only a few meters wide. The gorge has a steep downward slope into the lakeside. North of the Helvetinkolu gorge, is another fault formation. Lakes Kovero, Luomajärvi, Iso Helvetinjärvi; large Hell’s lake Pikku Helvetinjärvi; small hell’s lake and Pitkä Helvetinjärvi; long hell’s lake, form a narrow, with high cliffs in the deepest fault, with high points 190 - 200 meters above sea-level.

What is there to see: Helvetinkolu and Haukanhieta.

Driving directions to the Helvetinjärvi National Park: Here is a trail which starts in Kankimäki, goes to Helvetinkolu gorge and back. Simple and easy 4 km trail you can take your kids to. There is even a kiosk (for a snack) in Kankimäki a place for making an open fire and a hut in Helvetinkolu. While you are driving in that area, get on route 66 toward Virrat, and along the side of the road just before getting to Virrat see the Toriseva attraction, which are 30 meter cliffs beside a series of lakes. A 6 kilometer walking path, is around the lake(s) and along the path is a cafe on a hill. This also shows the drive to the park. Drive and see 4 nature points in one day:

Start at...
1. Seitseminen at Seitsemisentie 116, Ylöjärvi, Suomi --->
2. Riuttanen --Torttilantie, Ylöjärvi, Suomi ---> Drive through Virrat then turn back south to...
3. Toriseva -- Torisevajärventie 493, Virrat, Suomi ---> Finally end the trip at the
4. Helvetinjärvi National Park -- Helvetinkoluntie 775, Ruovesi, Suomi

Trip Tip:

In southern Finland there are deer fly or yellow fly hirvikärpänen, which can bite you. Plan a trip to the more southern national parks later in the season, like in September, when deer fly are less rampant. In September, as nighttime comes earlier, fewer visitors frequent the parks. When you sit around an outdoor fire, it is easy to sense that ”around the campfire” atmosphere. You find yourself surrounded by dark woods.

Leivonmäki National Park

Leivonmäen kansallispuisto

The Leivonmäki National Park is around 30 kilometers southeast of Jyväskylä, located northwest of Leivonmäki. It's a simple park, broken up into two parts. Lake Rutajärvi separates the upper part, which is comprised of pine forest, and the southern part, more boggy is called Haapasuo. It is significant to see lake Rutajärvi because the water level of this lake has dropped 4 meters between 1890 and 1894. Yes, one meter per year, within four years. Because of the drop in water-level, over 200 islands up-merged all over the lake, creating long rocky shorelines around the lake.

28 kilometers of trails, marked in blue, are good for taking the family on a day hike. Stay in an overnight shelter while roasting hot dogs over a fire. One trail worth walking is the 1,5 kilometer long scenic Joutsniemi ridge trail. A walk way projects out into lake Rutajärvi where the lake is visible on both sides of the path. Getting to the trail is easy. Hike on either the Mäyränkierras or Harjunkierras trails which start from the Kosikara school in Rutalahti, or the Harjunlahti swimming grounds.

To get on the scenic Joutsniemi trail first enter the Mäyränkierras trail at Selänpohja parking lot, then connect to the Joutsniemi trail from the larger trail.

The address is: 1248 Kivisuoantie(road), Joutsa/Leivonmäki(city), western Finland.
Linnansaari National Park

Linnansaaren kansallispuisto

Ideal for camping and boating, the Linnansaari National Park covers a 96 square kilometer (15 square miles) area, located in southwestern Finland 45 kilometers northwest of Savonlinna. Linnansaari Castle-Island is both the name of this national park, and respective island.

The park consists of a large open lake area called Haukivesi, with over 120 islands which are best seen by boat. Each day between June 28 - August 15, a boat runs from either Oravi or Porosalmi to the island of Linnansaari. For boat rides, time schedules, and prices see Saimaaholiday.net

See the Saimaa Ringed Seal- Saimaannorppa or in Latin: phoca hispida saimensis. This area is a breeding ground for these seals, and the view promises to be good.

Get information about trails at the Sammakkoniemi camping ground. -a choice, 7 kilometers long, medium difficult day hike trail starts at this camping ground.

For more information about the park, please drive to the Oskari Linnansaari Visitor Center, or drive straight to the Oravin Melontakeskus for information about canoe rental or accommodations.

Navigate to: Kiramontie(road), Savonlinna/Oravi(city).

Seitseminen National Park

Seitsemen kansallispuisto

The park’s nature center is located in Parkano at the Address: Seitsemisentie 110, Länsi-Aure (Kuru). Once in Kuru head toward Kaidankylä on road 332 and drive to Länsi-Aura, where you will see signs for park entrance. This is your park, if you are interested in both young and old pine forest vegetation; some of the pine trees are over 400 years old. Swamps cover over half of the area, as well, there are many interesting ridges.

What makes this an attractive Finnish sight? -you get a genuine 'forest-like feeling' while hiking on the moss-covered old Multiharju forest floor. Getting to the park by car

See three Finnish nature parks in one area, and one cliff attraction (Toriseva) A total of four nature sights to see in one day. What fun! Once at Setseminen National Park, assuming you want to see more, why not drive to Riuttanen right off of road 3351. There you will find a place for day trip/camping at Riuttaskorpi, which is in Kuru. If you are coming from road 332 Kuru - Parkano there are signs which direct you to the southern part of Riuttaskorpi. At Riuttaskorpi, use the outside fire places, sheltered cooking, and go bird watching at a nature tower. After a few hours hiking in the woods, drive from Riuttaskorpi to the Helvetinjärvi national park.

Lauhanvuori National Park

Lauhanvuoren kansallispuisto

Lauhanvuori, is 230 meters above sea level, making it the highest hill in southwestern Finland. Though located in the south, the park looks like fell hills found in Finnish Lapland. The park area is 53 square kilometer (20 square miles), and is easy to walk through in a day. Upon approaching the park, it is difficult to perceive the rise of 200 plus meters of land level. This is due to gradual ascents around the perimeter of the park.

Located in Isojoki(city), Pohjanmaa(region), about 140 kilometers northwest of Tampere. Once in Isojoki, head south toward Kortteenkylä, and take the first possible road toward Sarviluoma.(east)

Here’s where you will also find the Muurahainen nature visitor center. Navigate to Kauhajoki(city), Lauhanvuorentie 1(road), 61960(zip)

The park’s unique attraction, is an open 800 meter long field of large bolder quartz sandstone rocks called Kivijata Pirunkiuas. Normally these rocks are found under the very outer surface of the earth. However, these happened to be exposed due to the lifting of the land’s surface.

See the Aumakivi granite boulder, located at the south-west end of the park. These are the two attractions at Lauhanvuori. Also be sure to see the natural springs, and bogs with puddles of water.

Help, the ground is moving up! An educational tour for students.

Rising of the ground created this natural attraction for those interested in Geo-Tourism. Take an educational excursion and see the results of the ‘up-raising’ of ground, which is occurring in Lauhanvuori at a rate of 80 centimeters every one hundred years.
Isojärvi National Park

Isojärven kansallispuisto

Isojärvi is located in south-central Finland, about 100 km’s east of Tampere off of route E63/9 toward Jyväskylä on the southern side of lake Isojärvi. After driving past the city of Orivesi for about 30 km’s, there is a sign for the park.

The attractive features include: **30 meter high spruce trees and large Aspens populus tremula** which are in the middle of the spruce forest. The many lakes of Isojärvi are narrow, have clear water, and rocky shores. Since Isojärvi is good for kayaking and canoeing, there are row boats for rent at the Heretty Loggers Cabin (main information center). Please type in "heretty opening hours" into your favorite search engine for the latest opening hours.

Park your car at the Heretty Loggers Cabin where you can get more information about trails. Start hiking at the 3km Heretty Nature Trail. Along the trail you will find a place to make an open fire for cooking. Like most parks, there are sheltered areas for overnighting. If you like mountain biking, there is a trail up to 10 km’s long which connects to a few point at the perimeter of the park.

For your navigator: Kylämäntie 1335(street), 17800(zip) Kuhmo(city), which is in Keski-Suomi central Finland.

Puurijärvi-Isosuo National Park

Puurijärven Isosuo kansallispuisto

Puurijärvi-Isosuo large swamp is located in the Pirkanmaa and Satakunta regions. The park is 27 square kilometers in size (10 square miles).

While on the Helsinki-Pori road, if you happen to be traveling north on road 2 to Kokemäki, or north on road 12 toward Äetsä via Huittinen, the Puurijärvi-Isosuo national park is accessible from either roads. See the Isosuo, a large open wetland area which is connected to one of Finland's longest rivers. Most of the park consists of shallow swamp.

The unique attraction of this park are the large variety of insect species it contains. **35 different bird species, 38 types of butterflies and moths, and 24 different dragonflies.** At the park you can hike on short 1 and 6 kilometer trails, go bird watching at one of the highest capacity (fits 50 people) bird watching towers in the Nordic countries at the Kärjenkallio Rock. Get a nice view over the lake, and see what a vast swamp looks like in Finland.

**Bird watching tips:**
The best time to go bird watching is during the morning or evening, especially when birds are migrating moving from location to next. Use high power binoculars and a tripod, bring a packed lunch, and expect to spend time in the lookout tower.

Access Kärjenkallio, which is on Lake Puurijärvi from road 2481. The main hiking trail cuts clear across and between the two large swamps, Korkesuo and Isojou. This is where you can view the swamps on either side of the path. It takes 1 hour and 20 minutes to drive to the park from Tampere. (74 kilometers).

Navigate to the following address: 1008 Yttiläantie(road) Kokemäki/Yttilä/Kauvatsa(city), western Finland.
Päijänne National Park

Päijänne National Park is located east of Padasjoki (town). Lake Päijänne, is also the second largest body of water in Finland, with 400 kilometers of water route, and with unusually deep lakes (100 meters).

Looking at Lake Päijänne on a map, you see its great size: length: 112 kilometers; width, in some areas up to 30 kilometers. Are you thirsty? If you ever need extra drinking water, try gulping down the water from lake Päijänne. Many years ago, a long water supply pipe was built to deliver water to larger cities from this lake. The Päijänne National Park, covers a far smaller area than the vast Lake Päijänne. Located at the southern part of the lake, the park is a 14 square kilometers (5.4 square miles) area which consist of a series of 50 deserted islands, mainly rock, moraine ridge formation with some cliffs.

The Päijänne National Park is best experienced by boat... Bring your own canoe or kayak for a boat trip out to the park. You can even go on a boat trip to explore the large body of water over many days. Getting to the park by boat is easiest from the Padasjoki Harbor. This is also where you can find boat trip services like the M.S. Elbatar (www.elbatar.fi), which gets you to the Kelvenne Islands. Want to get a super view of Lake Päijänne, including the park? Start driving from Padasjoki toward Asikalla. In Asikalla get on road 314 also called Pulkilantie and drive past Iso Kohilo. Drive across the bridge while driving on Pulkilantie. After entering the bridge, you can see the park off to the left.

Select your own source. Getting to this scenic drive across lake Päijänne for navigation devices. Type in: Asikalla(city), then Pulkilantie(road). There is no road number. Just follow your navigator until you see the lake coming up on the navigator’s screen, then drive across the lake.

Getting to one of the many island of Päijänne by car. In Padasjoki, head northeast on Kellossalmen tie, take a right. Drive to the end of Höysniementie where there is a place for making an open fire.

Repovesi National Park

Repoveden kansallispuisto

This park is near Lappeenranta. It’s attractive cliffs are up to 60 meters tall, making hiking ideal for advanced hikers, with hiking trails up to 40 kilometers in length. Take a walk over a 50 meter hanging bridge called the Lapinsalmen riippusilta, or go on a berry-picking trip.

Tip: Make sure you are in fit condition while if planning to hike at Repovesi. Bring good hiking shoes while on the more difficult trails.

Do nature photography over lake Olhavanlampi on a clear morning. Capture the view of the cliffs of Olhavanvuori as the sun is rising, and the wind is calm. Watch the sun reflect against these cliffs in variable colors. When the lake is calm, the cliffs reflect in the lower water. Another photography spot is on top of the 50 meters high Olhavanvuori Rock, located above lake Olhavanlampi. From on top, the lake looks very small compared with the surrounding forest. Go in late May-June to see the Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata), cackling, as it is flying over the lake. it makes a eerie piercing "key-ka" sound. A set of steps rises almost vertically to the top of Katajavuori Hill -one of the most scenic places in Repovesi National Park.

Here are the driving directions to the Lapinsalmi entrance from Lahti, where you can walk over the Lapinsalmi hanging bridge. From this point you can also hike to Mustalampi where there is a lookout tower with a view of the park. Navigate to: Valkeala(city), or use the zip code 47910, Riippusillantie 70(road). This will get you 200 meters close to the bridge.
Kurjenrahka National Park

Kurjenrahka kansallispuisto

Kurjenrahka is located 80 kilometers southeast of Rauma, 120 kilometers west of Forssa, and 40 kilometers north of Turku. The popular hiking trail paths of the Kuhankuonon retkeilyreitistö are where you can hike peacefully for many days. Hike for up to 300 kilometers if you want. The Kurjenrahka park area has 29 square kilometers (11 square miles) of woods with old growth forests and swampy areas.

The swamp section contains bogs which are elevated in the center, and dry around the sides. These special bogs receive water from the rainwater due to lack of water supply surrounding the lower perimeter of the bogs. See old dead spruce trees, petrified trees, and old logs lying in the forest of Pukkipalo. Want to go on a short hike, to get a taste for the park? o trekking for a day or two at the Kurjenrahka National Park, since there are free or rental shelters for wilderness accommodation. Navigate to the northern information hut from road 204(also called Säkyläntie or Turunväylä) like this: Pöytyä(city) which is in varsinais-Suomi, Savojärventie 92(road), or use this address: Yläne(city), 92 Savojärventie(road) 21930(zip).

Torronsuo National Park

Torronsuo kansallispuisto

Torronsuo National Park is located 55 kilometers northeast of Salo, 62 kilometers southwest of Hämeenlinna, or 130 kilometers northwest of Helsinki. The closest city would be Forssa, which is 10 kilometers (6.5 miles) from the park.

Torronsuo’s 26 square kilometer of park includes mainly open mire. The wet soggy area of the park is encompassed by trees and rocks, while in the center there are patches of pine trees. Small pines. The parks unique attraction is it dates back to the stone age. At some points the top turf is 10 meters (30 feet) deep giving proof of the park’s antiquity. Just count how thick the turf is and add up the years. Scientists have interesting data like that written down for your information at some points in the park. The wet swamp area is known to contain rare pegmatite minerals.

If you happen to travel from Helsinki to Pori, or Turku to Hämeenlinna, and would rather drive smaller roads between these routes, on the way, stop to see this park along road 2. Plan your trip wisely! See two parks with one visit. There are two national parks along road 2, Torronsuo, and Liesjärvi national park. If in need of familiarizing yourself with southern Finland wetlands, near the park is a visitor center at the following address: Härkätie 818(road), 31380 Letku(city), where you can watch a video presentation about the area and even get a guided tour. Go straight to exploring the park! If you want to drive directly to the park, here are driving directions to the Kiljamo entrance from Hämeenlinna. -A one hours drive. Road 282 runs between Somero and Tammela. Use this road to get to the Kiljamo parking lot. When entering the park on road 282 from the north, you will see a sign for the park. Keep driving a bit further until you see a sign for the parking lot.

For navigator use: 680 Somerontie(road), Tammela(city). Or use Forssa as an alternate city, 30100(zip)

Valkmusa National Park

Valkmusan kansallispuisto

Drive 125 kilometers (1 hour 40 minutes) to the east of Helsinki to get to Valkmusa. The park is closest to the city of Kotka, which is 25 kilometers or a 35 minutes drive northwest of Kotka.

You can easily see the park while visiting Kotka. The park is along side of road E18/7 which stretches west to east from the capitol city towards Porvoo. Driving further east brings you to Kotka. About 5 kilometers before Kotka, there is a small town called Pyhtää. In Pyhtää road 3561 connects to 3562 toward Metsäkylä (north), which gets you to the park.

If you want another look at miry wetlands of southern Finland, at Valkmusa you can see a large 15 square kilometers (.57 square mile) area of mire in contrast with only 2 square kilometers (.77 square mile) of forest. The contrast between forest and mire is significant.

The park has both raised bogs, with trees, and softer, more wet mires where the color of the water is transparent green. Go walking on a 2.5 kilometer circular trail, and see birds from a birdwatching observation tower at the Valkmusa parking area. Plan a 2 day trip to see Kotka. Day 1 - Hike and visit the birdwatching...
Tower at Valkmusa. Day 2 - Visit Kaunissaari Island - a sparsely inhabited island.

If you happen to travel to Kotka from Valkmusa, there is a small island worth visiting called Kaunissaari beautiful island, located 15 kilometers southwest of Kotka, the island is 2 kilometers wide and 3 kilometers long. You can get a boat to the island in Kotka from the Sapokka line with the M/S Vire or M/S Tekla 1. The large boats sit there on the dock, and there is an ice-cream stand real close. Ahh! Drive to the beginning of the trails like this from the city of Kotka.

Address: Vastilantie 400(road), Pyhtää(city) 49220(zip). This road runs along the western perimeter of the park, this is where you will find the northern entrance with a parking place.

**Liesjärvi National Park**

**Liesjärven kansallispuisto**

Liesjärvi is situated 125 kilometers south of Tampere. It takes about an hour 45 minutes to drive to the park from Tampere.

Liesjärvi is one of the places in Finland you could see a flying squirrel Pteromys volans, is in the old forests of this park. Look around the shores at the base of the aspens, to see if you can spot yellow droppings left by the squirrel. The Liesjärvi National Park has lots of thick, spruce forests, and mires containing patches of woods. The park has ridges and over 50 kilometers of shoreline to enjoy. For example the sandy shore ridge which separates lake Kynäränharju, Kynärä and Lake Liesjärvi from each other.

With 22 square kilometers (8.5 square miles), this is another one of Finland's small parks. While visiting, you may want to hike in the virgin forests, which have been protected since the 1920’s. These are located at Ahonnokka and Isosaari large island. See the estate of a forest ranger from 1910 in Korteniemi. -An almost exact representation of how land and farm was maintained long time ago. For example: In the summer, see the Finnish farm animals like...horses, cows, sheep, chickens. At the Korteniemi heritage farm you will also see the traditional Finnish farming methods, like cutting rye with a scythe, drying and threshing methods.

*Directions to getting to Korteniemi from Tampere. Address: Korteniementie 270, 31350 Tammela*

**Nuukso National Park**

**Nuukson kansallispuisto**

Camp, fish, hike in nature close to the big cities of Espoo and Helsinki. Nuukso is located north of the Turunväylä, in north west Espoo, or 35 kilometers from the center of Helsinki. -the capitol. Catch road E18 in Vantaa or Espoo and travel west toward Turku on highway E18(road 1).

The landscape: birch forests, pine, and old growth trees; over forty lakes, some of which have clear water, swampy areas, gentle hills, granite bedrock for walking, and a high lookout rock found on the 4 kilometer long Haukankierros Trail. The Haukankierros Trail is marked with blue signs, and starts at the Haukkalampi information hut, where you can also get water, make an open fire for cooking, and stay under a sheltered area.

Address: Haukkalammentie 32(road), Espoo(city).

**Eastern Gulf National Park**

**Itäinen Suomenlahden kansallispuisto**

Located 30 kilometers south of the city of Kotka, this park area includes a 60 kilometers long stretch of over 60 islands off the eastern coast of Finland. The eastern boundary of the park touches the border of Russia. Since, the Eastern Gulf National Park consists of small islands across a 60 kilometer stretch, the land base is only a very small 6.7 square kilometers (2.6 square miles).

What you will find out there: Migrating birds flying into Finland during the spring, rocky islands without trees with the exception of small pines which grow on the larger islands. For a summer weekend trip, travel from Helsinki through Kotka to the city of Hamina, by car. Catch a passenger boat in Hamina out to the Ulko-Tammio Island, which is a 1 hour and 45 minute trip. See the Finnish website (www.meriset.fi) for departure details, and prices.

Once at Ulko-Tammio Island, there is a 3 kilometer walking trail and a bird observation tower. Take a pup tent and go camping and then return by boat to Hamina the next day.

The Tervasaari dock is one kilometer south of the city center.
Ekenäs Archipelago National Park

Ekenäs kansallispuisto

Islands off the coast of Tammisaari, more popularly know as the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park. This park is located about 80 kilometers west of Helsinki, and 18 kilometers south of Ekenäs (Tammisaari).

In Helsinki, begin driving on road 51 toward Ekenäs or Tammisaari. Once in Tammisaari, drive toward Sommorö, which is in Skälandet. This is the closest you can get to the largest of the islands, Älgö. At this point, if you are an experienced kayaker, it’s around a 9 kilometer boat stretch to the Rödjan Nature Information Hut in Älgö. Once in Älgö there is a campsite and a dry toilet(outdoor toilet).

Find out about charter boat rides to the islands at the Ekenäs visitor center. Address: Ekenäs Visitor Center, Rantapuistikko, 10600 Tammisaari, Finland. This trip takes about 1.5 hours by car.

Archipelago National Park

Saaristomeri kansallispuisto

Saaristomeri off of Turku is also called the Archipelago National Park -Located in the southern Turku archipelago of the Baltic Sea, between Turku and Hanko. The park covers a vast area of 500 square kilometers and contains over 2000 islands.

The type of land and seascape is like nothing else in Finland. Most of the lone rocky outer islands have very few trees. The islands are between the size of a football field, while others host small villages, like Kasnäs.

Why take a trip to Kasnäs? At the very end of road 1830 there is a visitor center called Luontokeskus Sinisimpukka which is located in Kasnäs. At the visitor center you will find exhibits and DVD presentations (also in English) of what life is like on the Finnish Archipelago.

2011 Opening times for the Sinisimpukka Nature Center:

February 2nd to May 8th:
Fridays 10 am to 3 pm, Saturdays 10 am to 5 pm.

May 10th to August 31st:
daily from 10 am to 6 pm

September 1st to November 27th:
Tuesdays through Fridays 10 am to 3 pm and Saturdays 10 am to 5 pm.

Getting to Kasnäs:

From the Tammisaari Salo road number 52, once at Pernio exit towards Kemiö on road 183 due southwest. Drive through Kemiö towards Dragsfjärd and Taalintehdas. Before branching off to Dragsfjärd you will notice a blue sign on the right: Sinisimpukan luontokeskus 21 km. Turn right toward Kasnäs after the sign. Use a navigational device to get to Kasnäs, since there is a 5 kilometer ferry ride to get there. No worries the ferries are free of charge. Just type in Kasnäs, Dragsfjärd, Finland into your navigator.

The island of Jurmo in Korppoo has a beach containing round thumb and fist-sized rocks, and is treeless. This is one of the best places to go birdwatching in the Turku area. You can buy fish and sip coffee at a cafe. Remember to go there before April and after July when it is permitted to walk around on the island. 3.5 kilometer long Nötö Island.

The Nötö island is located between Nauvo and the Jurmo island. Nötö is the largest island in the Archipelago National Park. On the island you can see the remains of what a village used to look like. See some old buildings like a chapel from the 16th century, or an ancient wind mill.

Ferry boats such as the MS Eivor and MS Fiskö, see routes and timetables (in Finnish) at portal.fma.fi. These ferries sail through Nötö and Jurmo islands.
Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi - Our Tour

The Real Santa Clause lives in Finland. He’s at the Santa Clause Village, they say. The Santa Clause Village in Rovaniemi, Finland: This attraction took us three hours to see. On our tour, we visit shops in the Christmas House, and see the Christmas exhibition, mail postcards at Santa’s Post Office, and even meet Santa himself.

If you tour the entire village, go on reindeer sleigh rides, see Santa, or do extras, like go on snowmobile rides, give yourself more than three hours time.

To see where Santa lives in Finland. Finally, we have arrived at the arctic circle close to the city of Rovaniemi.

Since we are traveling by car and most navigational devices, include popular attractions, it is easy to navigate our way to the Finnish arctic circle. Naturally, Santa Clause Village is busy around the Christmas holidays, that is why we are here at the end of February. Welcoming our arrival, we notice these buildings...

Visitor welcome overview map of the Santa Clause Village

Below image is a general overview map of the village. We parked our car on the far right of the pic., see the P (near the yellow bus) parking place. The wind is howling, and blowing snow against our faces making visibility poor. We are in a snow storm. The perfect setting to visit off-season to find discounts, deals, items on sales, great bargains ...and of course, fewer people, as well as, cars and buses.

Tip: Visit off-season to find discounts, deals, items on sales, great bargains ...and of course, fewer people, as well as, cars and buses.

Left: Arctic Circle , Center: Shop number 1, Right: Iittala glass outlet sho
In the picture bellow we are standing below the arctic circle Napapiiri sign. The yellow arrows show our distance from: New York = 6204 kilometers; London 2260 kilometers; Rome = 2985 kilometers... and so on.

From the southernmost tip of Finland you can count on driving two days if you want to get where we are standing.

Tomi, Rosa, and Aura standing below the arctic circle sign

Gift shopping inside the Santa Claus Village

Inside the Christmas House See #5 on the map.

Inside the Christmas house there is a large shop we found with every kind of Finnish gift. A Toy Factory and Christmas exhibition. Rosa finds a key chain pen made of reindeer antler. Products include: Handcrafted, wooden spreading knives, clothing, mugs, Santa’s carved out of wood, and elves. This is one of the many shops at the Santa Clause Village. We ‘dig’ a bit for bargain souvenirs. Adjacent to where we are standing... reindeer fur for sale.

Shop for reindeer skin.
Hang up the Northern lights in your home!

My favorites are the northern lights collection picture framed photos on display. Here are pictures of the northern lights displayed in Finnish Lapland.

Red Northern lights of Finnish Lapland

There are many more "Northern Light's" pictures to select from at the store. Practical gift ideas from Finland. Everyone spreads something on bread; butter, jam etc. Wooden knives which say Finland, Lapland, and Arctic circle.

Spread butter with handmade wooden knives at the Santa Clause Villag
The Santa Clause Village Christmas Exhibition.

Christmas around the world...What is that like?

We go into the houses and see Christmas tree decorations from different parts of the world. This exhibition has rooms to see what Christmas around the Christmas tree looks like. There is an explanation posted about each room. Let's go take a look around the Christmas tree.

*The tree is carrying the Finnish flag. Top right, a pic. of the Finnish Santa Clause.*

Sprucing up on Christmas tree history. Christmas trees from the 15th and 16th centuries were hung from the inside of the houses’ ceilings. Apples signify the similarity of the forbidden fruit.

*A Christmas tree in a typical Austrian home. Ist so wie es scheint?*
Images of Santa Clause

There is a close-knit relationship between Lapland and Santa. Center picture: Santa looks like a Lapp!

See more at the exhibition:
- An interactive short movie clip of Christmas around the world.
- Elves under your feet. Be careful where you step!
- Ancient Christmas - What Christmas was once like.
- Tin and wooden toys, dolls, teddy bears and digital toys at the toy factory and more.

Next stop at the Santa Clause Village...Santa's Main Post Office!

But first...along the way we meet a reindeer herdsman. -Willing to offer us a sleigh ride...

Tomi and his reindeer friend at the ice art exhibition. The Santa Clause Village.

...we are almost out of time and in a hurry to find Santa. Before seeing Santa let's get Aura's postcards mailed out. Another quick pic. near the ice-sculpture gallery ice-house.

Next to an Ice House in Rovaniemi Finland

An ice House used for the ice-exhibition display. Except for the wooden roof. The windows, block elements, walls, fixtures are all out-of-ice held together by frozen water like mortar.

The perfect spot to mail postcard and letters home... at Santas main post-office

Ahhh, back indoors and out of the snow blizzard where it is warm. A golden sign on a the table reads: Joulu-pukin Pääposti Santa Claus' Main Post Office. Here, you can read letters, that others sent to Santa.
See a real elf at work. Boy is she fast!

Inside Santa’s post office - A friendly elf helper runs the mail department

Making the choice difficult, there are hundreds of postcards on the theme of Santa, Christmas, Lapland, Northern Lights. Ready to send your mail, ok great. The friendly elf will place on your letter/postcard/parcel an official stamp which also has this on it...

Santa Clause - proof that he exists

Back out into the cold and to our final stop. To see Santa Clause. Yes, he Is in Finland. This is where to go to See Santa...notice the red welcome note on the side of the steeple?

Going into the entrance of a pointed steeple structure to pay Santa a visit

Tomi is entering the hut to pay Santa a visit. Aura and Rosa are already in the building. Getting closer and closer to Santa! Inside the hut, we venture along the narrow corridors, through paths of snow and ice. Up creaky wooden stairs. What could be up there? Finally, we are on an upper loft, eyes fixed at some amazing clockwork which the elves put together. A huge wooden clock wheel.

Attached to the ceiling, a grand wooden wheel for Santa’s clockwork
These Elves are geniuses! Now we are really close to seeing Santa. The bright light, under the wheel is where all the action is.

Seeing Santa is free, we talked and sat with him, he talked to us, put his arm around Tomi and Rosa, and "Flash" --a we got a picture made with him. This time around we did not get the 'Santa and Us' video to take home. A picture with Santa costs around 25 euros, and the DVD 35 euros.

More to do at the Santa Clause Village:

- Slide down the ice-slides with the kids, or go on Husky Reindeer rides.
- Get a “Been there done that” certificate proof with a golden nugget that you crossed the Arctic Circle. Costs 5 - 12 Euros.
- Make a mini ‘Santa Clause’ for free at the art hand craft section.
- See interesting ice-sculptures.
- Buy your children a gift from Santa without them knowing about it! That is cute.

Tip(s): Rovaniemi airport is closer to Santa’s village than it is to Rovaniemi town. So if you are flying into Rovaniemi, first go to the Santa Clause Village from the airport, then on into Rovaniemi for accommodations. Santa Claus Village is situated 8 km to the north of Rovaniemi direction Ivalo along highway number 4. You can reach the Arctic Circle also easily by local bus number 8.

Opening hours for the Santa Claus Village. These are tricky, but bear with!

- between January 10 and May 31, 10 am to 5 pm
- June 1 to August 31 9 am to 7 pm
- December 1 to January 9 9 am to 7 pm

Make sure you do not go...

- April 30 between 10 am and 3 pm.
- May 1 from 12 noon to 3 pm.
- December 24 from 9 am to 3 pm (Santa is Reaaaallly busy then and is unavailable)
- The same goes for December 25 at 12 up to 5 pm.
- The same for dawning of the new year...
- It is a no-go December 31 between 9 am and 5 pm
- January 1st between 12 noon and 5 pm.

Go to the Santa Clause Village in late January, early February.
An Award Winning Smoke Sauna Experience in Finland

Recommended by the international Smoke Sauna Club

To get this award winning Finnish smoke sauna experience, Tomi, Rosa and I are invited to the Huikanhovi farm for a smoke sauna in Vesilahti.

Around our smoke sauna experience

It is August, a bright and clear summer day at 6.30 pm as we arrive at the Huikanhovi farm. Only a five minutes drive along a well kept dirt road about 30 kilometers from Tampere. The ambient temperature is 70 degrees Fahrenheit or 20 degrees celcius. It is a short 400 meter walk down to the lakeside smoke sauna. Along the path we see a gas grill for cooking out.

The warming of the smoke sauna - The same day around 7 am morning

To get your optimal smoke sauna experience, the smoke sauna requires the right kind of warming. Here it is warming up -Opposite of lake view

The wheelbarrow with some half part Alder, half Pine. To give it a nice aroma he may of added a piece juniper. A few wheelbarrow loads will do the trick for the warming. No need to add too much wood. This smoke sauna is more efficient than the finnish electric or wood sauna. Use this combination of woods to get real Finnish smoke sauna experience.

Each piece of split wood for using in the smoke sauna stove is one meter in length.

Smoke escapes out the top vent during warm up

After all the batches of wood have been added it is good practice to remove the remains of the burnt debri including the cinder since they may cause the sauna to smell funny. - Plus for health reasons - avoid poisonous gases from being in the sauna like carbon-monoxide.

Important tip for the construction of smoke sauna stoves:

Build the stone stoves as high as possible. 80 centimeters or higher is better! Why? The object here is that the burning flames should not touch the stones inside the stove. That keeps the smoke to minimum and the aromas from the wood at maximum.
A three storey smoke sauna.

Top left and right are vents, and on the window level there are vents. (not shown). Plexiglas windows show where the changing rooms are. The changing room is on the lakes side. The side we are looking at now. The changing room uses the whole space of the inside. Let’s look at the second level more close in the next picture.

The foundation -concrete blocks. In the bottom level there is storage for hot and cold water, and extra changing rooms if needed. Getting the best smoke sauna experience we can...the kids and I go right into the sauna room, observing the rule of silence as we enter into the hot room.

Since this sauna won an award in 1998 as being the best smoke sauna in Finland, based on different criteria. A characteristic of a suitable sauna design is that there is a separate changing drying, or cooling off area. This sauna's got what it takes for a great smoke sauna experience.
The kids are going into the hot room from the changing room

Notice above the door where the darkened area is. You can see vertical lines of thin dark streaks, extending from block to block. Inbetween the streaks is where the chiselers chisel fell. Meaning...Those marks above the door show where the blocks are chiseled.

The chiseled marks encompass the whole outside perimeter of the sauna. All this chiselling is done to level the outside. Making the outside even to the rest of the wooden blocks. After all that fine wood work... -a clean straight and even look.

A recommendation from our hosts:

When you get into the sauna hot room and sit on the bench. There are only top benches in this smoke sauna. You can either throw one ladle full of water onto the stove, or many.

Let the first few ladle fulls be only half full and throw them on to the center of the stones. That gives your body a chance to adapt to the sauna. The next go around, I promise, will feel cooler.

Going inside a real Finnish smoke sauna for the first time

To get your best smoke sauna experience, climb the stairs to the top. Sit on the left or right. I chose the right side. -- The closest to the center of the sauna gives you the best steam. Makes your sauna go more enjoyable!

Where I sat is the best place to sit... according to our host. The stove is to the right of this picture -- Not visible.
Kids can get used to the gentle steam of the smoke sauna.

It was Rosa’s (age 5) first smoke sauna experience. After throwing some water onto the stove with a few half ladle fulls. Rosa, sitting on the bottom, begs me not to throw on any more water. Not because she is too hot.

She expects the heat wave to hit fast, after the water gets poured on. In this finnish smoke sauna, the heat takes much longer to travel in a large space, and the hot-room temperature is lower than in most other wood burning, or electric driven finnish saunas.

Rosa is used to our small home sauna, A 5 - 8 square meter room with an electric sauna stove, where - the heat travels fast and hits you fast. OUCH! Even when you pour the water on slowly.

When Rosa realizes that the heat is not so intense she calms down. On our last time to get in and out and throw on the water in the hot-room, she bravely joins us on top where Tomi and I sit.

The smoke sauna experience is different to a Finnish home sauna.

The first heat wave seems like the temperature increases but not to an unbearable uncomfortable amount. Just at the threshold of pain. After throwing a few more ladlefuls onto the stove, you feel a drop in temperature. But not much. After a few ladle throws we go into the water for a 5 minute swim. The sandy bottom feels refreshing on the feet.

Back into the hot sauna room we go. This time we throw on a few full ladles of water onto the stones at a time. Now... it feels like the temperature drops significantly. It feels, cooler and the heat is quite comfortable. Not the kind of heat that chokes you or smothers completely. A very soothing type of heat.

I am also enjoying this smoke sauna with Tomi... who agrees with my experience and even holds up his hands into the air. Meaning...the temperatures high up inside the sauna hot room seem bareable. The air is easy to breath. A good smoke sauna experience.

Toward the end of our sauna routine... we go into the sauna hot room, washing off. And, then it hits us ALL. A wonderful feeling. We all begin to feel rather tired and sleepy, not exhausted. Like the tired feeling after you have been on a long hike in the woods all day. Nice and tired feeling. A tiredness which makes you more aware or keen on life. As if you had been working hard physically and now your whole body feels relaxed. We spend about one hour in the sauna, and now we are ready for bed.

We get dressed and head out

After chatting with our host, he said that that is exactly what happens after a smoke sauna experience. You feel nice, tired, comfy and warm. The heat of the smoke sauna or the feeling of how hot it is is controlled by the amount of water you throw on the stove. Our first smoke sauna experience is a success.

Order your first smoke sauna experience in Finland. Here is how!

Would you like to try this smoke sauna with the option of ordering food with your sauna? This is how you can get to know more about this particular smoke sauna in Vesilahti.

Location: 30 kilometer drive south of Tampere? First go to the Vesilahti municipality pages here giving you an idea what the food looks like that you can order with your smoke sauna. Then fill out this form to inquire about the smoke sauna, and get your first smoke sauna experience. Add your choice of food, or ask them to send you a menu. The food and sauna is served at the same location. A one-of-kind experience!
Our mid-May trip to the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park in Tampere

Located near Tampere, the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park, one of Finland’s more popular amusement parks hosts about 1000 people daily. With comfortably cool weather and Finnish school’s still in session the month of May is ideal especially in avoiding the normally long wait for rides. Tomi, his friend Toni, and Aura visit the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park on May 15th. This is a good time to go since it’s a cool day. Plus, most Finnish schools are out by June 4th. Yep, less kids around.

It is a cool 7 degrees Celsius (44 F) in the morning. By noon temps will reach 13 degrees Celsius (55 F). It’s a perfect day to go to the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park. Why? Overcast weather tends to keeps the crowds down. Notice, I did not say ‘bad weather.’ Checking the weather at AccuWeather.com’s forecast for Tampere, Finland gives me the advantage of knowing how to be more prepared for the day. AccuWeather says: “overcast and cloudy” ; "relative humidity 60%" -which practically means... No Rain! And also means...no long delays before getting to ride the ‘Rides’!

Knowing that the weather in Tampere in May is dry, I deduce, this is a best, ‘theme park’ day, for visiting the Sarkaniemi Amusement Park.

I recommend a day trip visit to the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park, mid to end of May. In July, expect the queue for the rides to be much longer, when the park is crowded. If you really want "peace and quiet", choose an overcast day, like we did here. In May I only waited 5 minutes for my favourite roller coaster ride, "The Tornado."

Entrance tickets and prices

Aura purchased the basic 10 Euro ticket allowing her a full day’s entrance to the park, free access to the Näsinneula Observation Tower and the Sara Hilden Art Museum Sara Hildenin taidemuseo. With this ticket each ride costs an additional 7-9 Euros. Tomi, Toni and I purchased ‘All Day, Unlimited Rides’ Passes, two kids and one adult. These tickets for one adult and two children cost 112 Euros.

Tip: If you plan to go on more than two rides, you'll want to buy the whole day pass, costing between 32 - 34 euros. This includes entrance and access to almost all rides.

Inside the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park

MotoGee -me, waving in the back!
The four of us arrive here at 1 pm. We'll enjoy the rides around five hours and let the boys go free within the park. The very first ride is one we will do together.

**MotoGee** is a ride for those wanting to feel what a sudden start on a motorcycle is like.
Sit in the position of a motorcyclist leaning forward, holding onto handle bars. When the ride starts, feel the G forces as the roller coaster shoots the rider you into motion.
I can feel the effect of the sudden start in my stomach. It happened quite unexpectedly. This is a short ride worth trying a few times.

*MotoGee... Me... Havin fun too!!*

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**Traditional Rides at the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park**

The bumper cars sign says: "No Bumping Allowed!"
So if you want a peaceful and gentle ride, on the bumper cars, Audi Racing is for you.

*Audi Racing Bumper Cars!*

There are smaller roller coaster rides besides the fast and twisty "Tornado". One is called the **Nopea Mato Fast worm** fast worm gives Tomi a ride he wants to repeat. This is a small and fast roller coaster ride running on oblong shaped tracks. Next I enjoy the "Jetstar", a gentler roller coaster which keeps your stomach from reaching your mouth.

*On the Jetstar*

*An old favorite of mine. The Troikka!*

*This classic ride is suited for oldies who have remained young at heart.*
Next ride... is the Tyrski ride. The three of us are sitting on a large dish, with only a few other people around. We are facing the outside, in a half-kneeling position.

**The Tyrsky Ride!**

During the ride, my engineering mind is desperately trying to figure out what keeps the spinning saucer on the tracks? I finally realize this spinning saucer clamped to a track glides smoothly over a ascending and descending slopes similar to a roller coaster. This ride gives you a feeling of being moved in more than one direction. At first it is not difficult to predict what direction you are heading toward, until... you feel it in your stomach!

**Tyrsky about to roll down-n-up!**

**See the Tornado ride video at Sarkanniemi here**

The Tornado shoots, loops, twists, and has sharp turns. A potential neck-breaker, on the verge of being scary. The boys rode the water rides like the "Log Ride" to add a bit of moisture to your fun day!

**Log ride with a Kerrrrsplaaashhh!**

**Going up the Tower!**

The elevator trip from ground zero, to the highest floor at the Nasinneula Observation Tower takes under a minute with the super fast elevator. Up top we've got a panoramic view of Tampere and surrounding lakes.

**Next ride**

My favorite! -the "Tornado". This roller coaster is the largest and fastest ride at the Sarkanniemi Adventure Park.

**Tornado roller coaster with folks right-side up!**
View from Nasinneula Observation Tower in competition with an intense study of Donald Duck.

Our day at Sarkanniemi Adventure Park provides us fun, excitement, laughter and relaxation. Perfect May weather topped things off. It is easy to walk through the theme park. In addition to rides, the park also offers an Aquarium, Petting Zoo, Dolphinarium, Planetarium, and the Nasinneula Observation Tower.

At the Dolphinarium!

Viewing Tampere’s boat landing area from the Nasinneula tower

The Petting Zoo!

Food and Eating at the Sarkanniemi Amusement Park

There are lots of kiosks and eating locals at the park: "The Trombikioski, the Tornadokioski and one located on the edge of the water, Rantakioski. There are several smaller ones like the Koskigrilli, Sandwichkioski and Wafflekioski. Pilivilinna Cafe and Auranko Terassi offer a variety of foods, as well, there is a pizzeria, ice-cream shop "Peliherkkum" and a lunch cafe located at the top of the observation tower. "Games Square Grill" offers fast food to those in a hurry.

Tomi and Toni with Cotton Candy

Tomi's favorite Sarkanniemi Adventure Park rides

Rides for Young Children under 120 Centimeters. Metkula Fun House - a crooked house you can walk through. Nearby is also the funny House-of-Mirrors.
House of Mirrors

Coffee Cups - Kids get inside the cup and spin themselves around.

Ladybird - kids go forward up and down and around in Ladybirds

Piggy Train -a small train for kids that goes round a track and back to the main Piggy train station.

Red Baron -a spinning ride where riders sit in little planes and fly round-'n-round, up-'n-down.

Regatta Carousel -a small carousel which not only spins but creates up-and-down motion as children are sitting in little boats.

Turtle Train -kids sit in a turtle-like position riding the track, or the Magic Bikes where kids are suspended in the air.

The Magic River ride offers you a gentle boat ride drifting down a stream. Rides for teens and adults. Dad’s and Mom’s too!

The Tower Of Orlochless -a haunted house train ride.

Candy Carousel -a large carousel suited for all ages. It is located to the left near the park’s entrance.

Wave Swinger Carousel -a tall and large carousel for older kids and adults.

Trombi -a roller coaster ride for kids 140 cm and taller. Closed down while we were visiting.

Jetstar -an old-fashioned roller coaster suited for kids 140 cm and taller. The ride has a typical up-and-down motion, and one steep drop, then runs through a few bends, with another smaller drop toward the end.

Tyrsky -a large spinning dish roller coaster combination type ride. Not a superfast ride. But you experience centrifugal forces like never before.

Time Carpet - Riders are seated on a platform that moves up and down while also moving forward and backward. This circular motion give you a feeling of weightlessness for a brief movement while on the down turn.

Take Off -Riders begin spinning in their platforms which spin around an additional larger platform. The larger platform begins tilting as it is spinning, lifting the riders higher and at a steeper angle. This ride is for kids 140cm and taller.

The larger Wave Swinger Carousel
Rides for Children 120 cm and Up

Hurricane - this ride is located near the water’s edge where the ride is perfectly positioned to give you a near ‘sea sick’ feeling. The swinging, dipping, and up-and-down motion make it a potential stomach-turner.

MotoGee - the fast-start motorcycle roller coaster ride for adults too!

Rapids Ride - a ride in a log around the park.

Audi Racing - traditional bumper cars.

Shops and Shopping at the Sarkanniemi Amusement Park: In case you want to pick up a gift, here are some of the shops... Tower Shop, Dolphin shop, Aquarium shop.

A picture tour of Tampere in September.

Walk around town. I’ll guide you where to go.

Come to Tampere in September for a great weekend getaway. Even for taking pictures of a top tourist town in Finland.

The average weather conditions according to BBC news for Tampere in September - a pleasant surprise: 7 -14 Celsius (44 - 57.2 Fahrenheit). It is half as hot as in the month of July. The relative humidity is slightly higher than in August, with less rainfall historically.

Our starting point is at the top of the highest tower in Tampere. Enjoying the view from the highest of cafes in Tampere. Our walking tour of Tampere in September starts at the Särkänniemi Amusement Park.

Lappinniemi

Here is a picture of Lappinniemi, at Lake Näsijärvi as seen from the Näsinneula Observation tower at the Särkänniemi Amusement Park.

Visit the tower, if you want a panoramic picturesque view of Tampere in September. Eat at the Näsinneula restaurant or sip coffee 124 meter (407 foot) above sea level.

Another photo from the top of the Näsinneula tower. Notice the fall season in Finland is approaching. Color
appears on the leaves of the trees. (See the red splotch at lower part of the picture).

The Dolphinarium building at the Särkänniemi Amusement Park

The kids will like watching the dolphins swim and perform. We went in September.

Another pic of the Särkänniemi Amusement Park in Tampere from the top of the Näsinneula observation tower.

Walking Tampere in September along Paasikiventie -a view of Näsijärvi

First we’ll start walking to the west. Begin walking west along the main road Paasikiventie (road 12), for a ten minute walk. Soon you will see an open park area on the right side of the road. (north of the main road) Here is where you can walk along the shore of lake Näsijärvi, play frisbee, and have a picnic. At the opposite side of the park area, as you are looking up toward Pispala ridge, you’ll notice an industrial area below, residences, and... sights nearby like this tall red tower.

The pellet shot tower in Tampere Pispala

Let's go walking around Tampere in September

To begin with is a walk which originates at the Särkänniemi Amusement Park. (See the green pinpoint on the map.) The first walking stretch is to the west and east of the amusement park. Connected with this walking path, I have shown how you can slowly begin walking your way to the center of town. It will take a total of 2 to 3 hours to walk these paths, depending how long you stop at the tourist attractions I have noted in the map.

For more detailed viewing of the walks, click into the map and zoom in. Use Street View to see more photos. Oh, and, no worries! There are only 15 different places on the map to visit. Use the links in Google maps to bring you back to the corresponding location on this page.
The 1908 made Pispala Shot Tower Haulitorni in Tampere. Shotgun pellets were formed by dropping molten lead droplets from the top of tower down through the 50 meter high tube of this tower to the bottom of the tower. The hot lead droplets met with the upstream of air, forming a round contour giving the cooling lead its round shape. For a final cool down, at the very bottom, the pellets splashed into a basin of water.

Walk from the park area back to the Särkänniemi Amusement Park.

This time we'll walk past the park toward the east. Along the way, you'll walk by the boat landing harbor called Mustalahti. This is where you can see tour boats, like the Tarjanne, which offers cruises from Tampere to Virrat during the warmer season. For more information see: www.runoilijantie.fi/sivut/english/home.htm

At this point, Paasikiventie(road) turns into Kekkosentie(road) and along the left of this road you will see the lakeside shores of Näsijärvi. The walking and biking path are on the north side of the road.

As you are walking toward the east for 10 minutes turn around facing the west. -a good view of the Näsinneula Observation Tower. After walking another 5-10 minutes on the left you will see another boat harbor. Walk along the pedestrian path. When you get to Laivakatu 1, look to the north, and across the boat harbor you can see the Holiday Club Tampere Spa Hotel Holiday Club Tampereen Kylpylä.

If you happen to be staying at the hotel, the popular Rauhaniemi swimming beach and Rauhaniemi best ice-swimming sauna in Finland is only a 7 minute walk from the Hotel.

A pine tree at the Rauhaniemi swimming beach

The ice-swimming is great once the lake temperature is between 2 - 9 Celsius (35.5 F - 48.2 F). In Tampere the lakes are too warm for ice-swimming in September. Visit this beach front for a nice view of Lake Näsijärvi.

Vapriikki

Stop by Vapriikki to see exhibitions. Some exhibits are free to enter.

Playground near Tammerinpuisto

Playground for children near Tammerinpuisto. Grand Hotel Tammer building is on the left. To the opposite of this view is the Sokos Ilves Hotel. This playground is nicely located close to Hämeenpuisto, Tammerpuisto, and Tammerkoski. If you have children, you can spend hours at this playground. Tomi and Rosa always beg me to let them stop and play at the playground.

Dear brother Tomi, not sooo fast! Close to where the kids are playing at Tammer Park Tammerpuisto is...
Maple tree at Tammerpuisto

Due north 200 meters from this playground, we see the Grand Hotel Tammer. Notice the turning of the leaves on the top right tree.

Grand Hotel Tammer

Walk about 20 meters to the right of Sokos Hotel Tammer heading northeast opposite of the direction that yellow car is driving on a street called Ojakatu. Walk through Ojakatu 2, to visit the best of Tampere Finland Cafes. -have a waffle and a cup of coffee at the Vohveli Cafe.

Street view of Ojakatu

Walking this stretch of Tampere in September make sure to also visit the Tampere central fire station. -built in 1908 and designed by a women architect, Wivi Lönn. Walk past the main fire station on Satakunnankatu heading away from the town center, and you'll encounter an antique shop before getting to Hotel Pinja. A short walk toward the central/main railway station called Tampereen rautatieasema. A street view of the corner of the railway station main building. Address: Rautatienkatu, 33100, Tampere.

Across from the Tampere Railway Station

The building on the right -- The Tampere Railway Station. Check what time it is from the top of the tower. -left of the building. Finnish trains are comfortable, clean and quiet. If you want to travel cheaply by train, with limited flexibility, use VR, -the Finnish railway system. Here is a price comparison between using the train, bus or rental car.

From the railway station, walk toward the center of town called Keskustori. Stop to shop at the Stockmannin Tampereen tavaratalo(Hämeenkatu 4), where in the basement holds my favorite section. -fresh wide variety of veggies, exotic foods and delicacies from around the world.

Inside Stockmanns upper floors are: cosmetics, children's clothing section, home appliances, clothing section for men and women, a forex exchange point, textiles, gifts, glassware, and sportswear. You name it! Around the corner is the academic bookstore Akateeminen Kirjakauppa(Hämeenkatu 6)

Find English books at the Akateeminen kirjakauppa

Need to preview English books while in Tampere? This is where we go. From books about Finland, children’s, fiction, technology, social sciences, law, computing, medicine and the arts. -just to name a few. Compare their on-
line store with Amazon.Com to get the cheapest prices. Walk through the Koskipuisto park of Tampere in September. Once you have walked about 10 minutes toward the center of town from the Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, you will get to Koskikatu(street). This is where you will find the Koskipuisto Park...which looks like this.

Koskipuisto Park

Notice the waterfalls in the middle of this picture. We'll walk over there later. Walk downstream and you'll see some interesting trees like we did along the way. Keep walking until you pass under the Hämeensilta Bridge. Walk through the Koskipuisto Park toward the “Rosso Koskipuisto” restaurant. This leads you to a walking path running parallel to the Tammerkoski river. The bridge is above our head. After walking under the Hämeensilta Bridge, turn around and you’ll see the Tammerkoski River.

Hämeensilta bridge

The Hämeensilta bridge is designed by E.R. Eriksson, and built in 1979. In the middle of the above photo, notice the statue...right side of the tree on top of the edge of the bridge? Another view looking from the other side of the bridge. You can see three of the four statues on the bridge.

Tammerkoski River Canal Hämeensilta bridge sideview

We'll walk toward the statue on top of the bridge to get a glimpse... of the statue on each side of the bridge opposite of each other on the Hämeensilta Bridge. (a total of 4 statues) Notice the statue of a large man on the right side of the picture. To our left is the other statue from the previous picture.(hidden)

The Tampere Theater - Tampereen teatteri

This yellow structure is called the Tampere Theater Tampereen Teatteri(Hämeenkatu 15).

Walk toward the Tampere city center square across the cobblestone street of Hämeenkatu 15 behind the Tampere Theater Tampereen Teatteri is the old church Vanha Kirkko.
Old Church Tower Vanha Tampereen Kirkko

Tampere in September is the time when yellow turning leaves blend in with the colors of building. Behind the bell tower of the church is the Old Library of Tampere Vanha Kirjastotalo.

The Tampere Theatre

Old Library of Tampere - Vanha Kirjastotalo

Tomi is standing on the stairs in the early afternoon sun. Tampere in September at Keskustori, where each time you turn your head, there is something to see in every direction. Our location is at the intersection of Puutarhakatu 1 and Alexis Kiven Katu(street)

Finlayson building

At the town center Keskustori. In this picture, Rosa is in her warm clothes. In the background is the Finlayson building. The building with the white text lettering and red brick chimney.

Finlayson is a popular brand name in Finland. The company is known for manufacturing products like: luxury towels, linens, pillows and beds. Just to name a few. Try a Finlayson towel against your wet body after a sauna and you'll be aware of the quality material.

To buy a bath robe towel or other Finlayson gifts go to the genuine factory outlet shop in Tampere at: Kuninkaankatu 3, 33210 Tampere. Phone 020 7213 750

Whats For free in Tampere

Museums of course! Walk around the city to different art exhibitions and visit them for free. Here are a few. Walk toward the Finlayson building. You will see an entrance to a pedestrian street. Notice the movie theater Plevna is on the left side. Keep walking about 100 meters to the end of the road, turn right and walk into a courtyard. You are surrounded by the old industrial area of Finlayson. Here you will find a free (on Fridays) art exhibition center called TR1. For viewing visual arts like: media art, applied art or photography. Another freebie(on Fridays) is the Rubriiki Media Museum which is in the same building as TR1. Interested in the history of mobile phones, radio or television. This is your place.

Near Tammerkoski, 50 meters after Puutarhakatu 1 ends in the town center is the Kirjastonpuisto Park. In the backdrop is one of the prettiest chimneys in Finland. The blue skies of Tampere in September.
A swing set in the foreground near Keskustori. At the town center of Tampere in September. Now, let’s walk toward that chimney. We’ll soon go inside a quiet building where you can keep up on current events. First, for a close-up of this beautiful chimney. - southern view. To the left of the chimney...

The Newspaper Reading Room Lehtilukusali

Tomi and Rosa are standing at the entrance of the Tampere Newspaper Reading Room. - part of the Tampere City Library system.

Inside the Reading room
The Tampere City Library contains books from over 70 different countries. This brick building serves as a reading room for hundreds of daily visitors reading about the current affairs both locally and globally. Inside you will find newspapers and magazines from all over the world...for vacation reading, study research, and handcraft magazines.

Newspapers from different countries like: The Baltic Times; Beijing Review; Gentleman’s Quarterly; House and Garden; Moscow News; New York Times Sunday Edition; Sunday Times; De Telegraaf; L'espresso; Wprost; Senska Dagbladet; Frankfurter Allgemeine; Neue Zurcher Zeitung; Presse; Welt; Zeit

Walking toward the Tammerkoski River

On either side of the river Tammer Tammerkoski, the city of Tampere once thrived off the power of water to drive industry. Today, both sides of the the banks have walking paths with parks on either sides of the river. You can even go fishing at the falls.

The Tammer Waterfalls

Let’s walk towards the dam. Up closer, we see the old dam and the waterfall on the left side. On top is Tammerkoski 1930’s dam with a pedestrian walkway on top. A walkway for pedestrian and cyclist to cross the Tammerkoski River while getting a pretty view of the river Tammer which connects the northern lake Näsijärvi with the southern Pyhäjärvi, and runs through the center of Tampere.

City Library Opening Times:
Mondays - Fridays 9:00 am - 8:00pm,
Saturdays 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Address:
Puutarhakatu 1, phone 03 5656 4048

The highest waterfall and most visually attractive sight in Tampere seen from the lower river. Looking at the top of the dam we see the walkway on the left, the spillway, and extra spillway. -located inside the brick building (center).

Top of the Tammerkoski dam

Keep walking toward the Grand Hotel Tammer away from the city center, turn to the left and view the Tampella area. -see the white lettering written on the building in the middle of the following picture.

Top of Tammerkoski viewing the enclosed spillway
Now let’s walk back toward the town center across the abovearched bridge. We will head toward Puutarhakatu. Our first stop is at Kauppakatu 11 where there is this attractive yellow building near Puutarhakatu. (street view)

**Tampere building architecture at Kauppakatu 11 near Keskustori**

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**Viewing the Tampella area from the top of Tammerkoski**

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**Maple tree with a birch in the background**

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**A close up on the leaves in September**

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**Puutarhakatu street in the center of Tampere city trees and Ruska**

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**In the sun and shade**
Watch this video showing what Tampere in September is like. See the Tammerkoski (connecting river), Keskustori, The Tampere Theater, Hämeensilta bridge with statues and Finlayson building.

What Finnish Hotels Are Like -a Finland Hotels Guide!

Travel weary, need some shut-eye—here’s a Finland Hotels Guide of hotels I have tried. See which ones You may want to visit!

A Guide to Hotel Costs

Most hotels in Finland include a generous breakfast buffet and use of the sauna and gym. Almost all Finnish Hotels offer you discounted rates on the weekends. On average expect to pay 80-140 Euros/night/person. Hotel Kamp, a 5-star luxury hotel in Helsinki starts at 350 Euros for a deluxe double room. A pleasant and quiet 4 star hotel such as the Boutique Hotel Fabian in Helsinki, starts at 190 Euros/night/person. A 3-star hotel like Sokos Flamingo will cost about 75 Euros/night/person. Here one can add some relaxing activities—swim at the water park, enjoy the spa, workout at a gym or unwind with a soothing massage. If you stay for only one day at the Sokos or Cumulus chain 3-star hotels expect to spend at least 120 Euros/night. A budget Finnish hotel chain, the Omena Hotel charges around 45 Euros/night/person. Breakfast is not included. The Omena Hotels are located in nine locations throughout Finland.

Typical breakfast at a 3-star hotel

Finland hotel food -my evening meal is Mexican style

A 30 minute work-out at the gym...
...then hop into the Finnish sauna

Finland Hotels Guide - 5 Star
Finnish Hotels

The Hilton Brand Hotels in Helsinki, like the Hilton Strand and Hilton Helsinki Airport or the Radisson Blue have 5-star ratings.

The 5-Star Hotel Kämp -a non-brand Finnish 5 Star hotel downtown Helsinki

Hotel Kämp (1887) another 5-star hotel located in Helsinki where traditional European style meets the modern. It is the only Luxury Collection Hotel in Finland with rich, red carpeting lining the staircase, grand marble pillars adorning the indoors and soft, luxuriant furnishing. The hotel has accommodated famous celebrities like, Bono of U2 as well politicians have often gathered here reaching important official decisions.

Inside Hotel Kämp

The large Mannerheim suite has marble bathroom decor covering the floor and a marble bathtub. The deluxe guest room has large standing lamps, sturdy furniture and a walk-in closet. Suite beds are handmade by Relyon and known to be the best in the world. The Kämp suite Executive Suite Front Room features a crystal chandelier in the center of the room, solid upholstered wood furniture, a work desk, long mirrors, and large framed pictures on the walls.

• The Kämp Hotel Spa -receive facial treatment for men or women, manicure or pedicure, full body massages with warm rock treatment to relax your muscles, a full body aromatic massage or an Oriental Head Massage.
• Kämp Hotel Gym -get personal training or workout yourself. After your workout, use the 3 different saunas. The traditional Finnish sauna, the aromatic eucalyptus scents of the grotto steam sauna or the relaxing Turkish bath/hamman sauna.
• Hotel Kämp restaurants serve Japanese, European brasserie style menus, Finnish specialties, and much more.

Finland Hotels Guide -4 Star
Finnish Hotels

Some hotel chains in Finland which fall under this category are: Scandic, Sokos, Radisson and Cumulus.

A Finnish 4 star hotel Worldhotels chain which has the highest ratings for 2011 is the hotel Fabian Boutique Hotel. Located on Fabiankatu 7, Helsinki, Hotel Fabian is conveniently located within walking distance of the Market Square, Museum of Finnish Architecture, the Senate Square, Presidential Palace, Lutheran Cathedral and the Uspenski Cathedral. If you ever need to stay downtown Helsinki this hotel is optimally located. The hotel allows plenty of natural light to enter the rooms. Choose to sleep in a room viewing the quiet courtyard side, or sleep on the side with a view of the city.

• rooms each have an unique design
• close up mirror for makeup/shaving, iron and ironing boards
• bathrobes and slippers
• air-conditioning (optional)
• beds available for children and infants

Super High Quality Sleeping

Get the best sleep in Finland at this hotel. It has exceptionally comfortable, custom-made beds by the Finnish company Unikulma and the rooms provide a restful atmosphere with minimal noise.

Finland Hotels Guide Tip: Unikulma custom makes the mattresses for the Hotel Fabian and for Hotel Haven. Here are other luxury hotels in Finland which use Unikulma beds.

• The Hotel Fabian suites have a kitchen to prepare your own food
• breakfast included in the booking
• bar and lounge
• staff help you with guided tours of the city
• wired and wireless internet
• non-smoking hotel
• reception is open for 24 hours
Near the hotel, you can eat fried Baltic herrings with potato at the Savoy world-class restaurant. This restaurant is also recognized for its designer interior by Alvar Aalto.

Finland Hotels Guide - 3 Star Finnish Hotels

Cumulus and Sokos Hotels Chain

The 3 Star Finland Hotel can be classified average to good. Whether you are on business or vacation, Cumulus hotels give you a choice of 25 different hotels across Finland. The strength of Cumulus and Sokos hotel chains is that they are most frequented by the local Finns and foreign visitors. The biggest benefits these hotels have are the location in town centers near all the convenient exhibitions centers, theaters, shopping centers or concert halls. Both Cumulus and Sokos hotels offer...

- single, double, triple, superior rooms, up to 4 people per room
- special rooms for the disabled and people with allergies
- saunas
- gym
- children’s playrooms
- winter plug in sockets for warming your car
- parking lots or parking garages
- meeting and conference rooms

Finland Hotels Guide - the "Private Hotels" brand in Finland

The Private Hotels of Finland offer a typically traditional Finnish setting. For example, the Hotel Arthur located in the middle of Helsinki claims to be the most traditional in Finland. The hotel has 25 rooms, plus the 'Sir Arthur Suite' which offers designer furniture, high quality textiles, a bedroom of your dreams, a spa room and a sauna with alder wood panels.

There are 18 Private Hotels in Finland and almost all contain meeting rooms or conference facilities. Private Hotels are found in the following towns in Finnish Lapland: Rovaniemi, Muonio, Saariselkä, Suomutunturi, and Ivalo. Some fall under the 3 stars hotel class.

Finland Hotels Guide to Spa Hotels

There are Spa Hotels in most large towns in Finland. The natural environment, usually by the lake or sea is clean with high quality facilities and activities around the spas. Pamper yourself to a special therapy treatment.

There are over 12 Spa Hotels in Finland. Unique Spa Hotels include the Naantali Spa by the seaside which offers you a wide option of accommodations. Order a suite on a yacht for over 200 Euros/night. Find accommodation at 45 Euros/night near the hotel. Swim in an outdoor pool year round which is heated at 30 degree Celsius. - My reason to go there!

The Average Finnish Spa Hotel offers:

- indoor and outdoor pools. Not all Spa Hotels have outdoor pools heated in the wintertime - an exhilarating experience in the freezing cold
- spa treatments like massages, rock treatment
- accommodation in a double room includes, a bathroom with bathrobes, telephone, TV, minibar
- typical Scandinavian buffet style breakfast
- unlimited use of the saunas, pools and gym

Two Spa Hotels in the Tampere Pirkkala area I have tried are the Ikaalinen Kylpylä Spa Hotel in Ikaalinen and the Holiday Club Tampere Spa Hotel.

Try the Spa Hotel Sanio which is located near a sandy beach in Kalajoki, Finland, and has a good rating.

Economy Hotels in Finland

Finland Hotels Guide to the Omena Hotel Chain

A Finnish hotel surmised to be inexpensive by Finns is the Omena Hotel Brand. This hotel chain operates without a receptionist, but offers the basics in each room - beds, bathroom, TV, microwave oven, fridge, tea and coffee.
Finland Hotels Guide Fontana Chains

The Fontana Finland hotels chain has a handful of Hotels in Finland which offers unique services. The Fontana Korpi lampi Hotel is a half hour drive from the center of Helsinki. The hotel has 150 rooms. 16 of these are 4 person/room. The dining area/restaurant seats 300. Enjoy live music and karaoke.

With a pond next to the Korpilampi Hotel you experience country life near Helsinki. The hotel has three different saunas, a Jacuzzi, a 15 meter swimming pool, baby pool, squash court and gym. Go ice-swimming with a hot sauna in the wintertime. There is an auditorium with 350 seats and meeting rooms. The Serena Water Park is only 400 meters from the hotel. If you like hiking, visit the Nuuksio National Park, seven kilometers from the hotel. Another Fontana Hotel which is closer to the Nuuksio National Park is called Fontana Lepolampi.

Our Family Moomin World Review

Here is our Moomin World review for a taste of what to expect. This is our second trip to the Moomin World theme park in Naantali. Get ready to experience the ‘look’ and ‘feel’ as explained in the fairy tale stories of "The Moomins."

Getting to the World of Moomin

Driving to Naantali from Tampere takes about two and a half hours. From Tampere follow the signs to Turku, then drive east toward Naantali. Once you are in the small town of Naantali (15 kilometers from Turku) the signs are easy to follow. At the end of July, the temperature is around 29 Celsius. 84 degrees Fahrenheit If you are coming from Helsinki, take the train to Turku, then take bus 11 or 110 from downtown Turku, or get a taxi to Naantali.

Between June 8 and August 14 the S.S. Ukkopekka a 1938 built ice-breaker inspection vessel departs from Turku to Moomin World in Naantali. This is an interesting journey, if you want to see the Archipelago seascape. Follow the signs to Muumimaailma Moomin World until you get to the exclusive Muumimaailma parking lot, before the center of Naantali.

Parking costs six Euros, and the parking ticket also includes the bus trip out to the Moomin World Island. You can park in some areas of Naantali, but parking is only allowed for two hours.

We paid 21 Euros per person. Children three years and older need a ticket. The ticket/wrist band includes all day access to the activities at Moomin world, including the theater.

Our children, Tomi and Rosa have read Moomin books and movies before going to Moomin World, so they come expecting to experience something they have heard or seen either from books, or the television series.

Since the Moomin World Island/theme park is a product derived the books of Tove Jansson, it carries with it more of the idea of ‘being’ over ‘doing’. Consider it a good place to engage in activities with your children.
Tomi pounding nails into his wooden triangle when he was three years old. There are many other activities, like painting, drawing and more.

Our Moomin world review begins as we enter the Moomin World Island. The children are a bit older... ...Rosa is seven and Tomi is ten year old ... they'll enjoy it just the same.

Moomin World -entering the long walkway to Moomins Island

Tip: Do bring a packed lunch and plenty of drinking water. You'll be on an island for the whole day with your child. Rosa and Tomi's cousin got here before us, so we are in a hurry to get onto the island.

Boats run along either side of the walkway!

Motor and sail boats tied up along the walkway makes me think: "there is something interesting out here to see!" Walking across the almost 400 meter long wooden dock connects us from the mainland to Moomins Island. We arrive at the entrance of the island.

The same boat up closer!

About to set foot on the island!

Our Moomin world review of the Moomin Island

After paying for our tickets near the inner entrance of the island, we meet the extended family. We are curious, has our cousin arrived yet?

In the Gazebo enjoying Moomin lollipops. Our cousin is in the far right of this pic!
Now that we are all on the island, where will we go? Since it is midday, we first sit down to eat in a garden gazebo, next to the theater. After a few bites, we’ll visit the show.

The theater

Moomin world review of the theater...? It feels a bit mysterious to sit in the audience under the large canopy. Tomi wants to watch all the theater performances of the Moomin characters. There are several shows in a sequence. An hour or two break, then more shows follow. Being inside the theater is convenient, especially if there happens to be a shower of rain - just sit back, relax and enjoy the theater show until the rain has stopped! We’ll check the program for more shows later. And its' cast...

The Cast!

Moomin characters’ names from left to right: Moominpappa, Sniff, Stinky, Moomintroll and Mymble, who is also known as 'little My.' The kids are in a hurry to run around and see more, so after a show or two I take off with Tomi, Rosa, and their cousin. During the beginning of our journey I discover... interesting building architecture.
My ‘little My’

Our Moomin world review of the Moomins blue house

More to do before getting to the Moomins house. Take a picture of your child, and see what you get! Now we are close to the house! Rosa and her cousin running toward where the crowds are gathering. In between and around the people they dodge. I am sweating in my attempt not to lose sight of them! Everyone is over there around that funny looking blue tower! Hey, it’s the Muumitalo, Moomins house. Beneath the house a crowd gathers! Everyone wants to see the Moomins... Live!

The crowd!

In the very center of the picture you can see Snufkin in the shadows with his recorder. Sometimes he has an accordion or a guitar with. You can join Snufkin in a sing-along each day. The times are mentioned in the program. Or join him every time he sings at his favorite spot on the Island!
Snufkin standing under the door!

Our Moomin world review of going into the Moomin family house

The house has various levels. In particular the places most appealing to the younger ones are likes this. Tomi is intrigued by the small window. I am intrigued by the narrowing affect between the room and the window.

Flash back to our 2003 visit. Inside the house!

Up windy staircases, and into fairy tales like rooms where Moomins live. The kids have seen enough, and run down the stairs out of the house.

Tove Jansson, created the characters cute and friendly.

Upstairs at the Moomin’s house.

Tip: If the crowds are too large. Wait just before closing of Moomin World to get a picture with the Moomin characters. 

Daddy outruns em to...
...sneak a picture with the Moomin World Witch!

Witch and I(eye) close up!

After meeting the Witch, Rosa’s cousin finds her Daddy. Next we all wander across another island trail.

Slow uncle I, trying to keep up with fast moving cousins

Our Moomin world review of the the Hattifatteners trail

Entering the Hattifatteners Domain on the Hattifatteners trail. A quote taken from Tove Jansson’s story...

...Snufkin walks along the shore, and hears his friend Hemulen crying out for help. “This is a very tricky problem!” The Hattifatteners, unable to speak or hear, still have a very keen sense of feeling. Banging against the pole, they can feel the ground shaking, and they’ll be frightened to leave.

The exercise at this activity: Shout into the tree stump and see if you hear an echo. Stomp your feet near the stump to see if you can shake them up down there.

After shouting and stomping! Did I scare the Hattifatteners away?
The famous bridge over the waterfalls.

After walking across the bridge, I venture out with Rosa on our own little path. At the end of the path there is a beach, where we visit...

_Drontti Edvard the Dragon._

I get a picture of Rosa by a popular background which is found in the many storylines of the Moomins. Here is one flashback picture on top of the dock in 2003. It's almost the same background as the previous picture.

On top of the dock!

Close to the dock is... a colossal shell with a surprise in the middle!

Then the thought occurs to me! Where is Tomi? Rosa last saw him at the maze... ...Sooo, that is where we'll embark to next.

_The a-Maze-ing Labyrinth!_

I even had difficulties finding my way out of this maze! The three of us venture out to explore the outer island paths.
Our Moomin World review of sights around the island

Surrounding seascape!

After an archipelago seascape view... we discover the Moomin World swimming beach. Reminding me that next time we go to Muumimaailma, we’ll remember to bring along the swimming gear. Most important, if you are going to swim, make sure to warm up in the... sauna at Muumimaailma Moomin World!

The beach!

The Sauna

The kids want to do a little shopping before leaving the island.

Our shop stop inside the shop! It's... Sniff's Shop!

Our Moomin World review of shopping at Muumimaailma. Special Finlayson made towels with Moomin characters. They are sooo cute!

The equivalent towels a bit closer!

Stuffed Toy Muumins!
Warning: Moomin products like the mugs have become collectables among adults too. Aura loves to collect Moomin Mugs.

Our Moomin world review - what else can you do on the island?

- Eat cotton candy and a bunch of other sweets.
- Mail out a letter with a custom Moomin stamps, showing your loved ones where you have been.
- On the brochure there a location shown where one can cook and grill.

Hey, look at the clock, it is almost 6 pm. Time to close Moomin World Island for the day.

Our Moomin World Review. Leaving the island.

We walk off the island, and again cross the long dock. The kids are very tired. The miniature train is here to pick us up at the end of the walk. All aboard!

The Train going between Moomin World and Naantali center!

The train has a trailer caboose, for strollers and extra bring along items, in case you have an extra big lunch box with you.

After the train ride to Naantali, there is still some shopping to be done. Walking over to the Naantali Moomin World Shop, it is easy especially on a clear sunny day to notice the charming Naantalian architecture.
What else can one do in Naantali?

- Eat at local restaurants near the Moomin World Island.
- Walk around Naantali. The building architecture and seascape(s) are attractive.
- There are grocery stores in Naantali for other shopping needs.

**Summer opening times:**
June 8 - August 15; 10 am to 6 pm
August 16 - August 29; 12 pm to 6 pm

**Winter Opening Times:**
February 20 - February 28; 11 am to 5 pm

**Prices for Admission:**
Varies from year to year: 21 Euros and up per person

Buy a two day ticket starting at 15 Euros day per person. (also gets you into the Väski Adventure Island)

Children under three years of age get in free!