

This is your personalised First Steps Checklist!

The list below outlines the things you will need to take care of after your arrival in Helsinki. Once you've got these things taken care of, you should be ready to go! Welcome to Helsinki!

- ☐ Citizens of non-EU countries who visit Finland for fewer than 90 days (as a tourist, visiting family, or on business) need a visa, unless they are citizens of a visa-exempt country. Check the foreign ministry website ([Um.fi](https://um.fi)) for more information on different visa requirements.

If you plan to work in Finland, you may need a residence permit even if your stay will be shorter than 90 days. Citizens of non-EU countries who plan to stay for more than 90 days must apply for a residence permit. See the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](https://migri.fi)) for more information.

More steps to consider

- ☐ **Arrange to use an interpreter, if necessary**

If you do not speak Finnish or Swedish, you have the right to use an interpreter when interacting with some public authorities. Interpreter services must be arranged in advance and often come at no cost. Find more information at [InfoFinland.fi](https://infofinland.fi).

- ☐ **Open a bank account**

Book an in-person visit at your bank of choice to open an account. Ask beforehand about the documents you will need to show them. Remember to request access codes for online banking.

- ☐ **Set up a form of strong identification**

You will need to acquire a form of strong identification, i.e., online banking codes, a mobile ID or a police-issued ID card, to use various e-services in Finland. Learn more at [Suomi.fi](https://suomi.fi).

- ☐ **Find a place to live and buy home insurance**

Almost all rental agreements will require you to buy home insurance. Some banks in Finland offer bundled banking and insurance services at a discount, so ask around for different offers. See the [Housing in Helsinki](#) section of welcome.helsinki.fi for more information.

- ☐ **Buy a phone and internet service**

You must have a [personal identity code](#) and Finnish address to buy a mobile service and/or broadband subscription. If you do not have a credit history in Finland, you will be asked to make an advance payment. If you do not yet have an ID code or address, you can purchase a pre-paid subscription. Check if your housing agreement includes broadband before you buy a subscription from an operator. Let your operator know if you want to use a [mobile ID](#).



Use your Kela card and learn about state benefits

If you are [eligible for national health insurance](#) in Finland, you will be issued a Kela card. You can also apply for it yourself from the state benefits agency ([Kela.fi](#)). You will need to show this card to receive state-supported healthcare and subsidies. Each Kela benefit must be applied for separately, and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.



Make it a habit to use public transport

Public transport in Helsinki is convenient, reliable and eco-friendly. The handy [HSL app](#) allows you to buy tickets and access the [Journey Planner](#) on your mobile phone. Check the [Getting around the city](#) section of [welcome.helsinki](#) for more information.



Exchange your driving license

Driving licenses issued in EU/EEA countries are valid in Finland indefinitely, but it is a good idea to exchange your license for a Finnish one if you plan to live here permanently. Owners of driving licenses issued by other countries will need to pass a Finnish driving exam if they do not exchange their license by the deadline. See more at [Ajokortti-info.fi](#).



Sign up for Finnish or Swedish language lessons

While it is true that almost everyone in Helsinki speaks English, we suggest you start learning one or both of the national languages right away, as it will bring many advantages. Check [Finnishcourses.fi](#) for suitable courses near you.



Explore your new home

Once you have settled in, remember to take some time to get to know Helsinki's different neighbourhoods. [MyHelsinki](#) is great source of ideas for fun things to see and do!



Enjoy your new life in Helsinki!

Congratulations! You have now finished all the steps and are ready to start your Helsinki adventure. Remember to visit the [welcome.helsinki](#) website, if you have any more questions.

Any questions? Contact one of Helsinki's helpful services listed below:

International House Helsinki

Lintulahdenkuja 2 D, 00530 Helsinki
Monday–Friday 9:00–16:00

Please note the following exceptions to regular service hours: TE office desk is closed daily between 12:00–13:00. The Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK) is present at the service point from Monday to Wednesday, 9:00–12:00 and 13:00–16:00.

Helsinki-info

Tel 09 31011 111

Chat [neuvonta.hel.fi](#)

Service point IHH and Oodi