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Finland

Finland (Finnish: *Suomi* ['suomi] (listen); Swedish: *Finland* ['finländ] (listen)), officially the **Republic of Finland** (Finnish: *Suomen tasavalta*; Swedish: *Republiken Finland* (listen to all)),^[note 1] is a Nordic country and a member state of the European Union in Northern Europe. It shares land borders with Sweden to the west, Russia to the east, Norway to the north, and is defined by the Gulf of Bothnia to the west, and the Gulf of Finland of the Baltic Sea across Estonia to the south. Finland covers an area of 338,455 square kilometres (130,678 sq mi), with a population of 5.5 million. Helsinki is the country's capital and largest city, but together with the neighbouring cities of Espoo, Kauniainen, and Vantaa, it forms a larger metropolitan area. Finland is officially bilingual, with Finnish and Swedish being official.^[11] The climate varies relative to latitude, from the southern humid continental climate to the northern boreal climate. The land cover is primarily a boreal forest biome, with more than 180,000 recorded lakes.^[12]

Finland was inhabited around 9000 BC after the Last glacial period.^[13] The Stone Age introduced several different ceramic styles and cultures. The Bronze Age and Iron Age were characterized by extensive contacts with other cultures in Fennoscandia and the Baltic region.^[14] From the late 13th century, Finland gradually became an integral part of Sweden as a consequence of the Northern Crusades. In 1809, as a result of the Finnish War, Finland was annexed by Russia as the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland, during which Finnish art flourished and the idea of independence began to take hold. In 1906, Finland became the first European state to grant universal suffrage, and the first in the world to give all adult citizens the right to run for public office.^{[15][16]} Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia, tried to russify Finland and terminate its political autonomy, but after the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared independence from Russia. In 1918, the fledgling state was divided by the Finnish Civil War. During World War II, Finland fought the Soviet Union in the Winter War and the Continuation War, and Nazi Germany in the Lapland War. After the wars, Finland lost parts of its territory, including the culturally and historically significant town of Vyborg,^[17] but maintained its independence.

Finland largely remained an agrarian country until the 1950s. After World War II, the country rapidly industrialized and developed an advanced economy, while building an extensive welfare state based on the Nordic model, resulting in widespread prosperity and a high per capita income.^[18] Finland joined the United Nations in 1955 and adopted an official policy of neutrality. Finland joined the OECD in 1969, the NATO Partnership for Peace in 1994,^[19] the European Union in 1995, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997,^[19] and the Eurozone at its inception in 1999. Finland is a top performer in numerous metrics of national performance, including education, economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life and human development.^{[20][21][22][23]} In 2015, Finland was ranked first in the World Human Capital^[24] and the Press Freedom Index and as the most stable country in the world during 2011–2016 in the Fragile States Index,^[25] and second in the Global Gender Gap Report.^[26] It also ranked first on the World Happiness Report report for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.^{[27][28]}

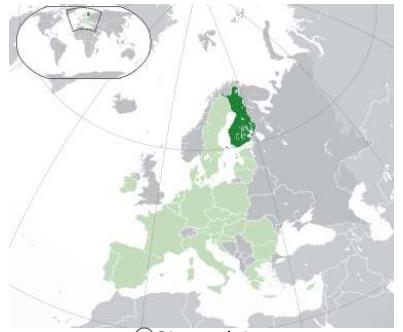
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<i>Republiken Finland</i> (Swedish)	
 Flag	 Coat of arms
Anthem:	
<i>Maamme</i> (Finnish)	
<i>Vårt land</i> (Swedish)	
(English: "Our Land")	
0:00	MENU
	
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Location of Finland (dark green)	
– in Europe (green & dark grey)	
– in the European Union (green) –	
[Legend]	
Capital	Helsinki
and largest city	60°10'N 24°56'E
Official languages	Finnish • Swedish
Recognized national languages	Sámi • Karelian • Finnish Kalo • Finnish Sign Language • Finland-Swedish Sign Language
Ethnic groups	91.98% Finnish
(2020) ^{[1][2]}	4.15% Other European
	2.40% Asian
	1.04% African
	0.43% Others
Religion (2020) ^[3]	69.8% Christianity
	—67.8% Lutheranism
	—1.1% Orthodoxy
	—0.9% Other Christian
	29.4% No religion
	0.8% Others
Demonym(s)	Finnish • Finn
Government	Unitary parliamentary

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Etymology

Finland

The earliest written appearance of the name *Finland* is thought to be on three runestones. Two were found in the Swedish province of *Uppland* and have the inscription *finlonti* (U 582). The third was found in Gotland. It has the inscription *finlandi* (G 319) and dates back to the 13th century.^[29] The name can be assumed to be related to the tribe name *Finns*, which is mentioned at first known time AD 98 (disputed meaning).

Suomi

republic ^[4]	
• President	Sauli Niinistö
• Prime Minister	Sanna Marin
Legislature Parliament	
Independence from Russia	
• Autonomous status	29 March 1809
• Declaration of Independence	6 December 1917
• Finnish Civil War	January – May 1918
• Constitution established	17 July 1919
• Winter War	30 November 1939 – 13 March 1940
• Continuation War	25 June 1941 – 19 September 1944
• Joined the EU	1 January 1995
Area	
• Total	338,455 km ² (130,678 sq mi) (65th)
• Water (%)	9.71 (as of 2015) ^[5]
Population	
• 2020 estimate	▲ 5,536,146 ^[6] (116th)
• Density	16/km ² (41.4/sq mi) (213th)
GDP (PPP) 2020 estimate	
• Total	\$257 billion ^[7] (60th)
• Per capita	\$49,334 ^[7] (19th)
GDP (nominal) 2020 estimate	
• Total	\$277 billion ^[7] (43rd)
• Per capita	\$48,461 ^[7] (14th)
Gini (2019) ▲ 26.2 ^[8] low · 6th	
HDI (2019) ▲ 0.938 ^[9] very high · 11th	
Currency Euro (€) (EUR)	
Time zone UTC+2 (EET)	
• Summer (DST)	UTC+3 (EEST)
Date format d.m.yyyy ^[10]	
Driving side right	
Calling code +358	
ISO 3166 code FI	
Internet TLD .fi, .ax ^a	

a. The .eu domain is also used, as it is shared with other European Union member states.

The name *Suomi* (Finnish for 'Finland') has uncertain origins, but a common etymology with *saame* (the Sami, the native people of Lapland) and *Häme* (a province in the inland) has been suggested (Proto-Finnic *hämä from older *šämä, possibly loaned into Proto-Saami as *sāmē), whose source could be the Proto-Baltic word *zēmē, meaning '(low) land'.^[30] According to the hypothesis, *sāmē – or *šämä directly – was loaned back into Baltic as *sāma- (compare Latvian sāms 'Finn, Öselian'), from which Northern Finnic reborrowed it (perhaps via a Germanic intermediate *sōma-) as *sōma- > *sōme- 'Finland'.^[31] In addition to the close relatives of Finnish (the Finnic languages), this name is also used in the Baltic languages Latvian (*soms*, *Somija*) and Lithuanian (*suomis*, *Suomija*), although these are evidently later borrowings. An alternative hypothesis by Petri Kallio suggests the Proto-Indo-European word *(d̥)gʷʰm-on- 'human' (cf. Gothic *guma*, Latin *homo*), being borrowed into Uralic as *éoma.^[31]

It has been suggested that the Finnish word *Suomi* is first attested the Royal Frankish Annals annal for 811, which mentions a person called *Suomi* among the Danish delegation at a peace treaty with the Franks.^[32] If so, it is also the earliest evidence for the change from the proto-Finnic monophthong /o:/ to the Finnish diphthong /uo/.^{[33][34]} However, some historical linguists view this interpretation of the name as unlikely, supposing another etymology or that the spelling originated as a scribal error (in which case the sound-change /o:/ > /uo/ could have happened much later).^[35]

Concept

In the earliest historical sources, from the 12th and 13th centuries, the term Finland refers to the coastal region around Turku from Perniö to *Usikaupunki*. This region later became known as *Finland Proper* in distinction from the country name *Finland*. *Finland* became a common name for the whole country in a centuries-long process that started when the Catholic Church established a missionary diocese in *Nousiainen* in the northern part of the province of *Suomi* possibly sometime in the 12th century.^[36]

The devastation of *Finland* during the Great Northern War (1714–1721) and during the Russo-Swedish War (1741–1743) caused Sweden to begin carrying out major efforts to defend its eastern half from Russia. These 18th-century experiences created a sense of a shared destiny that when put in conjunction with the unique Finnish language, led to the adoption of an expanded concept of *Finland*.^[37]

History

Prehistory

If the archeological finds from *Wolf Cave* are the result of Neanderthals' activities, the first people inhabited Finland approximately 120,000–130,000 years ago.^[38] The area that is now Finland was settled in, at the latest, around 8,500 BC during the Stone Age towards the end of the last glacial period. The artefacts the first settlers left behind present characteristics that are shared with those found in Estonia, Russia, and Norway.^[39] The earliest people were hunter-gatherers, using stone tools.^[40]

The first pottery appeared in 5200 BC, when the Comb Ceramic culture was introduced.^[41] The arrival of the Corded Ware culture in Southern coastal Finland between 3000 and 2500 BC may have coincided with the start of agriculture.^[42] Even with the introduction of agriculture, hunting and fishing continued to be important parts of the subsistence economy.



Reconstruction of Stone Age dwelling from *Kierikki*, Oulu

In the Bronze Age permanent all-year-round cultivation and animal husbandry spread, but the cold climate phase slowed the change.^[43] Cultures in Finland shared common features in pottery and also axes had similarities but local features existed. The Seima-Turbino phenomenon brought the first bronze artefacts to the region and possibly also the Finno-Ugric languages.^{[43][44]} Commercial contacts that had so far mostly been to Estonia started to extend to Scandinavia. Domestic manufacture of bronze artefacts started 1300 BC with *Maaninka-type* bronze axes. Bronze was imported from Volga region and from Southern Scandinavia.^[45]

In the Iron Age population grew especially in Häme and Savo regions. Finland proper was the most densely populated area. Cultural contacts to the Baltics and Scandinavia became more frequent. Commercial contacts in the Baltic Sea region grew and extended during the eighth and ninth centuries.

Main exports from Finland were furs, slaves, castoreum, and falcons to European courts. Imports included silk and other fabrics, jewelry, *Ulfberht* swords, and, in lesser extent, glass. Production of iron started approximately in 500 BC.^[46]

At the end of the ninth century, indigenous artefact culture, especially women's jewelry and weapons, had more common local features than ever before. This has been interpreted to be expressing common Finnish identity which was born from an image of common origin.^[47]



Finland on a medieval map, which is part of the *Carta marina* (1539)



An ancient Finnish man's outfit according to the findings of the Tuukkala Cemetery in Mikkeli, interpretation of 1889. The cemetery dates from the late 13th century to the early 15th century.

An early form of Finnic languages spread to the Baltic Sea region approximately 1900 BC with the Seima-Turbino-phenomenon. Common Finnic language was spoken around Gulf of Finland 2000 years ago. The dialects from which the modern-day Finnish language was developed came into existence during the Iron Age.^[48] Although distantly related, the Sami retained the hunter-gatherer lifestyle longer than the Finns. The Sami cultural identity and the Sami language have survived in Lapland, the northernmost province, but the Sami have been displaced or assimilated elsewhere.

The 12th and 13th centuries were a violent time in the northern Baltic Sea. The Livonian Crusade was ongoing and the Finnish tribes such as the Tavastians and Karelians were in frequent conflicts with Novgorod and with each other. Also, during the 12th and 13th centuries several crusades from the Catholic realms of the Baltic Sea area were made against the Finnish tribes. According to historical sources, Danes waged at least three crusades to Finland, in 1187 or slightly earlier,^[49] in 1191 and in 1202,^[50] and Swedes, possibly the so-called second crusade to Finland, in 1249 against Tavastians and the third crusade to Finland in 1293 against the Karelians. The so-called first crusade to Finland, possibly in 1155, is most likely an unreal event. Also, it is possible that Germans made violent conversion of Finnish pagans in the 13th century.^[51] According to a papal letter from 1241, the king of Norway was also fighting against "nearby pagans" at that time.^[52]



Late Iron Age swords found in Finland

Swedish era



The Swedish Empire following the Treaty of Roskilde of 1658. Dark green: Sweden proper, as represented in the Riksdag of the Estates. Other greens: Swedish dominions and possessions

As a result of the crusades (mostly with the second crusade led by Birger Jarl) and the colonization of some Finnish coastal areas with Christian Swedish population during the Middle Ages,^[53] including the old capital Turku, Finland gradually became part of the kingdom of Sweden and the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church. Due to the Swedish conquest, the Finnish upper class lost its position and lands to the new Swedish and German nobility and to the Catholic Church.^[54] In Sweden even in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was clear that Finland was a conquered country and its inhabitants could be treated arbitrarily. Swedish kings visited Finland rarely and in Swedish contemporary texts Finns were portrayed to be primitive and their language inferior.^[55]

Swedish became the dominant language of the nobility, administration, and education; Finnish was chiefly a language for the peasantry, clergy, and local courts in predominantly Finnish-speaking areas. During the Protestant Reformation, the Finns gradually converted to Lutheranism.^[56]

In the 16th century, Mikael Agricola published the first written works in Finnish, and Finland's current capital city, Helsinki, was founded by Gustav I of Sweden.^[57] The first university in Finland, the Royal Academy of Turku, was established in 1640. The Finns reaped a reputation in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) as a well-trained cavalrymen called "Hakkapeliitta", that division excelled in sudden and savage attacks, raiding and reconnaissance, which King Gustavus Adolphus took advantage of in his significant battles, like in the Battle of Breitenfeld (1631) and the Battle of Rain (1632).^{[58][59]} Finland suffered a severe famine in 1696–1697, during which about one third of the Finnish population died,^[60] and a devastating plague a few years later.

In the 18th century, wars between Sweden and Russia twice led to the occupation of Finland by Russian forces, times known to the Finns as the Greater Wrath (1714–1721) and the Lesser Wrath (1742–1743).^{[17][60]} It is estimated that almost an entire generation of young men was lost during the Great Wrath, due mainly to the destruction of homes and farms, and to the burning of Helsinki.^[61] By this time Finland was the predominant term for the whole area from the Gulf of Bothnia to the Russian border.

Two Russo-Swedish wars in twenty-five years served as reminders to the Finnish people of the precarious position between Sweden and Russia.^[17] An increasingly vocal elite in Finland soon determined that Finnish ties with Sweden were becoming too costly, and following the Russo-Swedish War (1788–1790), the Finnish elite's desire to break with Sweden only heightened.^[62]

Even before the war there were conspiring politicians, among them Georg Magnus Sprengtporten, who had supported Gustav III's coup in 1772. Sprengtporten fell out with the king and resigned his commission in 1777. In the following decade he tried to secure Russian support for an autonomous



Now lying within Helsinki, Suomenlinna is a UNESCO World Heritage Site consisting of an inhabited 18th-century sea fortress built on six islands. It is one of Finland's most popular tourist attractions.

Finland, and later became an adviser to Catherine II.^[62] In the spirit of the notion of Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858) – "we are not Swedes, we do not want to become Russians, let us therefore be Finns" – a Finnish national identity started to become established.^[63]

Notwithstanding the efforts of Finland's elite and nobility to break ties with Sweden, there was no genuine independence movement in Finland until the early 20th century. As a matter of fact, at this time the Finnish peasantry was outraged by the actions of their elite and almost exclusively supported Gustav's actions against the conspirators. (The High Court of Turku condemned Sprengtporten as a traitor around 1793.)^[62] The Swedish era ended in the Finnish War in 1809.

Russian era

On 29 March 1809, having been taken over by the armies of Alexander I of Russia in the Finnish War, Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire with the recognition given at the Diet held in Porvoo. This situation lasted until the end of 1917.^[17] In 1812, Alexander I incorporated the Russian Vyborg province into the Grand Duchy of Finland. In 1854, Finland became involved in Russia's involvement in the Crimean War, when the British and French navies bombed the Finnish coast and Åland during the so-called Åland War. During the Russian era, the Finnish language began to gain recognition. From the 1860s onwards, a strong Finnish nationalist movement known as the Fennoman movement grew, and one of its most prominent leading figures of the movement was the philosopher J. V. Snellman, who was strictly inclined to Hegel's idealism, and who pushed for the stabilization of the status of the Finnish language and its own currency, the Finnish markka, in the Grand Duchy of Finland.^{[65][66]} Milestones included the publication of what would become Finland's national epic – the Kalevala – in 1835, and the Finnish language's achieving equal legal status with Swedish in 1892.



Pioneers in Karelia (1900) by Pekka Halonen^[64]

The Finnish famine of 1866–1868 killed approximately 15% of the population, making it one of the worst famines in European history. The famine led the Russian Empire to ease financial regulations, and investment rose in following decades. Economic and political development was rapid.^[67] The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was still half of that of the United States and a third of that of Britain.^[67]

In 1906, universal suffrage was adopted in the Grand Duchy of Finland. However, the relationship between the Grand Duchy and the Russian Empire soured when the Russian government made moves to restrict Finnish autonomy. For example, the universal suffrage was, in practice, virtually meaningless, since the tsar did not have to approve any of the laws adopted by the Finnish parliament. Desire for independence gained ground, first among radical liberals^[68] and socialists. The case is known as the "Russification of Finland", driven by the last tsar of Russian Empire, Nicholas II.^[69]

Civil war and early independence

After the 1917 February Revolution, the position of Finland as part of the Russian Empire was questioned, mainly by Social Democrats. Since the head of state was the tsar of Russia, it was not clear who the chief executive of Finland was after the revolution. The Parliament, controlled by social democrats, passed the so-called Power Act to give the highest authority to the Parliament. This was rejected by the Russian Provisional Government which decided to dissolve the Parliament.^[70]



White firing squad executing Red soldiers after the Battle of Läkipohja (1918)

New elections were conducted, in which right-wing parties won with a slim majority. Some social democrats refused to accept the result and still claimed that the dissolution of the parliament (and thus the ensuing elections) were extralegal. The two nearly equally powerful political blocs, the right-wing parties and the social democratic party, were highly antagonized.

The October Revolution in Russia changed the geopolitical situation once more. Suddenly, the right-wing parties in Finland started to reconsider their decision to block the transfer of highest executive power from the Russian government to Finland, as the Bolsheviks took power in Russia. Rather than acknowledge the authority of the Power Act of a few months earlier, the right-wing government, led by Prime Minister P. E. Svinhufvud, presented Declaration of Independence on 4 December 1917, which was officially approved two days later, on 6 December, by the Finnish Parliament. The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), led by Vladimir Lenin, recognized independence on 4 January 1918.^[71]

On 27 January 1918, the official opening shots of the civil war were fired in two simultaneous events: on the one hand the government's beginning to disarm the Russian forces in Pohjanmaa, and on the other, a coup launched by the Social Democratic Party. The latter gained control of southern Finland and Helsinki, but the White government continued in exile from Vaasa. This sparked the brief but bitter civil war. The Whites, who were supported by Imperial Germany, prevailed over the Reds,^[72] which were guided by Kullervo Manner's desire to make the newly independent country a Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic (also known as "Red Finland") and part of the RSFSR.^[73] After the war, tens of thousands of Reds and suspected sympathizers were interned in camps, where thousands were executed or died from malnutrition and disease. Deep social and political enmity was sown between the

Reds and Whites and would last until the Winter War and beyond. Even nowadays, the civil war remains a sensitive topic.^{[74][75]} The civil war and the 1918–1920 activist expeditions called "Kinship Wars" into Soviet Russia strained Eastern relations. At that time, the idea of a Greater Finland also emerged for the first time.^{[76][77]}

After a brief experimentation with monarchy, when an attempt to make Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse King of Finland proved to be a poor success, Finland became a presidential republic, with K. J. Ståhlberg elected as its first president in 1919. As a liberal nationalist and with a legal background, Ståhlberg anchored the state in liberal democracy, guarded the fragile shoot of the rule of law, and embarked on internal reforms.^[78] Finland was also one of the first European countries to strongly aim for equality for women, with Miina Sillanpää serving in Väinö Tanner's cabinet as the first female minister in Finnish history in 1926–1927.^[79] The Finnish–Russian border was defined in 1920 by the Treaty of Tartu, largely following the historic border but granting Pechenga (Finnish: Petsamo) and its Barents Sea harbour to Finland.^[17] Finnish democracy did not experience any Soviet coup attempts and likewise survived the anti-communist Lapua Movement. Nevertheless, the relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union remained tense. Army officers were trained in France, and relations with Western Europe and Sweden were strengthened.

In 1917, the population was three million. Credit-based land reform was enacted after the civil war, increasing the proportion of the capital-owning population.^[67] About 70% of workers were occupied in agriculture and 10% in industry.^[80] The largest export markets were the United Kingdom and Germany.

World War II and after

Finland fought the Soviet Union in the Winter War of 1939–1940 after the Soviet Union attacked Finland and in the Continuation War of 1941–1944, following Operation Barbarossa, when Finland aligned with Germany following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. For 872 days, the German army, aided indirectly by Finnish forces, besieged Leningrad, the USSR's second-largest city.^[81] After Finnish resistance to a major Soviet offensive in June and July 1944 led to a standstill, the two sides reached an armistice. This was followed by the Lapland War of 1944–1945, when Finland fought retreating German forces in northern Finland. Perhaps the most famous war heroes during the aforementioned wars were Simo Häyhä,^{[82][83]} Aarne Juutilainen,^[84] and Lauri Törni.^[85]

The treaties signed with the Soviet Union in 1947 and 1948 included Finnish obligations, restraints, and reparations, as well as further Finnish territorial concessions in addition to those in the Moscow Peace Treaty of 1940. As a result of the two wars, Finland ceded Petsamo, along with parts of Finnish Karelia and Salla. This amounted to 10% of Finland's land area and 20% of its industrial capacity, including the ports of Vyborg (Viipuri) and the ice-free Liinahamari (Liinahamari). Almost the whole Finnish population, some 400,000 people, fled these areas. The former Finnish territory now constitutes part of Russia's Republic of Karelia, Leningrad Oblast, and Murmansk Oblast. Finland was never occupied by Soviet forces and it retained its independence, but at a loss of about 97,000 soldiers. The war reparations demanded by the Soviet Union amounted to \$300 million (5,516 million in 2019).

Finland rejected Marshall aid, in apparent deference to Soviet desires. However, in the hope of preserving Finland's independence, the United States provided secret development aid and helped the Social Democratic Party.^[86] Establishing trade with the Western powers, such as the United Kingdom, and paying reparations to the Soviet Union produced a transformation of Finland from a primarily agrarian economy to an industrialized one. Valmet was founded to create materials for war reparations. After the reparations had been paid off, Finland continued to trade with the Soviet Union in the framework of bilateral trade.

In 1950, 46% of Finnish workers worked in agriculture and a third lived in urban areas.^[87] The new jobs in manufacturing, services, and trade quickly attracted people to the towns. The average number of births per woman declined from a baby boom peak of 3.5 in 1947 to 1.5 in 1973.^[87] When baby-boomers entered the workforce, the economy did not generate jobs quickly enough, and hundreds of thousands emigrated to the more industrialized Sweden, with emigration peaking in 1969 and 1970.^[87] The 1952 Summer Olympics brought international visitors. Finland took part in trade liberalization in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Officially claiming to be neutral, Finland lay in the grey zone between the Western countries and the Soviet bloc. The YYY Treaty (Finno-Soviet Pact of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance) gave the Soviet Union some leverage in Finnish domestic politics. This was extensively exploited by president Urho Kekkonen against his opponents. He maintained an effective monopoly on Soviet relations from 1956 on, which was crucial for his continued popularity. In politics, there was a tendency to avoid any policies and statements that could be interpreted as anti-Soviet. This phenomenon was given the name "Finlandization" by the West German



Finnish military leader and statesman C. G. E. Mannerheim as general officer leading the White Victory Parade at the end of the Finnish Civil War in Helsinki, 1918



J. K. Paasikivi and P. E. Svinhufvud, both at the time future presidents of the Republic of Finland, discuss the Finnish monarchy project in 1918.



Areas ceded by Finland to the Soviet Union after World War II. The Porkkala land lease was returned to Finland in 1956.



Urho Kekkonen, the eighth president of Finland (1956–1982)

press. During the Cold War, Finland also developed into one of the centres of the East-West espionage, in which both the KGB and the CIA played their parts.^{[88][89][90][91][92][93]} The 1949 established Finnish Security Intelligence Service (*SUPO, Suojelupoliisi*), an operational security authority and a police unit under the Interior Ministry, whose core areas of activity are counter-Intelligence, counter-terrorism and national security,^[94] also participated in this activity in some places.^{[95][96]}

Despite close relations with the Soviet Union, Finland maintained a market economy. Various industries benefited from trade privileges with the Soviets, which explains the widespread support that pro-Soviet policies enjoyed among business interests in Finland. Economic growth was rapid in the postwar era, and by 1975 Finland's GDP per capita was the 15th-highest in the world. In the 1970s and 1980s, Finland built one of the most extensive welfare states in the world. Finland negotiated with the European Economic Community (EEC, a predecessor of the European Union) a treaty that mostly abolished customs duties towards the EEC starting from 1977, although Finland did not fully join. In 1981, President Urho Kekkonen's failing health forced him to retire after holding office for 25 years.

Finland reacted cautiously to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but swiftly began increasing integration with the West. On 21 September 1990, Finland unilaterally declared the Paris Peace Treaty obsolete, following the German reunification decision nine days earlier.^[97]

Miscalculated macroeconomic decisions, a banking crisis, the collapse of its largest trading partner (the Soviet Union), and a global economic downturn caused a deep early 1990s recession in Finland. The depression bottomed out in 1993, and Finland saw steady economic growth for more than ten years.^[98] Like other Nordic countries, Finland decentralized its economy since the late 1980s. Financial and product market regulation were loosened. Some state enterprises have been privatized and there have been some modest tax cuts. Finland joined the European Union in 1995, and the Eurozone in 1999. Much of the late 1990s economic growth was fueled by the success of the mobile phone manufacturer Nokia, which held a unique position of representing 80% of the market capitalization of the Helsinki Stock Exchange.



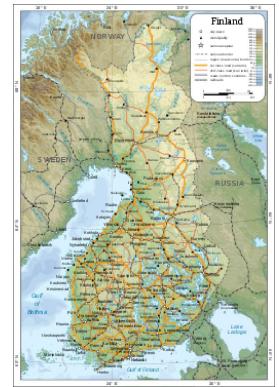
Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and signed the Lisbon Treaty in 2007.

Geography

Lying approximately between latitudes 60° and 70° N, and longitudes 20° and 32° E, Finland is one of the world's northernmost countries. Of world capitals, only Reykjavík lies more to the north than Helsinki. The distance from the southernmost point – Hanko in Uusimaa – to the northernmost – Nuorgam in Lapland – is 1,160 kilometres (720 mi).

Finland has about 168,000 lakes (of area larger than 500 m² or 0.12 acres) and 179,000 islands.^[99] Its largest lake, Saimaa, is the fourth largest in Europe. The Finnish Lakeland is the area with the most lakes in the country; many of the major cities in the area, most notably Tampere, Jyväskylä and Kuopio, are located in the immediate vicinity of the large lakes. The greatest concentration of islands is found in the southwest, in the Archipelago Sea between continental Finland and the main island of Åland.

Much of the geography of Finland is a result of the Ice Age. The glaciers were thicker and lasted longer in Fennoscandia compared with the rest of Europe. Their eroding effects have left the Finnish landscape mostly flat with few hills and fewer mountains. Its highest point, the Halti at 1,324 metres (4,344 ft), is found in the extreme north of Lapland at the border between Finland and Norway. The highest mountain whose peak is entirely in Finland is Ridnitšohkka at 1,316 m (4,318 ft), directly adjacent to Halti.



Topographic map of Finland

The retreating glaciers have left the land with morainic deposits in formations of eskers. These are ridges of stratified gravel and sand, running northwest to southeast, where the ancient edge of the glacier once lay. Among the biggest of these are the three Salpausselkä ridges that run across southern Finland.



Having been compressed under the enormous weight of the glaciers, terrain in Finland is rising due to the post-glacial rebound. The effect is strongest around the Gulf of Bothnia, where land steadily rises about 1 cm (0.4 in) a year. As a result, the old sea bottom turns little by little into dry land: the surface area of the country is expanding by about 7 square kilometres (2.7 sq mi) annually.^[100] Relatively speaking, Finland is rising from the sea.^[101]

There are some 187,888 lakes in Finland larger than 500 square metres and 75,818 islands of over 0,5 km² area, leading to the denomination "the land of a thousand lakes".^[12]

The landscape is covered mostly by coniferous taiga forests and fens, with little cultivated land. Of the total area 10% is lakes, rivers and ponds, and 78% forest. The forest consists of pine, spruce, birch, and other species.^[102] Finland is the largest producer of wood in Europe and among the largest in the world. The most common type of rock is granite. It is a ubiquitous part of the

scenery, visible wherever there is no soil cover. Moraine or till is the most common type of soil, covered by a thin layer of humus of biological origin. Podzol profile development is seen in most forest soils except where drainage is poor. Gleysols and peat bogs occupy poorly drained areas.

Biodiversity

Phytogeographically, Finland is shared between the Arctic, central European, and northern European provinces of the Circumboreal Region within the Boreal Kingdom. According to the WWF, the territory of Finland can be subdivided into three ecoregions: the Scandinavian and Russian taiga, Sarmatic mixed forests, and Scandinavian Montane Birch forest and grasslands.^[103] Taiga covers most of Finland from northern regions of southern provinces to the north of Lapland. On the southwestern coast, south of the Helsinki-Rauma line, forests are characterized by mixed forests, that are more typical in the Baltic region. In the extreme north of Finland, near the tree line and Arctic Ocean, Montane Birch forests are common. Finland had a 2018 Forest Landscape Integrity Index mean score of 5.08/10, ranking it 109th globally out of 172 countries.^[104]

Similarly, Finland has a diverse and extensive range of fauna. There are at least sixty native mammalian species, 248 breeding bird species, over 70 fish species, and 11 reptile and frog species present today, many migrating from neighbouring countries thousands of years ago. Large and widely recognized wildlife mammals found in Finland are the brown bear, grey wolf, wolverine, and elk. The brown bear, which is also nicknamed as the "king of the forest" by the Finns, is the country's official national animal,^[105] which also occur on the coat of arms of the Satakunta region is a crown-headed black bear carrying a sword,^[106] possibly referring to the regional capital city of Pori, whose Swedish name *Björneborg* and the Latin name *Arctopolis* literally means "bear city" or "bear fortress".^[107] Three of the more striking birds are the whooper swan, a large European swan and the national bird of Finland; the Western capercaillie, a large, black-plumaged member of the grouse family; and the Eurasian eagle-owl. The latter is considered an indicator of old-growth forest connectivity, and has been declining because of landscape fragmentation.^[108] Around 24,000 species of insects are prevalent in Finland some of the most common being hornets with tribes of beetles such as the Onciderini also being common. The most common breeding birds are the willow warbler, common chaffinch, and redwing.^[109] Of some seventy species of freshwater fish, the northern pike, perch, and others are plentiful. Atlantic salmon remains the favourite of fly rod enthusiasts.



The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) is Finland's national animal. It is also the largest carnivore in Finland.

The endangered Saimaa ringed seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*), one of only three lake seal species in the world, exists only in the Saimaa lake system of southeastern Finland, down to only 390 seals today.^[110] Ever since the species was protected in 1955,^[111] it has become the emblem of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation.^[112] The Saimaa ringed seal lives nowadays mainly in two Finnish national parks, Kolovesi and Linnansaari,^[113] but strays have been seen in a much larger area, including near Savonlinna's town centre.

Climate

The main factor influencing Finland's climate is the country's geographical position between the 60th and 70th northern parallels in the Eurasian continent's coastal zone. In the Köppen climate classification, the whole of Finland lies in the boreal zone, characterized by warm summers and freezing winters. Within the country, the temperateness varies considerably between the southern coastal regions and the extreme north, showing characteristics of both a maritime and a continental climate. Finland is near enough to the Atlantic Ocean to be continuously warmed by the Gulf Stream. The Gulf Stream combines with the moderating effects of the Baltic Sea and numerous inland lakes to explain the unusually warm climate compared with other regions that share the same latitude, such as Alaska, Siberia, and southern Greenland.^[114]

Winters in southern Finland (when mean daily temperature remains below 0 °C or 32 °F) are usually about 100 days long, and in the inland the snow typically covers the land from about late November to April, and on the coastal areas such as Helsinki, snow often covers the land from late December to late March.^[115] Even in the south, the harshest winter nights can see the temperatures fall to −30 °C (−22 °F) although on coastal areas like Helsinki, temperatures below −30 °C (−22 °F) are rare. Climatic summers (when mean daily temperature remains above 10 °C or 50 °F) in southern Finland last from about late May to mid-September, and in the inland, the warmest days of July can reach over 35 °C (95 °F).^[114] Although most of Finland lies on the taiga belt, the southernmost coastal regions are sometimes classified as hemiboreal.^[116]

In northern Finland, particularly in Lapland, the winters are long and cold, while the summers are relatively warm but short. The most severe winter days in Lapland can see the temperature fall down to −45 °C (−49 °F). The winter of the north lasts for about 200 days with permanent snow cover from about

Köppen climate types of Finland



Köppen climate type
ET (Tundra)
Dfc (Subarctic)
Dfb (Warm-summer humid continental)

*Northern land is tundra (ET) and continental (Dfc) climate
Source: Climate Classification Map of Europe

Köppen climate classification types of Finland

mid-October to early May. Summers in the north are quite short, only two to three months, but can still see maximum daily temperatures above 25 °C (77 °F) during heat waves.^[114] No part of Finland has Arctic tundra, but Alpine tundra can be found at the fells Lapland.^[116]

The Finnish climate is suitable for cereal farming only in the southernmost regions, while the northern regions are suitable for animal husbandry.^[117]

A quarter of Finland's territory lies within the Arctic Circle and the midnight sun can be experienced for more days the farther north one travels. At Finland's northernmost point, the sun does not set for 73 consecutive days during summer, and does not rise at all for 51 days during winter.^[114]

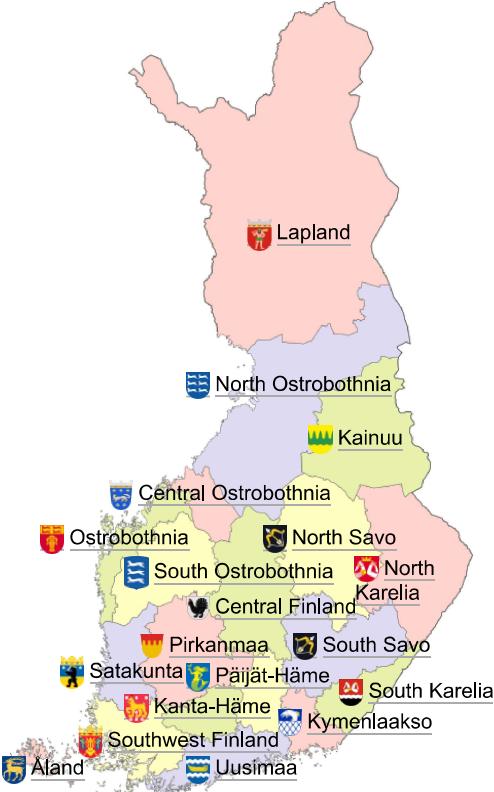
Counties

Finland consists of 19 counties, called *maakunta* in Finnish and *landskap* in Swedish. The counties are governed by regional councils which serve as forums of cooperation for the municipalities of a county. The main tasks of the counties are regional planning and development of enterprise and education. In addition, the public health services are usually organized on the basis of counties. Currently, the only county where a popular election is held for the council is Kainuu. Other regional councils are elected by municipal councils, each municipality sending representatives in proportion to its population.

In addition to inter-municipal cooperation, which is the responsibility of regional councils, each county has a state Employment and Economic Development Centre which is responsible for the local administration of labour, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and entrepreneurial affairs. The Finnish Defence Forces regional offices are responsible for the regional defence preparations and for the administration of conscription within the county.

Counties represent dialectal, cultural, and economic variations better than the former provinces, which were purely administrative divisions of the central government. Historically, counties are divisions of historical provinces of Finland, areas which represent dialects and culture more accurately.

Six Regional State Administrative Agencies were created by the state of Finland in 2010, each of them responsible for one of the counties called *alue* in Finnish and *region* in Swedish; in addition, Åland was designated a seventh county. These take over some of the tasks of the earlier Provinces of Finland (*lääni/län*), which were abolished.^[118]



Name	Official English name ^[119]	Finnish name	Swedish name	Capital	Regional state administrative agency
Lapland	Lapland	Lappi	Lappland	Rovaniemi	Lapland
North Ostrobothnia	North Ostrobothnia	Pohjois-Pohjanmaa	Norra Österbotten	Oulu	Northern Finland
Kainuu	Kainuu	Kainuu	Kajanaland	Kajaani	Northern Finland
North Karelia	North Karelia	Pohjois-Karjala	Norra Karelen	Joensuu	Eastern Finland
North Savo	North Savo	Pohjois-Savo	Norra Savolax	Kuopio	Eastern Finland
South Savo	South Savo	Etelä-Savo	Södra Savolax	Mikkeli	Eastern Finland
South Ostrobothnia	South Ostrobothnia	Etelä-Pohjanmaa	Södra Österbotten	Seinäjoki	Western and Central Finland
Central Ostrobothnia	Central Ostrobothnia	Keski-Pohjanmaa	Mellersta Österbotten	Kokkola	Western and Central Finland
Ostrobothnia	Ostrobothnia	Pohjanmaa	Österbotten	Vaasa	Western and Central Finland
Pirkanmaa	Pirkanmaa	Pirkanmaa	Birkaland	Tampere	Western and Central Finland
Central Finland	Central Finland	Keski-Suomi	Mellersta Finland	Jyväskylä	Western and Central Finland
Satakunta	Satakunta	Satakunta	Satakunta	Pori	South-Western Finland
Southwest Finland	Southwest Finland	Varsinais-Suomi	Egentliga Finland	Turku	South-Western Finland
South Karelia	South Karelia	Etelä-Karjala	Södra Karelen	Lappeenranta	Southern Finland

Päijät-Häme	Päijät-Häme	Päijät-Häme	Päijänne-Tavastland	Lahti	Southern Finland
Kanta-Häme	Kanta-Häme	Kanta-Häme	Egentliga Tavastland	Hämeenlinna	Southern Finland
Uusimaa	Uusimaa	Uusimaa	Nyland	Helsinki	Southern Finland
Kymenlaakso	Kymenlaakso	Kymenlaakso	Kymmenedalen	Kotka and Kouvola	Southern Finland
Åland ^[120]	Åland	Ahvenanmaa	Åland	Mariehamn	Åland

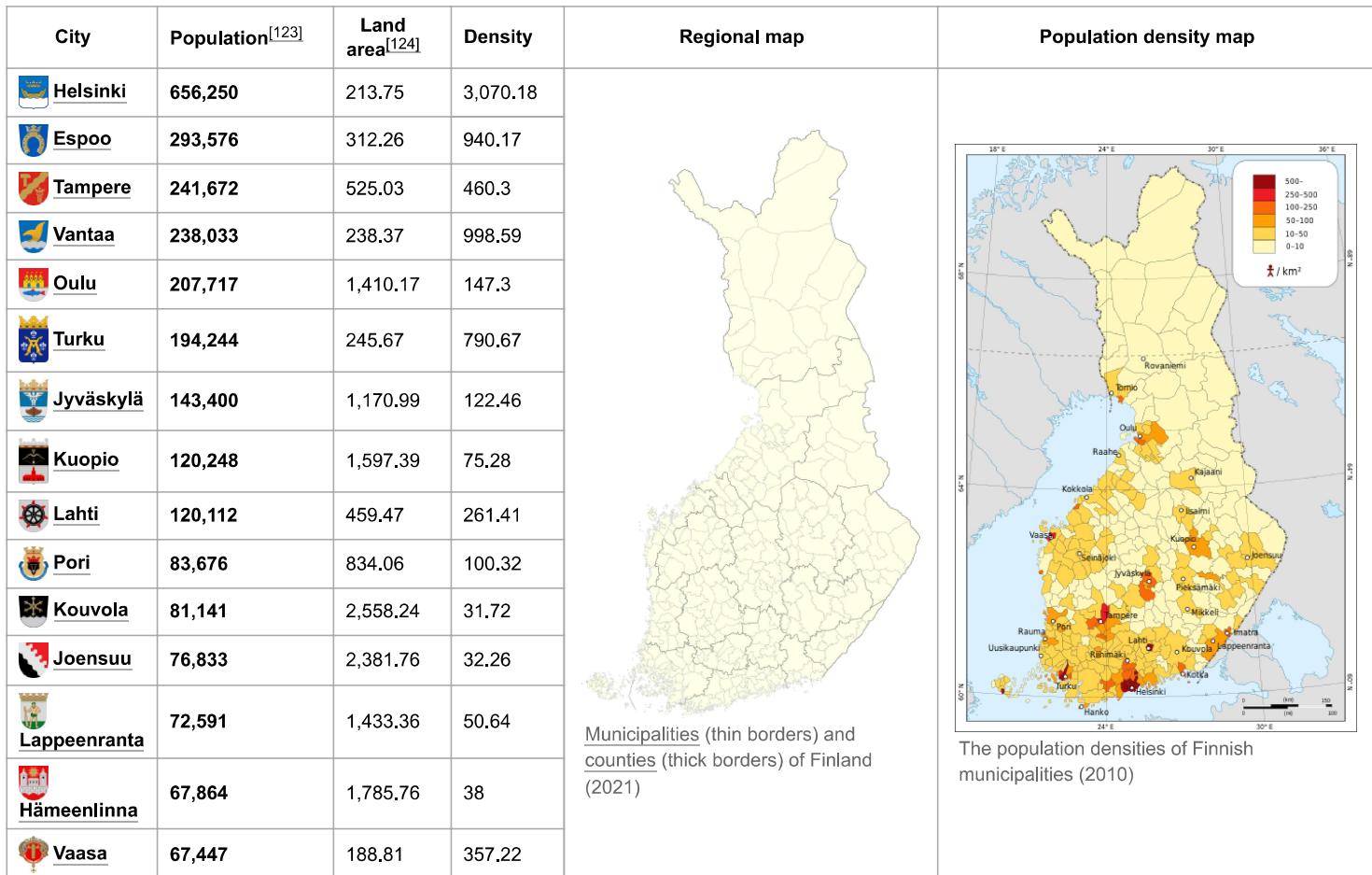
The county of Eastern Uusimaa (Itä-Uusimaa) was consolidated with Uusimaa on 1 January 2011.^[121]

Administrative divisions

The fundamental administrative divisions of the country are the municipalities, which may also call themselves towns or cities. They account for half of public spending. Spending is financed by municipal income tax, state subsidies, and other revenue. As of 2021, there are 309 municipalities,^[122] and most have fewer than 6,000 residents.

In addition to municipalities, two intermediate levels are defined. Municipalities co-operate in seventy sub-regions and nineteen counties. These are governed by the member municipalities and have only limited powers. The autonomous province of Åland has a permanent democratically elected regional council. Sami people have a semi-autonomous Sami native region in Lapland for issues on language and culture.

In the following chart, the number of inhabitants includes those living in the entire municipality (*kunta/kommun*), not just in the built-up area. The land area is given in km², and the density in inhabitants per km² (land area). The figures are as of 31 March 2021. The capital region – comprising Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo and Kauniainen – forms a continuous conurbation of over 1.1 million people. However, common administration is limited to voluntary cooperation of all municipalities, e.g. in Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council.



Government and politics

Constitution

The Constitution of Finland defines the political system; Finland is a parliamentary republic within the framework of a representative democracy. The Prime Minister is the country's most powerful person. The current version of the constitution was enacted on 1 March 2000, and was amended on 1 March 2012. Citizens can run and vote in parliamentary, municipal, presidential and European Union elections.



 **Sauli Niinistö**
12th President
since 1 March 2012

 **Sanna Marin**
46th Prime Minister
since 10 December 2019

President

The head of state of Finland is President of the Republic of Finland (in Finnish: *Suomen tasavallan presidentti*; in Swedish: *Republiken Finlands president*). Finland has had for most of its independence a semi-presidential system, but in the last few decades the powers of the President have been diminished. Constitutional amendments, which came into effect in 1991 and 1992, as well as a new drafted constitution of 2000 (amended in 2012), have made the presidency a primarily ceremonial office. However, the President still leads the nation's foreign politics together with the Council of State and is the commander-in-chief of the Defence Forces.^[4] The position still does entail some powers, including responsibility for foreign policy (excluding affairs related to the European Union) in cooperation with the cabinet, being the head of the armed forces, some decree and pardoning powers, and some appointive powers. Direct, one- or two-stage elections are used to elect the president for a term of six years and for a maximum of two consecutive 6-year terms. The current president is Sauli Niinistö; he took office on 1 March 2012. Former presidents were K. J. Ståhlberg (1919–1925), L. K. Relander (1925–1931), P. E. Svinhufvud (1931–1937), Kyösti Kallio (1937–1940), Risto Ryti (1940–1944), C. G. E. Mannerheim (1944–1946), J. K. Paasikivi (1946–1956), Urho Kekkonen (1956–1982), Mauno Koivisto (1982–1994), Martti Ahtisaari (1994–2000), and Tarja Halonen (2000–2012).

The current president was elected from the ranks of the National Coalition Party for the first time since 1946. The presidency between 1946 and the present was instead held by a member of the Social Democratic Party or the Centre Party.



Finland is a member of:
 the Eurozone
 the European Union

Parliament

The 200-member unicameral Parliament of Finland (Finnish: *Eduskunta*, Swedish: *Riksdag*) exercises supreme legislative authority in the country. It may alter the constitution and ordinary laws, dismiss the cabinet, and override presidential vetoes. Its acts are not subject to judicial review; the constitutionality of new laws is assessed by the parliament's constitutional law committee. The parliament is elected for a term of four years using the proportional D'Hondt method within a number of multi-seat constituencies through the most open list multi-member districts. Various parliament committees listen to experts and prepare legislation.



The Parliament of Finland's main building along Mannerheimintie in Töölö, Helsinki

Since universal suffrage was introduced in 1906, the parliament has been dominated by the Centre Party (former Agrarian Union), the National Coalition Party, and the Social Democrats. These parties have enjoyed approximately equal support, and their combined vote has totalled about 65–80% of all votes. Their lowest common total of MPs, 121, was reached in the 2011 elections. For a few decades after 1944, the Communists were a strong fourth party. Due to the electoral system of proportional representation, and the relative reluctance of voters to switch their support between parties, the relative strengths of the parties have commonly varied only slightly from one election to another. However, there have been some long-term trends, such as the rise and fall of the Communists during the Cold War; the steady decline into insignificance of the Liberals and their predecessors from 1906 to 1980; and the rise of the Green League since 1983.



The Session Hall of the Parliament of Finland

The Marin Cabinet is the incumbent 76th government of Finland. It was formed following the collapse of the Rinne Cabinet and officially took office on 10 December 2019.^{[125][126]} The cabinet consists of a coalition formed by the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Green League, the Left Alliance, and the Swedish People's Party.^[127]

Cabinet

After parliamentary elections, the parties negotiate among themselves on forming a new cabinet (the Finnish Government), which then has to be approved by a simple majority vote in the parliament. The cabinet can be dismissed by a parliamentary vote of no confidence, although this rarely happens (the last time in 1957), as the parties represented in the cabinet usually make up a majority in the parliament.^[128]

The cabinet exercises most executive powers, and originates most of the bills that the parliament then debates and votes on. It is headed by the [Prime Minister of Finland](#), and consists of him or her, of other ministers, and of the [Chancellor of Justice](#). The current prime minister is [Sanna Marin](#) (Social Democratic Party). Each minister heads his or her ministry, or, in some cases, has responsibility for a subset of a ministry's policy. After the prime minister, the most powerful minister is the [minister of finance](#). The incumbent Minister of Finance is [Matti Vanhanen](#).

As no one party ever dominates the parliament, Finnish cabinets are multi-party coalitions. As a rule, the post of prime minister goes to the leader of the biggest party and that of the minister of finance to the leader of the second biggest.

Law

The judicial system of Finland is a [civil law](#) system divided between [courts](#) with regular civil and criminal jurisdiction and [administrative courts](#) with jurisdiction over litigation between individuals and the public administration. Finnish law is codified and based on [Swedish law](#) and in a wider sense, [civil law](#) or [Roman law](#). The court system for civil and criminal jurisdiction consists of local courts (*käräjäoikeus, tingsrätt*), regional appellate courts (*hovioikeus, hovrätt*), and the [Supreme Court](#) (*korkein oikeus, högsta domstolen*). The administrative branch of justice consists of [administrative courts](#) (*hallinto-oikeus, förvaltningsdomstol*) and the [Supreme Administrative Court](#) (*korkein hallinto-oikeus, högsta förvaltningsdomstolen*). In addition to the regular courts, there are a few special courts in certain branches of administration. There is also a [High Court of Impeachment](#) for criminal charges against certain high-ranking officeholders.



The Court House of the [Supreme Court](#)

Around 92% of residents have confidence in Finland's security institutions.^[129] The overall crime rate of Finland is not high in the EU context. Some crime types are above average, notably the high [homicide](#) rate for Western Europe.^[130] A day fine system is in effect and also applied to offenses such as [speeding](#).

Finland has successfully fought against government corruption, which was more common in the 1970s and 1980s.^[131] For instance, economic reforms and EU membership introduced stricter requirements for open bidding and many public monopolies were abolished.^[131] Today, Finland has a very low number of corruption charges; [Transparency International](#) ranks Finland as one of the least corrupt countries in Europe.

In 2008, Transparency International criticized the lack of transparency of the system of Finnish political finance.^[132] According to GRECO in 2007, corruption should be taken into account in the Finnish system of election funds better.^[133] A scandal revolving around campaign finance of the 2007 parliamentary elections broke out in spring 2008. Nine cabinet ministers submitted incomplete funding reports and even more of the members of parliament. The law includes no punishment of false funds reports of the elected politicians.

Foreign relations

According to the 2012 constitution, the president (currently [Sauli Niinistö](#)) leads foreign policy in cooperation with the government, except that the president has no role in EU affairs.^[134]

In 2008, president [Martti Ahtisaari](#) was awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](#).^[135] Finland was considered a cooperative model state, and Finland did not oppose proposals for a common EU defence policy.^[136] This was reversed in the 2000s, when Tarja Halonen and [Erkki Tuomioja](#) made Finland's official policy to resist other EU members' plans for common defence.^[136]



Martti Ahtisaari receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008

Military



Finnish [Leopard 2A4](#) tank Ps 273-106 in a combat demonstration at Comprehensive security exhibition 2015 in [Tampere](#).

The Finnish Defence Forces consist of a cadre of professional soldiers (mainly officers and technical personnel), currently serving conscripts, and a large reserve. The standard readiness strength is 34,700 people in uniform, of which 25% are professional soldiers. A universal male [conscription](#) is in place, under which all male Finnish nationals above 18 years of age serve for 6 to 12 months of armed service or 12 months of [civilian](#) (non-armed) service. Voluntary post-conscription overseas peacekeeping service is popular, and troops serve around the world in UN, NATO, and EU missions. Approximately 500 women choose voluntary military service every year.^[137] Women are allowed to serve in all combat arms including front-line infantry and special forces. The army consists of a highly mobile field army backed up by local defence units. The army defends the national territory and its military strategy employs the use of the heavily forested terrain and numerous lakes to wear down an aggressor, instead of attempting to hold the attacking army on the frontier.

Finnish defence expenditure per capita is one of the highest in the European Union.^[138] The Finnish military doctrine is based on the concept of total defence. The term total means that all sectors of the government and economy are involved in the defence planning. The armed forces are under the command of the Chief of Defence (currently General Jarmo Lindberg), who is directly subordinate to the president in matters related to military command. The branches of the military are the army, the navy, and the air force. The border guard is under the Ministry of the Interior but can be incorporated into the Defence Forces when required for defence readiness.

Even while Finland hasn't joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the country has joined the NATO Response Force, the EU Battlegroup,^[139] the NATO Partnership for Peace and in 2014 signed a NATO memorandum of understanding,^{[140][141]} thus forming a practical coalition.^[19] In 2015, the Finland-NATO ties were strengthened with a host nation support agreement allowing assistance from NATO troops in emergency situations.^[142] Finland has been an active participant in the Afghanistan and Kosovo.^{[143][144]}



Sisu Nasu NA-110 tracked transport vehicle of the Finnish Army. Most conscripts receive training for warfare in winter, and transport vehicles such as this give mobility in heavy snow.

Social security

Finland has one of the world's most extensive welfare systems, one that guarantees decent living conditions for all residents: Finns, and non-citizens. Since the 1980s the social security has been cut back, but still the system is one of the most comprehensive in the world. Created almost entirely during the first three decades after World War II, the social security system was an outgrowth of the traditional Nordic belief that the state was not inherently hostile to the well-being of its citizens, but could intervene benevolently on their behalf. According to some social historians, the basis of this belief was a relatively benign history that had allowed the gradual emergence of a free and independent peasantry in the Nordic countries and had curtailed the dominance of the nobility and the subsequent formation of a powerful right wing. Finland's history has been harsher than the histories of the other Nordic countries, but not harsh enough to bar the country from following their path of social development.^[145]

Human rights

§ 6 in two sentences of the Finnish Constitution states: "*No one shall be placed in a different position on situation of sex, age, origin, language, religion, belief, opinion, state of health, disability or any other personal reason without an acceptable reason.*"^[146]

Finland has been ranked above average among the world's countries in democracy,^[147] press freedom,^[148] and human development.^[149]

Amnesty International has expressed concern regarding some issues in Finland, such as alleged permitting of stopovers of CIA rendition flights, the imprisonment of conscientious objectors, and societal discrimination against Romani people and members of other ethnic and linguistic minorities.^{[150][151]}



People gathering at the Senate Square, Helsinki, right before the 2011 Helsinki Pride parade started.

Economy

The economy of Finland has a per capita output equal to that of other European economies such as those of France, Germany, Belgium, or the UK. The largest sector of the economy is the service sector at 66% of GDP, followed by manufacturing and refining at 31%. Primary production represents 2.9%.^[152] With respect to foreign trade, the key economic sector is manufacturing. The largest industries in 2007^[153] were electronics (22%); machinery, vehicles, and other engineered metal products (21.1%); forest industry (13%); and chemicals (11%). The gross domestic product peaked in 2008. As of 2015, the country's economy is at the 2006 level.^{[154][155]}

Finland has significant timber, mineral (iron, chromium, copper, nickel, and gold), and freshwater resources. Forestry, paper factories, and the agricultural sector (on which taxpayers spend around €3 billion annually) are important for rural residents so any policy changes affecting these sectors are politically sensitive for politicians dependent on rural votes. The Greater Helsinki area generates around one third of Finland's GDP. In a 2004 OECD comparison, high-technology manufacturing in Finland ranked second largest after Ireland. Knowledge-intensive services have also resulted in the smallest and slow-growth sectors – especially agriculture and low-technology manufacturing – being ranked the second largest after Ireland.^[156]



Angry Birds Land, a theme park in the Särkänniemi amusement park, in Tampere, Pirkkala; the mobile phone game Angry Birds, developed in Finland, has become a commercial hit both domestically and internationally.

Finland's climate and soils make growing crops a particular challenge. The country lies between the latitudes 60°N and 70°N, and it has severe winters and relatively short growing seasons that are sometimes interrupted by frost. However, because the Gulf Stream and the North Atlantic Drift Current moderate the climate, Finland contains half of the world's arable land north of 60° north latitude. Annual precipitation is usually sufficient, but it occurs almost exclusively during the winter months, making summer droughts a constant threat. In response to the climate, farmers have relied on quick-ripening and frost-

resistant varieties of crops, and they have cultivated south-facing slopes as well as richer bottomlands to ensure production even in years with summer frosts. Most farmland was originally either forest or swamp, and the soil has usually required treatment with lime and years of cultivation to neutralize excess acid and to improve fertility. Irrigation has generally not been necessary, but drainage systems are often needed to remove excess water. Finland's agriculture has been efficient and productive—at least when compared with farming in other European countries.^[145]

Forests play a key role in the country's economy, making it one of the world's leading wood producers and providing raw materials at competitive prices for the crucial wood-processing industries. As in agriculture, the government has long played a leading role in forestry, regulating tree cutting, sponsoring technical improvements, and establishing long-term plans to ensure that the country's forests continue to supply the wood-processing industries. To maintain the country's comparative advantage in forest products, Finnish authorities moved to raise lumber output toward the country's ecological limits. In 1984, the government published the Forest 2000 plan, drawn up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The plan aimed at increasing forest harvests by about 3% per year, while conserving forestland for recreation and other uses.^[145]

Private sector employees amount to 1.8 million, out of which around a third with tertiary education. The average cost of a private sector employee per hour was €25.10 in 2004.^[157] As of 2008, average purchasing power-adjusted income levels are similar to those of Italy, Sweden, Germany, and France.^[158] In 2006, 62% of the workforce worked for enterprises with less than 250 employees and they accounted for 49% of total business turnover and had the strongest rate of growth.^[159] The female employment rate is high. Gender segregation between male-dominated professions and female-dominated professions is higher than in the US.^[160] The proportion of part-time workers was one of the lowest in OECD in 1999.^[160] In 2013, the 10 largest private sector employers in Finland were Itella, Nokia, OP-Pohjo and Nordea.^[161]

The unemployment rate was 9.4% in 2015, having risen from 8.7% in 2014.^[162] Youth unemployment rate rose from 16.5% in 2007 to 20.5% in 2014.^[163] A fifth of residents are outside the job market at the age of 50 and less than a third are working at the age of 61.^[164] In 2014, nearly one million people were living with minimal wages or unemployed not enough to cover their costs of living.^[165]

As of 2006, 2.4 million households reside in Finland. The average size is 2.1 persons; 40% of households consist of a single person, 32% two persons and 28% three or more persons. Residential buildings total 1.2 million, and the average residential space is 38 square metres (410 sq ft) per person. The average residential property without land costs €1,187 per sq metre and residential land €8.60 per sq metre. 74% of households had a car. There are 2.5 million cars and 0.4 million other vehicles.^[166]

Around 92% have a mobile phone and 83.5% (2009) Internet connection at home. The average total household consumption was €20,000, out of which housing consisted of about €5,500, transport about €3,000, food and beverages (excluding alcoholic beverages) at around €2,500, and recreation and culture at around €2,000.^[167] According to Invest in Finland, private consumption grew by 3% in 2006 and consumer trends included durables, high-quality products, and spending on well-being.^[168]

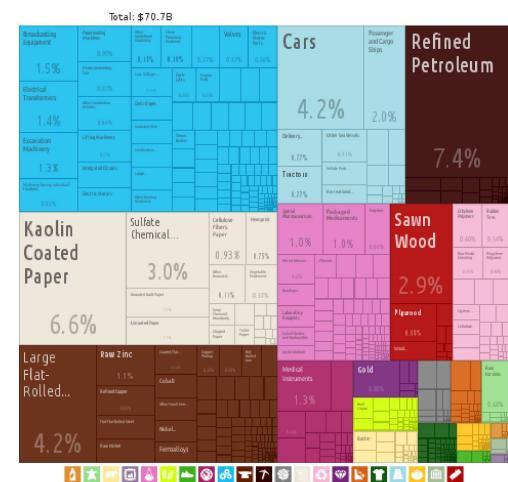
In 2017, Finland's GDP reached €224 billion. However, second quarter of 2018 saw a slow economic growth. Unemployment rate fell to a near one-decade low in June, marking private consumption growth much higher.^[169]

Finland has the highest concentration of cooperatives relative to its population.^[170] The largest retailer, which is also the largest private employer, S-Group, and the largest bank, OP-Group, in the country are both cooperatives.

Energy

The free and largely privately owned financial and physical Nordic energy markets traded in **NASDAQ OMX Commodities Europe** and **Nord Pool Spot** exchanges, have provided competitive prices compared with other EU countries. As of 2007, Finland has roughly the lowest industrial electricity prices in the EU-15 (equal to France).^[172]

In 2006, the energy market was around 90 terawatt hours and the peak demand around 15 gigawatts in winter. This means that the energy consumption per capita is around 7.2 tons of oil equivalent per year. Industry and construction consumed 51% of total consumption, a relatively high figure reflecting Finland's industries.^{[173][174]} Finland's hydrocarbon resources are limited to peat and wood. About 10–15% of the electricity is produced by hydropower,^[175] which is low compared with more mountainous Sweden or Norway. In 2008, renewable energy (mainly hydropower and various forms of wood energy) was high at 31% compared with the EU average of 10.3% in final energy consumption.^[176] Russia supplies more than 75% of Finland's oil imports and 100% of total gas imports.^{[177][178]}



A treemap representing the exports of Finland in 2017

Finland has four privately owned nuclear reactors producing 18% of the country's energy^[180] at the Otaniemi campus. The fifth AREVA-Siemens-built reactor – the world's largest at 1600 MWe and a focal point of Europe's nuclear industry – has faced many delays and is currently scheduled to be operational by June 2022, over 12 years after the original planned opening.^[181] A varying amount (5–17%) of electricity has been imported from Russia (at around 3 gigawatt power line capacity), Sweden and Norway.

The Onkalo spent nuclear fuel repository is currently under construction at the Olkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant in the municipality of Eurajoki, on the west coast of Finland, by the company Posiva.^[182]



The two existing units of the Olkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant. On the far left is a visualization of a third unit, which, when completed, will become Finland's fifth commercial nuclear reactor.^[171]

Transport

Finland's road system is utilized by most internal cargo and passenger traffic. The annual state operated road network expenditure of around €1 billion is paid for with vehicle and fuel taxes which amount to around €1.5 billion and €1 billion, respectively. Among the Finnish highways, the most significant and busiest main roads include the Turku Highway (E18), the Tampere Highway (E12), the Lahti Highway (E75), and the ring roads (Ring I and Ring III) of the Helsinki metropolitan area and the Tampere Ring Road of the Tampere urban area.^[183]

The main international passenger gateway is Helsinki Airport, which handled about 21 million passengers in 2019 (5 million in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic). Oulu Airport is the second largest with 1 million passengers in 2019 (300,000 in 2020), whilst another 25 airports have scheduled passenger services.^[184] The Helsinki Airport-based Finnair, Blue1, and Nordic Regional Airlines, Norwegian Air Shuttle sell air services both domestically and internationally. Helsinki has an optimal location for great circle (i.e. the shortest and most efficient) routes between Western Europe and the Far East.

Despite having a low population density, the Government annually spends around €350 million to maintain the 5,865-kilometre-long (3,644 mi) network of railway tracks. Rail transport is handled by the state owned VR Group, which has a 5% passenger market share (out of which 80% are from urban trips in Greater Helsinki) and 25% cargo market share.^[185] Since 12 December 2010, Karelian Trains, a joint venture between Russian Railways and VR Group, has been running Alstom Pendolino operated high-speed services between Saint Petersburg's Finlyandsky and Helsinki's Central railway stations. These services are branded as "Allegro" trains. The journey from Helsinki to Saint Petersburg takes only three and a half hours. A high-speed rail line is planned between Helsinki and Turku, with a line from the capital to Tampere also proposed.^[186] Helsinki opened the world's northernmost metro system in 1982, which also serves the neighbouring city of Esbo since 2017.

The majority of international cargo shipments are handled at ports. Vuosaari Harbour in Helsinki is the largest container port in Finland; others include Kotka, Hamina, Hanko, Pori, Rauma, and Oulu. There is passenger traffic from Helsinki and Turku, which have ferry connections to Tallinn, Marihamn, Stockholm and Travemünde. The Helsinki-Tallinn route – one of the busiest passenger sea routes in the world – has also been served by a helicopter line, and the Helsinki-Tallinn Tunnel has been proposed to provide railway services between the two cities.^[187] Largely following the example of the Øresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark, the Kvarken Bridge connecting Umeå in Sweden and Vasa in Finland to cross the Gulf of Bothnia has also been planned for decades.^[188]



Supply and total consumption of electricity in Finland^[179]



A VR Class Sr2 locomotive



Three VR Class Sr3 locomotives



Soviet-made electric locomotive VR Class Sr1 model from 1981

The state-owned VR operates a railway network serving all major cities in Finland.

Industry

Finland rapidly industrialized after World War II, achieving GDP per capita levels comparable to that of Japan or the UK in the beginning of the 1970s. Initially, most of the economic development was based on two broad groups of export-led industries, the "metal industry" (*metalliteollisuus*) and "forest industry" (*metsäteollisuus*). The "metal industry" includes shipbuilding, metalworking, the automotive industry, engineered products such as motors and electronics, and production of metals and alloys including steel, copper and chromium. Many of the world's biggest cruise ships, including MS Freedom of the Seas and the Oasis of

the Seas have been built in Finnish shipyards.^[189] ^[190] The "forest industry" includes forestry, timber, pulp and paper, and is often considered a logical development based on Finland's extensive forest resources, as 73% of the area is covered by forest. In the pulp and paper industry, many major companies are based in Finland; Ahlstrom-Munksjö, Metsä Board, and UPM are all Finnish forest-based companies with revenues exceeding €1 billion. However, in recent decades, the Finnish economy has diversified, with companies expanding into fields such as electronics (Nokia), metrology (Vaisala), petroleum (Neste), and video games (Rovio Entertainment), and is no longer dominated by the two sectors of metal and forest industry. Likewise, the structure has changed, with the service sector growing, with manufacturing declining in importance; agriculture remains a minor part. Despite this, production for export is still more prominent than in Western Europe, thus making Finland possibly more vulnerable to global economic trends.

In 2017, the Finnish economy was estimated to consist of approximately 2.7% agriculture, 28.2% manufacturing and 69.1% services.^[191] In 2019, the per-capita income of Finland was estimated to be \$48,869. In 2020, Finland was ranked 20th on the ease of doing business index, among 190 jurisdictions.

Public policy

Finnish politicians have often emulated the Nordic model.^[192] Nordics have been free-trading and relatively welcoming to skilled migrants for over a century, though in Finland immigration is relatively new. The level of protection in commodity trade has been low, except for agricultural products.^[192]

Finland has top levels of economic freedom in many areas. Finland is ranked 16th in the 2008 global Index of Economic Freedom and ninth in Europe.^[193] While the manufacturing sector is thriving, the OECD points out that the service sector would benefit substantially from policy improvements.^[194]

The 2007 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook ranked Finland 17th most competitive.^[195] The World Economic Forum 2008 index ranked Finland the sixth most competitive.^[196] In both indicators, Finland's performance was next to Germany, and significantly higher than most European countries. In the Business competitiveness index 2007–2008 Finland ranked third in the world.

Economists attribute much growth to reforms in the product markets. According to the OECD, only four EU-15 countries have less regulated product markets (UK, Ireland, Denmark and Sweden) and only one has less regulated financial markets (Denmark). Nordic countries were pioneers in liberalizing energy, postal, and other markets in Europe.^[192] The legal system is clear and business bureaucracy less than most countries.^[193] Property rights are well protected and contractual agreements are strictly honoured.^[193] Finland is rated the least corrupt country in the world in the Corruption Perceptions Index^[197] and 13th in the Ease of doing business index. This indicates exceptional ease in cross-border trading (5th), contract enforcement (7th), business closure (5th), tax payment (83rd), and low worker hardship (127th).^[198]

In Finland, collective labour agreements are universally valid. These are drafted every few years for each profession and seniority level, with only few jobs outside the system. The agreement becomes universally enforceable provided that more than 50% of the employees support it, in practice by being a member of a relevant trade union. The unionization rate is high (70%), especially in the middle class (AKAVA, mostly for university-educated professionals: 80%).^{[156][192]}

Tourism

In 2017, tourism in Finland grossed approximately €15.0 billion with a 7% increase from the previous year. Of this, €4.6 billion (30%) came from foreign tourism.^[203] In 2017, there were 15.2 million overnight stays of domestic tourists and 6.7 million overnight stays of foreign tourists.^[204] Much of the sudden growth can be attributed to the globalization of the country as well as a rise in positive publicity and awareness. While Russia remains the largest market for foreign tourists, the biggest growth came from Chinese markets (35%).^[204] Tourism contributes roughly 2.7% to Finland's GDP, making it comparable to agriculture and forestry.^[205]

Commercial cruises between major coastal and port cities in the Baltic region, including Helsinki, Turku, Mariehamn, Tallinn, Stockholm, and Travemünde, play a significant role in the local tourism industry. There are also separate ferry connections dedicated to tourism in the vicinity of Helsinki and its region, such as the connection to the fortress island of Suomenlinna^[206] or the connection to the old town of Porvoo.^[207] By passenger counts, the Port of Helsinki is the busiest



The Oasis of the Seas was built at the Perno shipyard in Turku.



Flags of the Nordic countries from left to right: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark



Medieval old town in Porvoo is one of the most popular tourist destinations in summers for those who are fascinated by the old look.^{[199][200][201]}

port in the world after the Port of Dover in the United Kingdom and the Port of Tallinn in Estonia.^[208] The Helsinki-Vantaa International Airport is the fourth busiest airport in the Nordic countries in terms of passenger numbers,^[209] and about 90% of Finland's international air traffic passes through the airport.^[210]

Lapland has the highest tourism consumption of any Finnish region.^[205] Above the Arctic Circle, in midwinter, there is a polar night, a period when the sun does not rise for days or weeks, or even months, and correspondingly, midnight sun in the summer, with no sunset even at midnight (for up to 73 consecutive days, at the northernmost point). Lapland is so far north that the aurora borealis, fluorescence in the high atmosphere due to solar wind, is seen regularly in the fall, winter, and spring. Finnish Lapland is also locally regarded as the home of Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus, with several theme parks, such as Santa Claus Village and Santa Park in Rovaniemi.^[211] Other significant tourist destinations in Lapland also include ski resorts (such as Levi, Ruka and Ylläs)^[212] and sleigh rides led by either reindeer or huskies.^{[213][214]}

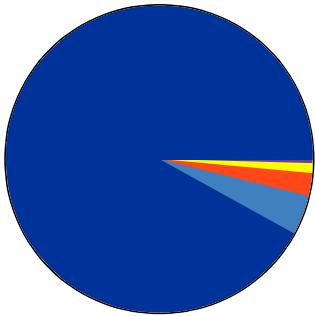


The historical Tavastia Castle (or Häme Castle) in Hämeenlinna, Tavastia Proper is located close to the Lake Vanajavesi.^[202]

Tourist attractions in Finland include the natural landscape found throughout the country as well as urban attractions. Finland is covered with thick pine forests, rolling hills, and lakes. Finland contains 40 national parks (such as the Koli National Park in North Karelia), from the Southern shores of the Gulf of Finland to the high fells of Lapland. Outdoor activities range from Nordic skiing, golf, fishing, yachting, lake cruises, hiking, and kayaking, among many others. Bird-watching is popular for those fond of avifauna, however hunting is also popular. Elk and hare are common game in Finland.

Finland also has urbanized regions with many cultural events and activities. The most famous tourist attractions in Helsinki include the Helsinki Cathedral and the Suomenlinna sea fortress. The most well-known Finnish amusement parks include Linnanmäki in Helsinki, Särkänniemi in Tampere, PowerPark in Kauhava, Tykkimäki in Kouvola and Nokkakivi in Laukaa.^[215] St. Olaf's Castle (Olavinlinna) in Savonlinna hosts the annual Savonlinna Opera Festival,^[216] and the medieval milieus of the cities of Turku, Rauma and Porvoo also attract curious spectators.^[217]

Demographics



Population by ethnic background in 2020^{[1][2]}

<input type="checkbox"/> Finnish (91.98%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other European (4.15%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian (2.40%)
<input type="checkbox"/> African (1.04%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (0.43%)

The population of Finland is currently about 5.5 million. The current birth rate is 10.42 per 1,000 residents, for a fertility rate of 1.49 children born per woman,^[218] one of the lowest in the world, significantly below the replacement rate of 2.1. In 1887 Finland recorded its highest rate, 5.17 children born per woman.^[219] Finland has one of the oldest populations in the world, with a median age of 42.6 years.^[220] Approximately half of voters are estimated to be over 50 years old.^{[221][87][222][223]} Finland has an average population density of 18 inhabitants per square kilometre. This is the third-lowest population density of any European country, behind those of Norway and Iceland, and the lowest population density of any European Union member country. Finland's population has always been concentrated in the southern parts of the country, a phenomenon that became even more pronounced during 20th-century urbanization. Two of the three largest cities in Finland are situated in the Greater Helsinki metropolitan area—Helsinki and Espoo, and some municipalities in the metropolitan area have also shown clear growth of population year after year, the most notable being Järvenpää, Nurmijärvi, Kirkkonummi, Kerava and Sipoo.^[224] In the largest cities of Finland, Tampere holds the third place after Helsinki and Espoo while also Helsinki-neighbouring Vantaa is the fourth. Other cities with population over 100,000 are Turku, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, and Lahti. On the other hand, Sottunga of Åland is the smallest municipality in Finland in terms of population (Luhanka in mainland Finland),^[225] and Savukoski of Lapland is sparsely populated in terms of population density.^[226]

As of 2019, there were 423,494 people with a foreign background living in Finland (7.7% of the population), most of whom are from the former Soviet Union, Estonia, Somalia, Iraq and former Yugoslavia.^{[227][228]} The children of foreigners are not automatically given Finnish citizenship, as

Finnish nationality law practices and maintain *jus sanguinis* policy where only children born to at least one Finnish parent are granted citizenship. If they are born in Finland and cannot get citizenship of any other country, they become citizens.^[229] Additionally, certain persons of Finnish descent who reside in countries that were once part of Soviet Union, retain the right of return, a right to establish permanent residency in the country, which would eventually entitle them to qualify for citizenship.^[230] 387,215 people in Finland in 2018 were born in another country, representing 7% of the population. The 10 largest foreign born groups are (in order) from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Iraq, Somalia, China, Thailand, Serbia, Vietnam] and Turkey.^[231]

Finland's immigrant population is growing. By 2035, the three largest cities in Finland are projected to have over a quarter of residents of a foreign-speaking background: in Helsinki, they are projected to form 26% of the population; in Espoo, 30%; and in Vantaa, 34%. The Helsinki region is projected to have 437,000 people of a foreign linguistic background, compared to 201,000 in 2019.^[232]

Language

Finnish and Swedish are the official languages of Finland. Finnish predominates nationwide while Swedish is spoken in some coastal areas in the west and south (with towns such as Ekenäs,^[233] Pargas,^[234] Närpes,^[234] Kristinestad,^[235] Jakobstad^[236] and Nykarleby,^[237]) and in the autonomous region of Åland, which is the only monolingual Swedish-speaking region in Finland.^[238] The native language of 87.3% of the population is Finnish,^{[239][240]} which is part of the Finnic subgroup of the Uralic language. The language is one of only four official EU languages not of Indo-European origin, and has no relation through descent to the other national languages of the Nordics. Conversely, Finnish is closely related to Estonian and Karelian, and more distantly to Hungarian and the Sámi languages.

Swedish is the native language of 5.2% of the population (Swedish-speaking Finns).^[241] Finnish is dominant in all the country's larger cities; though Helsinki, Turku and Vaasa were once predominantly Swedish-speaking, they have undergone a language shift since the 19th century, getting a Finnish-speaking majority.

Swedish is a compulsory school subject and general knowledge of the language is good among many non-native speakers: in 2005, a total of 47% of Finnish citizens reported the ability to speak Swedish, either as primary or a secondary language.^[242] Likewise, a majority of Swedish-speaking non-Ålanders are able to speak Finnish. However, most Swedish speaking youth reported seldom using Finnish: 71% reported always or mostly speaking Swedish in social settings outside of their households.^[243] The Finnish side of the land border with Sweden is unilingually Finnish-speaking. The Swedish across the border is distinct from the Swedish spoken in Finland. There is a sizeable pronunciation difference between the varieties of Swedish spoken in the two countries, although their mutual intelligibility is nearly universal.^[244]

Finnish Romani is spoken by some 5,000–6,000 people; Romani and Finnish Sign Language are also recognized in the constitution. There are two sign languages: Finnish Sign Language, spoken natively by 4,000–5,000 people,^[245] and Finland-Swedish Sign Language, spoken natively by about 150 people. Tatar is spoken by a Finnish Tatar minority of about 800 people whose ancestors moved to Finland mainly during Russian rule from the 1870s to the 1920s.^[246]

The Sámi languages have an official status in parts of Lapland, where the Sámi, numbering around 7,000,^[247] are recognized as an indigenous people. About a quarter of them speak a Sami language as their mother tongue.^[248] The Sami languages that are spoken in Finland are Northern Sami, Inari Sami, and Skolt Sami.^[note 2]

The rights of minority groups (in particular Sami, Swedish speakers, and Romani people) are protected by the constitution.^[249]

The Nordic languages and Karelian are also specially recognized in parts of Finland.

The largest immigrant languages are Russian (1.5%), Estonian (0.9%), Arabic (0.6%), Somali (0.4%) and English (0.4%).^[241] English is studied by most pupils as a compulsory subject from the first grade (at seven years of age), formerly from the third or fifth grade, in the comprehensive school (in some schools other languages can be chosen instead),^{[250][251]} as a result of which Finns' English language skills have been significantly strengthened over several decades.^{[252][253]} German, French, Spanish and Russian can be studied as second foreign languages from the fourth grade (at 10 years of age; some schools may offer other options).^[254]

About 93% of Finns can speak a second language.^[255] The figures in this section should be treated with caution, as they come from the official Finnish population register. People can only register one language and so bilingual or multilingual language users' language competencies are not properly included. A citizen of Finland that speaks bilingually Finnish and Swedish will often be registered as a Finnish only speaker in this system. Similarly "old domestic language" is a category applied to some languages and not others for political not linguistic reasons, for example Russian.^[256]

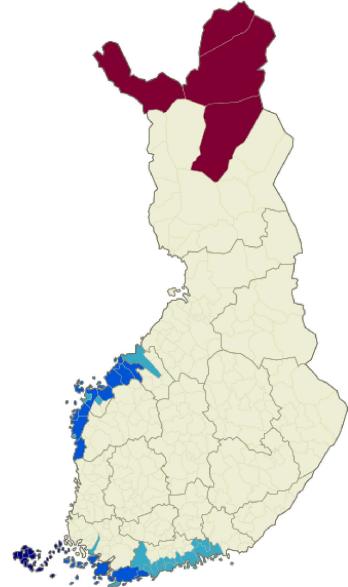
Largest cities

Largest cities or towns in Finland

Finland in Figures: 2021 (https://www.stat.fi/tup/julkaisut/tiedostot/julkaisuluetelot/yyti_fif_202100_2021_23492_net_p2.p)

[df&ved=2ahUKEwj05szlx9P0AhX4SvEDHbZIDNcQFnECAgQAO&usq=AOVvaw26vnIUKKegI7v7GxNmQ52d](https://www.worldcat.org/issn/2242-8496)). Statistics Finland. 2021.

Rank	Name	Region	Pop.	Rank	Name	Region	Pop.
1	Helsinki	Uusimaa	656 920	11	Kouvo	Kymenlaakso	81 187
2	Espoo	Uusimaa	292 796	12	Joensuu	North Karelia	76 935
3	Tampere	Pirkanmaa	241 009	13	Lappeenranta	South Karelia	72 662
4	Vantaa	Uusimaa	237 231	14	Hämeenlinna	Tavastia Proper	67 848
5	Oulu	Northern Ostrobothnia	207 327	15	Vaasa	Ostrobothnia	67 461
6	Turku	Finland Proper	194 391	16	Seinäjoki	Southern Ostrobothnia	64 238
7	Jyväskylä	Central Finland	143 420	17	Rovaniemi	Lapland	63 612
8	Kuopio	Northern Savonia	120 210	18	Mikkeli	Southern Savonia	52 573
9	Lahti	Päijänne Tavastia	119 984	19	Kotka	Kymenlaakso	51 679



Municipalities of Finland:

- unilingually Finnish
- bilingual with Finnish as majority language, Swedish as minority language
- bilingual with Swedish as majority language, Finnish as minority language
- unilingually Swedish
- bilingual with Finnish as majority language, Sami as minority language



Tampere



Religion

With 3.9 million members,^[258] the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is one of the largest Lutheran churches in the world and is also by far Finland's largest religious body; at the end of 2019, 68.7% of Finns were members of the church.^[259] The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has seen its share of the country's population declining by roughly one percent annually in recent years.^[259] The decline has been due to both church membership resignations and falling baptism rates.^{[260][261]} The second largest group, accounting for 26.3% of the population^[259] in 2017, has no religious affiliation. The irreligious group rose quickly from just below 13% in the year 2000. A small minority belongs to the Finnish Orthodox Church (1.1%). Other Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church are significantly smaller, as are the Jewish and other non-Christian communities (totalling 1.6%); for example, in the Protestant trend, there are about 1,500 Baptists concentrated in the region of Central Finland,^[262] and there are only about 2,000 Methodists who are scattered around the country.^[263] The Pew Research Center estimated the Muslim population at 2.7% in 2016.^[264] The main Lutheran and Orthodox churches are national churches of Finland with special roles such as in state ceremonies and schools.^[265]

In 1869, Finland was the first Nordic country to disestablish its Evangelical Lutheran church by introducing the Church Act, followed by the Church of Sweden in 2000. Although the church still maintains a special relationship with the state, it is not described as a state religion in the Finnish Constitution or other laws passed by the Finnish Parliament.^[266] Finland's state church was the Church of Sweden until 1809. As an autonomous Grand Duchy under Russia 1809–1917, Finland retained the Lutheran State Church system, and a state church separate from Sweden, later named the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, was established. It was detached from the state as a separate judicial entity when the new church law came to force in 1869. After Finland had gained independence in 1917, religious freedom was declared in the constitution of 1919 and a separate law on religious freedom in 1922. Through this arrangement, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland lost its position as a state church but gained a constitutional status as a national church alongside the Finnish Orthodox Church, whose position however is not codified in the constitution.

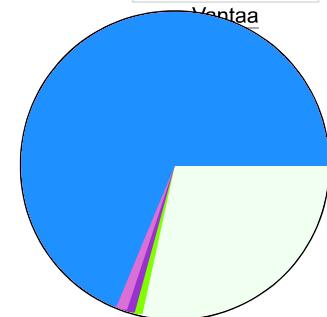
In 2016, 69.3% of Finnish children were baptized^[267] and 82.3% were confirmed in 2012 at the age of 15,^[268] and over 90% of the funerals are Christian. However, the majority of Lutherans attend church only for special occasions like Christmas ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. The Lutheran Church estimates that approximately 1.8% of its members attend church services weekly.^[269] The average number of church visits per year by church members is approximately two.^[270]

According to a 2010 Eurobarometer poll, 33% of Finnish citizens responded that they "believe there is a God"; 42% answered that they "believe there is some sort of spirit or life force"; and 22% that they "do not believe there is any sort of spirit, God, or life force".^[271] According to ISSP survey data (2008), 8% consider themselves "highly religious", and 31% "moderately religious". In the same survey, 28% reported themselves as "agnostic" and 29% as "non-religious".^[272]

Health

Life expectancy has increased from 71 years for men and 79 years for women in 1990 to 79 years for men and 84 years for women in 2017.^[273] The under-five mortality rate has decreased from 51 per 1,000 live births in 1950 to 2.3 per 1,000 live births in 2017, ranking Finland's rate among the lowest in the world.^[274] The fertility rate in 2014 stood at 1.71 children born/per woman and has been below the replacement rate of 2.1 since 1969.^[275] With a low birth rate women also become mothers at a later age, the mean age at first live birth being 28.6 in 2014.^[275] A 2011 study published in *The Lancet* medical journal found that Finland had the lowest stillbirth rate out of 193 countries, including the UK, France and New Zealand.^[276]

There has been a slight increase or no change in welfare and health inequalities between population groups in the 21st century. Lifestyle-related diseases are on the rise. More than half a million Finns suffer from diabetes, type 1 diabetes being globally the most common in Finland. Many children are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. The number of musculoskeletal diseases and cancers are increasing, although the cancer prognosis has improved. Allergies and dementia are also growing health problems in Finland. One of the most common reasons for work disability are due to mental disorders, in particular depression.^[277] Treatment for depression has improved and as a result the historically high suicide rates have declined to 13 per 100 000 in 2017, closer to the North European average.^[278] Suicide rates are still among the highest among developed countries in the OECD.^[279]



Religions in Finland (2019)^[257]

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (68.72%)
- Orthodox Church (1.10%)
- Other Christian (0.93%)
- Other religions (0.76%)
- Unaffiliated (28.49%)



The Evangelical Lutheran Helsinki Cathedral



The Meilahti Tower Hospital, part of the Helsinki University Central Hospital (HUCH) in Töölö, Helsinki

There are 307 residents for each doctor.^[280] About 19% of health care is funded directly by households and 77% by taxation.

In April 2012, Finland was ranked second in Gross National Happiness in a report published by The Earth Institute.^[281] Since 2012, Finland has every time ranked at least in the top 5 of world's happiest countries in the annual World Happiness Report by the United Nations,^{[282][283][284]} as well as ranking as the happiest country in 2018.^[285]

Education and science

Most pre-tertiary education is arranged at municipal level. Even though many or most schools were started as private schools, today only around 3 percent of students are enrolled in private schools (mostly specialist language and international schools), much less than in Sweden and most other developed countries.^[287] Pre-school education is rare compared with other EU countries and formal education is usually started at the age of 7. Primary school takes normally six years and lower secondary school three years. Most schools are managed by municipal officials.

The flexible curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Education Board. Education is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16. After lower secondary school, graduates may either enter the workforce directly, or apply to trade schools or gymnasiums (upper secondary schools). Trade schools offer a vocational education: approximately 40% of an age group choose this path after the lower secondary school.^[288] Academically oriented gymnasiums have higher entrance requirements and specifically prepare for Abitur and tertiary education. Graduation from either formally qualifies for tertiary education.

In tertiary education, two mostly separate and non-interoperating sectors are found: the profession-oriented polytechnics and the research-oriented universities. Education is free and living expenses are to a large extent financed by the government through student benefits. There are 15 universities and 24 Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the country.^{[289][290]} The University of Helsinki is ranked 75th in the Top University Ranking of 2010.^[291] The World Economic Forum ranks Finland's tertiary education No. 1 in the world.^[292] Around 33% of residents have a tertiary degree, similar to Nordics and more than in most other OECD countries except Canada (44%), United States (38%) and Japan (37%).^[293] The proportion of foreign students is 3% of all tertiary enrolments, one of the lowest in OECD, while in advanced programs it is 7.3%, still below OECD average 16.5%.^[294] Other reputable universities of Finland include Aalto University in Espoo, both University of Turku and Åbo Akademi University in Turku, University of Jyväskylä, University of Oulu, LUT University in Lappeenranta and Lahti, University of Eastern Finland in Kuopio and Joensuu, and Tampere University.^[295]

More than 30% of tertiary graduates are in science-related fields. Forest improvement, materials research, environmental sciences, neural networks, low-temperature physics, brain research, biotechnology, genetic technology, and communications showcase fields of study where Finnish researchers have had a significant impact.^[296]

Finland has a long tradition of adult education, and by the 1980s nearly one million Finns were receiving some kind of instruction each year. Forty percent of them did so for professional reasons. Adult education appeared in a number of forms, such as secondary evening schools, civic and workers' institutes, study centres, vocational course centres, and folk high schools. Study centres allowed groups to follow study plans of their own making, with educational and financial assistance provided by the state. Folk high schools are a distinctly Nordic institution. Originating in Denmark in the 19th century, folk high schools became common throughout the region. Adults of all ages could stay at them for several weeks and take courses in subjects that ranged from handicrafts to economics.^[145]

Finland is highly productive in scientific research. In 2005, Finland had the fourth most scientific publications per capita of the OECD countries.^[297] In 2007, 1,801 patents were filed in Finland.^[298]

In addition, 38% of Finland's population has a university or college degree, which is among the highest percentages in the world.^{[299][300]}

In 2010 a new law was enacted considering the universities, which defined that there are 16 of them as they were excluded from the public sector to be autonomous legal and financial entities, however enjoying special status in the legislation.^[301] As result many former state institutions were driven to collect funding from private sector contributions and partnerships. The change caused deep rooted discussions among the academic circles.^[302]

English language is important in Finnish education. There are a number of degree programs that are taught in English, which attracts thousands of degree and exchange students every year.



Helsinki Central Library Oodi was chosen as the best new public library in the world in 2019^[286]



Auditorium in Aalto University's main building, designed by Alvar Aalto



The library of the University of Eastern Finland in Snellmania, the Kuopio campus of the university



Pupils at the school of Torvinen in Sodankylä, Finland, in the 1920s

In December 2017 the OECD reported that Finnish fathers spend an average of eight minutes a day more with their school-aged children than mothers do.^{[303][304]}

Culture

Sauna

The Finns' love for saunas is generally associated with Finnish cultural tradition in the world. Sauna is a type of dry steam bath practiced widely in Finland, which is especially evident in the strong tradition around Midsummer and Christmas. In Finland, the sauna has been a traditional cure or part of the treatment for many different diseases, thanks to the heat, which is why the sauna has been a very hygienic place. There is an old Finnish saying: "Jos sauna, terva ja viina ei auta, on tauti kuolemaksi." ("If sauna, tar and booze doesn't help you, then a disease is deadly").^[305] The word is of Proto-Finnish origin (found in Finnic and Sámi languages) dating back 7,000 years.^[306] Steam baths have been part of European tradition elsewhere as well, but the sauna has survived best in Finland, in addition to Sweden, the Baltic states, Russia, Norway, and parts of the United States and Canada. Moreover, nearly all Finnish houses have either their own sauna or in multi-storey apartment houses, a timeshare sauna. Public saunas were previously common, but the tradition has declined when saunas have been built nearly everywhere (private homes, municipal swimming halls, hotels, corporate headquarters, gyms, etc.). At one time, the World Sauna Championships were held in Heinola, Finland, but the death of a Russian competitor in 2010 finally stopped organizing the competitions as too dangerous.^[307]



A smoke sauna in Ruka, Kuusamo

The Finnish sauna culture was inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists at the 17 December 2020 meeting of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. As authorized by the state, the Finnish Heritage Agency commits, together with Finnish sauna communities and promoters of the sauna culture, to safeguard the vitality of the sauna tradition and to highlight its importance as part of customs and wellbeing.^{[308][309]}

Literature

Written Finnish could be said to have existed since Mikael Agricola translated the New Testament into Finnish during the Protestant Reformation, but few notable works of literature were written until the 19th century and the beginning of a Finnish national Romantic Movement. This prompted Elias Lönnrot to collect Finnish and Karelian folk poetry and arrange and publish them as the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. The era saw a rise of poets and novelists who wrote in Finnish, notably Aleksis Kivi (*The Seven Brothers*), Minna Canth (*Anna Liisa*), Eino Leino (*Helkavirsiä*), Johannes Linnankoski (*The Song of the Blood-Red Flower*) and Juhani Aho (*The Railroad* and *Juha*). Many writers of the national awakening wrote in Swedish, such as the national poet J. L. Runeberg (*The Tales of Ensign Stål*) and Zachris Topelius (*The Tomten in Åbo Castle*).



Mikael Agricola (1510–1557), Bishop of Turku, a prominent Lutheran Protestant reformer and the father of the Finnish written language

After Finland became independent, there was a rise of modernist writers, most famously the Finnish-speaking Mika Waltari and Swedish-speaking Edith Södergran. Frans Eemil Sillanpää was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1939. World War II prompted a return to more national interests in comparison to a more international line of thought, characterized by Väinö Linna with his *The Unknown Soldier* and *Under the North Star* trilogy. Besides Lönnrot's *Kalevala* and Waltari, the Swedish-speaking Tove Jansson, best known as the creator of *The Moomins*, is the most translated Finnish writer;^[310] her books have been translated into more than 40 languages.^[311] Popular modern writers include Arto Paasilinna, Veikko Huovinen, Antti Tuuri, Ilkka Remes, Kari Hotakainen, Sofi Oksanen, Tuomas Kyrö, and Jari Tervo, while the best novel is annually awarded the prestigious Finlandia Prize.

Visual arts, design, and architecture

The visual arts in Finland started to form their individual characteristics in the 19th century, when Romantic nationalism was rising in autonomic Finland. The best known of Finnish painters, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, started painting in a naturalist style, but moved to national romanticism. Other notable world-famous Finnish painters include Magnus Enckell, Pekka Halonen, Eero Järnefelt, Helene Schjerfbeck and Hugo Simberg. Finland's best-known sculptor of the 20th century was Wäinö Aaltonen, remembered for his monumental busts and sculptures. Finns have made major contributions to handicrafts and industrial design: among the internationally renowned figures are Timo Sarpaneva, Tapio Wirkkala and Ilmari Tapiovaara. Finnish architecture is famous around the world, and has contributed significantly to several styles internationally, such as Jugendstil (or Art Nouveau), Nordic Classicism and Functionalism. Among the top 20th-century Finnish architects to gain international recognition are Eliel Saarinen and his son Eero Saarinen. Architect Alvar Aalto is regarded as among the most important 20th-century designers in the world;^[312] he helped bring functionalist architecture to Finland, but soon was a pioneer in its development towards an organic style.^[313] Aalto is also famous for his work in furniture, lamps, textiles and glassware, which were usually incorporated into his buildings.

Music

Classical

Much of Finland's classical music is influenced by traditional Karelian melodies and lyrics, as comprised in the *Kalevala*. Karelian culture is perceived as the purest expression of the Finnic myths and beliefs, less influenced by Germanic influence than the Nordic folk dance music that largely replaced the kalevaic tradition. Finnish folk music has undergone a roots revival in recent decades, and has become a part of popular music.

The people of northern Finland, Sweden, and Norway, the Sami, are known primarily for highly spiritual songs called *joik*. The same word sometimes refers to *lavlu* or *vuelie* songs, though this is technically incorrect.

The first Finnish opera was written by the German-born composer Fredrik Pacius in 1852. Pacius also wrote the music to the poem *Maamme/Vårt land* (Our Country), Finland's national anthem. In the 1890s Finnish nationalism based on the *Kalevala* spread, and Jean Sibelius became famous for his vocal symphony *Kullervo*. He soon received a grant to study *runo* singers in Karelia and continued his rise as the first prominent Finnish musician. In 1899 he composed *Finlandia*, which played its important role in Finland gaining independence. He remains one of Finland's most popular national figures and is a symbol of the nation. Another one of the most significant and internationally best-known Finnish-born classical composers long before Sibelius was Bernhard Crusell.^[314]

Modern

Iskelmä (coined directly from the German word *Schlager*, meaning "hit") is a traditional Finnish word for a light popular song.^[315] Finnish popular music also includes various kinds of *dance music*; *tango*, a style of *Argentine music*, is also popular.^[316] The light music in Swedish-speaking areas has more influences from Sweden. Modern Finnish popular music includes a number of prominent rock bands, jazz musicians, *hip hop* performers, dance music acts, etc.^[317] Also, at least a couple of Finnish *polkas* are known worldwide, such as *Säkkijärven polkka*^[318] and *Ievan polkka*.^[319]

During the early 1960s, the first significant wave of Finnish rock groups emerged, playing instrumental rock inspired by groups such as *The Shadows*. Around 1964, *Beatlemania* arrived in Finland, resulting in further development of the local rock scene. During the late 1960s and '70s, Finnish rock musicians increasingly wrote their own music instead of translating international hits into Finnish. During the decade, some progressive rock groups such as *Tasavallan Presidentti* and *Wigwam* gained respect abroad but failed to make a commercial breakthrough outside Finland. This was also the fate of the rock and roll group *Hurriganes*. The Finnish punk scene produced some internationally acknowledged names including *Terveet Kädet* in the 1980s. *Hanoi Rocks* was a pioneering 1980s glam rock act that inspired the American hard rock group *Guns N' Roses*, among others.^[320]

Many Finnish metal bands have gained international recognition; Finland has been often called the "Promised Land of Heavy Metal", because there are more than 50 metal Bands for every 100,000 inhabitants – more than any other nation in the world.^{[321][322]}

Cinema and television

In the film industry, notable directors include brothers Mika and Aki Kaurismäki, Dome Karukoski, Antti Jokinen, Jalmari Helander, Mauritz Stiller, Edvin Laine, Teuvo Tulio, Spede Pasanen, and Hollywood film director and producer Renny Harlin. Internationally well-known Finnish actors and actresses include Jasper Pääkkönen, Peter Franzén, Laura Birn, Irina Björklund, Samuli Edelmann, Krista Kosonen, Ville Virtanen and Joonas Suotamo. Around twelve feature films are made each year.^[323]

One of the most internationally successful Finnish films are *The White Reindeer*, directed by Erik Blomberg in 1952, which won the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film in 1956, five years after its limited release in the United States;^{[324][325]} *The Man Without a Past*, directed by Aki Kaurismäki in 2002, which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2002 and won the Grand Prix at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival;^[326] and *The Fencer*, directed by Klaus Härö in 2015, which was nominated for the 73rd Golden Globe Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category as a Finnish/German/Estonian co-production.^[327]

In Finland, the most significant films include *The Unknown Soldier*, directed by Edvin Laine in 1955, which is shown on television every Independence Day.^[328] *Here, Beneath the North Star* from 1968, also directed by Laine, which includes the Finnish Civil War from the perspective of the Red Guards, is also one of the most significant works in Finnish history.^[329] A 1960 crime comedy film *Inspector Palmu's*



Akseli Gallen-Kallela, *The Defense of the Sampo*, 1896, Turku Art Museum



The Finnish composer Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) was a significant figure in the history of classical music.



Pertti Kivilaakso of Apocalyptica



The Finnish filmmakers Edvin Laine and Matti Kassila in 1955

Mistake, directed by [Matti Kassila](#), was voted in 2012 the best Finnish film of all time by Finnish film critics and journalists in a poll organized by [Yle Uutiset](#),^[330] but the 1984 comedy film *Uuno Turhapuro in the Army*, the ninth film in the *Uuno Turhapuro* film series, remains Finland's most seen domestic film made since 1968 by Finnish audience.^[331]

Although Finland's television offerings are largely known for their domestic [dramas](#), such as the long-running [soap opera](#) series *Salatut elämät*,^{[332][333]} there are also internationally known drama series, such as *Syke* and *Bordertown*.^[334] One of Finland's most internationally successful TV shows are the backpacking travel documentary series *Madventures* and the reality TV show *The Dudesons*.

Media and communications

Thanks to its emphasis on transparency and equal rights, Finland's press has been rated the freest in the world.^[335]

Today, there are around 200 newspapers, 320 popular magazines, 2,100 professional magazines, 67 commercial radio stations, three [digital radio](#) channels and one nationwide and five national [public service](#) radio channels.

Each year, around 12,000 book titles are published and 12 million records are sold.^[323]

[Sanoma](#) publishes the newspapers *Helsingin Sanomat* (its circulation of 412,000^[336] making it the largest) and *Aamulehti*, the tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat*, the commerce-oriented *Taloussanomat* and the television channel *Nelonen*. The other major publisher [Alma Media](#) publishes over thirty magazines, including the tabloid *Iltalehti* and commerce-oriented *Kauppalehti*. Worldwide, Finns, along with other Nordic peoples and the Japanese, spend the most time reading newspapers.^[337]

[Yle](#), the Finnish Broadcasting Company, operates five television channels and thirteen radio channels in both national languages. Yle is funded through a mandatory television license and fees for private broadcasters. All TV channels are broadcast [digitally](#), both terrestrially and on cable. The commercial television channel *MTV3* and commercial radio channel *Radio Nova* are owned by [Nordic Broadcasting](#) ([Bonnier](#) and [Proventus](#)).

In regards to telecommunication infrastructure, Finland is the highest ranked country in the World Economic Forum's [Network Readiness Index](#) (NRI) – an indicator for determining the development level of a country's information and communication technologies. Finland ranked first overall in the 2014 NRI ranking, unchanged from the year before.^[338] This is shown in its penetration throughout the country's population. Around 79% of the population use the Internet (2007).^[339] Finland had around 1.52 million broadband Internet connections by the end of June 2007 or around 287 per 1,000 inhabitants.^[340] All Finnish schools and public libraries have Internet connections and computers and most residents have a mobile phone.^[341]



Linus Torvalds, the Finnish software engineer best known for creating the popular open-source kernel Linux

Cuisine

Finnish cuisine is notable for generally combining traditional country fare and [haute cuisine](#) with contemporary style cooking. [Fish](#) and meat play a prominent role in traditional Finnish dishes from the western part of the country, while the dishes from the eastern part have traditionally included various vegetables and [mushrooms](#). Refugees from Karelia contributed to foods in eastern Finland. Many regions have strongly branded traditional delicacies, such as *Tampere* has *mustamakkara*^[342] and *Kuopio* has *kalakukko*.^[343]



Karelian pastry (*karjalanpiirakka*) is a traditional Finnish dish made from a thin rye crust with a filling of rice.

Butter, often mixed with boiled egg (eggbutter or munavoi), is spread over the hot pastries before eating.

Finnish foods often use wholemeal products (rye, barley, oats) and berries (such as bilberries, lingonberries, cloudberries, and sea buckthorn). Milk and its derivatives like buttermilk are commonly used as food, drink, or in various recipes. Various turnips were common in traditional cooking, but were replaced with the potato after its introduction in the 18th century.

According to the statistics, red meat consumption has risen, but still Finns eat less beef than many other nations, and more fish and poultry. This is mainly because of the high cost of meat in Finland.

Finland has the world's second highest per capita consumption of coffee.^[344] Milk consumption is also high, at an average of about 112 litres (25 imp gal; 30 US gal), per person, per year,^[345] even though 17% of the Finns are lactose intolerant.^[346]

Public holidays

There are several holidays in Finland, of which perhaps the most characteristic of Finnish culture include Christmas (*joulu*), Midsummer (*juhannus*), May Day (*vappu*) and Independence Day (*itsenäisyyspäivä*). Of these, Christmas and Midsummer are special in Finland because the actual festivities take place on eves, such as Christmas Eve (*jouluaatto*)^{[347][348]} and Midsummer's Eve (*juhannusaatto*),^{[349][350]} while Christmas Day (*joulupäivä*) and Midsummer's Day (*juhannuspäivä*) are more consecrated to rest. Other public holidays in Finland are New Year's Day (*uuden vuoden päivä*), Epiphany (*loppiainen*), Good Friday (*pitkäperjantai*), Easter Sunday (*pääsiäissunnuntai*) and Easter Monday (*pääsiäismaantai*), Ascension Day (*helatorstai*), All Saints' Day (*pyhäinpäivä*) and Saint Stephen's Day (*tapaninpäivä*). All official holidays in Finland are established by Acts of Parliament. On the other hand, *laskiaisen* that is strongly part of the Finnish tradition is not defined as a public holiday in relation to the above-mentioned holidays.^[351]

Sports

Various sporting events are popular in Finland. *Pesäpallo*, resembling baseball, is the national sport of Finland, although the most popular sport in terms of spectators is *ice hockey*. The Ice Hockey World Championships 2016 final, Finland-Canada, was watched by 69% of Finnish people on TV.^[352] Other popular sports include *athletics*, *cross-country skiing*, *ski jumping*, *football*, *volleyball*, and *basketball*.^[353] While ice hockey is the most popular sport when it comes to attendance at games, *association football* is the most played team sport in terms of the number of players in the country and is also the most appreciated sport in Finland.^{[354][355]}

In terms of medals and gold medals won per capita, Finland is the best performing country in Olympic history.^[356] Finland first participated as a nation in its own right at the *Olympic Games* in 1908, while still an autonomous *Grand Duchy* within the *Russian Empire*. At the *1912 Summer Olympics*, great pride was taken in the three gold medals won by the original "Flying Finn" Hannes Kolehmainen.

Finland was one of the most successful countries at the Olympic Games before *World War II*. At the *1924 Summer Olympics*, Finland, a nation then of only 3.2 million people, came second in the medal count. In the 1920s and '30s, Finnish long-distance runners dominated the Olympics, with Paavo Nurmi winning a total of nine Olympic gold medals between 1920 and 1928 and setting 22 official world records between 1921 and 1931. Nurmi is often considered the greatest Finnish sportsman and one of the greatest athletes of all time.

For over 100 years, Finnish male and female athletes have consistently excelled at the *javelin throw*. The event has brought Finland nine Olympic gold medals, five world championships, five European championships, and 24 world records.

The *1952 Summer Olympics* were held in Helsinki. Other notable sporting events held in Finland include the *1983* and *2005 World Championships in Athletics*.

Finland also has a notable history in *figure skating*. Finnish skaters have won 8 world championships and 13 junior world cups in synchronized skating, and Finland is considered one of the best countries at the sport.

Some of the most popular recreational sports and activities include *floorball*, *Nordic walking*, running, cycling, and skiing (*alpine skiing*, *cross-country skiing*, and *ski jumping*). *Floorball*, in terms of registered players, occupies third place after football and *ice hockey*. According to the Finnish Floorball Federation, floorball is the most popular school, youth, club and workplace sport.^[357] As of 2016, the total number of licensed players reaches 57,400.^[358]

Especially since the *2014 FIBA Basketball World Cup*, Finland's national basketball team has received widespread public attention. More than 8,000 Finns travelled to Spain to support their team. Overall, they chartered more than 40 aeroplanes.^[359]

See also

- [Bibliography of Finland](#)
- [List of Finland-related topics](#)
- [Outline of Finland](#)

Notes

1. "Republic of Finland", or *Suomen tasavalta* in Finnish, *Republiken Finland* in Swedish, and *Suoma dásseváldi* in Sami, is the long protocol name, which is however not defined by law. Legislation recognizes only the short name.
2. The names for Finland in its Sami languages are: *Suopma* (*Northern Sami*), *Suomâ* (*Inari Sami*) and *Lää'ddjânnam* (*Skolt Sami*). See Geonames.de.



Finland's men's national ice hockey team is ranked as one of the best in the world. The team has won three world championship titles (in 1995, 2011 and 2019) and six Olympic medals.



Kankkunen on the Laajavuori stage of the 2010 Rally Finland

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- Trotter, William R. *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939–1940* ([ISBN 1-56512-249-6](#)).

External links

- [Finland](https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/finland/) (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/finland/>). *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency.
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- [Finland profile](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17288360) (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17288360>) from the [BBC News](#)
- [Key Development Forecasts for Finland](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=FI) (http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=FI) from [International Futures](#)
- [Population in Finland 1750–2010](http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2010/vaerak_2010_2011-03-18_kuv_001_en.html) (http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2010/vaerak_2010_2011-03-18_kuv_001_en.html)
- [Appendix figure 2. The largest groups by native language 2001 and 2011](http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2011/vaerak_2011_2012-03-16_kuv_002_en.html) (http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2011/vaerak_2011_2012-03-16_kuv_002_en.html) (Statistics Finland)
- [Official statistical information about Finland](http://findikaattori.fi/en) (<http://findikaattori.fi/en>) from [Findicator](#).

Government

- [This is Finland](http://finland.fi/) (<http://finland.fi/>), the official English-language online portal (administered by the Finnish [Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#))

- [Finland](https://web.archive.org/web/20080703233731/http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/finland.htm) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080703233731/http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/finland.htm>) (University of Colorado Boulder Libraries Government Publications)

Maps

-  Geographic data related to [Finland](https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/54224) (<https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/54224>) at [OpenStreetMap](#)
-  [Wikimedia Atlas of Finland](#)

Travel

- [Official Travel Site of Finland](http://www.visitfinland.com/) (<http://www.visitfinland.com/>)

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