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Tampere

Love at second sight?

The area of Tampere (Swedish: *Tammerfors*) had been inhabited already about 1000 years ago. In 1779, under Swedish rule at that time King Gustav III of Sweden founded this town at the famous *Tammerkoski rapids* between the lakes *Näsijärvi* and *Pyhäjärvi*, which have to overcome a total height of 18 meters over a distance of one kilometer through town. Of course, the very strong natural power of the water had then been utilized for different industrial purposes such as wood and paper production and also for generating electricity. Then in 1865 Knut Fredrik Idestam built the first ground wood mill. Naturally, this attracted many workers. But, since a pretty soon becoming necessary enlargement was not possible in Tampere, another one was built in 1868 about 10 kilometers away at the Nokia rapids, called *Nokia Aktiebolag*. Coming out of the train station for the first time, you will see some more red brick buildings and then one could think having arrived in any other European industrial town.



But already to your left, after about 300 meters you will see the spiers of the *Orthodox Church* built in 1899 under the former Russian rule. Walking further through town on the about 1 kilometer long main street *Hämeenkatu*, you can view tall chimneys built in the times of industrialization in the 20th century. But only one of them is still being used, while the others fall under cultural and heritage protection. Tampere was also called the "*Manchester of the North*" at one time. The



first Finnish paper factory was built here in 1783. A Scotsman named James *Finlayson* founded the first cotton factory in 1820 which later became a big textile industry point. In the weaving-hall where many, so called „cotton women“, were working, the first 150 light bulbs were illuminated in Scandinavia on March 15th 1882. The name Finlayson still has a big meaning today in Tampere, because the big Finlayson factory area with its partially own former workers-housings and many social institutions had a big impact on creating the overall picture of Tampere until today.

As in the whole of Europe, in the 1960s and 1970s this industry saw a certain drawdown because of the falling demand, outsourcing of jobs and an ongoing high technisation. But both universities of Tampere had already implemented professorships for Data Processing science in the 1960s, which were the first ones in Scandinavia. Soon now a new modern high tech industry settled in the suburbs of Tampere and in the about 10 kilometers away town of *Nokia* with the same name river, and worked together with a lot of students from the universities. The name Nokia (1996 Invention of the first Smartphones) soon became world famous.

Now, if you are maybe thinking that many of the old red brick factory buildings in town are abandoned and empty, you may be fooled. Walking on through town you can soon see new developments. The old red brick buildings were mostly left in their original structure, but around the rapids a lot has happened in the last decades. Many music-clubs, bars, museums, stores and cultural places were opened. Also you will find some very good and interesting restaurants and cafés while the prices in Tampere are normally much less than in the capital city Helsinki.

But then, walking even further and passing the central marketplace *Keskustori* with its yellow- white church built in 1824, you can discover many classic buildings, monuments, big sculptures, interesting market stands



with Finnish specialties and also the close by little harbor *Laukuntori*, from which the boats go out to the lake *Pyhäjärvi*. The population of the biggest in-country city of Scandinavia has continuously grown in the last years and, with about 210.000 people it is about as big as Mainz or Lübeck in Germany, Graz in Austria, Reims in France, and Portsmouth in England or Eindhoven in the Netherlands. The biggest town in the province of Western-Finland is situated about 170 kilometers North of Helsinki. It is the capital of the Western Lake district and in the huge area belonging to the city you will find a labyrinth of some 180 lakes. The total city district consists of 688 sqkm and is therefore as big as Helsinki's city district, and 164, 5 sqkm of this area consisting of lakes.

During its industrial times, Tampere was considered a center of the labor movements and, in 1918 the town saw some fierce and bloody battles between the “Reds” and the “Whites” during the times of the Finnish civil war.

With having a total of 10 professional theaters, this is the biggest number in any Finnish town. The many interesting museums, like the Doll and Costume Museum (over 5000 dolls), the Ice Hockey Museum and the Finnish Ice Hockey Hall of Fame (World Champions 1995 & 2011), the Nature History Museum, the Spy Museum with a possible “agents test”, a Shoe Museum and the only Lenin Museum in the world are absolutely worth a visit. For all fans of the funny children’s stories of the Moomin characters created by Tove Jansson there is even a Moomin Museum with a „Moomin Valley”. You can visit constantly changing exhibitions at



all times as well. This lively but never hectic city offers several parks, like the Pyyrikki Park with a size of about 60 acres. Here you will find beaches in the summer and lopes in the winter, and in the warm summer months you may enjoy festivals and concerts of all types. For example the upcoming “Baltic Folk Dance Festival” during the time of our European Convention in June.

An absolute must see, besides the Orthodox Church, is the *Dome Church* built in 1907 with natural rocks and with a very unique interior design.

In 1923 Tampere also became a Bishops residence. When the new *Tampere Hall* was built in 1990, it developed to be the biggest Congress and Concert Center in Scandinavia and, while some new hotels are being built right now, Tampere is becoming more and more a congress city. The all overlooking and 168 meters high *Näsinneula Tower* with a rotating restaurant can be seen from far away already. It is the landmark of this former industrial town and offers a really great view over both big lakes.

In 2008 Tampere has been elected as a UNICEF city and it also belongs to the UNION of the BALTIC CITIES. Being a member of the association „Cities for Children“, Tampere sees itself as a city for children and teenagers and it also offered the first ombudsman for children in Finland. Partner- or Sister cities of the third biggest town in Finland are, among others, Essen and Chemnitz in Germany, Linz in Austria, Syracuse in the USA, Saskatoon in Canada, Norrköping in Sweden, Trondheim in Norway, Odense in Denmark and Nizhny Novgorod in Russia. While almost all other Finnish towns are being leaded by a city council by now, with Mr. Timo P. Nieminen, Tampere still has a traditional Lord-mayor.

Running about 144 public city busses, this town offers a good and reasonably priced public transportation system and because all public places and sights are in the surroundings of about 5 kilometers in Tampere, you will quickly find your ways and feel comfortable very

soon. Situated on a ridge originating from one of the oldest and biggest end moraines in the greater area, you will find the most Western city suburb called Pyyrikki. 162 Meter above sea level there is an old 26 meter high observation tower built in 1929 and from its top you can have a great view. Right there besides it you can see Pispala, probably the most known suburb of Finland. And here you may visit the oldest public sauna in Finland. The *Rajaportti Sauna* is now over 100 years old and, until 1931 men and women took their bathes here together. Pispala is about 3 kilometers away from the city center and if you walk the 300 steps of the ridge, you can see the many different houses from the earlier at first rural times, then the workers times until about 1890, until the today's times of the middle and upper class. In the earlier times a lot of these houses were built without any public central city planning. Besides visiting the Mukamas puppet theater you may also relax at the popular Tahmela beach. At the same the most different trees, plants and berries are growing everywhere around here.



And at some point you will discover that Tampere was developed on a promontory between the two big lakes, *Pyhäjärvi* (207qkm) the “holy lake” being 46 meters deep in some parts, and *Näsijärvi* (256qkm). So, this means much water all around. While on the Northern lake



Näsijärvi some 646 little islands were counted at one time, the Southern lake *Pyhäjärvi* is a paradise for all fishermen who like to catch some nice pike-perches.

Nowadays, Tampere is considered one of the most popular towns in Finland. The job opportunities, the universities, a good infrastructure, cultural events and the possibility to be in a pure, refreshing and beautiful nature within a few minutes make this town so

interesting and well liked at a second sight.

J.H. 04MMXII