Otto gives me money ?

During the many hundreds of years of the highly interesting and eventful history of Finland and its people, some different currencies had been used. During the "Swedish time" -lasting several centuries- it was then the Swedish Daler in the 17th and 18th century (from the ancient German Thaler), which is known today as the Dollar in the U.S.A., Canada and other countries. Under Swedish rule it was now replaced by the Swedish Öre. After Sweden lost the last of the many wars with Russia (1808), it had to turn over Finland to Russia, and the Russian Rubles and Kopeks were used until the first half of the 19th century. Then, in 1860 after Russian Tsar Alexander II's manifesto the Finnish Markka and the Pennia were created, became the official currency and were now used for over 140 years. In the Middle-Ages a mark ("Markka") was originally 210.5 grams of silver. 1 mark was worth 8 Öre. And the ancient Finnish word "Markka" also meant the skin of a squirrel.

Finland was one of the first 12 European countries in January 2002 to implement the use of the over a long time developed new EURO currency. This was a sign aiming towards Europe and, up to today it is the only country in Scandinavia that has said good bye to its "old money".

The beautiful Finnish 2 Euro coins show us the nice blossoms of the cloudberry. This very special, orange colored berry looking like a kind of a blackberry with a sweet-sour taste only grows in Finland and in some parts of Russia. It is being used for different desserts, cakes and liqueurs. We can see two wild singing-swans flying over one of the many, many Finnish lakes and islands on the 1 Euro coin. This highly respected white bird has become the national bird of Finland based on some parts of the Finnish mythology. An old heraldic lion from an old crest is presented on the 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 Cent coins. However, in Finland, the copper color 2 and 1 Cent coins are not being used in the day to day life. The purchase amounts are being rounded up or down to the next amount of 5 Euro cents. This had already been done before with the old Finnish Pennyy coins in the 1970s. But, a certain amount of 1 and 2 Euro cent coins is being struck by the Finnish mint every year and these are very popular among

and looked for by many coin collectors around the world. This also counts for all Finnish coins in general and for some of the rare commemorative coins, of course.

Now, you may also have a brother, grandfather or an uncle with the name of Otto who is maybe willing to help you with some extra travel money. But here in Finland, outside or inside of some buildings in the towns or villages, you can occasionally see an illuminated yellow sign with white letters on a yellow background reading "Otto". And right there you can find an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) to withdraw your needed cash amounts in Euro currency. When you need to pay for a bill, cash can be used in Finland as well as credit or debit cards. Cards are mostly accepted everywhere, even for relatively small amounts. But this may not be so at very small shops or at outside marketplaces or flea markets. For some years now in Europe, Canada and the Far East a microchip had been embedded in the front of all Debit/Credit, Giro or Electronic Cash cards in addition to the earlier magnetic strips on the back. This technology developed by EMV (Eurocard, Mastercard, and Visa) in order to increase security, has been widely implemented in these countries. And there, most ATM systems have migrated to this new microchip system. These newer cards have also been introduced in the USA now as well. And having one of these newer cards will also improve global acceptance, like when travelling in Finland.

At the same time some ATMs in Finland may have two different card slots, one for cards without and, one for cards with a microchip

However, getting a cash advance with a credit card (VISA, American Express, Master Card, etc. in a bank in Finland is normally not possible.

Please, plan accordingly.