[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country) **Finland** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-fi](/wiki/Template:Lang-fi) [Template:IPA-fi](/wiki/Template:IPA-fi); [Template:Lang-sv](/wiki/Template:Lang-sv) [Template:IPA-sv](/wiki/Template:IPA-sv)), officially the **Republic of Finland**,[[1]](#cite_note-1) is a [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) in [Europe](/wiki/Europe). A peninsula with the [Gulf of Finland](/wiki/Gulf_of_Finland) to the south and the [Gulf of Bothnia](/wiki/Gulf_of_Bothnia) to the west, the country has land borders with [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden) to the northwest, [Norway](/wiki/Norway) to the north, and [Russia](/wiki/Russia) to the east. [Estonia](/wiki/Estonia) is south of the country across the Gulf of Finland. Finland is situated in the geographical region of [Fennoscandia](/wiki/Fennoscandia), which also includes [Scandinavia](/wiki/Scandinavia). Finland's population is 5.5 million (2014), staying roughly on the same level over the past two decades. The majority of the population is concentrated in the southern region.[[2]](#cite_note-2) In terms of area, it is the [eighth largest country in Europe](/wiki/Area_and_population_of_European_countries) and the most [sparsely populated](/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_and_dependent_territories_by_population_density) country in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). Finland is a [parliamentary](/wiki/Parliamentary_system) republic with a central government based in the capital [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki), local governments in 317 [municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Finland),[[3]](#cite_note-3) and an [autonomous region](/wiki/Autonomous_area), the [Åland Islands](/wiki/Åland_Islands). Over 1.4 million people live in the [Greater Helsinki](/wiki/Greater_Helsinki) metropolitan area, which produces a third of the country's [GDP](/wiki/Gross_domestic_product).

From the late 12th century, Finland was an integral part of [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden), a legacy reflected in the prevalence of the Swedish language and its official status. In the spirit of the notion of [Adolf Ivar Arwidsson](/wiki/Adolf_Ivar_Arwidsson) (1791–1858), "we are no-longer Swedes, we do not want to become Russians, let us therefore be Finns", the Finnish national identity started to establish. Nevertheless, in 1809 Finland was incorporated into the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) as the autonomous [Grand Duchy of Finland](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland). In 1906, Finland became the second nation in the world to give the right to vote to all adult citizens and the first in the world to give [full suffrage](/wiki/Full_suffrage) to all adult citizens.[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) Following the 1917 [Russian Revolution](/wiki/Russian_Revolution), Finland declared itself independent.

In 1918, the fledgling state was divided by civil war, with the Bolshevik-leaning "[Reds](/wiki/Finnish_Socialist_Workers'_Republic)" supported by the equally new [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union), fighting the "[Whites](/wiki/Whites_(Finland))", supported by the [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire). After a brief attempt to [establish a kingdom](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Finland_(1918)), the country became a republic. During [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), the Soviet Union sought repeatedly to occupy Finland, with Finland losing parts of Karelia, Salla and Kuusamo, Petsamo and some islands, but retaining independence. Finland joined the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) in 1955 and established an official policy of neutrality. The [Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948](/wiki/Finno-Soviet_Treaty_of_1948) gave the Soviet Union some leverage in Finnish domestic politics during the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) era. Finland joined the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) (OECD) in 1969, the [NATO Partnership for Peace](/wiki/Partnership_for_Peace) on 1994,[[6]](#cite_note-6) the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) in 1995, the [Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council](/wiki/Euro-Atlantic_Partnership_Council) in 1997,[[6]](#cite_note-6) and finally the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) at its inception in 1999.

Finland was a relative latecomer to industrialisation, remaining a largely [agrarian](/wiki/Agriculture) country until the 1950s. It rapidly developed an advanced economy while building an extensive [Nordic-style](/wiki/Nordic_Model) [welfare state](/wiki/Welfare_state), resulting in widespread prosperity and one of the highest [per capita incomes](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita) in the world.[[7]](#cite_note-7) However, since 2012 Finnish GDP growth has been negative, with a preceding nadir of −8% in 2009.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Finland is a top performer in numerous metrics of national performance, including education, economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life, and human development.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) In 2015, Finland was ranked first in the World Human Capital[[13]](#cite_note-13) and the [Press Freedom Index](/wiki/Press_Freedom_Index), and as the most stable country in the world in the [Failed States Index](/wiki/Failed_States_Index),[[14]](#cite_note-14) and second in the [Global Gender Gap Report](/wiki/Global_Gender_Gap_Report).[[15]](#cite_note-15) A large majority of Finns are members of the [Evangelical Lutheran Church](/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_of_Finland),[[16]](#cite_note-16) though freedom of religion is guaranteed under the [Finnish Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Finland).

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The first known written appearance of the name Finland is thought to be on three rune-stones. Two were found in the Swedish province of [Uppland](/wiki/Uppland) and have the inscription *finlonti* ([U 582](/wiki/Baltic_expeditions_runestones#U_582)). The third was found in [Gotland](/wiki/Gotland), in the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea). It has the inscription *finlandi* ([G 319](/wiki/Baltic_expeditions_runestones#G_319)) and dates from the 13th century.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The name can be assumed to be related to the tribe name [Finns](/wiki/Finns), which is mentioned first known time AD 98 (disputed meaning).

#### Suomi[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

The name *Suomi* ([Template:Langnf](/wiki/Template:Langnf)) has uncertain origins, but a candidate for a source is the Proto-Baltic word *\*źemē*, meaning "land". In addition to the close relatives of Finnish (the [Finnic languages](/wiki/Finnic_languages)), this name is also used in the [Baltic languages](/wiki/Baltic_languages) [Latvian](/wiki/Latvian_language) and [Lithuanian](/wiki/Lithuanian_language). Alternatively, the Indo-European word \**gʰm-on* "man" (cf. Gothic *guma*, Latin *homo*) has been suggested, being borrowed as \**ćoma*. The word originally referred only to the province of [Finland Proper](/wiki/Finland_Proper_(historical_province)), and later to the northern coast of [Gulf of Finland](/wiki/Gulf_of_Finland), with northern regions such as [Ostrobothnia](/wiki/Ostrobothnia_(historical_province)) still sometimes being excluded until later. Earlier theories suggested derivation from *suomaa* ([fen](/wiki/Fen) land) or *suoniemi* (fen cape), and parallels between *saame* ([Sami](/wiki/Sami_people), a Finno-Ugric people in [Lapland](/wiki/Lapland_(Finland))), and [*Häme*](/wiki/Tavastia_(historical_province)) (a province in the inland) were drawn, but these theories are now considered outdated.[[18]](#cite_note-18)

### Concept[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[right|thumb|upright||](/wiki/File:Hakkapeliitta-1940.jpg)[Hakkapeliitta](/wiki/Hakkapeliitta) featured on a 1940 Finnish stamp

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the term "Finland" mostly referred to the area around [Turku](/wiki/Turku) (Åbo), a region that later became known as Finland Proper, while the other parts of the country were called [Tavastia](/wiki/Tavastia_(historical_province)) and [Karelia](/wiki/Karelia), but which could also sometimes be collectively referred to as "[Österland](/wiki/Österland)" (compare [Norrland](/wiki/Norrland)). (Medieval politics concerned tribes such as the Finns, the Tavastians, and the [Karelians](/wiki/Karelia_(historical_province_of_Finland)) more than geographical boundaries.)

In the 15th century, "Finland" became a common name for the whole land area to the east of the [Bothnian Sea](/wiki/Bothnian_Sea), possibly even including [Åland](/wiki/Åland), when the archipelago was seen as belonging to Åbo (Turku). What the term actually refers to can vary between sources, additionally, the boundaries to the east and the north were not exact. A sort of establishment of Finland as a united entity, if only in name, was made when [John III of Sweden](/wiki/John_III_of_Sweden) called his [duchy](/wiki/Duchy) the "grand duchy of Finland" (about 1580), as a strategy to meet the claims of the Russian [tsar](/wiki/Tsar). The term became part of the title of the [King of Sweden](/wiki/King_of_Sweden) but had little practical meaning. The Finnish land area had the same standing as the area to the west of the Bothnian Sea, and the Finnish part of the realm had the same representation in the parliament as the western part. In 1637, Queen [Christina](/wiki/Christina,_Queen_of_Sweden) named [Per Brahe the Younger](/wiki/Per_Brahe_the_Younger) [Governor General of Finland](/wiki/Governor_General_of_Finland), Åland, and [Ostrobothnia](/wiki/Ostrobothnia_(historical_province)) (other parts of Sweden had also had [governor generals](/wiki/Governor_general)).

The modern boundaries of Finland actually came into existence only after the end of [Sweden-Finland](/wiki/Sweden-Finland). What was signed over to Russia in 1809 was not so much "Finland" as six counties, Åland, and a small part of [Västerbotten County](/wiki/Västerbotten_County). The boundary between the new [Grand Duchy of Finland](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland) and the remaining part of Sweden could have been drawn along the river [Kemijoki](/wiki/Kemijoki), the boundary at the time between Västerbotten County and Österbotten County (Ostrobothnia) — as proposed by the Swedes in the peace negotiations — or along the river [Kalix](/wiki/Kalix_River), thereby including the Finnish-speaking part of [Meänmaa](/wiki/Meänmaa) — as proposed by the Russians. The actual boundary, which followed the [Torne River](/wiki/Torne_River) and the [Muonio River](/wiki/Muonio_River) to the fells [Saana](/wiki/Saana) and [Halti](/wiki/Halti) in the northwest, was a compromise. The area it delineated was to become what was represented by the concept of Finland — at least after Tsar [Alexander I of Russia](/wiki/Alexander_I_of_Russia) permitted the parts of Finland located to the east of the [Kymi River](/wiki/Kymi_River), which were conquered by Russia in 1721 and 1743, called "[Old Finland](/wiki/Old_Finland)", to be administratively included in "New Finland" in 1812.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

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### Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

According to [archaeological](/wiki/Archaeology) evidence, the area now comprising Finland was settled at the latest around 8500 BCE during the [Stone Age](/wiki/Stone_Age) as the ice sheet of the [last ice age](/wiki/Last_glacial_period) receded. The [artifacts](/wiki/Artifact_(archaeology)) the first settlers left behind present characteristics that are shared with those found in Estonia, Russia, and Norway.[[19]](#cite_note-19) The earliest people were [hunter-gatherers](/wiki/Hunter-gatherer), using stone tools.[[20]](#cite_note-20) The first pottery appeared in 5200 BCE, when the [Comb Ceramic culture](/wiki/Pit-Comb_Ware_culture) was introduced.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The arrival of the [Corded Ware culture](/wiki/Corded_Ware_culture) in southern coastal Finland between 3000 and 2500 BCE may have coincided with the start of agriculture.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Even with the introduction of agriculture, hunting and fishing continued to be important parts of the subsistence economy.

The [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age) (1500–500 BCE) and [Iron Age](/wiki/Iron_Age) (500 BCE–1200 CE) were characterised by extensive contacts with other cultures in the [Fennoscandian](/wiki/Fennoscandia) and [Baltic regions](/wiki/Baltic_region). There is no consensus on when [Uralic languages](/wiki/Uralic_languages) and [Indo-European languages](/wiki/Indo-European_languages) were first spoken in the area of contemporary Finland. During the first millennium AD, early Finnish was spoken in agricultural settlements in southern Finland, whereas Sámi-speaking populations occupied most parts of the country. Although distantly related, the [Sami](/wiki/Sami_people) are a different people that retained the hunter-gatherer lifestyle longer than the Finns. The Sami cultural identity and the [Sami language](/wiki/Sami_languages) have survived in Lapland, the northernmost province, but the Sami have been displaced or assimilated elsewhere.

### Swedish era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Swedish_Empire_(1560-1815)_en2.png) [Swedish Empire](/wiki/Swedish_Empire) following the [Treaty of Roskilde](/wiki/Treaty_of_Roskilde) of 1658.  
Dark green: [Sweden proper](/wiki/Sweden_proper), as represented in the [Riksdag of the Estates](/wiki/Riksdag_of_the_Estates). Other greens: [Swedish dominions](/wiki/Dominions_of_Sweden) and [possessions](/wiki/Possessions_of_Sweden). [thumb|right||Now lying within Helsinki,](/wiki/File:Suomenlinna.jpg) [Suomenlinna](/wiki/Suomenlinna) is a [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) [World Heritage Site](/wiki/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.

Swedish kings established their rule in the [Northern Crusades](/wiki/Northern_Crusades) from the [12th century](/wiki/First_Swedish_Crusade) until [1249](/wiki/Second_Swedish_Crusade).[[23]](#cite_note-23) The area of present-day Finland became a [fully consolidated part](/wiki/Consolidation_of_Sweden) of the Swedish kingdom. Swedish-speaking settlers arrived at the coastal regions during the Middle Ages. In the 17th century, [Swedish](/wiki/Finland_Swedish) became the dominant language of the nobility, administration, and education; [Finnish](/wiki/Finnish_language) was chiefly a language for the [peasantry](/wiki/Peasant), clergy, and local [courts](/wiki/Court) in predominantly Finnish-speaking areas.

During the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation), the [Finns](/wiki/Finns) gradually converted to [Lutheranism](/wiki/Lutheranism).[[24]](#cite_note-24) In the 16th century, [Mikael Agricola](/wiki/Mikael_Agricola) published the first written works in Finnish. The first university in Finland, [The Royal Academy of Turku](/wiki/The_Royal_Academy_of_Turku), was established in 1640. Finland suffered a severe [famine in 1696–1697](/wiki/Great_Famine_of_Finland_(1695–1697)), during which about one third of the Finnish population died,[[25]](#cite_note-25) and a [devastating plague a few years later](/wiki/The_plague_during_the_Great_Northern_War). 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](/wiki/Greater_Wrath) (1714–1721) and the [Lesser Wrath](/wiki/Russo-Swedish_War_(1741–1743)) (1742–1743).[[25]](#cite_note-25) It is estimated that almost an entire generation of young men was lost during the Great Wrath, due namely to the destruction of homes and farms, and to the burning of [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki).[[26]](#cite_note-26) By this time Finland was the predominant term for the whole area from the [Gulf of Bothnia](/wiki/Gulf_of_Bothnia) to the Russian border.

Two Russo-Swedish wars in twenty-five years served as reminders to the Finnish people of how precarious their position between Sweden and Russia was. An increasingly vocal elite in Finland soon determined that Finnish ties with Sweden were becoming too costly, and following [Gustav III's War](/wiki/Russo-Swedish_War_(1788–90)) (1788–1790), the Finnish elite's desire to break with Sweden only heightened.[[27]](#cite_note-27) In the late eighteenth century a politically active portion of the Finnish nobility became convinced that, due to Sweden and Russia's repeated use of Finland as a battlefield, it would be in the country's best interests to seek autonomy. Even before the Russo-Swedish War of 1788–1790, there were conspiring Finns, among them [Col G. M. Sprengtporten](/wiki/Georg_Magnus_Sprengtporten), who had supported [Gustav III's coup in 1772](/wiki/Gustav_III_of_Sweden#Coup_d'état). Sprengporten fell out with the king and resigned his commission in 1777. In the following decade he tried to secure Russian support for an autonomous Finland, and later became an adviser to Catherine II.[[27]](#cite_note-27) 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 twentieth 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 c. 1793.)[[27]](#cite_note-27)

### Russian Empire era[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

On 29 March 1809, having been taken over by the armies of [Alexander I of Russia](/wiki/Alexander_I_of_Russia) in the [Finnish War](/wiki/Finnish_War), Finland became an autonomous [Grand Duchy](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland) in the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) until the end of 1917. In 1811, Alexander I incorporated Russian [Vyborg province](/wiki/Vyborg_Governorate) into the Grand Duchy of Finland. During the Russian era, the Finnish language began to gain recognition. From the 1860s onwards, a strong Finnish [nationalist movement](/wiki/Ethnic_nationalism) known as the [Fennoman](/wiki/Fennoman) movement grew. Milestones included the publication of what would become Finland's [national epic](/wiki/National_epic)[Template:Spaced ndashthe](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) [*Kalevala*](/wiki/Kalevala)[Template:Spaced ndashin](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) 1835, and the Finnish language's achieving equal legal status with Swedish in 1892. [thumb|*Pioneers in Karelia* (1900) by](/wiki/File:Pekka_Halonen_-_Tienraivaajia_Karjalassa.jpg) [Eero Järnefelt](/wiki/Eero_Järnefelt)

The [Finnish famine of 1866–1868](/wiki/Finnish_famine_of_1866–1868) killed 15% of the population, making it one of the worst [famines](/wiki/Famine) 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.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The [GDP](/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) per capita was still half of that of the United States and a third of that of Britain.[[28]](#cite_note-28) In 1906, [universal suffrage](/wiki/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](/wiki/Autonomous_area). 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[[29]](#cite_note-29) and socialists.

### Civil war and early independence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

After the 1917 [February Revolution](/wiki/February_Revolution), the position of Finland as part of the Russian Empire was questioned, mainly by [Social Democrats](/wiki/Russian_Social_Democratic_Labour_Party). Since the head of state was the [tsar](/wiki/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 parliament. This was rejected by the [Russian Provisional Government](/wiki/Russian_Provisional_Government) which dissolved the parliament.[[30]](#cite_note-30) New elections were conducted, in which right-wing parties won 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.

[thumb|right|White firing squad executing Red soldiers in Länkipohja,](/wiki/File:FiringsquadLankipohja.jpg) [Längelmäki](/wiki/Längelmäki), in 1918. The [October Revolution](/wiki/October_Revolution) in Russia changed the game anew. 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](/wiki/Bolsheviks) took power in Russia. Rather than acknowledge the authority of the *Power Law* of a few months earlier, the right-wing government [declared independence](/wiki/Finnish_Declaration_of_Independence) on 6 December 1917.

On 27 January 1918, the official opening shots of the war were fired in two simultaneous events. The government started to disarm the Russian forces in [Pohjanmaa](/wiki/Ostrobothnia_(historical_province)), and the [Social Democratic Party](/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Finland) staged a coup.[Template:Failed verification](/wiki/Template:Failed_verification) The latter succeeded in controlling southern Finland and Helsinki, but the white government continued in exile from [Vaasa](/wiki/Vaasa). This sparked the brief but bitter [civil war](/wiki/Finnish_Civil_War). The [Whites](/wiki/White_Guard_(Finland)), who were supported by [Imperial Germany](/wiki/German_Empire), prevailed over the [Reds](/wiki/Red_Guards_(Finland)).[[31]](#cite_note-31) After the war, tens of thousands of Reds and suspected sympathizers were interned in camps, where thousands died by execution or from malnutrition and disease. Deep social and political enmity was sown between the Reds and Whites and would last until the [Winter War](/wiki/Winter_War) and beyond. The civil war and [activist expeditions](/wiki/Heimosodat) into Soviet Russia strained Eastern relations.

After [a brief flirtation with monarchy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Finland_(1918)), Finland became a [presidential](/wiki/Presidential_system) republic, with [Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg](/wiki/Kaarlo_Juho_Ståhlberg) elected as its first president in 1919. The Finnish–Russian border was determined by the [Treaty of Tartu](/wiki/Treaty_of_Tartu_(Russian–Finnish)) in 1920, largely following the historic border but granting [Pechenga](/wiki/Pechengsky_District) ([Template:Lang-fi](/wiki/Template:Lang-fi)) and its [Barents Sea](/wiki/Barents_Sea) harbour to Finland. Finnish democracy did not see any Soviet coup attempts and survived the anti-Communist [Lapua Movement](/wiki/Lapua_Movement). The relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union was tense. Germany's relations with democratic Finland cooled also after the Nazis' rise to power.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Army officers were trained in France, and relations to Western Europe and Sweden were strengthened.

In 1917, the population was 3 million. Credit-based [land reform](/wiki/Land_reform) was enacted after the civil war, increasing the proportion of capital-owning population.[[28]](#cite_note-28) About 70% of workers were occupied in agriculture and 10% in industry.[[32]](#cite_note-32) The largest export markets were the United Kingdom and Germany.

### World War II[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|Areas ceded by Finland to the](/wiki/File:Finnish_areas_ceded_in_1944.png) [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) after the [Winter War](/wiki/Winter_War) in 1940 and the [Continuation War](/wiki/Continuation_War) in 1944. The [Porkkala](/wiki/Porkkala) land lease was returned to Finland in 1956. Finland covered an area of approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) before the handover. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

During [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), Finland fought the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) twice: in the [Winter War](/wiki/Winter_War) of 1939–1940 after the Soviet Union had attacked Finland; and in the [Continuation War](/wiki/Continuation_War) of 1941–1944, following [Operation Barbarossa](/wiki/Operation_Barbarossa), during which Finland aligned, however not allied, with Germany following its invasion of the Soviet Union. After fighting a [major Soviet offensive](/wiki/Vyborg–Petrozavodsk_Offensive) in June/July 1944 to a standstill, Finland reached an armistice with the Soviet Union. This was followed by the [Lapland War](/wiki/Lapland_War) of 1944–1945, when Finland fought against the retreating German forces in northern Finland.

The treaties signed in 1947 and 1948 with the Soviet Union included Finnish obligations, restraints, and reparations—as well as further Finnish territorial concessions in addition to those in the [Moscow Peace Treaty](/wiki/Moscow_Peace_Treaty) of 1940. As a result of the two wars, Finland was forced to cede most of [Finnish Karelia](/wiki/Finnish_Karelia), [Salla](/wiki/Salla), and [Petsamo](/wiki/Pechengsky_District), which amounted to 10% of its land area and 20% of its industrial capacity, including the ports of [Vyborg](/wiki/Vyborg) (Viipuri) and the ice-free [Liinakhamari](/wiki/Liinakhamari) (Liinahamari). [Almost the whole population, some 400,000 people](/wiki/Evacuation_of_Finnish_Karelia), fled these areas. Finland was never occupied by Soviet forces; it retained its independence, however, at a loss of about 93,000 soldiers.

Finland rejected [Marshall aid](/wiki/Marshall_aid), in apparent [deference to Soviet desires](/wiki/Finlandization). However, the United States provided secret development aid and helped the (non-communist) Social Democratic Party in hopes of preserving Finland's independence.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Establishing trade with the Western powers, such as the United Kingdom, and the reparations to the Soviet Union caused Finland to transform itself from a primarily [agrarian](/wiki/Agriculture) economy to an industrialised one. For example, the [Valmet](/wiki/Valmet) corporation was founded to create materials for war reparations. Even after the reparations had been paid off, Finland—which was poor in certain resources necessary for an industrialized nation (such as iron and oil)—continued to trade with the Soviet Union in the framework of [bilateral trade](/wiki/Bilateral_trade).

### Cold War[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

In 1950, 46% of Finnish workers worked in agriculture and a third lived in urban areas.[[34]](#cite_note-34) 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](/wiki/Baby_boom) peak of 3.5 in 1947 to 1.5 in 1973.[[34]](#cite_note-34) When baby-boomers entered the workforce, the economy did not generate jobs fast enough, and hundreds of thousands emigrated to the more industrialized Sweden, with emigration peaking in 1969 and 1970.[[34]](#cite_note-34) The [1952 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1952_Summer_Olympics) brought international visitors. Finland took part in trade liberalization in the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank), the [International Monetary Fund](/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund) and the [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade](/wiki/General_Agreement_on_Tariffs_and_Trade).

[upright|thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Urho_Kaleva_Kekkonen.jpg)[Urho Kekkonen](/wiki/Urho_Kekkonen), the eighth president of Finland (1956–1982) Officially claiming to be [neutral](/wiki/Neutral_country), Finland lay in the grey zone between the [Western countries](/wiki/Western_world) and the Soviet Union. The [YYA Treaty](/wiki/Finno-Soviet_Treaty_of_1948) (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](/wiki/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 of avoiding any policies and statements that could be interpreted as anti-Soviet. This phenomenon was given the name "[Finlandization](/wiki/Finlandization)" by the German press.

Despite close relations with the Soviet Union, Finland remained a Western European market economy. Various industries benefited from [trade privileges](/wiki/Bilateral_trade) 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 80s, Finland built one of the most extensive [welfare states](/wiki/Welfare_state) in the world. Finland negotiated with the [EEC](/wiki/European_Economic_Community) (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](/wiki/Urho_Kekkonen) failing health forced him to retire after holding office for 25 years.

Miscalculated macroeconomic decisions, a [banking crisis](/wiki/Finnish_banking_crisis_of_1990s), the collapse of its largest single trading partner (the Soviet Union), and a global economic downturn caused a deep [early 1990s recession in Finland](/wiki/Early_1990s_recession_in_Finland). The depression bottomed out in 1993, and Finland saw steady economic growth for more than ten years.

### Recent history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|right|Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and signed the](/wiki/File:Tratado_de_Lisboa_13_12_2007_(081).jpg) [Lisbon Treaty](/wiki/Lisbon_Treaty) in 2007.

Like other Nordic countries, Finland has decentralised 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](/wiki/European_Union) in 1995, and the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) in 1999. On 21 September 1990, Finland declared unilaterally the [Paris Peace Treaty](/wiki/Paris_Peace_Treaty) obsolete, following the German reunification decision nine days earlier.[[35]](#cite_note-35) The population is aging with the [birth rate](/wiki/Birth_rate) at 10.42 births per 1,000 population per year, or a [fertility rate](/wiki/Fertility_rate) of 1.8.[[34]](#cite_note-34) With a median age of 42.7 years, Finland is one of countries with most mature population;[[36]](#cite_note-36) half of voters are estimated to be over 50 years old.

The [Finnish markka](/wiki/Finnish_markka) was replaced by the [euro](/wiki/Euro) in 2002. As a preparation for this date, the minting of the new euro coins started as early as 1999; this is why the first euro coins from Finland have the year 1999 on them, instead of 2002 like some of the other countries of the Eurozone. Three different designs (one for the [€2 coin](/wiki/2_euro_coin), one for the [€1 coin](/wiki/1_euro_coin) and one for the [other six coins](/wiki/Euro_coins)) were selected for the Finnish coins. In 2007, in order to adopt the new common map like the rest of the Eurozone countries, Finland changed the common side of its coins.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[thumb|upright|Detailed map of Finland. (See also](/wiki/File:Map_of_Finland-en.svg) [Atlas of Finland](/wiki/Commons:Atlas_of_Finland).) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Lying approximately between latitudes [60°](/wiki/60th_parallel_north) and [70° N](/wiki/70th_parallel_north), and longitudes [20°](/wiki/20th_meridian_east) and [32° E](/wiki/32nd_meridian_east), Finland is one of the world's northernmost countries. Of world capitals, only [Reykjavík](/wiki/Reykjavík) lies more to the north than Helsinki. The distance from the southernmost—[Hanko](/wiki/Hanko)—to the northernmost point in the country—[Nuorgam](/wiki/Nuorgam)—is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).

Finland is a country of thousands of lakes and islands—about 188,000 lakes (larger than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and 179,000 islands.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Its largest lake, [Saimaa](/wiki/Saimaa), is the fourth largest in Europe. The area with the most lakes is called [Finnish Lakeland](/wiki/Finnish_Lakeland). The greatest concentration of islands is found in the southwest in the [Archipelago Sea](/wiki/Archipelago_Sea) between continental Finland and the main island of Åland.

Much of the geography of Finland is explained by the Ice Age. The glaciers were thicker and lasted longer in [Fennoscandia](/wiki/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](/wiki/Halti) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), is found in the extreme north of Lapland at the border between Finland and [Norway](/wiki/Norway). The highest mountain whose peak is entirely in Finland is [Ridnitsohkka](/wiki/Ridnitsohkka) at 1,316 m (4,318 ft), directly adjacent to Halti.

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Cygnus_cygnus_from_zh.JPG) [whooper swan](/wiki/Whooper_swan), Finland's [national bird](/wiki/List_of_national_birds)

The retreating glaciers have left the land with [morainic](/wiki/Moraine) deposits in formations of [eskers](/wiki/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](/wiki/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](/wiki/Post-glacial_rebound). The effect is strongest around the [Gulf of Bothnia](/wiki/Gulf_of_Bothnia), where land steadily rises about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) 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 [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) annually.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Relatively speaking, Finland is rising from the sea.[[39]](#cite_note-39) The landscape is covered mostly by coniferous [taiga](/wiki/Taiga) forests and [fens](/wiki/Fen), with little cultivated land. Of the total area 10% is lakes, rivers and ponds, and 78% forest. The forest consists of [pine](/wiki/Pine), [spruce](/wiki/Spruce), [birch](/wiki/Birch), and other species.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Finland is the largest producer of wood in Europe and among the largest in the world. The most common type of rock is [granite](/wiki/Granite). It is a ubiquitous part of the scenery, visible wherever there is no soil cover. Moraine or [till](/wiki/Till) is the most common type of soil, covered by a thin layer of [humus](/wiki/Humus) of biological origin. [Podzol](/wiki/Podzol) profile development is seen in most forest soils except where drainage is poor. [Gleysols](/wiki/Gleysol) and peat [bogs](/wiki/Bog) occupy poorly drained areas.

### Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[Phytogeographically](/wiki/Phytogeography), Finland is shared between the Arctic, central European, and northern European provinces of the [Circumboreal Region](/wiki/Circumboreal_Region) within the [Boreal Kingdom](/wiki/Boreal_Kingdom). According to the [WWF](/wiki/World_Wide_Fund_for_Nature), the territory of Finland can be subdivided into three [ecoregions](/wiki/Ecoregion): the [Scandinavian and Russian taiga](/wiki/Scandinavian_and_Russian_taiga), [Sarmatic mixed forests](/wiki/Sarmatic_mixed_forests), and [Scandinavian Montane Birch forest and grasslands](/wiki/Scandinavian_Montane_Birch_forest_and_grasslands). 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](/wiki/Rauma,_Finland) 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](/wiki/Tree_line) and Arctic Ocean, Montane Birch forests are common.

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Bear_Finland.png) [brown bear](/wiki/Brown_bear) (*Ursus arctos*) is Finland's national animal. Similarly, Finland has a diverse and extensive range of fauna. There are at least sixty native [mammalian](/wiki/Mammal) species, 248 breeding bird species, over 70 fish species, and 11 reptile and frog species present today, many migrating from neighboring countries thousands of years ago. Large and widely recognized wildlife mammals found in Finland are the [brown bear](/wiki/Brown_bear) (the national animal), [gray wolf](/wiki/Gray_wolf), [wolverine](/wiki/Wolverine), and [elk](/wiki/Moose). Three of the more striking birds are the [whooper swan](/wiki/Whooper_swan), a large European swan and the national bird of Finland; the [capercaillie](/wiki/Capercaillie), a large, black-plumaged member of the [grouse](/wiki/Grouse) family; and the [European eagle-owl](/wiki/European_eagle-owl). The latter is considered an indicator of [old-growth forest](/wiki/Old-growth_forest) connectivity, and has been declining because of landscape fragmentation.[[41]](#cite_note-41) The most common breeding birds are the [willow warbler](/wiki/Willow_warbler), [common chaffinch](/wiki/Common_chaffinch), and [redwing](/wiki/Redwing).[[42]](#cite_note-42) Of some seventy species of freshwater fish, the [northern pike](/wiki/Northern_pike), [perch](/wiki/Perch), and others are plentiful. [Atlantic salmon](/wiki/Atlantic_salmon) remains the favourite of [fly rod](/wiki/Fly_fishing) enthusiasts.

The endangered [Saimaa ringed seal](/wiki/Saimaa_ringed_seal), one of only three lake seal species in the world, exists only in the [Saimaa](/wiki/Saimaa) lake system of southeastern Finland, down to only 300 seals today. It has become the emblem of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation.[[43]](#cite_note-43)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Finland map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Finland_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Koli_National_Park_in_Northern_Karelia.jpg)[Koli National Park](/wiki/Koli_National_Park) in North Karelia [thumb|](/wiki/File:Repoveden_Kansallispuisto_Kesayonauringossa.jpg)[Repovesi National Park](/wiki/Repovesi_National_Park) in southeastern Finland

The main factor influencing Finland's climate is the country's geographical position between the 60th and 70th northern parallels in the [Eurasian](/wiki/Eurasia) continent's coastal zone. In the [Köppen climate classification](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification), the whole of Finland lies in the [boreal zone](/wiki/Subarctic_climate), characterized by warm summers and freezing winters. Within the country, the [temperateness](/wiki/Temperateness) varies considerably between the southern coastal regions and the extreme north, showing characteristics of both a [maritime](/wiki/Oceanic_climate) and a [continental climate](/wiki/Continental_climate). Finland is near enough to the Atlantic Ocean to be continuously warmed by the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/Gulf_Stream). The Gulf Stream combines with the moderating effects of the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea) and numerous inland lakes to explain the unusually warm climate compared with other regions that share the same [latitude](/wiki/Latitude), such as [Alaska](/wiki/Alaska), [Siberia](/wiki/Siberia), and southern [Greenland](/wiki/Greenland).[[44]](#cite_note-44) Winters in southern Finland (when mean daily temperature remains below [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) 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](/wiki/Helsinki), snow often covers the land from late December to late March.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Even in the south, the harshest winter nights can see the temperatures fall to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) although on coastal areas like Helsinki, temperatures below [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) are very rare. Climatic summers (when mean daily temperature remains above [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) in southern Finland last from about late May to mid-September, and in the inland, the warmest days of July can reach over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[44]](#cite_note-44) Although most of Finland lies on the [taiga](/wiki/Taiga) belt, the southernmost coastal regions are sometimes classified as [hemiboreal](/wiki/Hemiboreal).[[46]](#cite_note-46) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Isokuru.JPG)[Pyhä-Luosto National Park](/wiki/Pyhä-Luosto_National_Park), [Lapland](/wiki/Lapland_(Finland))

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 [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The winter of the north lasts for about 200 days with permanent snow cover from about 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 [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) during heat waves.[[44]](#cite_note-44) No part of Finland has [Arctic tundra](/wiki/Arctic_tundra), but [Alpine tundra](/wiki/Alpine_tundra) can be found at the [fells](/wiki/Fell) Lapland.[[46]](#cite_note-46) The Finnish climate is suitable for cereal farming only in the southernmost regions, while the northern regions are suitable for [animal husbandry](/wiki/Animal_husbandry).[[47]](#cite_note-47) A quarter of Finland's territory lies within the [Arctic Circle](/wiki/Arctic_Circle) and the [midnight sun](/wiki/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.[[44]](#cite_note-44)

### Regions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Finland consists of 19 [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Finland) called [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) in Finnish and [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) in Swedish. The regions are governed by regional councils which serve as forums of cooperation for the [municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Finland) of a region. The main tasks of the regions are regional planning and development of enterprise and education. In addition, the public health services are usually organized on the basis of regions. Currently, the only region 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 region 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](/wiki/Finnish_Defence_Forces) regional offices are responsible for the regional defence preparations and for the administration of conscription within the region.

Regions represent dialectal, cultural, and economic variations better than the former [provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Finland), which were purely administrative divisions of the central government. Historically, regions are divisions of [historical provinces of Finland](/wiki/Historical_provinces_of_Finland), areas which represent dialects and culture more accurately.

Six [Regional State Administrative Agencies](/wiki/Regional_State_Administrative_Agencies_of_Finland) were created by the state of Finland in 2010, each of them responsible for one of the regions called [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) in Finnish and [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) in Swedish; in addition, Åland was designated a seventh region. These take over some of the tasks of the earlier [Provinces of Finland](/wiki/Provinces_of_Finland) (the *lääni*s), which were abolished.[[48]](#cite_note-48){| style="with:100%" | style="width:50%" |[Template:Finnish Regions](/wiki/Template:Finnish_Regions) | style="width:50%" |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **In English** | **In Finnish** | **In Swedish** | **Capital** | **Regional state administrative agency** |
| [**Lapland**](/wiki/Lapland,_Finland) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Rovaniemi](/wiki/Rovaniemi) | [Lapland](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Lapland) |
| [**Northern Ostrobothnia**](/wiki/Northern_Ostrobothnia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Oulu](/wiki/Oulu) | [Northern Finland](/wiki/Northern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Kainuu**](/wiki/Kainuu) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Kajaani](/wiki/Kajaani) | [Northern Finland](/wiki/Northern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**North Karelia**](/wiki/North_Karelia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Joensuu](/wiki/Joensuu) | [Eastern Finland](/wiki/Eastern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
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| [**Central Ostrobothnia**](/wiki/Central_Ostrobothnia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Kokkola](/wiki/Kokkola) | [Western and Central Finland](/wiki/Western_and_Central_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Ostrobothnia**](/wiki/Ostrobothnia_(region)) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Vaasa](/wiki/Vaasa) | [Western and Central Finland](/wiki/Western_and_Central_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Pirkanmaa**](/wiki/Pirkanmaa) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Tampere](/wiki/Tampere) | [Western and Central Finland](/wiki/Western_and_Central_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Central Finland**](/wiki/Central_Finland) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Jyväskylä](/wiki/Jyväskylä) | [Western and Central Finland](/wiki/Western_and_Central_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Satakunta**](/wiki/Satakunta_(region)) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Pori](/wiki/Pori) | [South-Western Finland](/wiki/South-Western_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
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| [**South Karelia**](/wiki/South_Karelia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Lappeenranta](/wiki/Lappeenranta) | [Southern Finland](/wiki/Southern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Päijänne Tavastia**](/wiki/Päijänne_Tavastia) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Lahti](/wiki/Lahti) | [Southern Finland](/wiki/Southern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Tavastia Proper**](/wiki/Tavastia_Proper) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Hämeenlinna](/wiki/Hämeenlinna) | [Southern Finland](/wiki/Southern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Uusimaa**](/wiki/Uusimaa_(region)) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki) | [Southern Finland](/wiki/Southern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Kymenlaakso**](/wiki/Kymenlaakso) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Kouvola](/wiki/Kouvola) | [Southern Finland](/wiki/Southern_Finland_Regional_State_Administrative_Agency) |
| [**Åland Islands**](/wiki/Åland_Islands)[**[49]**](#cite_note-49) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) | [Åland](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Åland) |

|} The region of [Eastern Uusimaa](/wiki/Eastern_Uusimaa) was consolidated with Uusimaa on 1 January 2011.[[50]](#cite_note-50)

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The fundamental administrative divisions of the country are the [municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Finland), 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. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), there are 317 municipalities,[[3]](#cite_note-3) and most have fewer than 6,000 residents.

In addition to municipalities, two intermediate levels are defined. Municipalities co-operate in seventy [sub-regions](/wiki/Sub-regions_of_Finland) and nineteen [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Finland). These are governed by the member municipalities and have only limited powers. The autonomous province of Åland has a permanent democratically elected regional council. In the [Kainuu](/wiki/Kainuu) region, there is a pilot project underway with regional elections. Sami people have a semi-autonomous [Sami Domicile Area](/wiki/Sami_Domicile_Area) 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 [Template:#time:d F Y](/wiki/Template:#time:d_F_Y). The [capital region](/wiki/Capital_region)[Template:Spaced ndashcomprising](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki), [Vantaa](/wiki/Vantaa), [Espoo](/wiki/Espoo) and [Kauniainen](/wiki/Kauniainen)[Template:Spaced ndashforms](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) a continuous [conurbation](/wiki/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](/wiki/Helsinki_Metropolitan_Area_Council).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **City** | **Population**[**Template:Infobox Finnish Municipality/population count**](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Finnish_Municipality/population_count) | **Land area**[**Template:Infobox Finnish Municipality/total area**](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Finnish_Municipality/total_area) | **Density** | **Regional Map** | **Population Map** |
| [**Helsinki**](/wiki/Helsinki) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [thumb|center|](/wiki/File:Suomi.kunnat.2009.template.thick.svg)[Municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Finland) (thin borders) and [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Finland) (thick borders) of Finland (2009). | [thumb|center|upright=1.5|Population map of Finland](/wiki/File:Population_map_of_Finland.svg) |
| [**Espoo**](/wiki/Espoo) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Tampere**](/wiki/Tampere) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Vantaa**](/wiki/Vantaa) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Oulu**](/wiki/Oulu) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Turku**](/wiki/Turku) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Jyväskylä**](/wiki/Jyväskylä) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Kuopio**](/wiki/Kuopio) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Lahti**](/wiki/Lahti) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Kouvola**](/wiki/Kouvola) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Pori**](/wiki/Pori) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Joensuu**](/wiki/Joensuu) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Lappeenranta**](/wiki/Lappeenranta) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Hämeenlinna**](/wiki/Hämeenlinna) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |
| [**Vaasa**](/wiki/Vaasa) | [**BROKEN**](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) | [BROKEN](/wiki/BROKEN) |

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

### Constitution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

The [Constitution of Finland](/wiki/Constitution_of_Finland) defines the political system. Finland is a [parliamentary democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy), and the [prime minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Finland) is the country's most powerful politician. The constitution in its current form came into force on 1 March 2000, and was amended on 1 March 2012. Citizens can run and vote in parliamentary, municipal, and presidential elections, and in [European Union elections](/wiki/Elections_in_the_European_Union).

### President[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) of Finland is [president of the Republic of Finland](/wiki/President_of_the_Republic_of_Finland) (in Finnish *Suomen tasavallan presidentti*, in Swedish *republiken Finlands president*). Finland has for most of its independence had a semipresidential system, but in last decades the powers of the President of Finland have been diminished. In constitution amendments, which came into effect in 1991 or 1992, 2000 and 2012, the President's position has become primarily ceremonary. However, the President still leads the nation's foreign politics together with the Council of state and is the chief-in-command of the Defence Forces.[[51]](#cite_note-51) The position still does entail some powers, including responsibility for [foreign policy](/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Finland) (excluding affairs related to the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union)) in cooperation with the [cabinet](/wiki/Finnish_Government), being [the head of the armed forces](/wiki/Commander-in-Chief), some decree 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 terms. The current president is [Sauli Niinistö](/wiki/Sauli_Niinistö); he took office on 1 March 2012. The former presidents were [K. J. Ståhlberg](/wiki/Kaarlo_Juho_Ståhlberg) (1919–1925), [L. K. Relander](/wiki/Lauri_Kristian_Relander) (1925–1931), [P. E. Svinhufvud](/wiki/Pehr_Evind_Svinhufvud) (1931–1937), [Kyösti Kallio](/wiki/Kyösti_Kallio) (1937–1940), [Risto Ryti](/wiki/Risto_Ryti) (1940–1944), [C. G. E. Mannerheim](/wiki/Carl_Gustaf_Emil_Mannerheim) (1944–1946), [J. K. Paasikivi](/wiki/Juho_Kusti_Paasikivi) (1946–1956), [Urho Kekkonen](/wiki/Urho_Kekkonen) (1956–1982), [Mauno Koivisto](/wiki/Mauno_Koivisto) (1982–1994), [Martti Ahtisaari](/wiki/Martti_Ahtisaari) (1994–2000), and [Tarja Halonen](/wiki/Tarja_Halonen) (2000–2012).

The current president was elected from the ranks of the [National Coalition Party](/wiki/National_Coalition_Party), first time since 1946. Until that the presidency was held by socialists or agrarian party.

### Parliament[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Eduskuntatalo_Helsinki.jpg) [Parliament of Finland's](/wiki/Parliament_of_Finland) main building.

The 200-member [unicameral](/wiki/Unicameralism) [Parliament of Finland](/wiki/Parliament_of_Finland) called [Eduskunta](/wiki/Eduskunta) exercises supreme legislative authority. 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](/wiki/Parliament_of_Finland#Committees). The parliament is elected for a term of four years using the proportional [D'Hondt method](/wiki/D'Hondt_method) within a number of multi-seat constituencies through open list multi-member districts. Various parliament committees listen to experts and prepare legislation. The [speaker](/wiki/Speaker_of_the_Parliament_of_Finland) is currently [Maria Lohela](/wiki/Maria_Lohela) ([Finns Party](/wiki/Finns_Party)).[[52]](#cite_note-52) Since [universal suffrage](/wiki/Universal_suffrage) was introduced in 1906, the parliament has been dominated by the [Centre Party](/wiki/Centre_Party_(Finland)) (former Agrarian Union), the [National Coalition Party](/wiki/National_Coalition_Party) (conservatives), and the [Social Democrats](/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Finland). 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](/wiki/Communist_Party_of_Finland) 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 [Liberal party](/wiki/Liberals_(Finland)) and its predecessors from 1906 to about 1980; and the rise of the [Green party](/wiki/Green_League) and its predecessor since 1983. In the 2011 elections, the [True Finns](/wiki/True_Finns) achieved exceptional success, increasing its representation from 5 to 39 seats, and thus surpassing the Centre Party.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The autonomous province of Åland, which forms a [federacy](/wiki/Federacy) with Finland, elects one member to the parliament, who traditionally joins the [parliamentary group](/wiki/Parliamentary_group) of the [Swedish People's Party of Finland](/wiki/Swedish_People's_Party_of_Finland). (The province also holds elections for its own permanent [regional council](/wiki/Parliament_of_Åland), and in the [2011 elections](/wiki/Åland_legislative_election,_2011), [Åland Centre](/wiki/Åland_Centre) was the largest party.)

[Template:Politics of Finland](/wiki/Template:Politics_of_Finland)

The Parliament can be dissolved by a recommendation of the Prime minister endorsed by the President. This procedure has never been used, although the parliament was dissolved several times under the pre-2000 constitution, when this action was the sole prerogative of the president.

After the [parliamentary elections on 19 April 2015](/wiki/Finnish_parliamentary_election,_2015), the seats were divided among eight parties as follows:[[54]](#cite_note-54)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Party** | **Seats** | **Net gain/loss** | **% of seats** | **% of votes** |
| [Centre Party](/wiki/Centre_Party_(Finland)) | 49 | +14 [Template:Increase](/wiki/Template:Increase) | 24.5 | 21.1 |
| [Finns Party](/wiki/Finns_Party) | 38 | −1 [Template:Decrease](/wiki/Template:Decrease) | 19.0 | 17.7 |
| [National Coalition Party](/wiki/National_Coalition_Party) | 37 | −7 [Template:Decrease](/wiki/Template:Decrease) | 18.5 | 18.2 |
| [Social Democratic Party](/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Finland) | 34 | −8 [Template:Decrease](/wiki/Template:Decrease) | 17.0 | 16.5 |
| [Green League](/wiki/Green_League) | 15 | +5 [Template:Increase](/wiki/Template:Increase) | 7.5 | 8.5 |
| [Left Alliance](/wiki/Left_Alliance_(Finland)) | 12 | −2 [Template:Decrease](/wiki/Template:Decrease) | 6.0 | 7.1 |
| [Swedish People's Party](/wiki/Swedish_People's_Party_of_Finland) | 9 | 0 [Template:Steady](/wiki/Template:Steady) | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| [Christian Democrats](/wiki/Christian_Democrats_(Finland)) | 5 | −1 [Template:Decrease](/wiki/Template:Decrease) | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| Others | 1a | 0 [Template:Steady](/wiki/Template:Steady) | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| [Template:Smaller](/wiki/Template:Smaller) | | | | |

### Cabinet[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

After parliamentary elections, the parties negotiate among themselves on forming a new cabinet (the [Finnish Government](/wiki/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.[[55]](#cite_note-55) 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](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Finland), and consists of him or her, of other ministers, and of the [Chancellor of Justice](/wiki/Chancellor_of_Justice#Finland). The current prime minister is [Juha Sipilä](/wiki/Juha_Sipilä) (Centre 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](/wiki/Minister_of_Finance_(Finland)), the incumbent Minister of Finance is [Alexander Stubb](/wiki/Alexander_Stubb).

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[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The judicial system of Finland is a [civil law](/wiki/Civil_law_(legal_system)) system divided between [courts](/wiki/Court) with regular civil and criminal jurisdiction and [administrative courts](/wiki/Administrative_court) with jurisdiction over litigation between individuals and the public administration. Finnish law is codified and based on [Swedish law](/wiki/Judiciary_of_Sweden) and in a wider sense, civil law or [Roman law](/wiki/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](/wiki/Judicial_system_of_Finland#Supreme_Court) (*korkein oikeus*, *högsta domstolen*). The administrative branch of justice consists of administrative courts (*hallinto-oikeus*, *förvaltningsdomstol*) and the [Supreme Administrative Court](/wiki/Judicial_system_of_Finland#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](/wiki/Judicial_system_of_Finland#High_Court_of_Impeachment) for criminal charges against certain high-ranking officeholders.

Around 92% of residents have confidence in Finland's security institutions.[[56]](#cite_note-56) The overall [crime rate of Finland](/wiki/Crime_in_Finland) is not high in the EU context. Some crime types are above average, notably the highest [homicide](/wiki/Homicide) rate in Western Europe.[[57]](#cite_note-57) A [day fine](/wiki/Day_fine) system is in effect and also applied to offenses such as [speeding](/wiki/Speeding).

Finland has successfully fought against government corruption, which was more common in the 1970s and 80s.[[58]](#cite_note-58)[Template:Verify source](/wiki/Template:Verify_source) For instance, economic reforms and EU membership introduced stricter requirements for open bidding and many public monopolies were abolished.[[58]](#cite_note-58) Today, Finland has a very low number of corruption charges; [Transparency International](/wiki/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.[[59]](#cite_note-59) According to [GRECO](/wiki/GRECO) in 2007, corruption should be taken into account in the Finnish system of election funds better.[[60]](#cite_note-60) [A scandal revolving around campaign finance of the 2007 parliamentary elections](/wiki/2007_campaign_finance_scandal_of_Finland) broke out in spring 2008. Nine Ministers of Government 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[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Nobel_Peace_Prize_2008_Martti_Ahtisaari.jpg)[Martti Ahtisaari](/wiki/Martti_Ahtisaari) receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008

According to the 2012 constitution, the president (currently [Sauli Niinistö](/wiki/Sauli_Niinistö)) leads foreign policy in cooperation with the government, except that the president has no role in EU affairs.[[61]](#cite_note-61) In 2008, president [Martti Ahtisaari](/wiki/Martti_Ahtisaari) was awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](/wiki/Nobel_Peace_Prize).[[62]](#cite_note-62) Finland was considered a cooperative model state, and Finland did not oppose proposals for a common EU defence policy.[[63]](#cite_note-63) This was reversed in the 2000s, when Tarja Halonen and [Erkki Tuomioja](/wiki/Erkki_Tuomioja) made Finland's official policy to resist other EU members' plans for common defence.[[63]](#cite_note-63)

### Social security[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

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.[[64]](#cite_note-64)

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Tracked_transport_vehicle_Sisu_NA_110.JPG)[Sisu Nasu](/wiki/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. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The Finnish Defence Forces consist of a [cadre](/wiki/En_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](/wiki/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.[[65]](#cite_note-65) 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.[[66]](#cite_note-66) 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](/wiki/Chief_of_Defence_(Finland)) (currently General [Jarmo Lindberg](/wiki/Jarmo_Lindberg)), who is directly subordinate to the president in matters related to military command. The branches of the military are the [army](/wiki/Finnish_Army), the [navy](/wiki/Finnish_Navy), and the [air force](/wiki/Finnish_Air_Force). The [border guard](/wiki/Finnish_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](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Treaty_Organization), the country has joined the [NATO Response Force](/wiki/NATO_Response_Force), the [EU Battlegroup](/wiki/EU_Battlegroup) [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed), the NATO [Partnership for Peace](/wiki/Partnership_for_Peace) and in signed a NATO [Memorandum of Understanding](/wiki/Memorandum_of_Understanding),[[67]](#cite_note-67) thus forming a practical coalition.[[6]](#cite_note-6) In 2015, the Finland-NATO ties were strengthened with a host nation support agreement allowing assistance from NATO troops in emergency situations.[[68]](#cite_note-68) Finland has been active participant in the Afghanistan and Kosovo.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[[70]](#cite_note-70) Recently Finland has been more eager to discuss about its current and planned roles in Syria, Iraq and war against ISIL.[[71]](#cite_note-71) On 21 December 2012 Finnish military officer [Atte Kaleva](/wiki/Atte_Kaleva) was reported to have been kidnapped and later released in Yemen for ransom. At first he was reported be a casual Arabic student, however only later it was published that his studies were about jihadists, terrorism, and that he was employed by the military.[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73) As response to French request for solidarity, Finnish defence minister commented in November that Finland could and is willing to offer intelligence support [[74]](#cite_note-74) In May 2015, Finnish Military sent nearly one million letters to all relevant males in the country, informing them about their roles in the war effort. It was globally speculated that Finland was preparing for war—however Finland claimed that this was a standard procedure, yet something never done before in Finnish history.[[75]](#cite_note-75) Mr Hypponen however said that this is not an isolated case, but bound to the European security dilemma.[[76]](#cite_note-76) The NATO Memorandum of Understanding signed earlier bestows an obligation e.g. to report on internal capabilities and the availability thereof to NATO.[[67]](#cite_note-67)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Angry_Birds_Land_Särkänniemi_11.jpg)[Angry Birds](/wiki/Angry_Birds), a mobile phone game developed in Finland, has become a commercial hit both domestically and internationally. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The economy of Finland has a per capita output equal to that of other European economies such as France, Germany, [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium), or the UK. The largest sector of the economy is services at 66%, followed by manufacturing and refining at 31%. [Primary production](/wiki/Primary_sector_of_the_economy) is 2.9%.[[77]](#cite_note-77) With respect to [foreign trade](/wiki/International_trade), the key economic sector is manufacturing. The largest industries in 2007[[78]](#cite_note-78) were [electronics](/wiki/Electronics) (22%); machinery, vehicles, and other engineered metal products (21.1%); forest industry (13%); and chemicals (11%). The gross domestic product peaked in 2008. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the country's economy is at 2006 level.[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80) Finland has significant timber, mineral ([iron](/wiki/Iron), [chromium](/wiki/Chromium), [copper](/wiki/Copper), [nickel](/wiki/Nickel), and [gold](/wiki/Gold)) and freshwater resources. [Forestry](/wiki/Forestry), paper factories, and the [agricultural sector](/wiki/Agriculture) (on which taxpayers spend around 3 billion euros annually) are politically sensitive to rural residents. The [Greater Helsinki](/wiki/Greater_Helsinki) area generates around a third of GDP. In a 2004 OECD comparison, high-technology manufacturing in Finland ranked second largest after Ireland. Knowledge-intensive services have also ranked the smallest and slow-growth sectors[Template:Spaced ndashespecially](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) agriculture and low-technology manufacturing[Template:Spaced ndashsecond](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) largest after Ireland.[[81]](#cite_note-81) Overall short-term outlook was good and GDP growth has been above many EU peers.

[thumb|left|Finland GDP growth from 2000 till 2013](/wiki/File:Image_illustrates_GDP_growth_of_Finland.png)

Finland is highly integrated into the global economy, and international trade is a third of GDP. The European Union makes up 60% of the total trade. The largest trade flows are with Germany, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands), and China. Trade policy is managed by the European Union, where Finland has traditionally been among the free trade supporters, except for agriculture. Finland is the only Nordic country to have joined the Eurozone.

Finland's climate and soils make growing crops a particular challenge. The country lies between latitudes 60°N and 70°N, and has severe winters and relatively short growing seasons that are sometimes interrupted by frosts. 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 had originally been either forest or swamp, and the soil had usually required treatment with lime and years of cultivation to neutralize excess acid and to develop fertility. Irrigation was generally not necessary, but drainage systems were often needed to remove excess water. Finland's agriculture was efficient and productive—at least when compared with farming in other European countries.[[64]](#cite_note-64) [thumb|Finland is part of the](/wiki/File:Euro_accession.svg) [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone), the [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area) and the EU single market.

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.[[64]](#cite_note-64) 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 25.1 euros in 2004.[[82]](#cite_note-82) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), average purchasing power-adjusted income levels are similar to those of Italy, Sweden, Germany, and France.[[83]](#cite_note-83) 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.[[84]](#cite_note-84) The female employment rate is high. Gender segregation between male-dominated professions and female-dominated professions is higher than in the US.[[85]](#cite_note-85) The proportion of part-time workers was one of the lowest in OECD in 1999.[[85]](#cite_note-85)In 2013, the 10 largest private sector employers in Finland were [Itella](/wiki/Itella), [Nokia](/wiki/Nokia), [OP-Pohjola](/wiki/OP_Financial_Group), [ISS](/wiki/ISS_A/S), [VR](/wiki/VR_Group), [Kesko](/wiki/Kesko), [UPM-Kymmene](/wiki/UPM-Kymmene), [YIT](/wiki/YIT), [Metso](/wiki/Metso), and [Nordea](/wiki/Nordea).[[86]](#cite_note-86) The unemployment rate was 9.4% in 2015, having risen from 8.7% in 2014.[[87]](#cite_note-87) 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.[[88]](#cite_note-88) As of today, nearly one million people are living with minimal wages or unemployed not enough to cover their costs of living.[[89]](#cite_note-89) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 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 [Template:Conv](/wiki/Template:Conv) per person. The average residential property without land costs 1,187 euro per sq metre and residential land 8.6 euro per sq metre. 74% of households had a car. There are 2.5 million cars and 0.4 million other vehicles.[[90]](#cite_note-90) Around 92% have a mobile phone and 83.5% (2009) [Internet connection at home](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_number_of_Internet_users). The average total household consumption was 20,000 euro, out of which housing consisted of about 5,500 euro, transport about 3,000 euro, food and beverages excluding alcoholic beverages at around 2,500 euro, and recreation and culture at around 2,000 euro.[[91]](#cite_note-91) 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.[[92]](#cite_note-92)

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[thumb|The two existing units of the](/wiki/File:EPR_OLK3_TVO_fotomont_2_Vogelperspektive.jpg) [Olkiluoto Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/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.[[93]](#cite_note-93) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Anyone can enter the free and largely privately owned financial and physical [Nordic energy markets](/wiki/Nordic_energy_market) traded in [NASDAQ OMX Commodities Europe](/wiki/NASDAQ_OMX_Commodities_Europe) and [Nord Pool Spot](/wiki/Nord_Pool_Spot) exchanges, which have provided competitive prices compared with other EU countries. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Finland has roughly the lowest industrial electricity prices in the [EU-15](/wiki/EU-15) (equal to France).[[94]](#cite_note-94) In 2006, the energy market was around 90 terawatt hours and the peak demand around 15 [gigawatts](/wiki/Gigawatt) in winter. This means that the [energy consumption per capita](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_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.[[95]](#cite_note-95)[[96]](#cite_note-96) Finland's [hydrocarbon](/wiki/Hydrocarbon) resources are limited to [peat](/wiki/Peat) and wood. About 10–15% of the electricity is produced by [hydropower](/wiki/Hydropower),[[97]](#cite_note-97) which is low compared with more mountainous Sweden or Norway. In 2008, [renewable energy](/wiki/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.[[98]](#cite_note-98) [thumb|Supply and total consumption of electricity in Finland](/wiki/File:Statistics_of_the_energy_supply_in_Finland.jpg)[[99]](#cite_note-99)

Finland has four privately owned nuclear reactors producing 18% of the country's energy[[100]](#cite_note-100) and one research reactor at the [Otaniemi](/wiki/Otaniemi) campus. The fifth [AREVA](/wiki/AREVA)-[Siemens](/wiki/Siemens_AG)-built reactor—the world's largest at 1600 [MWe](/wiki/MWe) and a focal point of Europe's nuclear industry—has faced many delays and is currently scheduled to be operational by 2018–2020, a decade after the original planned opening.[[101]](#cite_note-101) A varying amount (5–17%) of electricity has been imported from Russia (at around 3 gigawatt power line capacity), Sweden and Norway.

Energy companies are about to increase nuclear power production, as in July 2010 the Finnish parliament granted permits for additional two new reactors.

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Kontio_towing.jpg)[Icebreakers](/wiki/Icebreaker) enable shipping even during severe winters. [thumb|The state-owned](/wiki/File:I1949_Bf_Böle,_Sr2_3220.jpg) [VR Group](/wiki/VR_Group) operates a railway network serving all major cities.

The extensive road system is utilized by most internal cargo and passenger traffic. The annual state operated road network expenditure of around 1 billion euro is paid with vehicle and fuel taxes which amount to around 1.5 billion euro and 1 billion euro.

The main international passenger gateway is [Helsinki Airport](/wiki/Helsinki_Airport) with about 16 million passengers in 2014. [Oulu Airport](/wiki/Oulu_Airport) is the second largest, whilst another [25 airports](/wiki/List_of_airports_in_Finland) have scheduled passenger services.[[102]](#cite_note-102) The Helsinki Airport-based [Finnair](/wiki/Finnair), [Blue1](/wiki/Blue1), and [Nordic Regional Airlines](/wiki/Nordic_Regional_Airlines) sell air services both domestically and internationally. Helsinki has an optimal location for [great circle](/wiki/Great_circle) (i.e. the shortest and most efficient) routes between Western Europe and the Far East.

Despite low population density, the Government spends annually around 350 million euro in maintaining [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of railway tracks. Rail transport is handled by state owned [VR Group](/wiki/VR_Group), which has 5% passenger market share (out of which 80% are urban trips in Greater Helsinki) and 25% cargo market share.[[103]](#cite_note-103) Since 12 December 2010, [Karelian Trains](/wiki/Karelian_Trains), a joint venture between [Russian Railways](/wiki/Russian_Railways) and [VR (Finnish Railways)](/wiki/VR_Group), has been running [Alstom Pendolino](/wiki/Karelian_Trains_Class_Sm6) operated high-speed services between Saint Petersburg's [Finlyandsky](/wiki/Finlyandsky_Rail_Terminal) and Helsinki's [Central](/wiki/Helsinki_Central_railway_station) railway stations. These services are branded as "Allegro" trains. The journey from Helsinki to [Saint Petersburg](/wiki/Saint_Petersburg) takes only three and a half hours.

The majority of international cargo utilizes ports. Port logistics prices are low. [Vuosaari Harbour](/wiki/Vuosaari_Harbour) in Helsinki is the largest container port after completion in 2008 and others include [Kotka](/wiki/Kotka), [Hamina](/wiki/Hamina), [Hanko](/wiki/Hanko), [Pori](/wiki/Pori), [Rauma](/wiki/Rauma,_Finland), and [Oulu](/wiki/Oulu). There is passenger traffic from Helsinki and Turku, which have ferry connections to [Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn), [Mariehamn](/wiki/Mariehamn), and [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm). The Helsinki-Tallinn route, one of the busiest passenger sea routes in the world, has also been served by a helicopter line.

### Industry[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|Former headquarters of electronics corporation](/wiki/File:NokiaHeadquartersByPollo.JPG) [Nokia](/wiki/Nokia) in [Espoo](/wiki/Espoo). Finland was rapidly industrialized after the Second World War, achieving GDP per capita levels equal to that of Japan or the UK in the beginning of the 1970s. Initially, most 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 car industry, engineered products such as motors and electronics, and production of metals (steel, copper and chromium). The world's biggest [cruise ships](/wiki/Cruise_ship) are built in Finnish shipyards. The "forest industry" (*metsäteollisuus*) includes forestry, timber, pulp and paper, and is a logical development based on Finland's extensive forest resources (77% of the area is covered by forest, most of it in renewable use). In the [pulp and paper industry](/wiki/Pulp_and_paper_industry), many of the largest companies are based in Finland ([Ahlstrom](/wiki/Ahlstrom), [M-real](/wiki/M-real), and [UPM](/wiki/UPM_(company))). However, the Finnish economy has diversified, with expansion into fields such as electronics (e.g. [Nokia](/wiki/Nokia)), metrology ([Vaisala](/wiki/Vaisala)), transport fuels ([Neste](/wiki/Neste)), chemicals ([Kemira](/wiki/Kemira)), engineering consulting ([Pöyry](/wiki/Pöyry)), and information technology (e.g. [Rovio](/wiki/Rovio_Mobile), known for [Angry Birds](/wiki/Angry_Birds)), 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 reducing in importance; agriculture is only a minor part. Despite this, production for export is still more prominent than in Western Europe, thus making Finland more vulnerable to global economic trends.

In an [Economist Intelligence Unit](/wiki/Economist_Intelligence_Unit) report released in September 2011, Finland clinched the second place after the United States on Benchmarking IT Industry Competitiveness 2011 which scored on 6 key indicators: overall business environment, technology infrastructure, human capital, legal framework, public support for industry development, and research and development landscape.[[104]](#cite_note-104)

### Public policy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Finnish politicians have often emulated other Nordics and the Nordic model.[[105]](#cite_note-105) Nordics have been free-trading and relatively welcoming to skilled migrants for over a century, though in Finland [immigration](/wiki/Immigration) is relatively new. The level of protection in commodity trade has been low, except for agricultural products.[[105]](#cite_note-105) Finland has top levels of economic freedom in many areas.[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify) Finland is ranked 16th in the 2008 global [Index of Economic Freedom](/wiki/Index_of_Economic_Freedom) and 9th in Europe.[[106]](#cite_note-106) While the manufacturing sector is thriving, the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) points out that the service sector would benefit substantially from policy improvements.[[107]](#cite_note-107) The 2007 [IMD](/wiki/International_Institute_for_Management_Development) World Competitiveness Yearbook ranked Finland 17th most [competitive](/wiki/Competitiveness).[[108]](#cite_note-108) The [World Economic Forum](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum) 2008 index ranked Finland the 6th most competitive.[[109]](#cite_note-109) 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](/wiki/EU-15) countries have less regulated [product markets](/wiki/Product_market) (UK, Ireland, Denmark and Sweden) and only one has less regulated [financial markets](/wiki/Financial_market) (Denmark). Nordic countries were pioneers in liberalizing energy, postal, and other markets in Europe.[[105]](#cite_note-105) The legal system is clear and business bureaucracy less than most countries.[[106]](#cite_note-106) Property rights are well protected and contractual agreements are strictly honoured.[[106]](#cite_note-106) Finland is rated the least corrupted country in the world in the [Corruption Perceptions Index](/wiki/Corruption_Perceptions_Index)[[110]](#cite_note-110) and 13th in the [Ease of Doing Business Index](/wiki/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).[[111]](#cite_note-111) Finnish law [forces all workers to obey the national contracts](/wiki/Universal_validity_of_collective_labour_agreements) that are drafted every few years for each profession and seniority level. 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](/wiki/AKAVA)—80%). A lack of a national agreement in an industry is considered an exception.[[81]](#cite_note-81)[[105]](#cite_note-105)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|*Silja Symphony*, one of the](/wiki/File:Silja_Symphony_Kustaanmiekka.jpg) [Baltic sea cruiseferries](/wiki/Baltic_sea_cruiseferries), passing Kustaanmiekka strait in Helsinki.

In 2005, Finnish tourism grossed over €6.7 billion with a 5% increase from the previous year. Much of the sudden growth can be attributed to the [globalisation](/wiki/Globalisation) and modernisation of the country as well as a rise in positive publicity and awareness. There are many attractions in Finland which attracted over 8 million visitors in 2013.

The Finnish landscape is covered with thick [pine](/wiki/Pine) forests and rolling hills, and complemented with a labyrinth of lakes and [inlets](/wiki/Inlet). Much of Finland is pristine and virgin as it contains 37 national parks from the Southern shores of the [Gulf of Finland](/wiki/Gulf_of_Finland) to the high [fells](/wiki/Fell) of Lapland. Finland also has urbanised regions with many cultural events and activities.

[Commercial cruises](/wiki/Baltic_Sea_cruiseferries) between major coastal and port cities in the Baltic region, including Helsinki, [Turku](/wiki/Turku), [Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn), [Stockholm](/wiki/Stockholm), and [Travemünde](/wiki/Travemünde), play a significant role in the local tourism industry. Finland is locally regarded as the home of Saint Nicholas or [Santa Claus](/wiki/Santa_Claus), living in the northern Lapland region. Above the [Arctic Circle](/wiki/Arctic_Circle), in midwinter, there is a [polar night](/wiki/Polar_night), a period when the sun does not rise for days or weeks, or even months, and correspondingly, [midnight sun](/wiki/Midnight_sun) in the summer, with no sunset even at midnight. Lapland is so far north that the [Aurora Borealis](/wiki/Aurora_Borealis), [fluorescence](/wiki/Fluorescence) in the high atmosphere due to [solar wind](/wiki/Solar_wind), is seen regularly in the fall, winter, and spring.

Outdoor activities range from [Nordic skiing](/wiki/Nordic_skiing), golf, fishing, [yachting](/wiki/Yachting), lake cruises, hiking, and [kayaking](/wiki/Kayaking), among many others. At Finland's northernmost point, in the heart of summer, the Sun does not completely set for 73 consecutive days. Wildlife is abundant in Finland. [Bird-watching](/wiki/Bird-watching) is popular for those fond of avifauna, however hunting is also popular. [Elk](/wiki/Moose) and [hare](/wiki/Hare) are common game in Finland. [Olavinlinna](/wiki/Olavinlinna) in [Savonlinna](/wiki/Savonlinna) hosts the annual [Savonlinna Opera Festival](/wiki/Savonlinna_Opera_Festival).

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|Population of Finland by age group and sex in 2013](/wiki/File:Population_pyramid_finland_2013.png)[[112]](#cite_note-112)

The population of Finland is currently about 5,500,000.[[2]](#cite_note-2) 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](/wiki/Iceland), and the lowest population density in the EU. Finland's population has always been concentrated in the southern parts of the country, a phenomenon that became even more pronounced during 20th-century urbanisation. The largest cities in Finland are those of the [Greater Helsinki](/wiki/Greater_Helsinki) [metropolitan area](/wiki/Metropolitan_area)—[Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki), [Espoo](/wiki/Espoo), and [Vantaa](/wiki/Vantaa). Other cities with population over 100,000 are [Tampere](/wiki/Tampere), [Turku](/wiki/Turku), [Oulu](/wiki/Oulu), [Jyväskylä](/wiki/Jyväskylä), [Kuopio](/wiki/Kuopio), and [Lahti](/wiki/Lahti).

As of 2014, there were 322,700 people with a foreign background living in Finland (5.9% of the population), most of whom are from Russia, Estonia, Somalia, Iraq and Yugoslavia.[[113]](#cite_note-113) The children of foreigners are not automatically given Finnish citizenship. If they are born in Finland and cannot get citizenship of any other country, they become citizens.[[114]](#cite_note-114)

### Largest cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Largest cities of Finland](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Finland)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Finnish and [Swedish](/wiki/Swedish_language) are the official languages of Finland. Finnish predominates nationwide while Swedish is spoken in some coastal areas in the west and south and in the autonomous region of [Åland](/wiki/Åland). The [Sami language](/wiki/Sami_languages) is an official language in northern Lapland. [Finnish Romani](/wiki/Kalo_Finnish_Romani_language) and [Finnish Sign Language](/wiki/Finnish_Sign_Language) are also recognized in the constitution. The [Nordic](/wiki/Nordic_countries) languages and [Karelian](/wiki/Karelian_language) are also specially treated in some contexts.

The [native language](/wiki/Native_language) of 90% of the population is Finnish,[[115]](#cite_note-115) which is part of the Finnic subgroup of the [Uralic languages](/wiki/Uralic_languages). The language is one of only four official [EU languages](/wiki/Languages_of_the_European_Union) not of [Indo-European](/wiki/Indo-European_languages) origin. Finnish is closely related to [Karelian](/wiki/Karelian_language) and [Estonian](/wiki/Estonian_language) and more remotely to the Sami languages and [Hungarian](/wiki/Hungarian_language).

Swedish is the native language of 5% of the population ([Swedish-speaking Finns](/wiki/Swedish-speaking_Finns)),[[115]](#cite_note-115) To the north, in Lapland, are the Sami people, numbering around 7,000[[116]](#cite_note-116) and recognized as an [indigenous people](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples). About a quarter of them speak a [Sami language](/wiki/Sami_languages) as their mother tongue.[[117]](#cite_note-117) The Sami languages that are spoken in Finland are [Northern Sami](/wiki/Northern_Sami), [Inari Sami](/wiki/Inari_Sami_language), and [Skolt Sami](/wiki/Skolt_Sami).[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) [Finnish Romani](/wiki/Finnish_Kalo_language) is spoken by some 5,000–6,000 people. There are two sign languages: [Finnish Sign Language](/wiki/Finnish_Sign_Language), spoken natively by 4,000–5,000 people,[[118]](#cite_note-118) and [Finland-Swedish Sign Language](/wiki/Finland-Swedish_Sign_Language), spoken natively by about 150 people. Tatar language is spoken by a [Finnish Tatar](/wiki/Finnish_Tatars) minority of about 800 people who moved to Finland mainly during the Russian rule from the 1870s until the 1920s.[[119]](#cite_note-119) The rights of minority groups (in particular [Sami](/wiki/Sami_people#Finland), [Swedish speakers](/wiki/Swedish-speaking_population_of_Finland), and [Romani people](/wiki/Finnish_Kale)) are protected by the constitution.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Immigrant languages include Russian (1.1%), Estonian (0.6%), Somali, English, and Arabic.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) The largest groups of population of foreign languages in 2012 were Russian, Estonian and Somali [[121]](#cite_note-121) The best-known foreign languages are English (63%), [German](/wiki/German_language) (18%), and French (3%) [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed). English is studied by most pupils as a compulsory subject from the third or fifth grade (at 9 or 11 years of age respectively) in the comprehensive school (in some schools other languages can be chosen instead). German, French, and Russian can be studied as second foreign languages from the eighth grade (at 14 years of age; some schools may offer other options). A third foreign language may be studied in upper secondary school or university (at 16 years of age or over).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[Norwegian](/wiki/Norwegian_language) and, to some extent, [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language) are [mutually intelligible](/wiki/Mutual_intelligibility) with Swedish and are thus understood by a significant minority, although studied only slightly in school.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Religion in Finland**[**[122]**](#cite_note-122) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **year** | **Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland** | **Finnish Orthodox Church** | **Other** | **No religious affiliation** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1950 | 95.0% | 1.7% | 0.5% | 2.8% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1980 | 90.3% | 1.1% | 0.7% | 7.8% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1990 | 87.8% | 1.1% | 0.9% | 10.2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2000 | 85.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 12.7% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2010 | 78.3% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 19.2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2014 | 73.9% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 23.5% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2015 | 73.0% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 24.3% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Approximately four million (or 73.0%[[122]](#cite_note-122) at the end of 2015) Finns are members of the [Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland](/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_of_Finland). The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is one of the largest Lutheran churches in the world, although its share of the country's population has declined by roughly one percent annually in recent years.[[122]](#cite_note-122) The second largest group, accounting for 24.3% of the population[[122]](#cite_note-122) in 2015, has no religious affiliation. The non-religious group is growing quickly from just below 13% in the year 2000. A small minority belong to the [Finnish Orthodox Church](/wiki/Finnish_Orthodox_Church) (1.1%). Other [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) denominations and the Roman Catholic Church in Finland are significantly smaller, as are the [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim), [Jewish](/wiki/Jewish), and other non-Christian communities (totaling 1.6%). The main Lutheran and Orthodox churches are [national churches](/wiki/National_church) of Finland with special roles such as in state ceremonies and schools.[[123]](#cite_note-123) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Petäjävesi_Old_Church_from_south.JPG)[Petäjävesi Old Church](/wiki/Petäjävesi_Old_Church) is an old wooden Lutheran church and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

In 2014, 72.4% of Finnish children were [baptized](/wiki/Baptism)[[124]](#cite_note-124) and 82.3% were [confirmed](/wiki/Confirmation_(Lutheran_Church)) in 2012 at the age of 15,[[125]](#cite_note-125) 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.[[126]](#cite_note-126) The average number of church visits per year by church members is approximately two.[[127]](#cite_note-127) According to a 2010 [Eurobarometer](/wiki/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".[[128]](#cite_note-128) According to ISSP survey data (2008), 8% consider themselves "highly religious", and 31% "moderately religious".[[129]](#cite_note-129) In the same survey, 28% reported themselves as "agnostic" and 29% as "non-religious".

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

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[Life expectancy](/wiki/Life_expectancy) has increased from 71 years for men and 79 years for women in 1990 to 78 years for men and 84 years for women in 2012.[[130]](#cite_note-130) The under-five mortality rate has decreased from 51 per 1,000 live births in 1950 to 3 per 1,000 live births in 2012 ranking Finland’s rate among the lowest in the world.[[131]](#cite_note-131)[[132]](#cite_note-132) The [fertility rate](/wiki/Fertility_rate) in 2014 stood at 1,71 children born/per woman and has been below [the replacement rate](/wiki/Sub-replacement_fertility) of 2.1 since 1969.[[133]](#cite_note-133) 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.[[133]](#cite_note-133) 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.[[134]](#cite_note-134) There are 307 residents for each doctor.[[135]](#cite_note-135) About 19% of health care is funded directly by households and 77% by taxation.

A recent study by The Lancet medical journal found that Finland has the lowest stillbirth rate out of 193 countries, including UK, France, and New Zealand.[[136]](#cite_note-136)[[137]](#cite_note-137) In April 2012, Finland was ranked 2nd in Gross National Happiness in a report published by The Earth Institute.[[138]](#cite_note-138)

### Education and science[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[thumb|Auditorium in](/wiki/File:Helsinki_University_of_Technology_auditorium.jpg) [Aalto University's](/wiki/Aalto_University) main building, designed by [Alvar Aalto](/wiki/Alvar_Aalto). [thumb|Pupils at the school of Torvinen in Sodankylä, Finland, in the 1920s](/wiki/File:Torvisen_kansakoulu_1924-26.jpg) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

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.[[139]](#cite_note-139) 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 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](/wiki/Gymnasium_(school)) (upper secondary schools). Trade schools offer a [vocational education](/wiki/Vocational_education): approximately 40% of an age group choose this path after the lower secondary school.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Academically oriented gymnasiums have higher entrance requirements and specifically prepare for [Abitur](/wiki/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](/wiki/Student_benefit). There are 20 universities and 30 polytechnics in the country. [Helsinki University](/wiki/Helsinki_University) is ranked 75th in the Top University Ranking of 2010.[[141]](#cite_note-141) The [World Economic Forum](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum) ranks Finland's tertiary education No. 1 in the world.[[142]](#cite_note-142) 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%).[[143]](#cite_note-143) The proportion of foreign students is 3% of all tertiary enrollments, one of the lowest in OECD, while in advanced programs it is 7.3%, still below OECD average 16.5%.[[144]](#cite_note-144) 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.[[145]](#cite_note-145) Finland had 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](/wiki/Folk_high_school) are a distinctly Nordic institution. Originating in Denmark in the nineteenth 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.[[64]](#cite_note-64) Finland is highly productive in scientific research. In 2005, Finland had the fourth most scientific publications per capita of the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) countries.[[146]](#cite_note-146) In 2007, 1,801 patents were filed in Finland.[[147]](#cite_note-147) In addition, 38 percent of Finland population has a university or [college degree](/wiki/College_degree), which is among the highest percentages in the [world](/wiki/World).[[148]](#cite_note-148)[[149]](#cite_note-149) 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.[[150]](#cite_note-150) 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.[[151]](#cite_note-151) English language is important in Finnish education. There are a number of degree programs that are taught in English, what attracts thousands of degree and exchange students every year.

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Mikael_Agricola_by_Albert_Edelfelt.jpg)[Mikael Agricola](/wiki/Mikael_Agricola), a Lutheran Protestant reformer and the father of the Finnish written language. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Written Finnish could be said to have existed since [Mikael Agricola](/wiki/Mikael_Agricola) translated the [New Testament](/wiki/New_Testament) into Finnish during the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation), but few notable works of literature were written until the nineteenth century and the beginning of a Finnish national [Romantic Movement](/wiki/Romanticism). This prompted [Elias Lönnrot](/wiki/Elias_Lönnrot) to collect Finnish and Karelian folk poetry and arrange and publish them as the [*Kalevala*](/wiki/Kalevala), the Finnish [national epic](/wiki/National_epic). The era saw a rise of poets and novelists who wrote in Finnish, notably [Aleksis Kivi](/wiki/Aleksis_Kivi) and [Eino Leino](/wiki/Eino_Leino). Many writers of the national awakening wrote in Swedish, such as the national poet [Johan Ludvig Runeberg](/wiki/Johan_Ludvig_Runeberg) and [Zachris Topelius](/wiki/Zachris_Topelius).

After Finland became independent, there was a rise of [modernist writers](/wiki/Modernist_literature), most famously the Finnish-speaking [Mika Waltari](/wiki/Mika_Waltari) and Swedish-speaking [Edith Södergran](/wiki/Edith_Södergran). [Frans Eemil Sillanpää](/wiki/Frans_Eemil_Sillanpää) was awarded the [Nobel Prize in Literature](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Literature) in 1939. The [Second World War](/wiki/Second_World_War) prompted a return to more national interests in comparison to a more international line of thought, characterized by [Väinö Linna](/wiki/Väinö_Linna). Besides Kalevala and Waltari, the Swedish-speaking [Tove Jansson](/wiki/Tove_Jansson) is the most translated Finnish writer. Popular modern writers include [Arto Paasilinna](/wiki/Arto_Paasilinna), [Ilkka Remes](/wiki/Ilkka_Remes), [Kari Hotakainen](/wiki/Kari_Hotakainen), [Sofi Oksanen](/wiki/Sofi_Oksanen), and [Jari Tervo](/wiki/Jari_Tervo), while the best novel is annually awarded the prestigious [Finlandia Prize](/wiki/Finlandia_Prize). [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Sammon_puolustus.jpg)[Akseli Gallen-Kallela](/wiki/Akseli_Gallen-Kallela), [*The Defense of the Sampo*](/wiki/The_Defense_of_the_Sampo), 1896, [Turku Art Museum](/wiki/Turku_Art_Museum).

### Visual arts, design, and architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) 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](/wiki/Akseli_Gallen-Kallela), started painting in a naturalist style, but moved to national romanticism. Finland's best-known sculptor of the twentieth century was [Wäinö Aaltonen](/wiki/Wäinö_Aaltonen), remembered for his monumental [busts](/wiki/Bust_(sculpture)) and sculptures. Finns have made major contributions to [handicrafts](/wiki/Handicraft) and [industrial design](/wiki/Industrial_design): among the internationally renowned figures are [Timo Sarpaneva](/wiki/Timo_Sarpaneva), [Tapio Wirkkala](/wiki/Tapio_Wirkkala) and [Ilmari Tapiovaara](/wiki/Ilmari_Tapiovaara). Finnish architecture is famous around the world, and has contributed significantly to several styles internationally, such as [Jugendstil](/wiki/Jugendstil) (or [Art Nouveau](/wiki/Art_Nouveau)), [Nordic Classicism](/wiki/Nordic_Classicism) and [Functionalism](/wiki/Functionalism_(architecture)). Among the top twentieth-century Finnish architects to gain international recognition are [Eliel Saarinen](/wiki/Eliel_Saarinen) and his son [Eero Saarinen](/wiki/Eero_Saarinen). Architect [Alvar Aalto](/wiki/Alvar_Aalto) is regarded as among the most important twentieth-century designers in the world;[[152]](#cite_note-152) he helped bring [functionalist architecture](/wiki/Functionalism_(architecture)) to Finland, but soon was a pioneer in its development towards an organic style.[[153]](#cite_note-153) Aalto is also famous for his work in furniture, lamps, textiles and [glassware](/wiki/Glassware), which were usually incorporated into his buildings.

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[thumb|upright||The Finnish composer](/wiki/File:Jean_Sibelius,_1913.jpg) [Jean Sibelius](/wiki/Jean_Sibelius) (1865–1957), a significant figure in the history of [classical music](/wiki/European_classical_music). [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

#### Classical[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

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

The people of northern Finland, Sweden, and Norway, [the Sami](/wiki/Sami_people), are known primarily for highly spiritual songs called [Joik](/wiki/Yoik). The same word sometimes refers to [lavlu](/wiki/Lavlu) or vuelie songs, though this is technically incorrect.

The first Finnish opera was written by the German-born composer [Fredrik Pacius](/wiki/Fredrik_Pacius) in 1852. Pacius also wrote the music to the poem [*Maamme/Vårt land* (Our Country)](/wiki/Maamme), Finland's [national anthem](/wiki/National_anthem). In the 1890s Finnish nationalism based on the *Kalevala* spread, and [Jean Sibelius](/wiki/Jean_Sibelius) became famous for his vocal symphony [*Kullervo*](/wiki/Kullervo_(Sibelius)). 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*](/wiki/Finlandia_(symphonic_poem)), 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.

Today, Finland has a very lively classical music scene and many of Finland's important [composers](/wiki/List_of_Finnish_composers) are still alive, such as [Magnus Lindberg](/wiki/Magnus_Lindberg), [Kaija Saariaho](/wiki/Kaija_Saariaho), [Kalevi Aho](/wiki/Kalevi_Aho), [Aulis Sallinen](/wiki/Aulis_Sallinen), and [Einojuhani Rautavaara](/wiki/Einojuhani_Rautavaara). The composers are accompanied by a large number of great conductors such as [Esa-Pekka Salonen](/wiki/Esa-Pekka_Salonen), [Osmo Vänskä](/wiki/Osmo_Vänskä), [Jukka-Pekka Saraste](/wiki/Jukka-Pekka_Saraste), and [Leif Segerstam](/wiki/Leif_Segerstam). Some of the internationally acclaimed Finnish classical musicians are [Karita Mattila](/wiki/Karita_Mattila), [Soile Isokoski](/wiki/Soile_Isokoski), [Pekka Kuusisto](/wiki/Pekka_Kuusisto), [Olli Mustonen](/wiki/Olli_Mustonen), and [Linda Lampenius](/wiki/Linda_Brava).

#### Modern[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[thumb|right|upright|](/wiki/File:Apocalyptica1.jpg)[Perttu Kivilaakso](/wiki/Perttu_Kivilaakso) of [Apocalyptica](/wiki/Apocalyptica). *Iskelmä* (coined directly from the German word [*Schlager*](/wiki/Schlager), meaning "hit") is a traditional Finnish word for a light popular song. Finnish popular music also includes various kinds of [dance music](/wiki/Dance_music); [tango](/wiki/Tango_music), a style of [Argentine music](/wiki/Music_of_Argentina), is also popular. The light music in Swedish-speaking areas has more influences from Sweden. Modern Finnish popular music includes a number of prominent rock bands, [jazz](/wiki/Jazz) musicians, [hip hop](/wiki/Hip_hop) performers, dance music acts, etc.

During the early 1960s, the first significant wave of Finnish rock groups emerged, playing [instrumental rock](/wiki/Instrumental_rock) inspired by groups such as [The Shadows](/wiki/The_Shadows). Around 1964, [Beatlemania](/wiki/Beatlemania) arrived in Finland, resulting in further development of the local rock scene. During the late 1960s and 1970s, Finnish rock musicians increasingly wrote their own music instead of translating international hits into Finnish. During the decade, some [progressive rock](/wiki/Progressive_rock) groups such as [Tasavallan Presidentti](/wiki/Tasavallan_Presidentti) and [Wigwam](/wiki/Wigwam_(progressive_rock)) gained respect abroad but failed to make a commercial breakthrough outside Finland. This was also the fate of the [rock and roll](/wiki/Rock_and_roll) group [Hurriganes](/wiki/Hurriganes). The Finnish punk scene produced some internationally acknowledged names including [Terveet Kädet](/wiki/Terveet_Kädet) in the 1980s. [Hanoi Rocks](/wiki/Hanoi_Rocks) was a pioneering 1980s [glam rock](/wiki/Glam_rock) act that inspired the American [hard rock](/wiki/Hard_rock) group [Guns N' Roses](/wiki/Guns_N'_Roses), among others.[[154]](#cite_note-154) Many Finnish metal bands have gained international recognition. [HIM](/wiki/HIM_(Finnish_band)) and [Nightwish](/wiki/Nightwish) are some of Finland's most internationally known bands. HIM's 2005 album *Dark Light* [went gold](/wiki/Music_recording_sales_certification) in the United States. [Apocalyptica](/wiki/Apocalyptica) are an internationally famous Finnish group who are most renowned for mixing strings-led classical music with classic heavy metal. Other well-known metal bands are [Amorphis](/wiki/Amorphis), [Children of Bodom](/wiki/Children_of_Bodom), [Impaled Nazarene](/wiki/Impaled_Nazarene), [Korpiklaani](/wiki/Korpiklaani), [Sentenced](/wiki/Sentenced), [Sonata Arctica](/wiki/Sonata_Arctica), [Stratovarius](/wiki/Stratovarius), [Turisas](/wiki/Turisas), [Finntroll](/wiki/Finntroll), [Ensiferum](/wiki/Ensiferum), [Insomnium](/wiki/Insomnium), [Moonsorrow](/wiki/Moonsorrow), and [Waltari](/wiki/Waltari).

After Finnish hard rock/heavy metal band [Lordi](/wiki/Lordi) won the [2006 Eurovision Song Contest](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_2006), Finland hosted the competition [in 2007](/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_2007).

### Cinema and television[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

In the film industry, notable directors include [Aki Kaurismäki](/wiki/Aki_Kaurismäki), [Mauritz Stiller](/wiki/Mauritz_Stiller), [Spede Pasanen](/wiki/Spede_Pasanen), and Hollywood film director and producer [Renny Harlin](/wiki/Renny_Harlin). Around twelve feature films are made each year.[[155]](#cite_note-155) Finland's most internationally successful TV shows are the backpacking travel documentary series [*Madventures*](/wiki/Madventures) and the reality TV show [*The Dudesons*](/wiki/The_Dudesons), about four childhood friends who perform stunts and play pranks on each other (in similar vein to the American TV show [*Jackass*](/wiki/Jackass_(TV_series))).

### Media and communications[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Linus_Torvalds.jpeg)[Linus Torvalds](/wiki/Linus_Torvalds), the Finnish [software engineer](/wiki/Software_engineering) best known for creating the popular [open-source](/wiki/Open_source) [kernel](/wiki/Kernel_(operating_system)) [Linux](/wiki/Linux). [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Thanks to its emphasis on transparency and equal rights, Finland's press has been rated the freest in the world.[[156]](#cite_note-156) Today, there are around 200 newspapers, 320 popular magazines, 2,100 professional magazines, 67 commercial radio stations, three [digital radio](/wiki/Digital_radio) channels and one nationwide and five national [public service radio channels](/wiki/Public_broadcasting).

Each year, around 12,000 book titles are published and 12 million records are sold.[[155]](#cite_note-155) [Sanoma](/wiki/Sanoma) publishes the newspaper [*Helsingin Sanomat*](/wiki/Helsingin_Sanomat) (its circulation of 412,000[[157]](#cite_note-157) making it the largest), the [tabloid](/wiki/Tabloid_(newspaper_format)) [*Ilta-Sanomat*](/wiki/Ilta-Sanomat), the commerce-oriented [*Taloussanomat*](/wiki/Taloussanomat) and the television channel [Nelonen](/wiki/Nelonen). The other major publisher [Alma Media](/wiki/Alma_Media) publishes over thirty magazines, including the newspaper [*Aamulehti*](/wiki/Aamulehti), tabloid [*Iltalehti*](/wiki/Iltalehti) and commerce-oriented [*Kauppalehti*](/wiki/Kauppalehti). Worldwide, Finns, along with other Nordic peoples and the Japanese, spend the most time reading newspapers.[[158]](#cite_note-158) 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](/wiki/Digital_television), both terrestrially and on cable. The commercial television channel [MTV3](/wiki/MTV3) and commercial radio channel [Radio Nova](/wiki/Radio_Nova_(Finland)) are owned by Nordic Broadcasting ([Bonnier](/wiki/Bonnier_Group) and Proventus Industrier).

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 1st overall in the 2014 NRI ranking, unchanged from the year before.[[159]](#cite_note-159) This is shown in its penetration throughout the country's population. Around 79% of the population use the Internet.[[160]](#cite_note-160) Finland had around 1.52 million broadband Internet connections by the end of June 2007 or around 287 per 1,000 inhabitants.[[161]](#cite_note-161) All Finnish schools and public libraries have Internet connections and computers and most residents have a mobile phone. [Value-added services](/wiki/Value-added_service) are rare.[[162]](#cite_note-162) In October 2009, Finland's Ministry of Transport and Communications committed to ensuring that every person in Finland would be able to access the Internet at a minimum speed of one [megabit-per-second](/wiki/Data_rate_units#Decimal_multiples_of_bits) beginning July 2010.[[163]](#cite_note-163)

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=47)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Karjalanpiirakka-20060227.jpg)[Karelian pasty](/wiki/Karjalanpiirakat) (*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 cuisine is notable for generally combining traditional country fare and [*haute cuisine*](/wiki/Haute_cuisine) with contemporary style cooking. [Fish](/wiki/Fish_(food)) 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](/wiki/Edible_mushroom). Refugees from Karelia contributed to foods in eastern Finland.

Finnish foods often use [wholemeal](/wiki/Wholemeal) products ([rye](/wiki/Rye), [barley](/wiki/Barley), [oats](/wiki/Oat)) and berries (such as [bilberries](/wiki/Bilberry), [lingonberries](/wiki/Lingonberry), [cloudberries](/wiki/Cloudberry), and [sea buckthorn](/wiki/Sea_buckthorn)). Milk and its derivatives like [buttermilk](/wiki/Buttermilk) are commonly used as food, drink, or in various recipes. Various [turnips](/wiki/Turnip) 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.

### Public holidays[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=48)]

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All official holidays in Finland are established by Acts of Parliament. Christian holidays include Christmas, New Year's Day, [Epiphany](/wiki/Epiphany_(Christian)), Easter, [Ascension Day](/wiki/Ascension_of_Jesus_Christ), [Pentecost](/wiki/Pentecost), [Midsummer Day](/wiki/Midsummer) (St. John's Day), and [All Saints' Day](/wiki/All_Saints'_Day), while secular holidays include May Day, [Independence Day](/wiki/Independence_Day_of_Finland), New Year's Day, and Midsummer. Christmas is the most extensively celebrated, and at least 24 to 26 December is taken as a holiday.

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=49)]

[thumb|Finland's](/wiki/File:Finlandbronzecelebration2010WinterOlympics.jpg) [men's national ice hockey team](/wiki/Finland_men's_national_ice_hockey_team) is [ranked](/wiki/IIHF_World_Ranking) as one of the best in the world. The team has won two world championship titles (in 1995 & 2011) and six Olympic medals. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Various sporting events are popular in Finland. [Pesäpallo](/wiki/Pesäpallo), resembling baseball, is the national sport of Finland, although the most popular sports in terms of spectators is [ice hockey](/wiki/Ice_hockey). [Ice Hockey World Championships 2016](/wiki/2016_IIHF_World_Championships) final Finland-Canada, 69% Finnish people watched that game on TV.[[164]](#cite_note-164) Other popular sports include [athletics](/wiki/Track_and_field), [cross-country skiing](/wiki/Cross-country_skiing), [ski jumping](/wiki/Ski_jumping), [football](/wiki/Association_football) and [basketball](/wiki/Basketball).[[165]](#cite_note-165) While ice hockey is the most popular sports when it comes to attendance at games, [association football](/wiki/Association_football) is the most played team sport in terms of the amount of players in the country and is also the most appreciated sports in Finland.[[166]](#cite_note-166)[[167]](#cite_note-167) In terms of medals and gold medals won per capita, Finland is the best performing country in Olympic history.[[168]](#cite_note-168) Finland first participated as a nation in its own right at the [Olympic Games](/wiki/Olympic_Games) in 1908, while still an autonomous [Grand Duchy](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland) within the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire). At the [1912 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1912_Summer_Olympics), great pride was taken in the three gold medals won by the original "[Flying Finn](/wiki/Flying_Finn)" [Hannes Kolehmainen](/wiki/Hannes_Kolehmainen).

Finland was one of the most successful countries at the Olympic Games before [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II). At the [1924 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1924_Summer_Olympics), Finland, a nation then of only 3.2 million people, came second in the medal count. In the 1920s and 1930s, Finnish long-distance runners dominated the Olympics, with [Paavo Nurmi](/wiki/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](/wiki/Javelin_throw). The event has brought Finland nine Olympic gold medals, five world championships, five European championships, and 24 world records.

In addition to Kolehmainen and Nurmi, some of Finland's most internationally well-known and successful sportspeople are long-distance runners [Ville Ritola](/wiki/Ville_Ritola) and [Lasse Virén](/wiki/Lasse_Virén); ski-jumpers [Matti Nykänen](/wiki/Matti_Nykänen) and [Janne Ahonen](/wiki/Janne_Ahonen); cross-country skiers [Veikko Hakulinen](/wiki/Veikko_Hakulinen), [Eero Mäntyranta](/wiki/Eero_Mäntyranta), [Marja-Liisa Kirvesniemi](/wiki/Marja-Liisa_Kirvesniemi) and [Mika Myllylä](/wiki/Mika_Myllylä); rower [Pertti Karppinen](/wiki/Pertti_Karppinen); gymnast [Heikki Savolainen](/wiki/Heikki_Savolainen_(gymnast)); professional skateboarder [Arto Saari](/wiki/Arto_Saari); ice hockey players [Kimmo Timonen](/wiki/Kimmo_Timonen), [Jari Kurri](/wiki/Jari_Kurri), [Teemu Selänne](/wiki/Teemu_Selänne), and [Saku Koivu](/wiki/Saku_Koivu); football players [Jari Litmanen](/wiki/Jari_Litmanen) and [Sami Hyypiä](/wiki/Sami_Hyypiä); basketball player [Hanno Möttölä](/wiki/Hanno_Möttölä); alpine skiers [Kalle Palander](/wiki/Kalle_Palander) and [Tanja Poutiainen](/wiki/Tanja_Poutiainen); Formula One world champions [Keke Rosberg](/wiki/Keke_Rosberg), [Mika Häkkinen](/wiki/Mika_Häkkinen) and [Kimi Räikkönen](/wiki/Kimi_Räikkönen); four-time World Rally champions [Juha Kankkunen](/wiki/Juha_Kankkunen) and [Tommi Mäkinen](/wiki/Tommi_Mäkinen); and 13-time World [Enduro](/wiki/Enduro) Champion [Juha Salminen](/wiki/Juha_Salminen), seven-time champion [Kari Tiainen](/wiki/Kari_Tiainen), and the five-time champions [Mika Ahola](/wiki/Mika_Ahola), biathlete [Kaisa Mäkäräinen](/wiki/Kaisa_Mäkäräinen) and [Samuli Aro](/wiki/Samuli_Aro). Finland is also one of the most successful nations in [bandy](/wiki/Bandy), being the only nation beside Russia and Sweden to win a [Bandy World Championship](/wiki/Bandy_World_Championship).

The [1952 Summer Olympics](/wiki/1952_Summer_Olympics) were held in Helsinki. Other notable sporting events held in Finland include the [1983](/wiki/1983_World_Championships_in_Athletics) and [2005 World Championships in Athletics](/wiki/2005_World_Championships_in_Athletics).

Finland also has a notable history in [figure skating](/wiki/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](/wiki/Floorball), [Nordic walking](/wiki/Nordic_walking), running, cycling, and skiing ([alpine skiing](/wiki/Alpine_skiing), [cross-country skiing](/wiki/Cross-country_skiing), and [ski jumping](/wiki/Ski_jumping)).

Especially since the [2014 Basketball World Cup](/wiki/2014_Basketball_World_Cup), [Finland's national basketball team](/wiki/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 airplanes.[[169]](#cite_note-169)

## International rankings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=50)]

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## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=51)]

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## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=52)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=53)]

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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=54)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=55)]

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* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Finland profile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17288360) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Finland](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=FI) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)
* [Population in Finland 1750–2010](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) (Statistics Finland)
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Government

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Maps

* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)

Travel

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

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