

FISHING

Angling and ice fishing are allowed in Helsinki and elsewhere in Finland without any licence fee; this applies equally to foreigners. The rapids of the River Vantaa are excepted.

Licensed bait fishing

Under 18's and over 65-year olds are exempted from paying for bait fishing in Helsinki.

Bait fishers between the ages of 18 and 65 living in Helsinki are obliged to pay 20 €/year (6 € for a week) for fishing rights. People of this age group living outside Helsinki have to buy a tourists' fishing licence. The licence costs 5 € for one day (00-24), 10 € a week and 34 € a year.

In addition, every bait fisher between the ages of 18 and 65 must have a state fishing-card, i.e., must pay a fishing maintenance fee. In 2005 this costed 6 € for a week and 20 € for the whole year. You can pay the fee at bank account Nordea 166030-101496. The permit is not transferable, and you must be able to produce the receipt for payment whenever you are fishing. The one-week permit remains valid for seven days, either from the date of payment, or from any date specified on the receipt.

Helsinkiites and non-Helsinkiites alike have another option: to purchase a bait fishing licence valid throughout the province of southern Finland. This costs 6 € for a week, or 27 € for a year. This licence, however, doesn't permit fishing along the rapids of the River Vantaa.

Fishing licences for the city of Helsinki are sold at the following offices and stores:

The city centre: · SCHRÖDER, 23 Unioninkatu Street, ☎ 656 656
· STOCKMANN, 52 Aleksanterinkatu Street, ☎ 1211
· SALAKALA, 31 Fredrikinkatu Street, ☎ 607 200
Itäkeskus: · TYRSKYTAIMEN Ltd., 10 F Kauppakartanonkatu, ☎ 323 3231 Kallio: · KALASTUS JA VAPAA-AIKA WIRGINIA, 40 Sturenkatu Street, ☎ 753 7272 Töölö: · HELSINGIN KALASTUSRETKI, 90 Mannerheimintie Street, ☎ 494 045
· HELSINKI CITY, SPORTS DEPARTMENT, 1E Paavo Nurmen kuja Drive, ☎ 3108 7759 mon-fri 9am-4pm.
Vuosaari: · Vuosaaren Pyörähuolto 1 A Lokitie street ☎ 321 5074
Puotinharju: · INTERSPORT MEGASTORE PUHOS, 2 Kastelholmantie Road, ☎ 343 6210 Viikki: · HELSINKI CITY, SPORTS

DEPARTMENT, Meri-info, 1 Viikintie street ☎ 310 87777.

- Haltiala farm kiosk, 15 May - 15 September
- Kaunissaari, 15 May - 15 September
- Lähteelä (Porkkala), 15 May - 15 September
- Rastila camping site, June - September, 24 hrs
- Kuningaskalastaja café (Vanhankaupunki kiosk), ☎ 728 1251.
May - August 10am-10pm, other times 10am-4pm.

When you buy a fishing licence for Helsinki, they'll give you a small map showing fishing areas within the city, as well as a list of special regulations. For further information call the fishing supervisor for Helsinki, ☎ 3108 7824, 050 511 8091.

Fishing guides in Helsinki:

Mr Pekka Haltia ☎ 0400 216795, Mr Seppo Hikipää
☎ 0400 640163, Mr Onni Valtonen ☎ 0400 211134

GETTING AROUND HELSINKI

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

It's easy getting around Helsinki on the buses or trams or the metro. Most of the routes mentioned in this guide operate every 5-20 minutes. You can reach nearly all the sites described here without having to transfer.

You can buy a single ticket from the bus driver or in certain train carriages, but if you're using the metro you'll have to buy your ticket in advance at the station. The normal price for a single is 2 €, and it's valid for one hour on any route within city limits. The trams are a little cheaper, 1,80 €. Children between 7-16 generally travel at half price, and there's no charge for very small children.

There are also tickets for one day (00-24) 5,40 €, 3 days 10,80 € and 5 days 16,20 €.

For information on schedules, call ☎ 0100 111.

Taxis are fast, and by international standards not overly expensive. For instance, a 10 km journey will cost 15-18 €, depending on the number of passengers and the time of day. If the yellow light on the roof is showing, you can often stop a taxi in transit, but you'll be charged extra for keeping a taxi waiting. The taxis in Helsinki are very reliable, and cases of malpractice are very rare. For taxis in Helsinki call ☎ 0100 0700 . In the neighbouring municipalities (Espoo, Vantaa etc.) call ☎ 0100 7300.

USING YOUR OWN CAR

Driving is comfortable, and the roads are in good condition. Driving conditions can be hazardous in winter, especially for those not used to them. Traffic jams are not a problem, but the city centre is best avoided in the morning and evening rush-hours. Parking is generally easy, except in the city centre. The roads are well signposted. There are several car rentals and all the international rent-a-car companies have offices in Helsinki.

BIKING

Biking is a great way of seeing Helsinki. The network of bicycle routes is well developed and comprehensive. On a bike you can experience nature at first hand, with all your senses. A biking map especially meant for tourists is available at the city tourist office, 19 Pohjoisesplanadi, ☎ 169 3757, or you can pick it up at bike rentals. From here you can get for free the biking-helmet also.

You can use a free city-bike for short trips against a deposit of 2 €. You're not supposed to stray outside the city centre. You could ride around Töölönlahti Bay, for instance. There are many locations in the central area where bike racks have been placed. Further information from the city tourist office ☎ 169 3895.

Bike rentals:

There are at least two bike rentals in the city area, both near Töölönlahti Bay.

- Greenbike, at 13 Mannerheimintie Road, is open daily 10am-6pm, and charges 10 € a day, 50 € a week, ☎ 8502 2850

- Suomen Latu north-west corner of Töölönlahti bay, 1 Mäntymäentie street, bike for a day 13,50 €, for 2 days 23,50 € and 43,50 € for a week. ☎ (09) 4776 9760. Mon-Fri 12am-6pm, Sat-Sun 12am-4pm.

- Rastila camping site also rents out bikes for 3 € an hour. Enquiries and reservations ☎ 321 6551.

BOATING

Two-thirds of the area of Helsinki is covered by sea, and includes more than 300 islands. The regular boat services provide both a reasonably cheap and pleasurable way of reaching the islands. See also the chapters on Suomalinn, Mustasaari, Korkeasaari, Pihlajasaari and Kaunissaari. Several sightseeing trips to Helsinki's archipelago start out from the main market square.

You can rent a pendel-boat for two at Töölönlahden venevuokraamo, at the south end of Töölönlahti Bay, by Finlandia Hall. A pendel-boat costs 9 € an hour, or 49 € a day. Information ☎ 041 530 9240

Rastila camping site hire out boats and canoes for 5 € an hour, 20 € for a day and canoes with the same price. For reservations call ☎ 321 6551.

Helsingin Melontakeskus Ltd (Helsinki Canoeing Centre) also lets out canoes and arranges canoe safaris by order. Sauna and snacks are available as well. The address is 8 Rajasaaren pengeri, ☎ 4362500
Further information www.helsinginmelontakeskus.fi

For canoe hiring also:

- Bear & Water, 11 Keilaranta, 02150 Espoo. By the sea-shore, 8 km from the city centre. Summer (1 June - 31 Aug.) daily 10am-8pm. Winter (1 Sept. - 30 May.) Mon-Wed 10am-5pm, thu-fri 10am-6pm, sat 10am-2pm. Buses from Helsinki: 102, 103, 106, 110T, 194, 195, ☎ 09- 455 6066, fax 525 94250. www.bearwater.fi

Chartered cruises in the archipelago are arranged for groups, e.g., with traditional wooden yachts. These are pretty pricey, but if the weather's good this is a wonderful way to explore the archipelago. These cruises often include a chance to take a sauna. For enquiries call ☎ 0600 02288. www.helsinkiexpert.fi and Inara Oy, ☎ 041-543 8616 www.inara.fi

SWIMMING

Helsinki has 22 supervised beaches, of which 19 are by the sea and three by the River Vantaa. The most popular beach is Hietaranta, not far from the centre (buses 55 and 55A). Suomenlinna has an especially pleasant and sheltered beach, flanked with rocks on either side, ideal for families with small children. So, too, is Kallahdenniemi with its wide shallow waters in a beautiful setting. You will find more beaches in Seurasaari and Uunisaari (off Kaivopuisto Park). Or take a trip to Pihlajasaari by boat from the south end of Merisatama; this island has excellent beaches.

In the main, the quality of the seawater is good. For most people, the swimming season is from June till August. In summery weather, the shallow waters, largely undisturbed by tidal action, warm up far faster than along Atlantic coasts, for instance. There are no charges for bathing, and in principle you can swim anywhere in Helsinki, except on a few beaches where prohibitions are signposted.

If you like swimming at other seasons, there are several swimming baths. Your hotel/digs will inform you which one is closest. Finland's oldest (opened in 1928) and, perhaps most elegant, fashioned on the model of Roman baths, lies along Yrjönkatu Street. You swim there in the nude, but there are separate turns for men and women. Enquiries: 21 Yrjönkatu Street, ☎ 3108 7400.

If you're really looking for An Experience, you can swim in open water hacked out of the ice. If you're that desperate (it is reputed to be extremely healthy), you'd best call one of the following numbers:

- Uunisaari ☎ 0400 437014, - Seurasaari ☎ 040 560 4606, Mon-Fri after 4pm - Humalluoto ☎ 436 2400 Mon-Fri 10.30am-3pm, - Rastila Camping Site ☎ (09)321 6551.

Helsinki naturally has plenty of saunas; there is very likely one in your hotel. These Finnish saunas are the real thing: a clean and wholesome contrast to many of the disreputable establishments called "saunas" in other European capitals. We mention the saunas in Keskuspuisto (see p. 92), Kuusijärvi (see p. 121) and Rastila (see p. 72). One of the best places to taste the real feeling of the Finnish sauna is Kotiharju public sauna. You can't

swim there, but the 'löyly' (fragrant steam, but almost untranslatable) from the wood-fired stove is incomparable. Address: 1 Harjutorinkatu, open Tue-Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 11am-7pm. Further information on Helsinki's saunas from the city tourist office ☎ 169 3895.

HIKING

Helsinkiites walk a lot. Walking, or hiking, is the most popular way for Finns to take exercise, and a pleasant passtime for many. And it's a good and safe way of getting around this not overly large city. Not only is it environmentally friendly; it's often the quickest way to go short distances. It also gives you a chance to see nature at close quarters. Helsinki has an excellent network of well marked paths, some of which are illuminated. On the whole, Helsinki is pretty safe, but it's as well to remember it has the hazards of any large city.

In forests, the going is often wet, especially in spring and autumn. It's best to wear rubber boots if you go trekking those times of year, or even in rainy weather in summer. Waterproof hiking boots are just as good. You won't have to worry about any of the large predators in the Helsinki area. In large forest areas (Nuuksio, Vuosaari) keep an eye out for our only poisonous snake, the viper. They usually slide away on approach. The bite is not usually dangerous for adults, but children and elderly people are more at risk. You can buy anti-venom packages at pharmacies. Take one with you, if you're planning to make longer excursions into the forest.

In winter time, you'll need warm boots. In deep snow take care your boots are high enough to keep the snow out.

SKIING

As well as being a very Finnish way of keeping fit, skiing offers perhaps the best means of exploring nature and venturing on the frozen sea. You gain easiest access onto the city's ski tracks from Paloheinä (take bus 66 to the terminus). You can hire all the equipment you need at a small cottage near the bus terminus. Make sure your skis are waxed properly - if they aren't, you may find skiing a profoundly discouraging experience! Coaching for cross-country skiing is available, too. Similar services are also offered at Kuusijärvi, as well from Suomen Latu's store by Töölönlahti Bay (see p. 14).

ACCOMMODATION

Helsinki offers a wide range of accommodation, from inexpensive hostels to luxury hotels. Staying somewhere a bit further out of town is quite a good option, as there are good connections to the centre. Many of the smaller hotels have far more character than the large international centres. If you wish, you can patronise hotels with the *green hotel award*, the first of which will be conferred in 2000. These hotels are managed in an environmentally friendly way.

There are hotels and hiking lodges right in the centre of the city. The lodge at the Olympia Stadium is very popular. During the summer, student lodgings are let out as summer hotels at favourable rates; here you can cook for yourself.

Rastila is the only camping site in Helsinki, and is located by the sea. It's an economic option with good connections to many sites of interest. From the railway station, you reach Rastila by metro in 17 minutes. Once there, you can rent a cottage for 43 €/2 persons (37 € in winter), or a site to pitch a tent for 8-14 €, depending on the number of persons. By the shore there is a sauna you can reserve for private use. In summer, there are very economically priced communal turns on Thursdays. You can use the sauna in winter, too (Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun) and round it off with an invigorating swim in open water carved out of the ice. The site also hires out bikes, canoes and rowing boats, as well as a variety of services. For further information and reservations ☎ 316 551. www.camping.fi

There are two other camping sites within the city area:

- Nuuksio hiking lodge, 2 Nuuksiontie Road, 02820 Espoo, ☎ 863 5927 and 050 569 0001
- Ankkalampi Caravan, 45 Ahoniityntie Road, 01769 Vantaa, ☎ 040-5117491 (For the caravans.)

SERVICES AND CONTACTS

HIKING EQUIPMENT

Suomen Latu (Central Association for Recreational Sports and Outdoor Activities) sports centre hires out all the equipment you'll need, for longer trips as well. They stock skis, sleeping bags and mattresses, rucksacks, cookers, bikes, walking boots and snow-shoes.

There's an exhibition displaying their equipment, and a coffee shop. The address is 1 Mäntytie Road, which lies between Töölönlahti Bay and the Olympic Stadium, best reached by tram 4, 7A, 7B, 8 and 10. The centre is open Mon-Fri 12am-6pm, Sat-Sun 12am-4pm. Enquiries ☎ 4776 9760.

Canoe hire and outdoor skating: Bear & Water, 11 Keilaranta street, 02150 Espoo, ☎ 09-455 6066. Guided tours. www.bearwater.fi

See also page 147. Outdoor skating information also: Call Suomen Latu ☎ (09) 17 01 01.

Bike rentals: see page 146.

Maps

All the main book shops sell various maps. Karttakeskus in 14 Vuorikatu street and Karttakeskus Map-Point at the corner of Aleksanterinkatu Street and Unioninkatu Street specialises in maps. You can buy maps for specific purposes at Helsingin kaupunginmittausosasto (Helsinki City Survey Division), 2 Viipurinkatu Street, ☎ 7312 4267 (weekdays 8.15am-4pm).

Hiking maps and brochures on nature sites in Helsinki are available free of charge at:

- Helsinki City Environment Centre, 24 Helsinginkatu Street, weekdays 8.15am-4pm. Enquiries ☎ 7312 2730 during office hours, e-mail: y mk@hel.fi. For further information: www.hel.fi/y mk

- Helsinki City Sports Department, 1C Paavo Nurmenkuja Drive, 00250 Helsinki, ☎ 3108 7700. Further information: www.hel.fi/liv

-Gardenia-Helsinki, 1 Viikintie, open Mon-Thu 10am-6pm, Fri closed, Sat-Sun 10am -5pm.

GUIDED TOURS

Gardenia-Helsinki arranges free guided nature tours. These are mainly given in Finnish or Swedish, but commentaries in other languages (English, German, Russian and French) can also be provided, either for individuals or groups. ☎ 09-3478 4050. Ask for the brochure on free tours and sites of natural interest. The centre's customer service office is 1 Viikintie. The same information also available at Environment Centre, 24 Helsinginkatu Street, weekdays 8.15am-4pm. Enquiries ☎ 7312 2730 during office hours.

Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau
19 Pohjoisesplanadi Street
P. O. Box 1, FIN-00099 CITY OF HELSINKI
☎ +358 (0)9 169 3757 Fax: +358 (0)9 169 3839
E-mail: tourist.info@hel.fi

Tourist Information is open: 2.5-30.9 Mon-Fri 9am-8pm, Sat and Sun 9am-6pm. Other times Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat-Sun 10am-4pm. www.hel.fi/tourism

The HelsinkiExpert travel agency operates at the same address as the City Tourist & Convention Office. You can buy tickets for sightseeing tours and day-trips, as well as train, bus, air and boat tickets to anywhere in Finland. They also take care of hotel reservations, car rentals, concerts, and entrance fees all over Finland. Package tours to Stockholm, Tallinn and St Petersburg are available, too, ☎ 0600 02288. HelsinkiExpert Guidance Centre, ☎ 2288 1222 arranges qualified tourist guides in 25 languages (other services ☎ 2288 1200, fax 22881599). e-mail: helsinkiexpert@helsinkiexpert.fi, www.helsinkiexpert.fi

Espoo Convention and Marketing, Keskustorni, 10th floor. Tapiola 02100 Espoo. ☎ 09 - 816 47 230, fax. 09 - 816 47 238. www.espootravel.com

City of Vantaa. City Hall / Asematie street, 01300 Vantaa ☎ (centre): +358 (0)9 83911. Tourist information. www.vantaa.fi/en/

KAIKUVA OY. Bird-spotting, quality nature tours e.g. in Nuuksio. 65 Kaislalammentie street, 02880 Veikkola. ☎ + 358 (0) 0208 311 611 fax 0207 311 611 www.kaikuva.fi

Talent Adventure, 6 Heikkiläntie Street, 00210 HELSINKI
☎ 0201 600 888 Fax 0201 600 701.
<http://www.talentadventure.com/index.html>

SEA & MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES OY (Paul Almén,
Susanna Järvi-Laturi) PL 62, 02701 Kauniainen.
Nuuksiontie 77, 02820 Espoo. ☎ 09 - 881 1561,
fax. 09 - 881 1571 www.sma.fi/

NATURE & ADVENTURE INCENTIVE, Nature & Adventure
Incentive is providing individualized travel itineraries and
services including such aspects as nature, culture, sports
and adventures. 7 Kaitamäenkuja Street, 02260 Espoo
☎ +358-500-205473 Fax 09-801 1523
www.ohjelmapalvelu.com

Kikkapakka OY. Nature tours, fishing e.g. c/o Mr Pasi
Tuunanen ☎ 040 820 9199 Fax (09) 877 56847.
pasi.tuunanen@kikkapakka.fi
www.kikkapakka.fi

RETKET J. IJAS (Mr Jouni Ijas), Kontionkuja 11 M, 01450
Vantaa. ☎ (09) 851 2968, 040-558 1350
E-mail: ijas.retket@kolumbus.fi

SARIUSA OY -fishing (Mr Tage Salmi), Finnoontie 54 N 38,
02280 Espoo. X (09) 803 8318, 0500-501 739, fax (09)
859 7769

STALL EQVUS - horse rides (Cajus Aminoff), Nuuksiontie
50, 02820 Espoo, ☎ 09 - 863 0685, fax. 09 - 863 0880.

Owl-spotting tours:

Tours are arranged in the Helsinki area between 20 April
and 10 June, where you can learn about how owls nest
from experts in this field. The charge for a tour on one owl
species is 40• per person. Enquiries and reservations:
Kimmo af Ursin, ☎ 239 1848, e-mail:
kimmo.af.ursin@kolumbus.fi

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Helsinki City Environment Centre. Hiking maps and information on the Helsinki area free of charge. 24 Helsinginkatu Street, 00530 Helsinki. Trams 3B, 3T and 8. For enquiries ☎ 7312 2730, open weekdays 8.15am-4pm, e-mail y mk@hel.fi Further information from www.hel.fi/y mk

Espoo Environmental Centre, Box 20, 6B Kirkkojärventie Road, 4th floor, 02771 Espoo; ☎ 806 4832, fax 806 4846, e-mail: y mparisto@espoo.fi. Nature House Villa Elfvik

Vantaa Environmental Centre. 5 Pakkalankuja Drive. On duty for environmental and health inspections Mon-Fri 8.30-11.30am, ☎ 8392 3110.

The Finnish Environmental Centre. Library and exhibition open to the public. Location: 6 Kesäkatu Street. Postal address: Box 140, 00251 Helsinki; ☎ 403 000. Open 9.00am-4.15pm. Customer service ☎ 4030 0100, fax: 4030 0190. Library ☎ 4030 0201, fax 4030 0290.

Forest and Park Service, customer service 'Tikankontti'. Information and brochures describing the department's products and services, advice for hikers, multimedia presentations on Finland's national parks, renting of overnight accommodation, Villi Pohjola ('Wild North') fishing, hunting and motor sledge licences on state land; maps, books on nature and hiking and posters on sale. Box 94 (Vernissakatu 4) 01301 Vantaa. ☎ 0205 64 120 www.luontoon.fi

The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council – YTV. Traffic information ☎ 0100-111. Waste disposal customer service ☎ 156 11. Bulletins on air quality www.ytv.fi

The Finnish Nature Association. Courses, camp meetings, periodical 'Suomen Luonto' -Nature Magazine. Central office address: 9 Kotkankatu Street, 00510 Helsinki, ☎ 228 081, fax 228 08200. www.sll.fi/

WWF - World Wildlife Foundation, Finnish section. Conservation projects in various parts of the country. Particular emphasis on forests and the Baltic Sea. 10 Lintulahdenkatu Street, 00500 Helsinki; t 7740 100, fax 7740 2139. For further information: www.wwf.fi

BirdLife Finland (BirdLife Suomi ry) Information on Finnish birds, their protection and bird watching. 29A Annankatu Street. Postal address: Box 1285, 00101 Helsinki; t (Mon-Fri 10am-3pm) (09) 4135 3300. Fax (09) 4135 3322 For further information: www.birdlife.fi

Dendrological Society. The Botanical Museum, Box 7, 00014 Helsinki University. Meetings, walks in parks and courses. www.dendrologianseura.fi/

Finnish Lepidopterologist Society, Box 17, 00014 Helsinki University. Lämmittäjänkatu 2 A, 00810 Helsinki t 09-477 2310, fax. 09-477 231. Office open Tue 1-9pm. www.perhostutkijainseura.fi/