

# LGBT HELSINKI – HEL YEAH! #visithelsinki

Helsinki – the former hometown of Tom of Finland – is mostly famous for its design, architecture and high technology. But what makes the city really special is its friendly and easily approachable local residents. We want all visitors to enjoy the slow rhythm of the urban Helsinki.

As well as the other Nordic Capitals, Helsinki is well known of its open and welcoming atmosphere. There is no need for gay village, as gay restaurants can be found all the way from the city center to the trendy districts like Kallio.

Helsinki is a member of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA). Since 2009 the Visit Helsinki has brought together local companies that are dedicated to providing high quality services for LGBT visitors.



# WHAT TO EXPERIENCE IN HELSINKI IN 2016

## FINNISH SAUNA EXPERIENCE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Finland's sauna culture is enjoying a renaissance in Helsinki, and in summer 2016 there will be lots of new ways to enjoy the Finnish sauna experience in the heart of the city. For example, check out the stunning new Löyly sauna complex, which will open in time for the summer by the sea in Hernesaari, or try instead one of the more traditional public saunas in town.

## NEW RECREATIONAL ISLAND OF VALLISAARI

A new island destination is waiting to be explored! The island of Vallisaari will be opened to the public in the beginning of summer 2016. The island is situated next to the Suomenlinna sea fortress. Formerly used by the Finnish Defence Forces, the island is known for its beautiful nature with diverse flora. A ferry connection from the Market Square will begin operating in May 2016.

## SWIM IN THE SEA AT THE NEW HELSINKI POOL

The new Helsinki Pool spa complex will open in spring 2016 right next to the Market Square, allowing visitors to enjoy swimming, saunas and a great seaside atmosphere all year round. Take a dip in the sea pool and relax at the café while enjoying the city centre atmosphere!

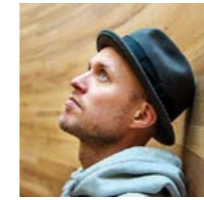
## NEW AND IMPROVED MUSEUMS

Helsinki is a treasure trove for museum-goers. Must-see museums in the city centre include the Helsinki Art Museum HAM, which opened in autumn 2015, and the Helsinki City Museum, which reopens in spring 2016. Ateneum and Kiasma also offer world-class art experiences. Why not reserve a day just for the museums!

## CYCLE AROUND HELSINKI WITH NEW CITY BIKES

Helsinki will get new city bikes for summer 2016, allowing visitors to explore the urban nature and maritime scenery on two wheels.

# EAT & ENJOY



TOP5 tips for enjoying Helsinki's Food Culture  
by Timo Santala  
Co-founder of Restaurant Day  
food carnival,  
travel, food & wine journalist and  
photographer

## 1. NATURAL FLAVOURS

The best flavours can be found in the forests of Finland. Berries, mushrooms and wild herbs are best when picked yourself, and a walk in the woods is both soothing and exhilarating at the same time. In wintertime, walking across the frozen sea and ice fishing are unforgettable experiences.

## 2. FINNISH CUISINE

The Michelin-awarded Chef & Sommelier, Ask and Olo are great places to discover Finnish cuisine. Less formal establishments include Juuri where you can enjoy exquisite Finnish tapas ("sapas"), Kolmon3n and Loung3 are great casual eats and for a great Kaurismäki atmosphere, try Sea Horse or Cella.

## 3. MARKET HALLS

The indoor market halls are great for enjoying the hustle and bustle and meeting the locals. I get my fish, meat and cheese from Hakaniemi Market Hall – Lentävä Lehmä ("Flying Cow") is the best cheese shop in town.

## 4. STREET FOOD

Helsinki is experiencing a real boom in street food. The most interesting event is Restaurant Day, when locals set up their own pop-up restaurants throughout the city. Check out also the food bicycles rolling around the city in the summertime.

## 5. LET'S EAT TOGETHER!

Food always tastes best when enjoyed with friends. Eating out is also a great way to meet the locals. In summertime you can get together at a picnic in the park, beside the sea or on an island. Helsinki also has many public grilling places – my favourites are at Pikku Leikosaari, the Abattoir and Sompasauna.

# EXPLORE THE URBAN NATURE

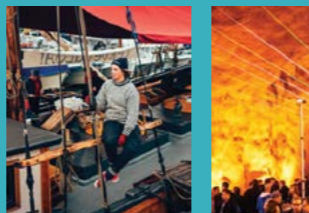
Helsinki is one of the greenest metropolises in the world: over one third of the city consists of parks and other green areas. There are also 42 nature reserves in the city. The city's many parks are enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. In wintertime they are used for skiing and in summertime for jogging and picnics.

## PARK LIFE!

**CENTRAL PARK (Keskuspuisto)** – A favourite among outdoor enthusiasts, this park stretches far to the north from the city centre and is the nearest place to experience the authentic Finnish forest in Helsinki.

**TÖÖLÖNLAHTI** – Take a walk through the park around the bay and past the Helsinki Music Centre, Finlandia Hall and the Finnish National Opera.

**KAIVOPUISTO** – Enjoy the fine views to the sea from atop the hill in Helsinki's most popular park.



# EVENTS ALL YEAR AROUND

## LUX HELSINKI LIGHT FESTIVAL 6–10 January 2016

The brilliant light installations during Lux Helsinki create a sense of magic amidst the winter darkness, creating an experience that engages all five senses. [luxhelsinki.fi](http://luxhelsinki.fi)

## TOM OF FINLAND EXHIBITION, KUNSTHALLE 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY – 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

Largest collection of Touko Laaksonen's art ever presented with archive material shedding light on the artist's personal life.

## RESTAURANT DAY four times a year

Check out how and what the locals are cooking! Restaurant Day is a food carnival when anyone can open a restaurant for a day. [restaurantday.org](http://restaurantday.org)

## CLEANING DAY two times a year

Following on from the concept of Restaurant Day, on Cleaning Day anyone can sell their own stuff anywhere they like, such as on the street and inside courtyards. [siivouspaiva.com](http://siivouspaiva.com)

## VALLISAARI ISLAND summer 2016

A new island destination is being opened to the public! Situated next to the Suomenlinna sea fortress, the island is known for its beautiful nature with diverse flora.

## TASTE OF HELSINKI, 16–19 June

Check out the local flavours at this food festival in Kansalaistori Park. [tasteofhelsinki.fi](http://tasteofhelsinki.fi)

## HELSENKI DAY, 12 June

Helsinki celebrates its birthday with events throughout the city. [helsinki.paiva.fi](http://helsinki.paiva.fi)

## HELSENKI PRIDE 27 June–3 July

A theme week of sexual and gender minorities welcoming everyone interested. Join the parade on 2 July! [helsinki.pride.fi](http://helsinki.pride.fi)

## EUROGAMES 2016 29 June–2 July

Europe's biggest LGBTIQ sporting event, open for everyone, is proudly hosted by Helsinki, Finland. [eurogameshelsinki.org](http://eurogameshelsinki.org)  
[2016.eurogames.info](http://2016.eurogames.info)

## TUSKA OPEN AIR METAL FESTIVAL, 1–3 July

Join in with all the metal heads! [tuska-festival.fi](http://tuska-festival.fi)

## FLOW FESTIVAL, 12–14 August

This globally recognised music and urban culture event attracts thousands each year to Suvilahti to listen to the most interesting performers from Finland and abroad. [flowfestival.com](http://flowfestival.com)

## HELSENKI FESTIVAL 19 August–4 September

The largest arts festival in Finland aims to make art accessible for all with special events throughout the city. [helsinginjuhlaviikot.fi](http://helsinginjuhlaviikot.fi)

## HELSENKI DESIGN WEEK 1–11 September

Be inspired by the latest design, fashion and architecture! [helsinki.designweek.com](http://helsinki.designweek.com)

## HERRING MARKET, 2–9 October

Helsinki's oldest traditional event packs the Market Square with fishermen and locals. Enjoy the delicacies, music and events!

## SLUSH, 28 November–2 December

One of the most exciting events for startups and tech talent to meet with top-tier international investors, executives and media. [slush.org](http://slush.org)

## NEW YEAR EVE CELEBRATION at Senate Square, 31 December

# WE ♥ SAUNA!

A sauna by the sea or lake is a not only a Finnish dream but also an essential part of the way of life here. For centuries the sauna has been a place for physical and spiritual cleansing, for getting bare in all senses of the word, and for entering the core of humanity. If you want to understand Finland and its people, getting familiar with the sauna is a good place to start.

## EXPERIENCE SAUNA IN HELSINKI!

**NEW LÖYLY DESIGN SAUNA**  
The Löyly design sauna will open in spring 2016 in Hernesaari, just a short distance from the city centre on the southern tip of the Helsinki peninsula. The modern complex will also house a restaurant serving the finest Finnish cuisine, which visitors can enjoy while admiring the stunning views from the large terrace that stretches out over the sea. Covering over 1800 square metres including terraces and with a profile height of 9 metres, the impressive building will also be a real design attraction as an example of contemporary wooden architecture. The Löyly sauna complex consists of three saunas: one smoke sauna and two wood-heated saunas for 600 people. There will be also terrace area including a café and a restaurant open all year round.

**KOTIHARJU SAUNA**  
This traditional wood-heated neighbourhood sauna in Helsinki has welcomed sauna lovers since 1928. Massages and other treatments are available.

# FOOD HELSINKI? HEL YEAH!

...and a bit more food?

Enjoy the city and its food delights with the help of the brochure entitled "Food Helsinki? HEL YEAH!" This pocket-sized brochure is packed with interesting information about Helsinki's food culture, making it easy for visitors to discover the capital's culinary secrets. Get your free copy from Tourist Information or download it at [visithelsinki.fi](http://visithelsinki.fi).

## THE ABATTOIR

Welcome to the old city abattoir, constructed in 1933. The Culinary and Urban Culture Centre Teurastamo ("Abattoir") is now a vibrant new home for restaurants, new creative businesses and urban culture events. [teurastamo.com](http://teurastamo.com)

## MARITIME DREAMS



Over 100 kilometres of shoreline and around 300 islands – the proximity of the sea can be sensed everywhere in Helsinki. Take a day cruise in the archipelago or visit one of the many islands open to the public. One of the "must-sees" just off the coast of Helsinki is Suomenlinna, one of the biggest sea fortresses in the world and a UNESCO world heritage site. Suomenlinna is not only an important part of the history of Finland but also a lively district of Helsinki that offers something for everyone: nature, culture and history.

## VISIT A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY!

Helsinki is a hub when it comes to international ferry, train and flight connections. There are a lot of choices for taking a ferry to the Estonian capital Tallinn and the Swedish capital Stockholm. St. Petersburg in Russia is within easy reach by train or ferry. More information: [helsinkiexpert.com](http://helsinkiexpert.com)  
[stpeterline.ru/en](http://stpeterline.ru/en)



#### DESIGN DISTRICT HELSINKI

The Design District Helsinki is a cluster of creative businesses that is full of fascinating design attractions and a Mecca for fans of Finnish Design. It comprises 25 streets and 200 spots on the map, including design and antique shops, art galleries and museums, restaurants, hotels, design studios and more.. [designdistrict.fi](http://designdistrict.fi)

#### DESIGN WALK

Discover the Design District on foot! The Helsinki Design Walk is a two-hour guided tour in English of the top design sights. Tours are organised on Fridays at 3pm throughout the year and last approximately 2.5 hours. [visithelsinki.fi](http://visithelsinki.fi)

#### TORI QUARTER

The "new old town" in the historical centre of Helsinki is being rejuvenated. Old offices are being converted into spaces for new design and fashion businesses. [torikorttelit.fi](http://torikorttelit.fi)

# DESIGN FOR LIFE

Minimalistic, functional and clean Finnish design has enjoyed an enviable international reputation for decades. Helsinki has always been the hot spot when it comes to Finnish design. Get inspired by the tips offered by Finnish design experts!



**EUROGAMES**  
**Helsinki**  
**2016**  
[www.eurogameshelsinki.org](http://www.eurogameshelsinki.org)



## SHOPPING

#### DESIGN:

Artek Helsinki and Artek 2nd Cycle  
[www.arte.fi](http://www.arte.fi)  
Iittala Store Esplanadi and Iittala Outlet  
[www.iittala.fi](http://www.iittala.fi)

TOM OF FINLAND HOME PRODUCTS:  
Finlayson Esplanadi  
[www.finlayson.fi](http://www.finlayson.fi)

#### FASHION:

Samuji Espo  
[www.samuji.com](http://www.samuji.com)  
Marimekko Flagship Store and Marimekko Outlet  
[www.marimekko.fi](http://www.marimekko.fi)



#### TOUR OPERATORS

Twist Travel  
[www.twisttravel.fi](http://www.twisttravel.fi)  
Kontiki Finland  
[www.kontiki.fi](http://www.kontiki.fi)  
LSS - Long Shore Services  
[www.lss.fi](http://www.lss.fi)  
TTE- The Travel Experience  
[www.travel-experience.fi](http://www.travel-experience.fi)

#### HOTELS

Klaus K  
[www.klaushotel.com](http://www.klaushotel.com)  
Hotel Haven  
[www.hotelhaven.fi](http://www.hotelhaven.fi)  
Hotel Indigo Helsinki - Boulevard  
[www.helsinki-boulevard.hotelindigo.com](http://www.helsinki-boulevard.hotelindigo.com)  
BW Premier Hotel Katajanokka  
[www.bwkatajanokka.fi](http://www.bwkatajanokka.fi)  
Scandic Paasi  
[www.scandichotels.fi](http://www.scandichotels.fi)  
Sokos Hotel Albert  
[www.sokoshotels.fi](http://www.sokoshotels.fi)  
Hotel Finn  
[www.hotellifinn.fi](http://www.hotellifinn.fi)

#### BARS AND CAFÉS

Café Cavalier  
[www.cafecavalier.com](http://www.cafecavalier.com)  
dtm  
[www.dtm.fi](http://www.dtm.fi)  
Fairytale  
[www.fairytale.fi](http://www.fairytale.fi)  
Hercules Gay Night Club  
[www.herculesgayclub.com](http://www.herculesgayclub.com)  
Hugo's Room  
[www.hugosroom.fi](http://www.hugosroom.fi)  
Kallio Bear Park Cafe  
[www.bearparkcafe.net](http://www.bearparkcafe.net)  
Mann's Street  
[www.mannsstreet.com](http://www.mannsstreet.com)  
TerassiBAR  
[www.terassibar.com](http://www.terassibar.com)