

Fresh in Finland in 2011

Tour and taste Helsinki with Food Sightseeing

Combining both flavours and architecture from East and West, Food Sightseeing offers a unique way to explore the capital of Finland. Take a guided tour on one of the city's iconic trams with stops at major sights or see them at your own pace following a specially tailored route, both eventually leading to restaurants offering true local tastes often missed by visitors. Famed Finnish design blends smoothly with Northern delicacies while exploring one of Europe's cosiest cities in this innovative fashion. A range of tours and menus are available for groups and individuals, starting summer 2011.

For more specific information, please log on to: www.foodsightseeing.fi

Accommodation in Helsinki: <http://www.helsinki.fi/en/index/matkailu/majoitus.html>

Cruise the Baltic for two Capitals of Culture

Separated by the Baltic Sea, brought together by art – Finland's Turku and Estonia's Tallinn are European Capitals of Culture in 2011. Why not see the offerings of both and to top it all, visit another two capitals, Helsinki and Stockholm, through a cruise on the Baltic? Viada offers a week-long itinerary for a healthy portion of Baltic life, arts and culture. All routes are cruised on TallinkSilja vessels.

For prices and itinerary, please see the .pdf attached.

www.viada.com, www.turku2011.fi/en, www.tallinn2011.ee/eng

Trek through REAL Lapland in northernmost Finland

Home to some of the biggest wilderness areas in Europe, true Lapland can only be discovered through hiking in the wild. Experience the midnight sun, visit the border between three states (Finland, Sweden, Norway), learn about local fishing traditions, see countless fells and take many deep breaths as the air is the cleanest in all of Europe.

Region Arctica's six-day guided tour in the wildernesses around Muonio and Kilpisjärvi will make sure you get the Nordic summer experience of a lifetime, and return home safe and sound to tell about it.

Please find more information on prices and itinerary at:

http://www.regionarctica.com/eng/travel_offers/summer_hiking_in_lapland/

New spa hotel at Lake Saimaa – revitalize at the shores of Finland's grand lake

A major new hotel development in Finland, Holiday Club Saimaa, is set to open its doors in October 2011. The complex features 221 rooms in three separate hotels: *Club Saimaa* is designed for families, *Castle* for couples and others seeking retreat from the daily grind, while *Wellness* is aimed for those after some pampering.

Several restaurants, an ice arena, a recreational spa, a wellness section with a range of saunas and, in the summer of 2012, an 18 hole golf course provide guests with relaxing activities on the grounds.

Situated in the town of Imatra in the Lake District, the hotel takes its name from Lake Saimaa, the biggest lake in Finland, at the shores of which it is located.

For more information, please see:

www.hcsaimaa.com (English site under construction, please contact hannele.eskelinen@hcoresorts.com for the time being)

In Russian: www.hcsaimaa.ru

Architects' illustration pics: <http://www2.emmi.fi/hcoresorts/?cart=109-lejebglegf&language=EN>

Get to Imatra: Fly to Helsinki. Train from Helsinki to Imatra takes three hours, ticket costs vary from 40 to 50 euro for adults. Several departures daily.

VR, national railway company: <http://www.vr.fi/en/index.html>

Spectacular ice sculptures and sunny ski days guarantee fun for all in Levi's spring

Icium, a wonderworld of ice, graces the foot of Finland's most popular ski resort Levi in the municipality of Kittilä, Lapland. Built by expert Chinese ice sculptors, Icium features many Finnish and international landmarks including the Helsinki Cathedral and the Great Wall of China, chiselled out of ice with astonishing precision. Icium is expected to stay intact until April.

April 16th-17th sees a new event in Levi. Leviloppet is a cross-country skiing competition that anyone can enter. Rather than a win, rosy cheeks are the desired outcome of this day out in Finland's sunny spring.

Levi, along with close-by resorts Ylläs, Pallas and Olos, offer a unique skiing experience for visitors until the start of May. Standing on top of a fell, watching untouched nature stretch as far as the eye can see before heading down the hill is something you can never get too much of.

For further information, please see:

www.icium.fi

www.leviloppet.fi (sorry, in Finnish only, please contact mikko.saarinen@levi.fi for more info)

Accommodation in Levi: <http://www.levi.fi/en/accommodation/central-booking/accommodation-providers.html>

General info on Levi: www.levi.fi/en/home.html

Ski resorts in Finland: http://www.ski.fi/ski_resorts

Helsinki-Kittilä flights:

http://www.finnair.fi/finnaircom/wps/portal/travel/en_FI?locale=en_FI&intro=true

<http://www.blue1.com/en/fi/>

<http://www.airbaltic.com/public/index.html>

New National Park to be founded on the west coast of Finland

Barely off the coast of the city of Rauma, a picturesque archipelago presents itself with numerous small islands scattered in the Bothnian Sea. During spring 2011, the Finnish government will officially grant the area the status of National Park.

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The Bothnian Sea National Park bustles with wildlife both under and above sea level, and provides beautiful terrain for hiking, cycling, canoeing and boating. The Kylmäpihlaja Lighthouse Island, Kuuskajaskari Fortress Island and Reksaari Nature Island all lay close to the city centre, yet in a world outside this one.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.visitrauma.fi/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=13&dir=DESC&order=name&Itemid=1&limit=5&limitstart=0 ("Raumanmeri" .pdf for tourist info in English)

Information on the Bothnian Sea, the Lighthouse & Fortress Islands etc:

http://www.selkameri.fi/en/bothnian_sea/bothnian_sea_-_information.html

Accommodation in Rauma: <http://www.rauma.fi/english/accomoda.htm>

General information on Rauma: <http://www.visitrauma.fi/?lang=english>

Get to Rauma: Fly to Helsinki. Several buses depart to Rauma daily from Helsinki Central Bus Station. Journey time is 4 hours. Tickets cost around 35-50 euro per adult.

Turku 2011 – European Capital of Culture top picks:

Eurocultured

The Eurocultured street culture event series will reach its conclusion with a grand festival on the banks of the River Aura in Turku. The free public event will introduce as many as 300 artists from over 10 different European countries.

The festival celebrates European street culture through live visual art, urban dance, live music, DJ sets, hip hop theatre and various action sports. Additionally, the festival features great food, local arts and crafts and free workshops. Led by top artists, the workshops will allow the participants to test their skills in a range of activities from graffiti art to break dance.

May 21st – 22nd. Free admission. <http://www.turku2011.fi/en/ohjelmahanke/568/info>

Photos from previous years' events: <http://www.eurocultured.com/>

Tom of Finland

Many will be surprised to learn that arguably the most internationally acclaimed Finnish artist comes from Kaarina, a neighbouring town to Turku. Now, Tom of Finland alias Touko Laaksonen (1920-1991) is returning home!

Famous for his blazingly homoerotic illustrations, the works of Tom of Finland have become stereotypical icons for masculine gay men all over the world. Held at Logomo, an old engineering works turned into a cultural space in central Turku, the exhibition is constructed with the help of Los Angeles based Tom of Finland Foundation.

Open every day until December 18th. Tickets cost 12 euro per adult. More information:

http://www.turku2011.fi/en/tom-finland_en

www.tomoffinlandfoundation.org/

http://www.turku2011.fi/en/blog/aboman/spending-day-tom_en

Get to Turku: Fly to Helsinki. Trains to Turku depart hourly from Helsinki Central Railway Station. Journey time is 2 hours. Tickets cost around 30 euro per adult.

Accommodation in Turku: <http://www.turku.fi/Public/Default.aspx?nodeid=8121&culture=en-US&contentlan=2>

Turku 2011: <http://www.turku2011.fi/en>

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