The Lutheran Cathedral
The city’s most photographed sight is often referred to as simply suurkirkko (literally “the great church”). Its white walls and green domes alone are stunning, but the elegantly undecorated inside is worth a visit as well. During the warmer months, its stone steps double as sunbathing spots or seating for outdoor concerts.

Unioninkatu 29, +358 9 234 06120

Helsinki University Library
After naming Helsinki the capital of Finland in 1812, Tsar Alexander I of Russia hired architect Carl Ludwig Engel to design much of the city centre, including the Lutheran Cathedral, the Senate, and the main University buildings. The neoclassical university library, complete with Corinthian columns and frescos, is considered to be one of the most gorgeous historical spaces in the city.

Unioninkatu 36, www.lib.helsinki.fi +358 9 191 23196

Uspenski Cathedral
Complete with 13 golden cupolas, the largest Russian Orthodox church in Western Europe is the city’s most immediately noticeable reminder of Russia’s century-old rule over Finland. Mysticism is almost tangible inside the cathedral, where the air smells of incense and the dome appears to continue all the way to the star-encrusted sky.

Kanavakatu 1, +358 9 634 267

Suomenlinna Fortress
Direct ferry access is available from Kauppatori to Suomenlinna, the largest sea fortress in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A visitor can freely meander through most of the old caves and rooms concealed within Suomenlinna’s walls. During warm weather the island is a perfect picnic destination.

www.suomenlinna.fi
For more information contact the Helsinki City Tourist Office, +358 9 169 3757

Temppeliaukio Church
From the outside, the “rock church” looks simply like a flat dome on top of a rock, but the interior reveals a spacious church supported by walls of granite and illuminated by natural sunlight that enters through large windows around the vault. Excellent acoustics make the space a popular concert venue.

Lutherinkatu 3, +358 9 234 05920

SEVEN MUST-SEES
Helsinki is a compact capital city, with most of its sights located around the city’s core. Traces of Russian and Swedish reign are visible, from a prominent Swedish-speaking minority to Russian-influenced architecture (Finland was a part of Sweden from 1323 to 1809 and an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia from 1809 to 1917).

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5 Lutherinkatu 3, +358 9 234 05920

TOP3 photo-ops

1 The Lutheran Cathedral Atop Hotel Torni, Ateljee Bar’s two balconies offer stunning views.

2 Uspenski Cathedral

3 Suomenlinna Fortress

Helsinki’s coffee shops merge history with modern, trendy café culture. Lattes and mochas in sleek glass cups are served on marble counters, in spaces that often date back a century or more. Finns are world leaders in coffee consumption, and like to use cafés as focal points for catching up with friends, conducting business, or even grabbing lunch or dinner (most Helsinki cafés serve soups, sandwiches, or substantial salads).

**Classics near the Esplanade**

**Café Strindberg**
This elegant café links the lively sidewalk of North Esplanade to the pristine interior of the Kämp Galleria, a shopping centre connected to the five-star Kämp Hotel. The café consistently draws sizeable crowds that fill both its indoor and outdoor tables to their capacity. In addition to a café and restaurant, Strindberg includes a stylish upstairs lounge for those who wish to relax on comfy sofas with a drink, a cigar, or a newspaper in hand.

Pohjoisesplanadi 33 (North Esplanade), [www.royalravintolat.com/strindberg](http://www.royalravintolat.com/strindberg), +358 9 681 2030

**Café Esplanad**
Vibrant Café Esplanad prides itself on its distinctively large cinnamon rolls (korvapuusti) and danishes. A fresh salad bar and a selection of sandwiches are also available. Especially during the warm months when Esplanad’s outdoor terrace is packed with locals and out-of-towners, it is a quintessential part of Helsinki’s landscape. Despite queues that often stretch to the door, the café is accommodating with its plentiful seating.

Pohjoisesplanadi 37 (North Esplanade), [www.esplanad.fi](http://www.esplanad.fi), +358 9 665 496

**Fazer Café, Kluuvikatu 3**
Since opening in 1891, Fazer has expanded from a café into a large international corporate group that caters food, bakery products and sweets. Most Finns consider their chocolate to be the world’s best. Throughout the years Fazer’s flagship café has attracted everyone from teenagers to celebrities. The Helsinki fixture is made unique by its dome ceiling, whose sneaky acoustics allow café goers to eavesdrop on each other’s conversations.

Kluuvikatu 3, [www.fazergroup.com](http://www.fazergroup.com), +358 9 207 296702

**Market Square café (Café Snellman)**
Café Snellman (Kahvipaikka Snellman), which recently marked its 112 anniversary, is located in one of the market square’s orange tents. Visibly demonstrating Finnish unpretentiousness, Snellman’s clusters of plastic tables have become famous for providing meeting spots for the country’s politicians and other public figures. Here you’ll find Finland’s finest meat pies (lihapiirakka) and delicious sugar-coated donuts.

Tel: +358 9 639 978

**Café Aalto**
Famed architect Alvar Aalto designed this impeccably stylish café, located on the second floor of one of Helsinki’s busiest bookstores. Those expecting a typical bookstore café are due for a surprise; although the café blends in with the surrounding book stacks almost seamlessly, it feels like an oasis in the middle of the city’s commercial centre with its warm lighting, friendly table service and comfy corners.

Keskuskatu 1, second floor of the Academic Bookstore, +358 9 121 4446

**Helsinki from Different Angles**

**Café Engel**
The cakes are impeccable in this cozy Senate Square café whose windows offer a majestic picture of the Lutheran Cathedral. Through the summer months Engel’s courtyard serves as a popular outdoor movie theatre, while bright, cheerful lighting distinguishes the space during dark winters.

Aleksanterinkatu 26, [www.cafeengel.fi](http://www.cafeengel.fi), +358 9 652 776

**Café Ekberg**
Helsinki’s oldest café holds a central role in the city’s character. Its white marble tables, gold-framed mirrors and accompanying table service reflect the style of old central European cafés. Many of Ekberg’s regulars have enjoyed their coffee and mouth-watering Napoleon-cake here for decades. Bread, pastries and other delicacies are available at the Ekberg bakery next door.

Bulevardi 9, [www.cafeekberg.fi](http://www.cafeekberg.fi), +358 9 681 18660

**Café Ursula**
Located in the southeast corner of Kaivopuisto park that opens to a scenic view of the Gulf, Ursula draws diverse crowds, particularly when the weather allows lounging on the outdoor terrace. In addition to a selection of sandwiches and pastries, the café features a lunch buffet and an à la carte menu for hungry guests.

Ehrenströmintie 3, [www.ursula.fi](http://www.ursula.fi), +358 9 652 817

**TOP3 pastries to try**

- **Korvapuusti:** the Finnish version of the cinnamon roll.
- **Munkki:** like a sugar coated, jelly-filled donut, but much better.
- **Omenapiirakka:** a Finnish apple pie, usually served with vanilla sauce.
Finlandia Hall

Alvar Aalto designed this music hall as a comprehensive whole, from its marble exterior to the lamps and doorknobs. Although harsh Nordic winters have done damage to its outer walls, the building remains one of Helsinki’s key symbols. Finlandia Hall is home to the Helsinki Philharmonic, which, along with the Radio Symphony Orchestra, performs at the hall year-round. In addition to an appealing selection of classical music, the Finlandia Hall hosts pop concerts, lectures and large congresses.

The Opera House

In 1993, the renowned Finnish National Opera and the Finnish National Ballet moved to their newly built location, an impressive demonstration of Nordic architecture overlooking the Töölö bay. In addition to productions by the National Opera and National Ballet, the Opera House is the location for many visiting performances. Its calendar in September includes Fidelio, Tosca, Swan Lake and The Seagull. Helsinki Opera House, Mannerheimintie 34, www.nba.fi/fi/skm, Ticket office: +358 9 405 09544

The National Museum

Its permanent collection of cultural artefacts, ranging from ancient archaeological finds to clothes, weapons, furniture and even mobile phones, provides a thorough overview of Finland’s history from the Stone Ages to present day. Legendary painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela’s fresco in the entrance hall depicts key events in Kalevala, Finland’s national epic. Mannerheimintie 34, www.nba.fi/fi/skm, Information: Tel: +358 9 173 36501

Ateneum

At the city’s most renowned art museum, a visitor can explore Finland’s often tumultuous history as interpreted by some of the country’s most important visual artists, including Albert Edelfelt, Eero Järnefelt, Helene Schjerfbeck and Akseli Gallen-Kallela. In addition to a range of works from Finnish masters from the 18th century until the 1950s, Ateneum includes a small collection of foreign art by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Léger and Chagall, among others. Kaivokatu 2, www.ateneum.fi

Kalevala Fresco
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela
(The National Museum)

The Covalescent
by Helene Schjerfbeck
(Ateneum Art Museum)

The Wounded Angel
by Hugo Simberg
(Ateneum Art Museum)

Helsinki City Museum

Each of the City Museum’s 11 locations plays a part in conserving the multidimensional legacy that Helsinki’s past has left the city. The museum’s main venue currently hosts an exhibit titled “Helsinki Horizons” that presents the city’s journey through Swedish rule, Russian rule and eventual independence. Other locations include for example Senate Square’s Sederholm House (built in 1757, it is the oldest concrete building in the city), the School Museum, the Tram Museum, and Burgher’s House, the oldest wooden building in the city.

For other sites, visit www.hel2.fi/kaumuseo

Movies

Suomen Elokuva-Arkisto (The Finnish Film Archive) screens critically acclaimed Finnish and foreign movies as well as cult films. A membership card, available for €4, is required. The Helsinki International Film Festival (also called the Love and Anarchy Festival) takes place every autumn, this year from September 14th to 24th, and includes an eclectic selection of films from all over the world. Mainstream releases in original languages can be viewed at larger movie theatres like Bristol and Tennispalatsi (Tennis Palace), and are usually shown in their original languages, with Finnish and Swedish subtitles.

Orion Theatre: Eerikinkatu 15, +358 9 615 40 201
Bristol: Mikonkatu 8
Tennispalatsi: Salomonkatu 15
Box office for Bristol and Tennispalatsi: +358-600 007 007

TOP3 artworks to see

Kalevala Fresco
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela
(The National Museum)

The Covalescent
by Helene Schjerfbeck
(Ateneum Art Museum)

The Wounded Angel
by Hugo Simberg
(Ateneum Art Museum)
Scandinavian pride in design is notable in the many Iittala, Marimekko and Kalevala Jewellery stores and boutiques throughout Helsinki. Design specialty stores like Artek, Skanno and Design Forum Finland also carry unique finds and blur the line between retail and art in their presentations. Function and durability are key elements in any product.

Clothing and Accessories

**Stockmann department store**
This centre of Helsinki's commercial life, marked by the unbroken flow of customers hurrying in and out of its doors, operates in the tradition of great European department stores like Harrods in London and the Galeries-Lafayette in Paris. Stockmann is a staple for quality and convenience, carrying everything from groceries to shoes, kitchenware and cosmetics. Aleksanterinkatu 52, www.stockmann.fi, +358 9 121 1

**Marimekko**
Arguably the most popular brand in Finnish design has several locations throughout the city. Carrying a varied selection of clothing, accessories, household items and fabrics, Marimekko is unique in its ability to consistently appeal to different age groups. Signature products include its poppy (unikko)-patterned fabric that has become a global hit in recent years. Kämp Galleria shopping centre, Pohjoisesplanadi 31 (North Esplanade), +358 9 686 0240
For other locations around town, visit www.marimekko.fi

**Kalevala Jewellery (Kalevala Koru)**
The largest jewellery manufacturer in Finland creates elegant, timeless pieces that pay tribute to Scandinavian traditions and spirit. Unioninkatu 25, www.kalevalakoru.fi, +358 9 020 7611380

**Design from A to Z**
**Artek**
One of Finland’s most notable interior design stores was launched in 1935 to create an international market for architect Alvar Aalto’s furniture and textile designs. Artek's furniture, designed for both public spaces and private homes, combines durability with style. In addition to original, recognisable Aalto designs, Artek now also markets newer talents that demonstrate the company’s commitment to innovative design. Eteläesplanadi 18, www.artek.fi, +358 9 613 25277

**Iittala**
This indispensable component of Finnish design is part of a company called Iittala Group that includes glassware, Arabia porcelain, and Hackman cookware. International designers regard many of Iittala's creations as some of the world’s most beautiful. Iittala products are widely sold at department stores, tourist shops and airports, but its concept stores offer the best selections. Pohjoisesplanadi 25 (North Esplanade), +358 0 204 39 3501
For other locations around town, visit www.iittala.com

**Design District Helsinki**
Created as part of Helsinki’s 2005 Design Year-program, the district includes clothing and jewellery boutiques, interior design stores, art galleries, restaurants, hotels, and even a spa. The locations, each identifiable by a black sticker on the door, are most concentrated around Uudenmaankatu and its side streets. The district’s hub is Design Forum Finland, a combined gallery, shop and cafe. www.designforum.fi/designdistrict, +358 9 622 0810

**Skanno**
Skanno’s selection of Finnish and international furniture presents new directions in interior design. Offering books, gift items, a florist’s services, an art gallery and even a restaurant, this concept store is a memorable experience in itself, whether or not a customer will leave with a furniture piece at the end of the day. Salmisaarentalo (Salmisaari House) Porkkalankatu 13 G, www.skanno.fi, +358 9 6129 440

**Just for fun**
**Moomin Shop**
Whether or not one is previously familiar with author Tove Jansson’s moomin characters, these curiously shaped figments of her imagination are bound to charm both children and adults. At the Moomin Shop one can purchase books and DVDs and bring home his or her favourite character in the form of a stuffed animal, a necklace, or even a pair of rubber boots. Kämp Galleria shopping centre, Kluuvikatu 4, www.kämpgalleria.fi, +358 9 622 2206

**TOP3 classic souvenirs**

- **Aalto’s Savoy vases**: these design classics are available in every imaginable size and colour.
- **Tales from Moominvalley**: a must-have introduction to the Moomin world.
- **Marimekko coin purses**: timeless mementos, available in both classic and funky patterns.
Fish is Helsinki’s most prominent delicacy, whether served in a sushi roll or smoked with a side of potatoes. To reflect the city’s increasingly cosmopolitan air, upscale restaurants blend international recipes with Finnish ingredients. Older restaurants are famous for their skilfully designed interiors. A reservation is recommended at most places.

### Helsinki Staples

**Kämp Café**
Helsinki’s finest hotel does not spare on luxury, offering high-end cuisine and an elegant upstairs nightclub. Kämp’s recently revamped, grand café-style flagship restaurant is open from breakfast hours to late night and features classic European recipes. Appetisers on Kämp Café’s à la carte menu range from €9-15 and its main courses from €15-25.

1. Pohjoisesplanadi 29
2. www.hotelkamp.fi /fi /Restaurants/kamp,
3. +358 9 584 09530

**FishMarket**
This cellar restaurant’s menu of sea-food has earned a reputation as one of the city’s finest, and holds a special appeal for its experimental combinations like Monkfish with duck risotto. Appetisers range from €9-15, while main courses average at €20 or more. Fish Market also offers special sea-food bar platters, ranging from just over €10 to over €35.

1. Pohjoisesplanadi 17, www.palacekamp.fi ,
2. +358 9 134 56220

**G.W Sundmans and Sundmans Krog**
Merchant ship captain Gustaf Wilhelm Sundman’s (1777-1835) old house is home to two restaurants. The more casual Sundmans Krog downstairs is known for its excellent Finnish food and relaxed atmosphere, while upstairs GW Sundmans puts forth a more luxurious dining experience. Appetisers at GW. Sundmans cost €20 or more, while its entrees range from €30-40. Sundmans Krog is more affordable, with its appetisers ranging from €6-16 and its main courses from €18-25.

2. Sundmans Krog: +358 9 622 64120,
3. GW Sundmans: +358 9 622 6410

**Savoy**
Helsinki’s most legendary restaurant is frequented by architecture buff s looking to check out the Alvar Aalto-designed interior that has remained virtually unchanged since the restaurant’s 1937 opening. The eighth-floor location offers a stunning view. Savoy’s menu consists of high-quality Finnish cuisine, with appetisers averaging at €20 and entrees at nearly €40 a plate. Pre-set menus are available in the €70-90 range.

2. +358 9 684 4020

**Kosmos**
A popular Helsinki hangout for more than 80 years, Cosmos prides itself with its Helsinki cuisine that has drawn influences from Russia, Sweden and France, and offers everything from borsch soup to paella. Appetisers range from €10-20, while entrees average at about €22 a plate.

1. Kalevankatu 3, www.ravintolakosmos.fi ,
2. +358 9 647 255

**International Fusion**
Finland and Japan share an affinity for fish. One of the city’s best sushi bars is found at cosy Raku Ya (Eteläranta 14, +358-9 675 449). Individual nigiri, sashimi and rolls range from €4-12, and larger assortments from €17-45. Main courses of Japanese dishes cost between €10 and €20. Hotel Kämp’s Yume (Kluuvikatu 4, +358-9 5761 1718) features a multifaceted and visually pleasing menu that chef Hirokazu Kamijunkkoku has built around the concept of four seasons. Appetisers at Yume range from €12-19, and its main courses from €15-26. Sake ranges from €10-100 per bottle.

**Demo** (Uudenmaankatu 11, +358 9 675 449) provides a no-nonsense environment for gourmet food. Its French, Italian and Scandinavian fusion cuisine offers creative dishes made of basic vegetables, meats and spices. Appetisers at Demo range from €12-15, and its main courses from €20-30.

**Toscanini** (Bulevardi 2-4, +358 0 207 704713) at design hotel Klaus K is the ideal choice for traditional Italian food. The restaurant is a tribute to artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who studied in Florence in the late 19th century. Appetisers at Toscanini range from €7-15, and its pastas, dinner salads and entrees from €15-25. Two-Michelin starred Chez Dominique (+358 9 612 73 93), led by praised chef Hans Välimäki, is a modern Franco-Scandinavian restaurant that is a must for any food enthusiast. Chez Dominique opens at its new location (Rikhardinkatu 4) in September.

### TOP3 delicacies to try

- **Reindeer**: the flavourful meat of this partially wild animal embodies the famed purity of Finnish food.
- **Salmon roe with blini pancakes**: sour cream and chopped onion are essential condiments.
- **Crayfish**: these savoury mini-lobsters are in season during late summer and early fall.