



My Drift

Title: Finland

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Russia borders 14 countries, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, and Ukraine. If you were to guess which one of these countries has the longest border with Russia, what would it be? Most people guess either China or Ukraine. The answer is Finland with an 830-mile border with Russia.



The Red Line is the Border with Russia

Here is a little better map of Finland showing cities etc.



The Republic of Finland is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. It shares land borders with Sweden to the northwest, Norway to the north, and Russia to the east, with the Gulf of Bothnia to the west and the Gulf of Finland to the south, across from Estonia. Finland covers an area of 338,455 square miles with a population of 5.6 million. Helsinki is the capital and largest city with a population of 632,000.



Helsinki

The vast majority of the population are ethnic Finns. Finnish and Swedish are the official languages, Swedish is the native language of 5.2% of the population. Finland's climate varies from humid continental in the south to the boreal in the north that is a vast expanse of coniferous forests, mires and lakes circling the northern hemisphere. Finland has more than 180,000 recorded lakes.



Lake Saimaa

Saimaa is a lake located in the Finnish Lakeland area in southeastern Finland. At approximately 1,652 square miles, it is the largest lake in Finland, and the fourth largest natural freshwater lake in Europe. It has the world's longest lake coastline, 9,010 miles long, and it boasts 13,710 islands.

A Little History

Finland was first inhabited around 9000 BC after the Last Glacial Period. The Stone Age introduced several different ceramic styles and cultures. The Bronze Age and Iron Age were characterized by contacts with other cultures in Fennoscandia and the Baltic region. From the late 13th century, Finland became a part of Sweden as a consequence of the Northern Crusades. In 1809, as a result of the Finnish War, Finland became part of the Russian Empire as the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland, during which Finnish art flourished and the idea of independence began to take hold. In 1906, Finland became the first European state to grant universal suffrage, and the first in the world to give all adult citizens the right to run for public office. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared independence from Russia. In 1918, the fledgling state was divided by the Finnish Civil War. During World War II, Finland fought the Soviet Union in the Winter War and the Continuation War, and Nazi Germany in the Lapland War. It subsequently lost parts of its territory but maintained its independence.

Finland largely remained an agrarian (farming) country until the 1950s. After World War II, it rapidly industrialized and developed an advanced economy, while building an extensive welfare state based on the Nordic model; the country soon enjoyed widespread prosperity and a high per capita income. During the Cold War, Finland adopted an official policy of neutrality. Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and the Eurozone at its inception in 1999.

Finland is a top performer in numerous metrics of national performance, including education, economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life and human development. In 2015, Finland ranked first in the World Human Capital, topped the Press Freedom Index, and was the most stable country in the world during 2011–2016, according to the Fragile States Index; it is second in the Global Gender Gap Report, and has ranked first in every annual World Happiness Report since 2018



In 2022, Finland was named the World's Happiest Country for the fifth year in a row.

With citizens in 156 countries worldwide being surveyed by Gallup to discover how happy they were, Finland coming out in first place again is no easy feat.

WHY IS FINLAND THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD?

- **Finns love to spend their free time outside rather than inside on the sofa watching TV or playing games on their cell phones, like other nations.**
- **Finnish people live a relaxed laid-back way of life.**
- **Finnish culture is likewise highly welcoming, with a strong emphasis on cooperation rather than competitiveness.**
- **Finland is beautiful, with vast swaths of unspoiled forest, stunning landscape, and gorgeous lakes. The air is fresh and clean!**

- Finland has very low crime rates. This low crime rate has resulted in a culture where people feel safe, secure, and fulfilled.
- Finland has a significant middle class and a low poverty rate. It is a country where the wealthy have generally been reluctant to flaunt their money. The poorest in society have healthcare access, and homelessness is rare.
- The educational system in the country is one of the most equitable in Europe, producing some of the most remarkable results and providing more chances for young people to succeed.
- In summary, the people in Finland are just happy and satisfied with how their lives are going.



Happy Finns

Okay, I know you are wondering what countries have the most unhappy people. I'm sorry to report that the world overall has become sadder, more worried and a more stressed-out place. But in two countries -- **Afghanistan and Lebanon** -- more people were living in misery than anywhere else on the planet.

Where does the United States rank? Are we a happy country? Well, for the most part, we are a happy country. The U.S. ranks 19th on the "Most Happy Country list". Hawaii ranks first for the most happy state and West Virginia came in last.

I hope everyone reading this article is happy and satisfied with their life.

FINLAND IN PICTURES (Warmer Months)

Typical Finland Towns and Cities



Outside - Lakes



Outside – Relaxing



Sightseeing



Celebrating



FINLAND IN PICTURES (Winter)

Northern Green Lights or Green Aurora Borealis



More Winter Pictures





Is Finland a member of NATO?

Finland is one of six members of the European Union that are not members of NATO. For decades, Sweden and Finland were content to work with NATO, but not become members of the defensive alliance. But Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine in February 2022 shifted the ground in Europe, and those nations – both historically neutral – petitioned to join NATO. At last week's NATO summit in Madrid, allied leaders agreed to invite Finland and Sweden to join the alliance. As of this writing, however, they have not officially joined NATO.

Bad news! Because many people in Finland are worried about Russia invading their country, Finland probably won't win the happiest country in the world award this year.



Sanna Marin

Sanna Mirella Marin (age 37) is a Finnish politician who has been serving as the Prime Minister of Finland since 2019. A member of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, she has been a Member of Parliament since 2015.

She was recently on a segment of “60 Minutes” explaining Finland’s fear of Russia and their desire to join NATO.

Some Fun Facts about Finland



Flag



Popular Beer Brands
 (Sorry to say, I haven't tried any beer from Finland)

Finland takes Albert Einstein's wise words "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new" seriously. The country has declared October 13th the National Day of Failure to celebrate life setbacks as a natural path toward success.

The word "Sauna" is Finnish, so no matter where you enjoy this purifying experience throughout the world, you can thank Finns for the name. It's also the only Finnish word making it into everyday English language. The Finnish Sauna is a critical piece of the country's heritage, with over 2 million saunas in Finland – approximately one per household.

Finland is home to the midnight sun, where in June and July the sun stays above the horizon, casting a white light even in the middle of the night.

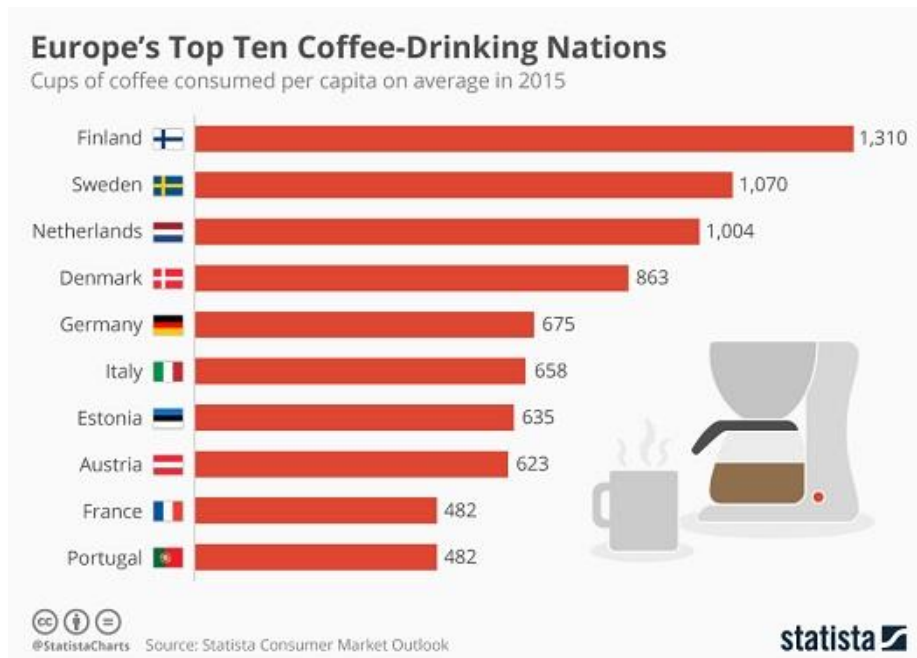
Lapland is Finland's northernmost region, a sparsely populated area bordering Sweden, Norway, Russia and the Baltic Sea. It's known for its vast subarctic wilderness, ski resorts and natural phenomena including the midnight sun and the Northern Lights. The Sámi people there speak an endangered language and are known for their trades in reindeer herding and coastal fishing.

Finland is an incredibly green country, with over 70% of its land being forests.

Helsinki, Finland's capital, ranks in the top 5 cities with the cleanest air in the world. Of the 25 least polluted cities in the world with the best air quality, Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Estonia) dominated the rankings with some of the cleanest air in the world.

You can ring in the New Year twice by hopping the border between Finland and Sweden as there is a 60-minute time difference between the countries.

The Nordic countries are famous for being heavy coffee-drinkers and the Finns are not an exception. Per capita, Finnish people consume more coffee than any other nation in the world. Eight or nine cups a day is the norm in this Nordic country.



Finland also has the world's highest annual consumption of milk per capita. In Finland, 81% of grown-up people drink milk and 66% of the population drinks it daily.



Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are quite similar and when making a small effort it's not hard to understand the 3 of those languages, even though they are not exactly the same. Finnish, however, is something completely else. The Finnish language is part of the Finno-Ugric language group and is way more similar to Estonian than the Scandinavian languages, even though it neighbors the Scandinavian countries.

Finland has free education, even at the university level.

If you travel to Finland during the winter months, make sure that you bring a warm jacket. While you probably won't have to face the record low temperature, the average temperature in Helsinki during the winter months is still -5 degrees Celsius (23 degrees Fahrenheit). The coldest temperature measured in the country was back in 1999 in Kittilä where the temperature went all the way down to -51.5 degrees Celsius (-60.7 degrees Fahrenheit). Finland is one of the coldest countries in the world.

Finland maybe cold and dark a big part of the year but the people are happy and get along just fine. The rest of the world would be a lot better off if they could learn a few things from this country. Amen.

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