Get to know the city on foot!

See Helsinki on foot

7 walking routes around town
Throughout its 450-year history, Helsinki has swung between the currents of Eastern and Western influences. The colourful layers of the past and the impact of different periods can be seen in the city’s architecture, culinary culture and event offerings. Today Helsinki is a modern European city of culture that is famous especially for its design and high technology. Music and fashion have also put Finland’s capital city on the world map.

Helsinki has witnessed many changes since it was founded by Swedish King Gustavus Vasa at the mouth of the Vantaa River in 1550. The centre of Helsinki was moved to its current location by the sea around a hundred years later in the mid 17th century. In the early 18th century the Kingdom of Sweden, to whom Finland belonged, lost all its fortifications along its eastern border to Russia, allowing the Russian fleet practically unimpeded access throughout the Baltic Sea. In response to this situation, Sweden began construction of a major maritime fortress off the coast of Helsinki in 1748. In 1809 Finland nevertheless became an autonomous grand duchy under the Russian Tsar with Helsinki as its new capital, and since 1917 Helsinki has been the capital of the independent Republic of Finland.

Helsinki is an easy city to explore, as most sights are situated within convenient walking distance of the city centre. In this brochure we present seven walking routes around town that allow you to discover historical and contemporary Helsinki with plenty to see along the way: architecture old and new, museums and exhibitions, large department stores and tiny specialist boutiques, restaurants and cafés, and much more. The routes pass through leafy parks to vantage points for taking in the city’s street life or admiring the beautiful seascape. Helsinki’s historical sights serve as reminders of events that have influenced the entire course of Finnish history.

Traffic in Helsinki is still relatively uncongested, allowing you to stroll peacefully even through the city centre. Walk leisurely through the park around Töölönlahti Bay, or travel back in time to the former working class district of Kallio. Discover the Art Nouveau treasures in Katajanokka, or make a voyage out to the Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress – the ferry crossing from the Market Square takes just 15 minutes.

The Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau’s Tourist Information provides free information about the city, sights, events and services. Our five-star Tourist Information also offers you a range of brochures and maps in several languages. Come and ask us for advice!
Discover the historical city centre

We begin our tour from the Senate Square. Already in the 17th century, a town square, town hall, church and cemetery were located where the Senate Square can be found today. The area around the town square began to be built in 1721 following the destruction of the entire town during the Great Northern War. Merchants began building residential buildings alongside the square. The most important building project of the 18th century was the Viapori (later Suomenlinna) Maritime Fortress, construction of which began in 1748 (see page 33 for walking tour of Suomenlinna).

As a result of the war of 1808-1809 between Sweden and Russia, Finland was ceded to Sweden and annexed to the Russian Empire as an autonomous grand duchy, with Helsinki as its capital from 1812 onwards. A new town plan was drawn up by Johan Albrecht Ehrenström (1762-1847), a native of Berlin who had previously worked in Reval (Tallinn) and St. Petersburg. A plaque by Felix Nylund commemorating Ehrenström and Engel can be found in the wall of Helsinki University Library. Engel designed the new public buildings in splendid Neoclassical style befitting Helsinki’s new position as Finland’s capital. The original town hall were pulled down to make way for the new Senate Square. The site of the church and cemetery were located where the Senate Square and neighbouring districts are marked on the cobblestones of the present square. The area around the town square began to be rebuilt in 1721 following the destruction of the entire town during the Great Northern War. Merchants began building residential buildings alongside the square. The most important building project of the 18th century was the Viapori (later Suomenlinna) Maritime Fortress, construction of which began in 1748 (see page 33 for walking tour of Suomenlinna).

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and the buildings along the southern side of the square, the university and Government Palace form one of the finest ensembles of Neoclassical architecture in Europe. The university building was completed in 1852 to the design of C. J. Sonck. Much of the old university, including the main hall and art treasurers, was destroyed by air bombardment in 1944. The main hall was subsequently reconstructed and opened again in 1948.

Porthania is a more modern campus building (1967-1977). The sculpture in front of the building was designed by Eberhard Cleihour (1904-2000) and was unveiled Helsinki.

Helsinki University Library, which also houses the National Library of Finland, dates from 1864 and is considered one of Engelin's most beautiful designs. The rooms inside represent arguably the most splendid example of neo-classical Finnish interior architecture, as well as one of the most beautiful interiors in Helsinki open to the public. The main building designed by Engel is, however, only a small part of the library. Books are also stored in the semi-circular extension designed by Gustaf Lindqvist. The main hall of the university was designed by Georg Theodor Chiewitz in the Neo- Gothic style and completed in 1843. Originally and still today a meeting place for the Finnish re- public, it is now used for concerts and exhibitions. The events, including chamber concerts. The coat-of- arms of all the Finnish noble families hang on the walls of the fine baroque hall.

The original design of the Main House was by Engelin, but it was subsequently altered considerably. The building was completed in 1843 in conjunction with the Imperial Palace across the street (today the Presidential Palace). Nowadays the Main House is owned by the Helsinki Garrison.

Our walk continues just a short bridge to the district of Katajanokka, which was originally a headland – the channel separating it from the mainland was dug in the 1840s. In terms of architecture Katajanokka is an inter- esting mix of the old and new: Neoclassicism, National Romantic and contemporary. Never- theless, Katajanokka is arguably most famous for the Kruunuvuorenkatu 24: the home of the Helsinki Art Museum. Most of the majority of the buildings in this district were built between the 1820s and nowadays serves as the residence of the Mayor of Helsinki. In fact, few other residents live along the street.

The house at Aleksanterinkatu 14 that is designed by Lars Sohnke and now serves as the main branch of the Helsinki City Museum. In addition to exhibition space, the building features offices and other work facilities. The Helsinki City Museum has always been quite unique in Helsinki. A fine example of this is the residence of the Mayor of Helsinki.

The street Museum on Soveraninkatu is the only mansion in Helsinki that is open 24 hours a day! The street Museum presents daily guided tours, the main house of Katajanokka!

The Market Square on Soveraninkatu is the oldest part dates back to the 1820s, while the east extension is completely new, albeit based on Engelin’s original design. The new Katajanokka reflects clearly the influence S. Petersburg had on Engel, and the design of the new buildings was probably based on the Residency St. Petersburg.

The residential buildings include the former Naval Barracks Hospital designed by C. L. Engel. The oldest part dates back to the 1820s, while the east extension is completely new, albeit based on Engel’s original design. The new Katajanokka reflects clearly the influence S. Petersburg had on Engel, and the design of the new buildings was probably based on the Residency St. Petersburg.

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Senate Square and neighbouring districts

From Mesitoitaluonti ("Sea Warrior Square") turn right down the footpath along the shoreline, which affords fine sea views with the inner harbours to the left and beyond the open sea. The route bypasses the Laivasto ("Fleet") Matruusi ("Seaman’s") parks and continues to Kruunuvuori.

From the corner of Mautakatu on the Park street the redbrick building on the Helsinki County Prison. The prison was recently moved out of the city centre and replaced by a unique new hotel. The prison chapels was designed by A. F. Casimir and completed in 1913.

The Kajatensit Terminal serves ferries to Sweden, Germany and Estonia year round, as well as many international cruise ships during the summer season.

The historic warehouses here now house the Wamba Satama exhibition centre and restaurants.

The historic Warrant House was designed by Lars Sonck and completed in the early 1900s. The building has been converted into a hotel, while the new building opposite houses a congress centre.

The redbrick building with the round tower is the former Customs and Bonded Warehouse that was designed in Jugend style by Gustaf Nyström and completed in 1900.

Along Kanavankatu on the right side is Kinnunen. The International Development Agency under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The building was designed by Olli Pakkala and completed 1963. The old mist alongside the Fenish Literature Society’s public information and department bookshop.

Overlooking Meritullintori square is a relief entitled "Peter’s Draught of Fish" from 1931 by Carl Wihlborg (1889-1953).

Puolustamo, Helsinki’s "North Shore", features handsome 19th-century residential buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries designed by such renowned architects as Theodor Hiipari, Lars Sonck and Osmo Tarjanne. In summertime traditional wooden sailing ships up to along Hakaniemi Pier.

One of the most unique buildings along Puolustamo is the Renaissance-style residential building designed by Sebastian Gripenberg and Magnus Sächer in 1669.

On the right is one of Helsinki’s numerous maritime museums, behind which in the distance you can see Kruunuvuori, home to the Helsinki Zoo. The zoo is open year round, so in summertime you can get there by ferry from the Market Square and Hakaniemen Market, and there is also a road and a real road from the mainland via Mustikkamaanlahti.

Alongside the building is a very popular restaurant, Tverasaa, where visitors can sit on the island in the 17th century. Now a park with a summer restaurant, this tiny island is a popular place for a walk.

In a small park in a monument designed by Gunnar Essén (1886-1952) and completed in 1923 stands a statue by 1874-1947 and erected in 1937 in memory to the White soldiers who died in the Battle of Pellinki during the Finnish Civil War of 1918.

The main role of the buildings at the end of Snellmaninkatu was the headquarters of the Finnish Civil War of 1918.

The redbrick buildings served as barracks until the early 20th century. In 1924 the Military Academy was established here. The buildings now house the Military Museum, which features exhibitions on military history and weapons from the 17th century to the Second World War, as well as an extensive photo archive. The museum is open to the public.

Turn into Meritullinkatu and continue onwards via Kallekuja to Kristianinkatu.

The oldest remaining wooden building in Helsinki dates back to 1818 and can be found at Kristianinkatu 12. The building was originally built as an English-style home for Ossian Donner and his family in 1901. Previously the site housed a military department and bookshop.

The Forest Building was designed by Jussi Katila and completed in 1909. It houses the Finnish Forest Research Institute and the University of Helsinki’s Forestry Department.

The Empire-style building on the opposite side of Unioninkatu was once a hospital and has been converted for use by the University of Helsinki.

The historic hospital buildings were designed by Engel in the 1820s. The windows have since been converted for use by the University of Helsinki. The grounds feature a picturesque courtyard.

Our walk continues along Oikokuja back to Liskiankatu.

A sculpture by Helena Pylkkänen (1945-) entitled "Sala" dates from 1981 can be seen inside the courtyard.

The oak monument on the far side of the square is the house the Finnish Literature Society’s public information and department bookshop.

The white marble office building on the corner was designed by legendary Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and completed in 1962. It serves as the head office of international paper company Stora Enso. The site once housed a stone redbrick residential building designed by Theodor Höijer and known as "Normerin’s Castle" after its owner. The bridge in front connects Kajatensit with Puolustamo.

Crossing through the northern bridge over the canal to Meritullintori ("Sea Customs") square.

The second oldest building in the city centre is the former Customs Warehouse that dates back to 1765. The building currently houses the Finnish Literature Society’s public information and department bookshop.

Overlooking Meritullintori square is a relief entitled "Peter’s Draught of Fish" from 1931 by Carl Wihlborg (1889-1953).

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On the corner of Rautakatu is Helsinki’s oldest Orthodox church, Holy Trinity, designed by A. F. Granstedt and completed in 1872. The church features a beautiful altar painting and offers religious services in Church Slavonic.

A sculpture by Wiivi Aalto (1894-1966) entitled "Daybreak" and dating from 1950 can be seen on the opposite corner. Aalto was one of the most prominent sculptors of the newly independent Finland and the artist behind many nationally important monuments.

The copper fountain at Rautakatu 18 is the work of Aila Hiltunen (1922-2003), an artist known for her culminating technique, and dates from 1961. This abstract sculpture is one of Helsinki’s foremost works of art.

The oldest section of the National Archives was designed by architect Gustaf Nyström and completed in 1890. The building has since been extended. The statutory group of three women on top of the old building was sculpted by C. E. Sjöqvist (1828-1905) and symbols of Finland standing in the middle surrounded by the goddesses of historical research and writing. The oldest document on Finland preserved in the archives dates from 1316. The archives are open to the public.

Turning into Snellmaninkatu you will see the Bank of Finland. The building was designed by German architect Ludwig Boltzmann and completed in 1902. Its front is by J. W. Snellman (1839-1914), another influential Finnish statesman in the 19th century. The bust was sculpted by Walter Runeberg and dates from 1905, although it was erected here in 1943.

At the bottom of Snellmaninkatu is the capital’s first post-office building, dating from 1835. It now houses the Bank of Finland Museum.

Opposite the Bank of Finland is the House of Estates, which is nowadays used to host state functions. In 1934 the building was awarded the Eero Nörste prize for its fine neo-renaissance detailing in 1981 as a meeting place for the commoner estates consisting of the clergy, bourgeois and peasants. The nobles met at the House of Nobility. Like the National Archives, the House of Estates was designed by Gustaf Nyström, who was responsible for drawing up the plans of many buildings in Helsinki. The symmetrical facade was also designed by Emil Wikström depicting Tsar Alexander I at the Voros-Diet in 1805.

In the town hall on the top floor of the Bank of Finland Museum you can see a bust of Senator Leo Mecklenburg (1839-1914), another influential Finnish statesman in the 19th century. The bust was sculpted by Walter Runeberg and dates from 1905, although it was erected here in 1943.

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Töölönlahti Bay is situated between the city centre and the southern end of Kaisaniemi, Helsinki’s “Central Park.” The parks around the bay are popular places for city residents and tourists alike to relax and exercise. The cultural and historic surroundings are best explored on foot, by bicycle or on rollerblades. The loop around the bay is approximately 2.2 kilometres. The environment also offers a taste of Finland’s unique nature. Many bird species nest along the northeast shore, and the waters hide a number of rare plants.

The granite castle was designed in National Romantic style by Otto Tanajoki. The frescoes in the foyer are by Juhani Roux, and the main hall by Yrjö Ollila. The theatre now houses a total of four stages. The interior was renovated in 1962 under the direction of Heikki and Kari Soini, who also designed the small stage that opened in 1954. The theatre was founded in 1872 and acquired the name “The Curtain,” it was unveiled in 1972.

Behind the National Theatre is a fountain and a sculpture by Viktor Janson (1886-1958) entitled “Convolvulus” that was unveiled in 1931.

On the slop stands a sculpture by Jussi Mantymies (1896-1976) entitled “The Young Elk” that dates from 1910. The bust of Fredrik Pacius (1809-1891), the German-born composer of Vårt land (“Our Land”), which became the Finnish national anthem, was sculpted by Emil Wikström and unveiled in 1895. Vårt land was first performed in 1848.

On the side of the field can be seen the grave of the famous Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. Behind the National Theatre is a fountain and a sculpture by Jussi Mantymies (1896-1976) entitled “The Young Elk” that dates from 1910.

The bridge still bears the scars of bombing from both the Civil War of 1918 and the Second World War. A bridge was first built across this stretch of water in the 17th century that was particularly popular among students. This restaurant is still operating.

The Botanical Garden, part of the Finnish Museum of Natural History, is an idyllic setting for a walk. Admire the trees, gardens and tropical plants. The Botanical Garden was originally designed by Franz Feldmann of St. Petersburg in the 1830s. The wooden Empire-style buildings along the Kaisaniemi shoreline were relocated from Punavuorenkatu and Uldernmerkatu streets already in the early 19th century.

Our walk continues to Kaisaniemi Park, which was created in the 1620s. It is named after Keaja Wallond, who ran a restaurant here in the first half of the 19th century that was particularly popular among students. This restaurant is still operating.

The first Finnish-language professional theatre was founded in 1872 and acquired the name “Finnish National Theatre” in 1902, the same year that it moved to its current premises. The granite castle was designed in National Romantic style by Otto Tanajoki. The frescoes in the foyer are by Juhani Roux, and the main hall by Yrjö Ollila. The theatre now houses a total of four stages. The interior was renovated in 1962 under the direction of Heikki and Kari Soini, who also designed the small stage that opened in 1954. The theatre was founded in 1872 and acquired the name “The Curtain,” it was unveiled in 1972.

Relax in the green heart of the city.

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Swedish-speaking students gather here on May Day morning to sing, while Finnish-speaking students congregate in Kanavopuisto Park.

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Central Railway Station and Töölönlahti Bay

The grey granite building with the steep principal is Paimio, the most famous Works of Alvar Aalto. The building, designed by Aalto, completed in 1931, is used as the headquarters of the Red Forces during Finland's Civil War. The building was designed by Aalto and completed in 1938.

The “Round House” (Yrityspäälä) was designed by Heikki and Kaja Seini and completed in 1968.

Beside the Round House is the Kallio Town Hall, Mission Office designed by Heikki and Kaja Seini and completed in 1955. The building houses the Helsinki City Social Services Department and the Helsinki City Archives.

Along the shoreline is a monumental antennae designed by Emil Wikstrom (1917-1996) and unveiled in 1968 in memory of Mila Silfverstolpe (1866-1952), the first female member of the Finnish Government as the Minister of Social Affairs.

Finland celebrated 100 years of equal voting rights for women in 2006. Finland was the first country in the world to give full voting and political rights to women. In 1919, 19 female members of the 200-seat parliament were elected in the 1907 elections.

Overlooking the park is the Helsinki City Theatre, designed by architects Erik Bryggman and completed in 1987. The theatre has three stages. The oldest of these, the 1908 Sea Theatre, is now a museum. The building was designed by Kaija and Atos Paasitorni, the most famous granite building with the steep principal in Helsinki. The building was designed by Heikki and Kaija Sirén and completed in 1935.

The building of Henrik Borgström (1898-1937), creator of Helsinki Central and Kansuoto Centres, was sculptured by Walter Runeberg and dates back to 1888.

The statue of Lauri Tihko Pakkala (1888-1919), a famous advocate of Finnish athletics, was unveiled on 5 January 1988 to mark the 100th anniversary of Pakkala's birth.

Behind the trees you can see the Olympic Stadium designed by Yrjö Leidsma and Timo Jantti. The first phase of construction was completed in time to host the 1940 Olympic Games, which were postponed due to the war. Helsinki subsequently hosted the Summer Olympics in 1952. The stands, grounds and facilities of the stadium have been renovated many times. The stadium currently holds 50,000 spectators, who come to watch major international sports events, outdoor rock concerts and the popular Finnish vs Sweden athletics meet, which hosts athletes held in alternating years in Helsinki and Gothenburg.

The City Theatre, designed by the Finnish Sports Museum. The stadium is 72 metres high and offers a splendid view over the city.

In front of the stadium stands the statue of legendary Finnish distance runner Paavo Nurmi (1894-1966) in 1952. Nurmi competed in three Olympic Games in the 1920s and won a total of three gold and three silver medals. Across the street, the statue is that of another famous Finnish runner Lasse Viren (1946-) sculpted by Seppo Salli (1930-1990) and unveiled in 1976.

The statue of the skater and politician of Lauri Parasans (1863-1944), a Kanavian news photographer, was unveiled in 1949 at the Skating Park. The statue was sculptured by Paola Jyra (1950-) and unveiled on 2000 on the centenary of Kokkonen's birth.

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Finlandia Hall is a concert and congress centre designed by legendary Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Designed in 1962, the main section was completed in 1967 and the congress wing in 1972. The construction was designed down to the smallest detail by Aalto himself. The facade is dressed in Carrara marble. Guided tours will allow you to appreciate the architecture of the building in full. Downstairs of congresses, concerts, exhibitions and other events are held in Finlandia Hall each year.

The pink stone building is Hakasalmi Villa, which houses a branch of the Helsinki City Museum. The villa was built in 1843 after the design of Eino Lust from Germany. It was completed in 1834 and is one of the most famous in Finland. The building also houses an extensive library that is used for the study of Finland's Parliament and their assistants. The first floor houses the Visitor's Centre, while the attic is the ground floor house the staff restaurant. The decor is characterised by the use of Finnish wood and floors covered in granite from different parts of the country. The annexe was designed by Armas Lindgren and completed in 1969. A statue by Eila Hiltunen (1888-1965) entitled “Knights of Yore” can be found in the “Little Parliament” Park in front of the annexe. Dedicated to equal and universal suffrage, the monument is under the care of a foundation set up in the occasion of Parliament's Centennial in May 2006. The park is home to the world’s most comprehensive collection in the world to give full voting and political rights to women. In 1919, 19 female members of the 200-seat parliament were elected in 1907 elections.

The Museum of Contemporary Art (Kiasma) was designed by Steven Holl and completed in 1998. The museum's collections and exhibitions of contemporary art, photography, media art and paintings. Each year the museum highlights different parts of its collections. The Kiema Theatre features musical performances, films, multimedia shows, debates and seminars.

The Sauna Hall and other facilities providing a wide range of services for men of all ages and their families. The plans of the Sauna hall will be in the Sikkelin Academy, the Helsinki Philharmonic and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

On the right is the Parliament House, which was completed in spring 2004 to provide ad- ministration for K. J. Ståhlberg, Finland's first president. The building also houses an extensive library that is used for the study of Parliament and their assistants. The first floor houses the Visitor's Centre, while the attic is the ground floor house the staff restaurant. The decor is characterised by the use of Finnish wood and floors covered in granite from different parts of the country. The annexe was designed by Armas Lindgren and completed in 1969. A statue by Eila Hiltunen (1888-1965) entitled “Knights of Yore” can be found in the “Little Parliament” Park in front of the annexe. Dedicated to equal and universal suffrage, the monument is under the care of a foundation set up in the occasion of Parliament’s Centennial in May 2006. The park is home to the world’s most comprehensive collection in the world to give full voting and political rights to women. In 1919, 19 female members of the 200-seat parliament were elected in 1907 elections.

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Behind Kiasma stands Samonmäki, the impressive glass and steel head-quarters of Helsingin Sanomat, the largest daily newspaper in Finland. The building was designed by Jan Söderlund and Antti- Matti Sillanpää and completed in 1999. In addition to the editorial offices of the newspaper, the building houses shops and restaurants.

Behind the Parliament Building you can see the Sibelius Academy, the largest music academy in Finland and the entire Nordic region. It was established in 1863 as the Helsinki Music Academy and was named after the legendary Finnish composer Jean Sibelius in 1919.

The Lasipalatsi building now houses a media centre in which 150 shops, cafés and restaurants, the new bus terminal and a metro station. On the north side of the shopping centre is the Tennis Palace, which was originally built in 1936 and converted in 1999 into a cinema complex. The building also houses the Museum of Cultures and the Sibelius Art Museum.

The famous equestrian statue of Field Marshal C. G. E. Mannerheim (1867-1951) was designed by Arno Takkenen (1907-1996) and unveiled in 1960. Mannerheim holds an unparalleled position in Finnish military and political history. He served as Supreme Commander of the Finnish Army during the Second World War and subsequently also as President of the Republic. Mannerheim’s birthday, 4 June has been commemorated as the Flag Day of the Finnish Defence Forces since 1942.

The Helsinki General Post Office was designed by architects J. Jarno and E. Lindgren and completed in 1936. The building houses the Post Museum, which features large collections of Finnish and foreign stamps, special exhibitions, multimedia presentations and a letter café. It also houses the Helsinki City Library’s “Library 10”, which is specialised in music and open to all visitors. Library 10 also lends literature on films, computers and travel, as well as comic books. The library also stocks a wide selection of magazines and features a wireless network and several computers with internet connections that can be used free of charge.

Housed in the west wing of the Central Railway Station is the Finnair City Terminal, from where Finnair buses to Helsinki-Vantaa Airport depart.

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Admire the Functionalist and Classicist architecture

Töölö is one of the finest districts in Helsinki, where splendid architecture is combined with many green parks. There are two parts to Töölö: Etu-Töölö (“Front Töölö”), which borders the city centre, and Taka-Töölö (“Back Töölö”) on the northern side of Hesperiankatu park street. The architecture of Etu-Töölö is dominated by the brick Classicism of the 1920s, and that of Taka-Töölö by the light Functionalism of the 1930s. Taka-Töölö is also home to such famous landmarks as the Olympic Stadium, the Sibelius Monument and the Finnish National Opera. Most of the residential buildings in the Meilahti district behind Töölö were built around the mid 1900s. Meilahti is home to Mäntyniemi, the official residence of the Finnish President that was completed in 1993, and a major hospital complex.

Our walking tour of Töölö begins at Temppeliaukio Church designed by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen and completed in 1969. The plot was reserved for a church already in the 1906 city plan. The building is hewn out of the granite bedrock, and the ceiling is crafted from copper. In addition to Lutheran services, the church is a popular venue for concerts due to its excellent acoustics. Its unique architecture has made the “Rock Church” one of the most popular tourist attractions in Helsinki. It is also a popular church for weddings in summertime.

Continue down Oksasenkatu to the small park where you will find a statue commemorating legendary Finnish novelist Mika Waltari (1908-1979) sculpted by Veikko Hirvimäki and unveiled in 1985. Waltari’s most famous novel “The Egyptian” has been translated into 40 languages. Waltari lived and wrote in nearby Tunturikatu. In the Hesperia Esplanade is the controversial memorial by Matti Peltokangas to Finland’s second president L. K. Relander (1883-1942).

On the corner of Töölöntorinkatu is a monument to the Lotta Svärd voluntary auxiliary organisation for women that was disbanded in 1944. The monument stands in front of the former Suojeluskuntatalo that served the Finnish National Guard.

Our walk continues to Töölö Market in Taka-Töölö, most of which was completed by the late 1930s. The facades of the buildings share a similar appearance that is often referred to as “Töölö Functionalism”. The market is open during weekdays. On the left is Töölö Church designed by Hilding Ekelund and completed in 1929. On the right is Töölö Hospital part of Helsinki University Central Hospital. It was originally built as a Red Cross hospital in the early 1930s. At the time the Finnish Red Cross was headed by none other than Carl Gustaf Mannerheim. The hospital was designed by Jussi Paatela.

Turn into Sibeliuksenkatu and continue onwards towards Topelius Park.
On the left is the Kivisel Hospital complex. The first buildings were completed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The large brick buildings were designed by Gunnar Taucher and completed in the 1930s.

The park is named after Finnish composer Toivo Kuula (1863-1918) who died tragically amidst celebrations marking the end of the Civil War. The statue of his memory was sculpted by Anna Manninen and unveiled in 1966. In summertime the shoreline is lined with yachts.

Hietaniemi Cemetery is the resting place of many notable figures in Finnish history from 1829 onwards. Many statues and monuments can be found among the graves. The serene cemetery is a beautiful place for a walk, and guided walking tours are also offered. West of the Hietaniemi Chapel is the military cemetery for soldiers who died in the Second World War and the tombs of the Unknown Soldier and Mannerheim. Nearby are Jewish, Islamic and Orthodox cemeteries (1883-1918) who died tragically amidst celebrations marking the end of the Civil War.

At the top of Toivo Kuula Park is the Rowing Stadium

Our walk continues along Merikan- nontie to Sibulais Park.

Töölö and Meilahti districts

In the park you will see the Sibulais Monument designed by Ela Hiltunen (1922-2003) and erected in 1967. The monument is constructed from welded steel to resemble an open pipe and features a bust of the composer to one side. Jouni Ståhls (1860-1918) is by far the best-known Finnish composer of all time, and the Sibulais Monument is one of the most popular sights in Helsinki, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The Children's Hospital was designed by Uno Ulberg and Erkki Linnanmaa and completed in 1946.

At the tip of the headland is Kekkonen Park, the official residence of the Prime Minister. The villa was acquired in 1904 as a summer residence for the Governor General during the period of Russian rule and was restored to its former state with its ornamental tower in 1983.

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At the other end of the park is Bronze Age burial finds that have been dated back to the 7th century.

Continue down Sibulansantie and admire the view of Humallahti Bay.

The official residence of the President of Finland, Miettisivi, was designed by the architect couple Ruut and Rainje Piirtti and completed in 1980. The contemporary design conforms with the natural setting, and Finnish wildflowers, trees and bushes have been planted in the garden. The attractive and sophisticated interior is characterized by light colours decorated with Finnish design, art and handicrafts. The main elements are wood and stone.

The Korjaamo Theatre is one of the most popular venues in the district. It is home to the Seurasaari Open-Air Museum and presents old Finnish buildings that have been relocated from all parts of Finland. Visitors can enter the buildings during summertime. The Korjaamo Theatre was transported from the western coast of Finland and date back to 1860. The wooden church is a popular place for summer weddings. Also in summertime, visitors to Seurasaari can enjoy folk dancing and other outdoor events, such as the traditional Midsummer celebrations and bonfires. A separate brochure of Seurasaari is available from the Korjaamo and Tourist Information.

The Sibelius Monument was designed by Professor Aarne Ervi in the Modernist style and completed in 1948. Sibelius Park.

Here along Seurasaari and adjoining roads are many wooden villas dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This big villa is the right used to be the residence of composer Työ Kilpinen (1892-1940)

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This big villa is the right used to be the residence of composer Työ Kilpinen (1892-1940). Turn into Stenbäckinkatu, where Seurasaari Open-Air Museum and presents old Finnish buildings.

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Feel the pulse of the commercial district

This walk begins in Esplanade Park, which together with Senate Square and Market Square from the heart of Helsinki’s historical centre. The park first featured in the town plan of J. A. Ehrenström in 1812 and from the start has been a popular place for Helsinki residents to congregate. Leading off to the north of the park, Kluuvi and Mikkelson have been converted into pedestrian streets.

1. Polyteknikinkatu 19 houses Tourist Information, which is run by the Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau. The building was designed by Pehr Granstedt and completed in 1816. Next door in the same building is Jugendsali. Inside is the Helsinki Info corner, which serves city residents. Originally designed as a bank by Lars Sonck and Walter Jung in the National Romantic style of the early 20th century, the “Staged Hall” is also a popular place for exhibitions. The main hall and orchestra on the upper levels are intended largely in their original exquisite condition. The exception of an extension made to the bank hall around 1916. Wilho Sjöström (1873-1944) painted the fresco of Helsinki in the semicircular end of the hall.

The building at Polyteknikinkatu 21 was designed by C. L. Engel and completed in 1820.

At the end of Esplanade Park is the historic Hotel Kämp. The new Hotel Kämp at Pohjoisesplanadi 31 was again designed by Engel and completed in 1867. It was based on a design by Hampus Dalström. It has been extended and renovated many times. In summer the Espoo Stage hosts many outdoor concerts and events. On either side of the bandstand are fountains and statues by Viktor Jansson (1886-1958) that feature the 19th century "Equator" and "Water nymphs" and "Water nymphs" and "Newly" of 1951. On the second floor is the well-known Hotel Kämp.

The house next door to the Hotel Kämp at Polyteknikinkatu 21 was designed by Höijer and today houses Marimekko, one of the most famous Finnish design, textile and clothing brands. Theodor Höijer was the leading Helsinki architect at the end of the 19th century whose stone pedestal is the patron muse of Walter Runeberg (1804-1877), Finland’s national poet and author of the Finnish national anthem. The statue was unveiled by his son Walter Runeberg (1838-1902) in 1885. The female figure decorating the pedestal in the patron muse of Finnish poetry.

Across the street is the Savoy restaurant, whose rooftop terrace offers a fine view over the centre of Helsinki. Opened in 1921 the restaurant and all its fixtures and fittings were designed by Alvar and Aino Aalto and are still in their original exquisite condition.

The statue of poet Eino Leino (1878-1926) designed by Lauri Leppänen (1895-1977) and unveiled in 1953. On the back of the statue are inscribed lines from “The Song of Väinämöinen”.

At the far end of the park is Svenska Teatern, the Swedish Theatre. A wooden theatre was first built on this site in 1827. The present building dates from 1886 and was designed by St. Petersburg architect Nikolai Benois. The red and gold auditorium also dates from Benois’ day, although the stage was entirely reconstructed in 1932 to commemorate another famous Finnish writer Zaches Topelius (1818-1896).

On the corner of Polyteknikinkatu and Mikkelson is the Academic Bookstore designed by Alvar Aalto and completed in 1969. Finland’s leading bookstore and one of the largest in Europe, the Academic Bookstore also sells magazines, maps, postcards and other accessories on four floors. Black beans can rise in the stylish Café Aalto on the second floor.

The building with imposing columns dates from 1908 and was designed by Lars Sonck to house the Mortgage Society of Finland. Today it houses the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The extra floors above the original facade were added in the 1950s.

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This building was designed by Theodor Höijer in the Neo-Renaissance style, which arrived in Helsinki in the late 19th century. It is referred to as “Grönqvist’s stone wall” after the man who built it. At the time that it was completed in 1885, the building was the largest private apartment block in Scandinavia.

In the centre of the park stands the statue of J. J. Runeberg (1804-1877), Finland’s national poet and author of the Finnish national anthem. The statue was unveiled by his son, Walter Runeberg (1838-1902) in 1885. The female figure decorating the pedestal is the patron muse of Finnish poetry.

From 1969 onwards the renovated building housed the Hotel Kämp. In 1999 it was converted back to house the new Hotel Kämp.

In the park on the other side of Mikkelson stands the statue of poet Eino Leino (1878-1926) designed by Leif Eklund & Eero Saarinen.

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Across the street in Stockmann’s, the largest department store in Scandinavia. A new wing of Stockmann’s opened its first shop in Helsinki in 1962. The main part of the department store was designed by Sigurd Freiman and completed in 1930. Since 1989 the department store has taken up the entire block. The main section was designed by Kristian Gullchell, Eiki Kausero and Timo Vormala.

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Throughout the 20th century Ludviginkatu was designed by Karl Lindgren and marked by a sophisticated Art Deco style. The oldest part was completed in 1906-1908.

The decorative building on Bulevardi is the Old Church, one of the finest examples of historic wooden buildings in Helsinki. It was designed by C. L. Engel and completed in 1826. The altar painting is by R. W. Ekman and was originally commissioned for the new Helsinki Cathedral. The pulpit and silvered chandeliers from the 18th century Virtius Electron Church, which was demolished in the 1920s to make way for Sederholm House. The building is a memorial to Finnish volunteers who died in the Estonian War of Liberation of 1919. The building was later extended and altered. HUT is now used by the University of Helsinki.

The Mannerheimintie office building was later extended and altered. HUT is now used by the University of Helsinki.

To our left is the iconic restaurant Fazer Café, whose original 1930s interior decorating boutiques, as well as restaurants.

On the occasion of his 75th birthday, Werner Söderström (WSOY) publishing house was named after Marshal Mannerheim in 1942. The building was designed by Axel Wickström and completed in 1901, it also features sculptures by Hilda Flodin. Opposite the street at #19 houses the legendary artist restaurant Fazer Café, whose original 1930s interior decorating boutiques, as well as restaurants.

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Smell the sea breeze

Our walk begins at the Market Square. The market is open on weekdays from 6.30am to 4pm and on Saturdays from 6.30am to 4pm. Here you will find many stalls, and some restaurants. The market is open throughout the summer. Archipelago cruises depart from the waterfront daily in summertime, as well as regular ferries to Suomenlinna and Kontulaesi Island, home to Helsinki Zoo. The city’s oldest traditional event, the annual Herring Market, dates back to the 1740s and is held at the Market Square in early October. Passenger terminals for international ferries are situated on either side of the Square.

At the eastern corner of the market stands the Presidential Palace. It was originally designed by Pehr Granstedt as a private residence and completed in 1818. In 1843 it was bought by the State and turned into a palace for visiting Russian tsars. Since 1919 it has been the official residence of the President of the Republic of Finland. Nowadays the palace houses the President’s Office and is used for official functions and receptions. The biggest annual event at the palace is the Independence Day reception on 6 December.

The Supreme Court in Töölö appears today as it did in 1883, when it was originally designed by F. A. Sjöström and completed in 1888. The market hall, Helsinki’s oldest, houses 30 delicatessen stalls, as well as restaurants and cafés.

On the opposite side of the street is the Sandeman’s House. A pelican was designed in 1820 to symbolise the peaceful coexistence and friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union. The female figure stands over five metres tall and was sculpted by Ville Vallgren (1911-1979). The monument was sculpted by Gunnar Finne (1886-1952) and Emil Wikström (1864-1942). Beside Sandeman’s House stands the Church of St. Henry, which is dedicated in 1860. Approximately 8000 people in Helsinki belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

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Atop the hill stands the Observatory designed by C. L. Engel and completed in 1833. The building still houses the Department of Astronomy of the University of Helsinki.

Observatory Hill offers a splendid view of the harbour and Vaiksaari island. One of Finland’s oldest yacht clubs, Nylandska Jaktklubben (NJ) was founded in 1861. The white-painted yachts with the green roof house a popular summer restaurant that is open to the public.

The ‘Shipwrecked’ statue was designed by Robert Stigell (1862-1947) and erected in 1937.

The yellow-brick building down on the waterfront was completed in 1952 as the Olympic terminal for Helsinki’s summer Olympics. The terminal offers daily ferry connections to Stockholm.

The Statue of Peace was erected in 1968 to symbolise the peace and friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union. The female figure stands over five metres tall and was sculpted by Essi Rennu (1911-1979).

At the corner of Ullanlinna and Teltanhaartti stands the Russian Embassy that was built after the Second World War. Next door is the Russian Consulate and residential buildings for embassy and consulate workers and their families.

The granite and soapstone embassy was completed in 1952 as part of Finland’s reparations to the Soviet Union.

Opposite the Russian Embassy is the Roman Catholic Church of St. Henry, which was dedicated in 1960. Approximately 6000 people in Finland belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

The white marble palace was designed by Eliel Saarinen and completed in 1916. Originally the private residence of a wealthy merchant, it was designed by C. L. Engel and completed in the 1830s. The building now houses one of Helsinki’s best restaurants.

The red, white and yellow-brick Old Market Hall was designed by Gustaf Nyström and completed in 1888. The market hall, Helsinki’s oldest, houses 30 deli stalls, as well as restaurants and cafés.

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The red granite obelisk commemorates the German soldiers who fell in the Finnish Civil War and particular the 123 who perished on the SS Helsingborg in 1918 while sailing back to Germany. The monument was sculpted by Gunnar Finne (1886-1892) and completed in 1919.

The red marble palace was designed by Eliel Saarinen and completed in 1916. Originally the private residence of a wealthy merchant, it was later transferred to State ownership. The interior features sculptures by Gunnar Finne (1886-1952) and Eero Wikström (1884-1942). Beside the entrance is a sculpture entitled ‘Lynxes’ by Gunnar Finne and erected in 1939. The building currently houses the Labour Court.
Kaivopuisto is one of the finest parks in Helsinki. It was created in the early 1890s on what had previously been wasteland on the initiative of businessman Henrik Bergström. At the time Russian high society was forbidden from travelling outside the Russian Empire for political reasons. Henric Bergström developed it into a lively and cosmopolitan spa town. To cater to the new clientele, a spa building was built by the sea and an entertainment complex, Kaivohuone, in the centre of the park. A regular steamers service also began sailing between Helsinki, St. Petersburg and Reval (Tallinn).

Once the ban on foreign travel was lifted during the Crimean War in the 1850s, Helsinki’s spa business declined. In 1880 the park was transferred to the City of Helsinki. The spa building was destroyed during a fire in 1944. Nowadays the district of Kaivopuisto overlooks the park a popular residential area among diplomats, and the park itself remains very popular among Helsinki residents, especially for walks. Open air concerts and other major events are also held in the park in summertime.

Kaivopuisto still stands in the centre of the park. Once the centre of social life during the summer season – one of the oldest in Helsinki – it is nowadays open only in summertime and on special occasions.

Behind Kaivohuone stands the “Tree of Independence” and plaque commemorating Finland’s independence. The fine tree was donated to the Finnish Parliament by Conal General Rudolf Ray in the 1930s.

The red granite “Fishing Bear” (1886-1912) and erected in 1912.

Further off is the Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress that was built on six islands in the 18th century.

The statue of great Arvid Månén (1876-1946) was sculpted by Viktor Janson (1886-1956) and unveiled in 1952.

On the site of the former Kaivopuisto Spa now stands the popular Café Ursula.

At the top of the cliff is the Urassaari observatory, which is still used to observe the sea. On May Day morning students gather here and in the park below to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Kaivopuisto, in Helsinki – is nowadays open only in summertime and on special occasions.

The granite rocks and sandy beaches of Hietasaari Island are a popular attraction for summer day visitors. Ferries to Hietasaari depart from the pier behind the round café. Nearby Uusmaa Island is also a great place for swimming and renting a sauna. In summer a pontoon bridge connects the island to the mainland, and you can walk directly over the ice when conditions allow. In summertime the ferry to the island departs from the corner with the inland chapel.

At the end of the shore path is a memorial for seafarers. The angel with the flame was designed by Jukka Kerttula (1910-1990) and Eero Eerikäinen (1918-) and erected in 1968.

From Merikatu we enter the prestigious Jugend style district of Eira that was built in the early 20th century.

The statue of poet Arvid Månén (1876-1946) was sculpted by Viktor Janson (1886-1956) and unveiled in 1952.

The statue of the poet Martti Huttu (1912-1999) was unveiled in 1997.

The square is named after the architect C. L. Engel and was designed by Jukka Kerttula (1910-1990) and completed in 1967.

The Design Museum is located at Konttori 27 in a former student union building that was designed by K. Hild/Segments and completed in 1901.

The Old Fire Station with the redbrick tower was designed by Theodor Höijer and completed in 1891.

Following Kaivopuisto we come to theassoil Museum of Finnish Architecture which houses an extensive photo archive of Finnish architecture, as well as a library. The building itself was designed by Magnus Schön and completed in 1989.

The sculpture “Topelius and Children” was designed by Ilon Vellonen (1945-1975) and erected in the School Park in 1952. Zacharias Topelius (1818-1889) is an important Finnish historian and author.

On the right is Havisvika, perhaps the most notable Jugend style street in Helsinki.

From Tehtaanlinna turn left onto Kansan kiinteä, on the right is the legendary local restaurant House Sea Horse that dates back to the 1500s, and opposite the restaurant is the KOM Theatre, which was founded by Per-Olov Kinnunen in 1956 and continues up Kerkeväntie, which has many nice boutiques, cafés and restaurants.

St. John’s Church was designed in Neo-Gothic style by Swedish architect A. E. Miller and completed in 1881. It is the biggest church in Helsinki and has excellent acoustics, making it a popular venue for concerts, particularly of large choral works.

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Explore the former working class districts

The buildings in the Kallio district originally constituted several working-class residential and neighborhood areas. The area was developed to accommodate the needs of the growing working class population. The buildings were mostly two-story wooden houses, and the district was known for its close-knit community and strong neighborhood associations.

Kallio, Alppila and Merihaka districts

The buildings in the Kallio district originally constituted several working-class residential and neighborhood areas. The area was developed to accommodate the needs of the growing working class population. The buildings were mostly two-story wooden houses, and the district was known for its close-knit community and strong neighborhood associations.

Our walk begins from Hakaniemi Market, which was originally built on reclaimed land. Since opening in 1912, the market has been a popular and busy center of local life. At the northern end of the market is the Round House (Ympyrätalo) on the northern edge of the market square. With its working class heritage, the apartments in Hakaniemi are traditionally small. The building is 76 meters. The building was fully renovated in 2004 according to the design of Jukka Sirén, son of Heikki and Kaija. The glass-enclosed ground floor in the courtyard adds space and light.

The Hakaniemi Market is a statue entitled “The Symbol” that was sculpted by Hannu Sirén, the second son of Heikki and Kaija, and unveiled in 1985. The diameter of the completely spherical steel ball is three meters.

The symbol sculpture created by Sörnäinen to the east. There are three main parts of Kallioki, Siltasaari, the “Linja” avenues and Turkukahdenkatu.

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Kallio, Alppila and Merihaka districts

Karusquino Park gets its name (literally “bear Park”) from the sculpture in the park, which depicts two bears. The sculpture was unveiled in 1924 and is a memorial to the bear “The Bear on the Anthill” which was sculpted in red granite by Juusi Martyn (1889-1970) and represents a bear eating a fish. It is located in Kallio. Martyn served as the official taxidermist at the Zoological Society of Zoology, allowing him to achieve a similar degree of accuracy and likeness as the von Wright brothers did in their famous paintings.

Kallio Fire Station was completed in three phases, the earliest of which was designed by K. Lindqvist and dated back to 1914. In 1978 the fire station was converted into Helsinki’s Central Library according to the design of Seppo Karppinen. The station houses a comprehensive fire fleet of fire engines, including the sympathetic H161, which was designed to fit through Helsinki’s narrow courtyards entrance.

Perched on top of the hill is the grey granite “The Bear on the Anthill” which was sculpted by K. Lindqvist in 1924. The statue, depicting the national animal of Finland, the brown bear, was unveiled on Mothers’ Day in 1926.

The Helsinki Deaconesses Institute was founded after the first evangelical deaconess institute that was founded in 1836 in Karinrena. The Helsinki Deaconesses Institute was founded in 1867 upon the initiative of Aino Karolina (1816-1892), the Finnish-born wife of a Russian colonel. One of the wealthiest and most famous Finns of her day, the former maid of honour of the Russian tsarina was a major benefactor and supported the deaconesses institute also financially.

Operations began very readily with an 8-bed hospital in rented facilities. In addition to treating patients, the institute trained women to become deaconesses, provided assistance to the poor and controlled smallpox and cholera epidemics. The oldest part of the present building was designed by August Wrede and Magnus Schönfeldt and completed in 1907. The Helsinki Deaconesses Institute exhibits the lives of deaconesses and the history of women’s health care in Finland. The complex includes a church that was also designed by Wrede and dedicated in 1898.

On hand for a summer day one can catch the scent of cotton candy and hear excited screams coming from Linnanmäki Amusement Park. In 1929, the park was opened to the public from late April to September, and Sea Life Helsinki is open year round.

Our walk ends back at Hakaniemi Market, where you can enjoy a nice coffee at one of the market cafés.

Rautelin Untelasto was opened in 1996, the statue is a memorial to the famous Yrjönkatu Swimming Hall, which was completed in 1928. Hakaniemi’s old saunas, especially Kotiharju Sauna, are a popular venue for concerts thanks to its excellent acoustics. In the evening, a traditional washing lady is on duty, who is said to visit only the most celebrated sauna couples in Finland.

In the half of the 20th century nearly every block in Helsinki had its public sauna. Most have long since disappeared, replaced by either more private saunas inside even the smallest apartments. Kotiharju Sauna is a public sauna technical to the original draft. The building was commissioned by the Finnish Communist Party. Kotiharju is a popular venue for concerts thanks to its excellent acoustics. Originally the location was meant to house only office and commerce. In the evening, a traditional washing lady is on duty, who is said to visit only the most celebrated sauna couples in Finland.

Kallio Cathedral is also unique in Finland in that it was designed to fit through Helsinki’s narrow courtyards entrance. The seven church bells play a melody composed by none other than Jean Sibelius; they can be heard from all over Kallio. It was also designed by Wrede and dedicated in 1898.

From here on a summer day one can catch the scent of cotton candy and hear excited screams coming from Linnanmäki Amusement Park. In 1929, the park was opened to the public from late April to September, and Sea Life Helsinki is open year round.

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Kallio, Alppila and Merihaka districts

Karusquino Park gets its name (literally “bear Park”) from the sculpture in the park, which depicts two bears. The sculpture was unveiled in 1924 and is a memorial to the bear “The Bear on the Anthill” which was sculpted in red granite by Juusi Martyn (1889-1970) and represents a bear eating a fish. It is located in Kallio. Martyn served as the official taxidermist at the Zoological Society of Zoology, allowing him to achieve a similar degree of accuracy and likeness as the von Wright brothers did in their famous paintings.

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A ferry departs in summertime from the Hakaniemi Market, where you can enjoy a nice coffee at one of the market cafés.
Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress

Experience this World Heritage Site and lively city district

Travel through time from the Swedish and Russian periods to independent Finland

Suomenlinna is a maritime fortress that was built on the islands off Helsinki under the command of Augustin Ehrensvärd beginning in 1748. At the time, Finland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden, and the fortress was designed to protect its eastern border. The construction project was one of the biggest undertakings by Sweden, and it was partially financed also by France. The whole fortress was given the name “Suomenlinna,” which Finnish-speakers preferred to pronounce as “Sveaborg,” which Swedish-speakers pronounced as “Sveaborg.” The fortress surrendered to the Russians in 1808 after a short siege, and for the next 110 years Viapori was a Russian garrison. During the Crimean War a large fleet of English and French warships bombarded the fortress for two days and nights, causing considerable damage. The fortress entered its third period in May 1918 when the new Finnish name “Suomenlinna” – the Fortress of Finland – was adopted.

Suomenlinna was administrated by the Finnish military all the way until 1973, when it was handed over to civilian administration. In 1995 Suomenlinna became a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a unique monument to European military architecture. Today Suomenlinna is one of Finland’s most popular sights and home also to 850 Helsinki residents. Suomenlinna is administrated by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna under the Ministry of Education and Culture. The story from the mainland arrives at the Jetty Barracks on Mustasaari Island, where you will also find a map of Suomenlinna. Our walk follows the main route through the fortress, which is marked on the island’s maps and with blue signposts along the way.

The long jetty Jetty Barracks are the most notable building from the Russian period. The barracks were built from 1868 to 1870 as the main gateway to the fortress. The east wing of the barracks today houses a recording studio, work rooms for musicians and a kiosk that also serves as a post office. The west wing houses the Suomenlinna Brewery Restaurant Panimo, where the islands’ own beer is brewed. The building also hosts a gallery run by the Helsinki Society of Artists, which presents different exhibitions throughout the year.

To the right over the white wooden bridge is Pikkus Mustasaari, where the Naval Academy maintains the islands’ military traditions. The academy claims to have the world’s largest wood-heated sauna. The courtyard of the Naval Academy is closed to the public.

Our walk continues through the archway under the Jetty Barracks.

The wooden houses along the main road were built by Russian merchants in the 19th century to serve as both their shops and family residences. Today the houses are among the few private residential buildings on Suomenlinna, and one of them operates a café.

On the right a redbrick school building that was completed in 1868-9. Over the decades both Russian and Finnish children attended the school. The building, which today serves as a school camp and hostel, once housed a prison camp, as well as the offices of the War Booty Department, a soldier’s home and an officers’ club.

Suomenlinna Church was originally built as a Russian Orthodox garrison church in 1854 and dedicated to Alexander Nevski. At the time the church featured five towers with onion-shaped domes. The appearance of the church, which is a prominent feature of Helsinki’s view to the south, was changed soon after Finland gained independence, when it was converted into an Evangelical Lutheran church. The present appearance of the church dates back to the 1930s. The church steeple doubles as a lighthouse that still guides ships – only at the end of the eastern ridge does it resemble its original Finnish form.

The Inventory Chamber and its art and decorative works from the mid-18th century to the early 19th century is housed in a yellow stone building. One of the first multistorey residential buildings in Finland, it is still used as a residence.

Our walk continues past the Ehrensvärd Crosswork and turns right at the end of the east wing.

To the right of the road is the Ehrensvärd Crosswork, the largest single group of buildings on Suomenlinna. These long fortifications form the shape of a crown with redbrick walls at either end. King Gustav III of Sweden laid the foundation stone of the building in 1756. The northern façade of the crosswork, its main line of defence, is built of granite with embellishments for muskets and cannons. On either side of the gateway in the low curtain wall is a sandstone ornament depicting the Swedish crest with its three crowns. In the Russian era, attempts were made to hack off some of the crowns. The building was badly damaged during the bombardment of Suomenlinna in 1865 at the time of the Crimean War. During the 1990s parts of the crosswork were converted into apartments and a daycare centre and library maintained by the City of Helsinki. The offices of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna and two function rooms are situated in the east wing.

The yellow stone building to the left of the road beside the church park is the largest residential building from the Swedish period. It was built from 1764 to 1765 to house the families of officers. Its Baroque influenced external architecture is exceptional in Finland. One of the few multi-storey residential buildings in Finland, it is still used as a residence.

Municipal forties (FRL) operate from the Koirakatu Square each summer season, and the JT-Line waterbus operates in summertime.

The ferry from the mainland arrives at the Jetty Barracks. From here there are ferry services to Tuomiokirkko, Pikku Mustasaari, and the Market Square to Suomenlinna. The ferry from Tuomiokirkko (church) also operates year round, and the JT -Line waterbus operates in summertime.
Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress

Suomenlinna is a UNESCO World Heritage Site built by Augustin Ehrensvärd. Suomenlinna was intended to be the most modern and powerful fortification, with the most advanced technology of the time. It was intended as a link in the line of defence from Stockholm to St. Petersburg.

Continuing on the bridge to Suomenlinna and turn right after the redbrick residential building housing the Café Restaurant Chapman and then to the Hopken Bastion wall into the courtyard.

The Great Courtyard was designed by Augustin Ehrensvärd and built between 1765 and 1770 in the baroque style. Representing the first monumental works in Finland, its architecture is based on symmetry and false perspective. The Great Courtyard was divided into two green stone bastions, the fortress commander’s house and two cubic courtyards. Upon completion the courtyard served as the main square for the fortress. Since 1954 the Ehrensvärd Museum has been housed in the commander’s house. The museum presents miniature models of the fortress from the Swedish period, as well as historical paintings and weapons.

Augustin Ehrensvärd was laid to rest in the Ehrensvärd Museum in 1745. Upon completion the town was the capital of the fortress. During the 1760s the famous archeological fleet was built in the dry dock under the supervision of Fredrik Handöll. After Finland gained independence, the State arqueological works operated in the dry dock, while the inner dry dock served as a base for Sweden’s submarine fleet. Following the Second World War the area was used to build ships as part of Finland’s war reports to the Soviet Union. The historic dry dock is still used today for repairing old wooden sailing vessels. Today the area also includes a working workshop, sailing facilities and guest harbour with café. The grey stone building to the left of the dry dock is the tenaille von Fersen, which originally housed the pump for the dry dock, as well as the gunnery’s stockroom and flourmill. The former granary of the old bakery has been restored as a function room where conferences, weddings, concerts and theatre performances are held.

Continue back through the Great Courtyard past the yellow wooden warehouses towards Piper’s Park beyond the grey wall bastion.

The fortifications on the southern tip of the island were the last to be completed, starting from the 18th century. Named after Swedish Crown Prince Gustav, who later became King Gustav III, the Kustaanmiekka Bastion, a central fortress outwork, was finished in 1774. The grey stone bastion was built along the wall into the courtyard. The bastion was named after the red brick building on the right side.

On the left of the main path are the bastions Chapman and Kustaanmiekka (“Furrow”) and contours on the right hyvä Omatio (“Good Conscience”), a well-preserved national monument. The bastion was named after the red brick building on the right side.

On the grass lawn on the other side of the Kustaanmiekka is a garrisons’ cannon covered in turf. Inside is a workshop chamber for garrisons’ cannons for service and repairs or fortifications. The fireproof stone grey sharp-cornered bastions are connected by a straight wall with a gate in the middle that was later widened. According to the legend, the unusual names were the response of Augustin Ehrensvärd to criticism he had received in his lifetime from the War Department. The Customs Museum presents the history of customs, including the history of the development of Suomenlinna and can be admired especially beautiful park, complete with trimmed hedges, fruit trees and flowerbeds. The original site of the villa and pond date back to the Suomenlinna yards, which was a service for fresh water, and in reality a water port. The grounds were renovated in 1783 into an English-style landscape park in which special attention was paid to the views opening up from the paths. The park walls are lined with hedges and lines of trees. The Café Piper was built on the remains of the original villa in 1828. In summertime lilacs, roses, irises and rare plants flower in the park.

Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress

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1. Helsinki Cathedral  
2. Senate Square  
3. University of Helsinki (Main Building)  
4. National Library of Finland  
5. Helsinki City Hall and City Hall Quarter  
6. Old Market Hall  
7. Departure point for sightseeing cruises  
8. Suomenlinna waterbus (JT-line)  
9. Suomenlinna ferry (Helsinki City Transport)  
10. Helsinki Zoo (Korkeasaari)  
11. Helsinki Zoo on Korkeasaari Island  
12. Helsinki City Museum  
13. Helsinki Waterfront  
14. Helsinki City Library  
15. Tourist Information  
16. Esplanade Park (departure point for Helsinki Expert sightseeing buses)  
17. Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde  
18. Uspenski Orthodox Cathedral  
19. Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress  
20. Ateneum Art Museum  
21. Central Railway Station  
22. General Post Office and Post Museum  
23. tennis Palace Cinema Complex, Museum of Cultures, and tennis Palace Art Museum  
24. Tennispalatsi (Glass Palace)  
25. Hakaniemi Market and Market Hall  
26. Kaapelitehdas (Cable Factory)  
27. Linnanmäki Amusement Park and Sea Life  

Helsinki - Visitors Guide provides a comprehensive package of information for visitors to the city, including sections on most popular sights and attractions, restaurants, services, shopping opportunities, and sightseeing tours and excursions. Pick up your own free copy from the Helsinki City Tourist Information or download it in 11 languages from our homepage: www.visithelsinki.fi

HELSINKI IN FIGURES

- Helsinki founded in 1550
- Capital of Finland since 1812
- Population: 580,000
- Population of Greater Helsinki: 1.2 million
- Finnish speakers: 86%
- Swedish speakers: 6%
- Other language groups: 8%
- Foreign nationals: 5.5%
- Evangelical Lutherans: 72%
- Orthodox: 2%
- Total area: 566 km²
- Coastline: 98 km
- Islands: 315
- Hotels: 45
- Restaurants: 900
- Universities and colleges: 7
- Mobile phones per 100 inhabitants: 96
- Average temperatures yearly: +6.6°C (warmest month: July) +19.2°C (coldest month: February) -5°C

Finland in Figures

- Independent since 1917
- Total area: 338,000 km²
- Population: 5.2 million
- EU member since 1995
- Introduced euro in 2002
Helsinki is a modern European cultural city whose urban cosmopolitan lifestyle exists in perfect harmony with nature. Surrounded by the sea and its own exotic archipelago, Helsinki offers visitors an endless number of possibilities. These possibilities are represented by Best of Helsinki nominees. They are all distinctive in their own fields and demonstrate various great alternatives to fully enjoy your stay in Helsinki.

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