

ECM 2012 Satellite

Fourier Analysis and Pseudo-Differential Operators: information about the Helsinki area, Finland

The satellite in Helsinki, Finland: The ECM 2012 satellite meeting on *Fourier Analysis and Pseudo-Differential Operators* will be held on Monday–Friday 25–29 (with conference trip on Saturday 30 June) at the Otaniemi campus main building of Aalto University (street address *Otakaari 1, Espoo*), 10 km away from the center of Helsinki, the capital of Finland.

Disclaimer: we cannot guarantee the validity of prices, web addresses etc.

Climate and daylight hours in Helsinki

As Helsinki is located on the 60° latitude (about at the same level as St. Petersburg in Russia), many foreign visitors are surprised about the amount of daylight in the mid-summer: approximately, the sun sets at 11pm, and rises at 4am. However, even at the darkest hour (roughly at 1:20am in the summer time) the sky is still considerably illuminated. Consequently then, in order to get better sleep, some people prefer to cover their eyes.

The coldest month in Helsinki is usually either January or February, The January monthly temperature averages during years 1961–2000 have ranged from -8.5°C to -1.7°C . The corresponding July monthly temperature averages have ranged from $+13.5^\circ\text{C}$ to $+20.7^\circ\text{C}$. Currently it is impossible to accurately predict the weather for many days in advance; for the latter part of June the usual day-time temperatures could be anything between, say, $+15^\circ\text{C}$ and $+25^\circ\text{C}$, but the recent couple of years have shown that over $+30^\circ\text{C}$ can happen. In summer, the 24-hour-temperature-variation is typically 10°C , with coldest hour at about 5–6am (after sunrise) and warmest about between 2pm and 5pm. Freezing temperatures should be impossible, however: rarely one sees snow/hail/sleet in summer. In June/July in Helsinki, during a day it might rain with say +40% probability (but sometimes there are long dry/wet spells), but the monthly total rain amount might be only about 5–7cm.

Up-to-date weather forecast by Finnish Meteorological Institute can be found at

<http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/weather/Helsinki>

together with updated weather radar pictures for predicting rains nationwide

at <http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/rain-and-cloudiness>

and especially nearby Helsinki at

<http://testbed.fmi.fi/>

Currency exchange etc.

The currency unit in Finland is Euro. Many bank offices (Nordea, Osuuspankki, Säästöpankki etc) and e.g. Forex agencies exchange major (and some minor)

currencies.

How to get to central Helsinki?

Arrival by air: The Helsinki–Vantaa international airport is located 15 km north of the center of Helsinki. In day-time, there are plenty of shops/restaurants open there.

Taxi to the center costs about 30–40 euros, and it takes about 20–30 minutes depending on the traffic. The bus line 615 (or in night-time 620N) leaves every 15–30 minutes, and travels between the airport and (the east side of) Central Railway Station (4 euros, 30–45 minutes). Finnair City Bus (line 620) leaves every 20 minutes (6 euros, 30 minutes, route Airport Terminal T2–Airport Terminal T1–...–Ooppera–Hesperianpuisto–Central Railway Station (west side)).

Arrival by train: Helsinki central railway station can easily be reached e.g. from St. Petersburg by train (3+1/2 hours) or Moscow (overnight), and naturally from most places in Finland.

Arrival by boat: There are plenty of regular boats connecting Helsinki to e.g. Stockholm, Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Travemünde etc. The passenger harbours in Helsinki are well-connected to the center by public transport (trams, buses).

Public transport in greater Helsinki area

The local transport in Helsinki buses, local trains, metro, and trams. The most useful website for “how to get from A to B” is at

<http://www.hsl.fi>

with an English language option: you may type street addresses, date and the time to find recommended public transport options.

The greater Helsinki area consists of cities called Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo (surrounding the tiny town of Kauniainen). The public transport ticket price depends on whether one crosses the city borders: a single ticket within one city (“Zone 1”) costs 2.70 euros and is valid for 60 minutes after purchase/stamping, and a single ticket in the whole greater Helsinki area (“Zone 2”) costs 4.50 euros and is valid for 90 minutes. You may also consider buying a touristic ticket, valid for 1 to 7 days, with unlimited travel (validated at the first use), with price formula $(d + 1)p$ euros, where d is the number of days and currently (in 2012) $p = 6$ for “Zone 2”: such tickets are sold e.g. at “R-kioski” shops, at ticket booths at major public transport stations, and at ticket vending machines in many stations. During the late night (2am–4:30am), some extra charges may apply in public transport.

The conference takes place at the Otaniemi campus of Aalto University in Espoo, while most of the hotels and cultural events are located in Helsinki. The airport resides in Vantaa. Thus many participants will benefit from “Zone 2” tickets.

How to get to Campus?

The Otaniemi Campus main building of Aalto University is located at the street address *Otakaari 1, Espoo*, and the conference venue is at the opposite side of the street at *Otakaari 4* in the building called *Konetekniikka 1*. The main building (red bricks with a quite distinctive shape!) is easy to recognize from almost any direction: then you know where you should get out of the bus (which otherwise could take you far away from the university...).

From airport: By taxi (30–40 euros, 30 minutes). By bus, in average the most convenient way is to go to the center, and take another bus there, see below.

From center: Plenty of **bus lines** (bus time 20-35 minutes, plus possible walking and waiting for 5-15 minutes) take you to the Otaniemi Campus: e.g. 102 and 103 from the *Kamppi bus station*, 194 and 195 from (the west side of) the *central railway station*. Buses 102T/103T/194A/195N are slower (than the corresponding 102/103/194/195) by couple of minutes due to slightly longer routes, but are definitely good options should you encounter them.

From “Töölö Towers” Hotel: Either walk along the Hesperia Park to Mannerheimintie to catch buses 194 or 195, or walk to the Kamppi bus station for buses 102 or 103. Buses 102T/103T/194A/195N are slower (than the corresponding 102/103/194/195) by couple of minutes due to slightly longer routes, but are definitely good options should you encounter them.

From Tapiola (e.g. Sokos Hotel Tapiola): Make sure that you take the buses to *Otaniemi* direction (roughly towards east). Any of the following bus lines will do: 10, 15, 194, 194A, 195, 195N, 550.

Accommodation

In the following, there is a short list of recommended places, with good connections to the conference site. In any case, there are many more hotels in central Helsinki, prices ranging usually from 70 euros/night to almost infinity: Please check e.g. www.booking.com. The local organizers are happy help too.

Töölö Towers at *Pohjoinen Hesperiankatu 23a*,
www.unihome.fi
University research visitor hotel.

Hostel Academica at *Hietaniemenkatu 14*,
www.hostelacademica.fi
Close to the Kamppi bus station in the central Helsinki. Hostel during summer, student accommodation during rest of the year.

Hotel Anna at *Annankatu 1*,
www.hotelanna.fi
Close to the Kamppi bus station in the central Helsinki.

Hotel Helka at *Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 23*,
www.helka.fi
Close to the Kamppi bus station in the central Helsinki.

Hotel Arthur at *Vuorikatu 19*,
www.hotelarthur.fi
Short distance east from the central railway station.

Omena Hotel (at *Eerikinkatu 24*, *Lönnrotinkatu 13* and *Yrjönkatu 30*,
www.omenahotels.com) Cheap self-service hotels without reception personnel.

Glo Hotel at *Leppävaarankatu 1 in Espoo*,
www.hotelglo.fi/glo-espoo-sello
Next to the large Sello shopping mall in Leppävaara district in Espoo, well-connected by local buses to the campus (5 km, “Zone 1”), well-connected by local trains to the central Helsinki (10 km, “Zone 2”).

Sokos Hotel Tapiola at *Tapionaukio 3 in Espoo*
www.sokoshotels.fi/en/hotels/espoo/
In the classic 1950s architecture Tapiola district, well-connected by local buses to the campus (3 km away, “Zone 1”), well-connected by local buses to the central Helsinki (12 km, “Zone 2”).

Radisson Blu (SAS) Otaniemi at *Otaranta 2 in Espoo*,
www.radissonblu.com/hotel-espoo
Less than 1 km away from the congress site. 10 km away from the central railway station (“Zone 2”): to/from center, take buses 102, 103, 194, 195 (or 102T, 103T, 194A, 195N).

Eurohostel at *Linnankatu 9*,

<http://www.eurohostel.eu>

Couple of kilometers away from the center in Katajanokka district, with tram connection.

Stadion Hostel at the north entrance to the 1952 Summer Olympic Stadium at *Pohjoinen Stadiontie 4*,

www.stadionhostel.fi

Couple of kilometers away from the center. Cheap very-non-luxurious dormitory for 20 euros/night for young and adventurous. ;) Single rooms at 38 euros/night, doubles at 47 euros/night (in 2011). Notice that European Athletics Championships will take place in the Helsinki Olympic Stadium on June 27 – July 1, 2012.

To eat (and drink)

Once in Finland, please consider experiencing the Finnish cuisine. Below, we will list some tips in that direction, without forgetting international options.

What does Finnish cuisine mean? For historical reasons, one could think of a mixture between Scandinavian (Swedish) and Russian cooking, but there are many national features involved. Due to the four different seasons, time of the year dictates the supply of ingredients, though most items are served all year round. So, some local delicacies:

- fresh-water fish species are quite different from salt-water species: for instance, please try e.g. Arctic Char (*nieriä/rautu*), bream (*lahna*), burbot (*made*), common roach (*särki*), perch (*ahven*), pike (*hauki*), pike-perch (*kuha*), trout (*taimen*), vendace (*muikku*), whitefish (*siika*), zander (*kuha*) — after all, there are almost uncountably many rivers/brooks and over 10^5 lakes in Finland (by definition, a Finnish lake has an area of at least 10^4 square meters...).
- salt-water fish like Baltic herring (*silakka*), salmon (*lohi/merilohi*).
- crayfish from rivers, lakes (in latter part of July, August) and Baltic sea.
- game from forest wilderness (bear, reindeer (semi-wild animal), elk/moose, wild boar, different deer species, hares, wild birds like grouses, wild ducks, geese, ...)
- wild (non-cultivated!) berry species from forests and swamps: blueberry (*mustikka*), lingonberry (*puolukka*), sea-buckthornberry (*tyrni*), cloudberry (*lakka/suomuurain*), raspberry (*vadelma*), arctic raspberry (*mesimarja*), crowberry (*variksenmarja*), wild strawberry (*metsämansikka*), cranberry (*karpalo*), rowanberry (*pihlajanmarja*), bilberry (*juolukka*).
- hundreds of edible wild (non-cultivated!) mushrooms: some common examples are chanterelle (*kantarelli/keltavahvero*), funnel chanterelle/yellowfoot

(*suppilovahvero*), black chanterelle (*mustatorvisieni*), northern milk-cap (*haaparousku*), brittlegill mushrooms (*hapero(sienet)*), cep/boletus (*herkkutatti*), but especially recommendable is the delicious false morel (*korvasieni*), which is lethally poisonous if not prepared right! Curiously, matsutake (*tuoksuvalmuska/männnyntuoksuvalmuska*) which is highly praised in Japan can rarely be found in Finnish dishes, even though it is common in Finland.

- cultivated domestic special vegetables and fruits, like Brassica rapa/white turnip (*nauris*), rutabaga/Brassica napus/yellow turnip (*lanttu*, bred mixing turnip and cabbage), new potatoes in June/July,
- wild vegetables, e.g. nettles (*nokkonen*) etc (especially at Restaurant Juri, see below)
- traditional treats for afternoon coffee, e.g. cinnamon buns (*pulla*).
- salmiakki! Main ingredient ammonium chloride, in its pure form a white-greyish powder, often cured with sugar etc. Either usual salmiakki candies, or salmiakki-chocolates. Dozens of variants, from salty/strong to sweet and mild.
- traditional Christmas dishes (in December): ham in different styles, beetroot-onion-apple salad, stews (carrot/potato/swede), Finnish gingerbread/Christmas tarts/Christmas cakes...
- traditional Easter dishes (in spring): *mämmi* (malted rye pudding, possibly with milk/cream and sugar), pasha (Russian style quark/curd pudding)

What drinks could accompany your meal? You may follow the recommendations at the restaurant, and nowadays people often take fairly typical international wines etc., but there are domestic alternatives:

- Alcoholic drinks: First of all, the traditional Finnish strong beer called *sahti*, one of the ancient existing (albeit a bit rare nowadays) beer types in the world: very much recommended for strong tastes, like game/meat dishes, but can be enjoyed on its own (check Restaurant Zetor (*Lammin Sahti*) or St. Urho's Pub (*Finlandia Sahti*). There is a rapidly increasing culture of micro-breweries, producing interesting beer types (ask for producers like Stadin Panimo, Suomenlinnan Panimo, Plevna, Huvila/Malmgård, Stallhagen/Ålands bryggeri, Prykmestar/Vakka-Suomen Panimo, Teerenpeli, Laitilan Wirvoitusjuomatehdas, Lammin Sahti, Beer Hunters, Bruuveri). Sweet berry liquors (cloudberry, lingonberry, seabuckthornberry, cranberry etc) at the end of the dinner are worth trying. There have been some recent experiments to produce Finnish wines, but we do not recommend these (well, of course you can try, for exotic experience). Traditionally, Finland has been a vodka-country, but maybe nowadays the trend is towards softer drinks.

- Non-alcoholic drinks: The ordinary tap water is potable and actually a good refreshing choice. There are good bottled Finnish sparkling/non-sparkling mineral waters, too. Some may enjoy home-made beer (whose Russian equivalent is *kvas*, about 0.1% in alcohol) or mead (honey/sugar sweetened home-made lemonade, about 0.1% in alcohol). Even adults may enjoy sourmilk/milk or berry/fruit juices at dinner. Coffee/tea at the end of dinner is often served; espresso style culture is still at the early stages of development in the country.

There are hundreds of restaurants downtown in Helsinki. However, the choice is more limited nearby the university, especially in the summer time. Please notice that the Finns tend to be “early birds” compared to people from e.g. Mediterranean: Typical lunch time is between 11am and noon (sometimes till 2pm, but this is rare), and it is ok to have a dinner already at 5pm or 6pm (8pm is relatively late then...). In many restaurants, the kitchen might close at 10pm or even at 9pm! In hotels, breakfast may start at 6am-7am during the working week.

Restaurants nearby campus

For lunch at the campus, the student cafeteria-restaurants offer lunch for 4–8 euros (salad, soup/heftier meal, bread, water/juice/home-made beer/milk/sourmilk) from Monday to Friday, usually between 11am and 1pm. Please ask the locals about which places are open.

At the Dipoli building (300 m from the main building towards Radisson SAS Hotel, which also has its own restaurant) there is a student cafeteria, and furthermore a privately owned pizzeria (with alcoholic drinks to serve, too). Architecture enthusiasts may find the Dipoli building worth visiting, both inside and outside.

There is also a grocery store and a kiosk selling groceries at a small shopping mall 200m from the main building, nearby the Dipoli building.

Restaurants in Tapiola

Tapiola is located 3km east from the Otaniemi campus, reached by several bus lines (e.g. 10, 15, 550). There are several restaurants in the area, ranging from ethnic places and kebab-pizzerias to a gourmet establishment.

Naturally, Sokos Hotel Tapiola has its own restaurant, but far more interesting (and more expensive) is *Tapiontori*, located at Kauppamiehentie 1 in Tapiola in Espoo (see www.tapiontori.com).

Restaurants in central Helsinki

As said, there is a wealth of restaurants downtown. Google searches and tourist services provide almost too much information, so let us offer you some recommendations. In the recent years the pleasant trend in the restaurants has been the ambitious use of traditional local high-quality ingredients.

The locations, opening hours, contact information, menus etc can be found by Google; the addresses are also in e.g. *Helsinki This Week* brochure. In the following list, the price information like 8–12/20–25/7–9 refers to euro price ranges for *Starters/Mains/Desserts* in June 2011 (so some modest inflation is to be expected by 2012), without drinks.

Reservations? Table reservations are recommended especially for smaller establishments — moreover, many restaurants can be closed during the summer holidays, often in latter part of June, July and early August: it is better to check up-to-date information.

Tippling in restaurants? If you are *very* satisfied with your dining experience, you may consider rounding up your bill by 1–10 percent, or leaving some change on the table. In Finland, however, even in a fine restaurant with a good service, you are not really expected to leave a tip (no matter some people may claim).

Recommended? In the following, some subjective recommendations are marked by ★, based sometimes on exceptionally good food, or historic atmosphere, or sense of humor... ;)

Exotic(?) Finnish or Laplandish (traditional dishes and domestic ingredients, non-luxury but sometimes pricey):

Ravintola Hiisi. 6–13/12–25/8.
Ravintola Lappi. 9–20/13–38/10.
Ravintola Saaga. 10–21/21–28/10–12.
★ Ravintola Savotta. 10–22/18–43/10–12. ;)
Ravintola Savu. 8–11/18–27/7–13.
★ Ravintola Zetor. 7–14/14–30/6–8 (sahti!) ;)

Modern/traditional Finnish cuisine:

★ Ravintola Aino. 9–22/15–34/9–13.
Ravintola Aito.
Ravintola Ateljé Finne. 9/24/6–9.
★ Ravintola Elite (est. 1932/1938). 12–14/18–27/4–9.
Ravintola FishMarket. 12–17/24–35/12–15.
Ravintola Graniittilinna. 12–18/19–33/9–14.
Ravintola Havis. 17–18/29–32/12–13.
★ Ravintola Helkan keittiö (in Hotel Helka). 8–10/13–25/7.
Ravintola Juuri (est. 2004). 5–13/25–28/6–8.
★ Ravintola Kappeli (est. 1867). 7–14/14–35/8–12.
Ravintola Karljohan. 7–11/18–29/8–10.
Ravintola Kuurna.
Ravintola Kolme Kruunua.
★ Ravintola Kosmos (est. 1924). 10–20/15–30/10.

Ravintola Kuu (est. 1966). 10–12/18–29/10.
 ★ Ravintola Lasipalatsi (est. 1996). 9–15/17–30/7–9.
 Ravintola Lehtovaara (est. 1916/1940). 9–15/17–30/7–9.
 Ravintola Manala/Botta. 7–14/13–28/5–6.
 Ravintola Martta. 6–10/16–28/5–9.
 Ravintola Messenius (est. 1937). 8–14/12–27/6–8.
 ★ Ravintola Nokka. 15–19/21–32/11.
 Ravintola Palace Gourmet. 16–20/30–34/15–16.
 Ravintola Savoy. 20–25/36–45/15–18.
 Ravintola Salutorget. 12–15/16–28/8–11.
 ★ Ravintola Salve (est. 1897/1927). 8–11/15–32/8–9.
 ★ Ravintola Sea Horse (est. 1934). 6–12/13–35/7–9.
 Ravintola Sipuli. 6–12/13–35/7–9.
 Ravintola Sundmans Krog. 11–15/21–25/9.
 Ravintola Torni (est. 1931). 8–12/16–34/7–9.

Michelin Guide recommended (in 2011):

Ravintola Chez Dominique (est. 1998). **. 40/55/25.
 Ravintola Demo. *.
 Ravintola Farang.
 Ravintola Grotesk.
 Ravintola La Table.
 Ravintola Luomo. *.
 Ravintola Olo. *.
 Ravintola Postres. *.
 Ravintola Solna. (Three courses menu for 44 euros.)

Mixed Finnish–international:

Ravintola Carelia.
 Ravintola Fabian.
 Ravintola G. W. Sundmans. 22–27/31–45/16–18.
 ★ Ravintola Kellarikrouvi.
 Ravintola Maxill.
 Ravintola Mecca.
 Ravintola Raffla.

Russian style: Finland used to be part of Russian empire from 1809 to 1917 — it has even been said that the Soviet era destroyed much of the culinary knowledge on the east side of the iron curtain, whereas in Helsinki the czaristic cooking traditions were carried in sort of a still existing time-bubble. Whether or not this is the case, following places are worth trying:

- Bellevue (est. 1917). 8–27/20–64/7–9.
- Kasakka (est. 1969). 9–25/21–59/8–11.
- ★ Saslik (est. 1972). 8–27/23–98/9–13.

- Troikka (est. 1968). 9–21/20–28/6–1.

Scandinavian style: Prior the Russian rule, Finland was part of Sweden from the medieval times to 1809, and even after that the local Swedish speaking population has had considerable impact on politics and cultural life. The Scandinavian traditions are inseparably intertwined in Finnish cuisine.

Hamburgers and such: The typical international chains around, but if you fancy this type of food, there are Finnish options, e.g. the *Hesburger* chain.

Other international: Belge. Fabian. Farouge. Gastone. George. Kabuki. Koto. La Cocina. La Petite Maison. La Place. Lyon. Mange Sud. Raku Ya. Ristorante Gastone. Sasso. Tokyo55. Toscanini. Trattoria Rivoletto. YuMe.

Pubs etc: You may find the ancient strong primitive Finnish beer *sahti* at least from Zetor (*Lammin Sahti*) at Mannerheimintie 3–5, and from St. Urho's Pub (*Finlandia Sahti*) at Museokatu 10, where there are also selections of modern Finnish micro-brewery beers available. Other places to find micro-brewery products include pubs like Bruuveri and Teerenpeli in Kamppi region, and Restaurant Suomenlinnan Panimo on Suomenlinna Island (see <http://www.panimo.com>).

Some cafes, with some recommendations marked by ★:

★Aschan Cafe Jugend.
Bulevardin Kahvisalonki.
Café Carusel.
Café Aalto.
★Café Ekberg.
★Café Engel.
★Café Esplanad.
Café Kafka.
★Café Lasipalatsi.
Cafe Neuhaus.
Café Ursula.
Café Ursula Aleksis.
Cafe at Ateneum Art Museum.
Cafe at Kiasma Modern Art Museum.
Cafe at Design Forum Finland.
Kämp Café.
★Karl Fazer Café.
Krulla's Wiener Kaffeehaus.
★Ravintola Kappeli.
★Strindberg.
Tamminiemen kahvila.
Villipuutarha.

Some places to see

Outdoors, with major human influence

Suomenlinna (Finnish Fortress) island: One of the worlds largest sea fortresses, built in 18th and 19th centuries, nowadays a Unesco World Heritage site. Very popular place for walking and having picnics. Beautiful sea/landscapes. The conference excursion will be on Saturday June 30, 2012, starting at 10:00am next to the "Havis Amanda" statue nearby the central market place in Helsinki. At Hostel Academica and Töölö Towers, there will be organisers guiding participants to "Havis Amanda", starting from the hotels at 9:00am. We are going to a guided 3-hour boat-and-walking tour to Suomenlinna island fortress: Please notice that you will need a valid public transport ticket in the tram to "Havis Amanda" and on the boat to Suomenlinna (public transport boat from the Kauppatori market place, "Zone 1" or "Zone 2" ticket). The conference trip is scheduled to end at 1pm nearby the central market place, but the participants will have an option to stay longer in Suomenlinna, enjoying e.g. a picnic in historic settings or local microbrewery beers. Suomenlinna visitors information www.suomenlinna.fi

Korkeasaari Zoo island: The main zoo in the country. Open year round, entrance fee 4–7 euros. Bus lines 16 and 11 from the center ("Zone 1"). Alternatively, a boat from the Kauppatori market place (6–12 euros, including the entrance fee).

www.korkeasaari.fi

Linnanmäki amusement park: Free entrance to the area.

www.linnanmaki.fi

Seurasaari Open Air Museum: Collection of over 80 old-style countryside buildings from different parts of Finland, and a reconstruction of an iron age village. Take bus line 24 from the center. Entrance to the museum area is free (popular place to walk, have picnics), but entrance to the buildings costs a little bit.

www.seurasaari.fi

Tarvaspää: 2km north from Otaniemi campus area, on a hill by the seaside, there is the studio home museum of the painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931).

<http://www.gallen-kallela.fi/english.html>

Kauppatori market place: Local food products, such as fish, vegetables etc. Souvenirs. There is also a nearby 19th century market hall next to the sea.

Hakaniemi market place: Open air market on the first Sunday of any month, and an old market hall with small food/handicraft/etc shops.

Hietalahti market place: Occasional open air flea market, and an old market hall with vintage (Finnish) design items.

Senaatintori (Senate Square): The center of the early 19th century Helsinki, resembling central St. Petersburg enough (as the architect here too was C. L. Engel) so that in the Soviet times Helsinki appeared in historical Hollywood movies occasionally...

Töölönlahti area: Popular place for jogging and walking.

Kaivopuisto park: In southernmost part of Helsinki, very popular place to walk or to have a picnic.

Hietaniemi cemetery: Peaceful place next to the center. On the seaside, there is the most popular local swimming beach.

Outdoors, with less human influence

An almost complete reference site for Finnish natural sights is at <http://www.outdoors.fi/>

Helsinki Central Park scenes vary tremendously: it has a typical park appearance in its southern part from the center to Olympic Stadium, but right after that (from Nordenskiöldinkatu onwards) it turns into a wild forest, extending about 10 km to north, with walking paths and cycling ways through the park. The forest part is located just couple of kilometers away from the center, reached easily by local public transport: e.g. take a bus or a tram from center along Mannerheimintie, take off nearby Nordenskiöldinkatu, and walk to the forest paths along Nordenskiöldinpolku (located just 500 meters north from Olympic stadium).

For spotting birds, the Laajalahti seaside areas next to Otaniemi Campus (especially the bird observation towers just 1–3km north of campus) are good (see <http://www.outdoors.fi/destinations/otherprotectedareas/laajalahti>). Similarly, also the Viikki area in Helsinki is recommended (see <http://www.gardenia-helsinki.fi/viikkinature/index.htm>).

Nuoksio National Park: This is one of the largest wild-life forest areas nearby Helsinki, ideal for day-trips in nature, good for hiking too (see <http://www.outdoors.fi/destinations/nationalparks/nuoksio>).

Take a train to Espoon keskus (trains S/U from the central railway station, takes 25 minutes to Espoon Keskus) **and** then bus 85A from Espoon keskus to Nuoksio (ask from driver where to get off: you may take the last bus stop) — the total travel time including waiting for connections can be 90 minutes. Be sure to take something to eat and drink while there, since finding a cafe might be impossible. There are even some bears living in Nuoksio forests, but they are wise enough to flee from tourist: almost no chance of seeing them. For those who are satisfied with less wild (but wild enough) forest, please check the easily accessible Helsinki Central Park forests (mentioned above).

Churches

Temppeliaukio Church, Lutherinkatu 3: Open every day, but the opening hours might vary. Modern architecture from 1969, built uniquely inside a rock, illuminated by huge window panes in the ceiling. Recommended!

Tuomiokirkko (*Helsinki Cathedral*), Unioninkatu 29: The great lutheran church at Senate Square, built 1830–1852, designed by C. L. Engel. Looks most impressive from outside.

Uspenski Cathedral, Kanavakatu 1: The largest orthodox church in Western Europe, a monumental red brick building from 1862–1868. Its interior is worth seeing, too.

Johannes Church, Korkeavuorenkatu 12: Late 19th century neo-gothic style.

Kallio Church, Itäinen papinkatu 2, built in 1908–1912, a national romantic jugend grey granite building.

Vanhakirkko (Old Church), Lönnrotinkatu 6, and its surrounding 18th century cemetery.

Indoors

Ateneum Art Museum, Kaivokatu 2: Finnish visual arts up to (early) 20th century, and temporary related exhibitions. Noteworthy current event: Helene Schjefbeck (1862–1946) 150 years, in 2012 from June 10 to October 14.

www.ateneum.fi

Design Museum, Korkeavuorenkatu 23.

Finlandiatalo concert hall, Mannerheimintie 13: A celebrated piece of architecture by Alvar Aalto, shedding off its marble layers once in generation. Acoustically challenging...

Kiasma Museum of Modern Art, Mannerheiminaukio 2.

www.kiasma.fi

Art Museum at Tennispalatsi (Tennis Palace) cinema complex, featuring Georgia O’Keeffe in 2012 from June 8 to September 9. Next to the Kamppi center.

www.hel.fi/wps/portal/Taidemuseo

EMMA, Espoo Museum of Modern Art, at Exhibition Center WeeGee, Aherajantie 5, Tapiola, Espoo.

(Free entrance on Wednesdays from 6pm to 8pm. Open Tue–Sun, closed Mon). Currently featuring especially the 1960s UFO-shaped Futuro House till September 16, 2012.

www.emma.museum/en

Kansallismuseo (National Museum), Mannerheimintie 34: Finnish (pre-)history up to 20th century.

Natural History Museum, Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 13.

Olympiastadion (Olympic Stadium), Paavo Nurmen tie 1: Built for the 1940 Summer Olympics, which eventually took place in 1952 due to some unexpected happenings. Good views from its tower (1–2 euros entrance fee). Hosts also a sports museum (0–5 euros).

Sauna

Sauna is an essential part of Finnish culture, also having an important role in the modern Mid-Summer. Actually, *sauna* itself is a Finnish word. In the northern cold climates, sauna was traditionally heated by burning wood, and it used to be an essential way to clean the body (and mind ;), Nowadays, most Finnish new apartments and houses are routinely built with a small electrically heated

sauna, and this trend has been side-by-side with the decline of the public sauna culture of past decades. Currently, in Helsinki there are some public saunas, and every swimming hall, almost every hotel etc has a sauna for its visitors.

In a simple original form, sauna could be a simple wooden cottage with one room, maybe even having dirt floor, with a wooden bench, and a pile of hot rocks heated by burning logs; in an archaic smoke sauna (*savusauna*) there would not be even a chimney, but then it would be important to ventilate the smoke away before entering sauna. Also, before entering the sauna, people preliminarily clean themselves; and naturally, after the sauna, wash still completely. Then the idea is to sit on the bench inside sauna, have a bucket of cool water and a large wooden spoon to occasionally throw the water on the heated stones, evaporating hot steam in the air. The temperature inside may vary from say $+60^{\circ}\text{C}$ to well over $+100^{\circ}\text{C}$, but $+70^{\circ}\dots+80^{\circ}\text{C}$ is quite typical. Depending on the temperature and the humidity inside, people may sit inside for some minutes before going outside to cool down e.g. by swimming. This heating-cooling process stimulates the body to produce certain hormones, and activates the blood circulation, which is good for health in moderate amounts. For a perfect sauna experience, the hot atmosphere can be enhanced by whipping yourself and your neighbor with a whip (the Western Finnish *vihta* or the Eastern Finnish *vasta*) which is a bundle of thin birch branches with leaves.

Bathing in sauna at $+80^{\circ}\text{C}$ and then swimming in a lake/sea water at $+15^{\circ}\dots+20^{\circ}\text{C}$ (and repeating the process sauna-swim-sauna-swim-... for as long as you like) is a quintessential Nordic experience; in winter-time, try combining sauna with swimming in $+\varepsilon^{\circ}\text{C}$ water in a hole on ice, or “swimming” in a soft layer of snow — tingling nice feeling. With sauna, be sure to drink enough water, and it is good to sometimes also replace the minerals lost in sweating: thus consider eating something after sauna, or drink mineral water. After/during sauna, it might be popular to drink beer or even vodka, but better be especially careful with the loss of water.

In Helsinki, the major public saunas do not unfortunately benefit from a sea/lake/riverside location. Nevertheless, you may consider trying the traditional public saunas like *Sauna Arla* at Kaarlenkatu 15, which is open almost daily, e.g. on Mid-Summer Eve Friday of 2011, it was open from 2pm to 8pm, or *Kotiharjun sauna* at Harjutorinkatu 1, which was open on Mid-Summer Eve Friday of 2011 from noon to 4pm. Moreover, the public swimming halls and hotels typically have electrically heated saunas.

Shopping

Stockmann department store, Aleksanterinkatu 52 B/Mannerheimintie/Pohjois-Esplanadi: The largest department store in the Nordic countries, with best all-round selection ranging from groceries to extensive selection of books (Aka-teeminen kirjakauppa, Academic Book Shop) to what-ever — maybe not the very high end of luxury, though. Sometime a bit pricey, but only reasonably so. Recommendable experience.

For buying local agricultural/wilderness food products, the above mentioned

market places (Kauppatori/Hakaniemi) with their old market halls are also worth visiting. Also worth visiting are shops like *Eat&Joy Maatilatori* at Mannerheimintie 22–24, *Anton & Anton* <http://www.antonanton.fi/> at Museokatu 19, and *Juuren Puoti* <http://juurenpuoti.fi/puoti-in-english/> at Korkeavuorenkatu 27. Moreover, good selection of locally produced food items is hidden within the shelves of the grocery department of Stockmann, just ask the staff there for interesting products.

For buying alcoholic drinks stronger than +4.7%, you have to shop at *Alko* stores, where the best selection is at Salomonkatu 1 (e.g. selling *Finlandia sahti* there). Beers up to +4.7% in ethanol can be found in ordinary grocery stores.

There are lots of small design shops on streets nearby Esplanadinpuisto (Esplanadi Park). Look for vintage Finnish design — it should be cheaper here than abroad. Of special interest for children and adults alike: Moomin Shops (e.g. at the airport, or at Pohjoisesplanadi 33).

Luxury shops nearby Aleksanterinkatu: you may buy the regular international stuff like a Louis Vuitton, a Rolex etc here, but almost anywhere else in the world too. However, you may consider wristwatches by Stepan Sarpaneva or Kari Voutilainen (e.g. at Aseman Kello shop at Aleksanterinkatu 50).

F-musiikki music shop. Extensive selection of art music. Finland has a startling amount of internationally famous artists in classical and contemporary music. Of the active artists, try e.g. CD recordings of music by Magnus Lindberg (Kraft, Aura, etc), Kaija Saariaho or Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Further afield

Porvoo: a charming historical town, medieval church, pleasant old wood architecture along the riverside. Small cafes, boutiques, restaurants. 50 km from Helsinki, an hour by bus.

Turku: Turku (*Åbo* in Swedish language) was the capital of Finland from medieval times till 1812, after which losing the capital status to Helsinki. After the Great Fire of Turku in 1827, the old university moved to Helsinki. Medieval castle and cathedral, old wooden and stone houses, interesting museums (*Aboa Vetus et Ars Nova* combines an indoor medieval ruin with a museum and modern art exhibition; Luostarinmäki open air museum is a complete district of original on-site 18th/19th century town houses; Wäinö Aaltonen Museum; ...) nice riverside views and some excellent restaurants (e.g. Ravintola Rocca, Ravintola Mami, Ravintola Smör). 170 km from Helsinki, 2 hours by train, 2 hours by car. Turku and Tallinn share the 2011 European Capital of Culture status.

Tampere: 180 km from Helsinki, 2 hours by train, 2 hours by car, Tampere is at reasonable distance for a day-trip. Old industrial town with lakeside views and nice 19th and early 20th century architecture, with plenty of interesting museums (e.g. Vapriikki Museum Center, Sara Hilden art museum nearby

Näsinneula, museums in the Finlayson district, Amuri Workers' Housing Museum (open in summer), Lenin Museum ;) and good restaurants serving local dishes (e.g. Ravintola Näsinneula, Ravintola Hella & Huone, Ravintola C, Ravintola Masuuni). The must-see-place is the 168-meter-high Näsinneula tower, and the sights from there. The rotating Näsinneula restaurant is in the tower at the altitude of 124 meters, turning slowly (360 degrees per hour) — the food there is good, so this is an ideal place to enjoy lunch or dinner.

Tallinn, Estonia: Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, has a splendid medieval old town. There are plenty of daily boat/ship connections between Helsinki and Tallinn, the fastest ones traveling the 80 kilometer distance across the Finnish Gulf in about 90 minutes. Ideal for day-trips, or staying even longer. Some restaurants for fine dining: Restoran Õ, Restoran Tsaikovski, Restoran Neh. As a curiosity, a medieval style restaurant: Olde Hansa.

Stockholm, Sweden: Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, benefits from an attractive old town, too. Between Helsinki and Stockholm, boats by *Viking Line* (www.vikingline.fi) and *Tallink-Silja* (www.tallinksilja.com) travel over-night (taking about 16–18 hours) each weekday. The boat trip itself might be exotic experience, often with 2000 fellow passengers fuelled with tax-free alcohol (not that bad as it might sound ;), various restaurants and night-clubs etc. With a short two-night cruise, you still would have some hours to visit Stockholm, but it might be worthwhile to extend the visit there.

St. Petersburg, Russia: usually Russia requires visa for most foreigners (e.g. EU citizens). However, there are **visa-free cruises** to St. Petersburg from Helsinki! Such cruises are provided by St. Peter Line (www.peterline.com, offering day-trips, and also 1- or 2-night hotel vacations in St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, even in three days you are able to see only a small fraction of interesting sights there: e.g. merely the State Hermitage Museum would easily fill your program, and then there are myriad of other famous museums, Peterhof, all the churches, historical architecture, cultural activities etc. Our recommendations: Spend one full day at Hermitage Museum/Winter Palace complex (this was the palace of the czars, nowadays one of the best art museums in the world, with also astonishing historical items). Walk and/or take a river boat cruise in the center: there are churches (Isaac's, Kazan's, Church of Our Saviour on Spilt Blood...) museums (of course Hermitage, but also the Russian Museum, Kunstkamera), Peter and Paul Fortress... So, if you spend one day at Hermitage, second day seeing other places in the center, and possible third day visiting e.g. Peterhof, then you have had a busy holiday indeed.

Some cultural activities

The main holiday season in Finland starts from Mid-Summer celebrations, and thus there are plenty of cultural summer festivals around. Consequently, this

means too that the usual cultural establishments (National Opera, usual theaters) close their doors before the holidays. Up-to-date information of the festivals can be found from tourist information places and their brochures. In any case, we list some major events:

Mid-Summer Celebrations, June 22–23, 2012

Tourists may find the Mid-Summer Celebrations in Finland interesting in a positive exotic sense. In 2012, the Mid-Summer Eve is on Friday June 22, and the Mid-Summer Day on Saturday June 23.

In Finnish/Baltic/Scandinavian cultures, only Christmas is more important than the Mid-Summer (*juhannus* in Finnish). Actually in ancient times, instead of Christmas, there were the original Mid-Winter celebrations on the shortest day of the year about on December 21, and dually the the original Mid-Summer celebrations about on June 21 (depending on the year). Nowadays, the Mid-Summer Eve and the Mid-Summer Day are always on Friday–Saturday nearby the actual longest day of the year. The Mid-Summer Celebrations nominally have Christian association to John the Baptist, but in reality the celebrations owe more to the more ancient traditions; and this sort of strong “pagan” influence applies to Christmas celebrations, as well.

The Mid-Summer Celebrations also mean that the vast majority of shops, restaurants, museums etc are closed due to the National Holiday. Smaller shops are closed typically on Mid-Summer Eve (Friday), on Mid-Summer Day (Saturday), and on the immediately following Sunday. Larger shops maybe closing at noon on Mid-Summer Eve, opening next time at noon on Sunday, or on the next Monday morning. The public transport typically runs with reduced week-end time-tables on Mid-Summer Eve till late at night, and is almost non-existent then till 11am or the noon on Mid-Summer Day, after which there is public transport with reduced week-end time-tables till the next Monday morning.

So what to see during the Mid-Summer in Helsinki? Many locals escape the capital to their countryside cottages in forests and by sea/lakesides (there is approximately one such cottage per 10 inhabitants in Finland), but nowadays many things happen also in the city. It is traditional to celebrate around huge bonfires, which are set on fire some time between 6pm and 11pm on the Mid-Summer Eve. Burning the bonfires may include music, singing and dancing, in a traditional or a modern way, and drinking/eating seasonal favourites. Often the cuisine might simply include grilling sausages in an open fire, drinking beer and vodka, but lighter and healthier options should be available, too. The Mid-Summer Eve public bonfires can be found e.g. in *Seurasaari* (e.g. in 2012 open from 6pm to 1am, with re-created old-style celebrations, tickets 18 euros/adult, kids under 15 free with adult supervision; bus line number 24, with additional buses), www.seurasaarisaatio.fi

There are Mid-Summer Eve bonfires also in *Pihlajasaari* (a nearby island, boat connections from *Ruoholahden tori* and *Merisatama*, in 2011 boats till 2am with return ticket costing 5.50 euros in cash, with bonfire at 9pm), the Retro Mid-Summer at *Cafe Piritta* (in 2012 from 8pm to 2am free entry at

Eläintarhantie 12, bonfire at 11pm).

On Saturday June 23, 2012: Midsummer Day dancing at Antti Event grounds (Seurasaari) at 2.30 pm, free entry: traditional games and dancing, Suvisakarat (folk music society) and “Saarella palaa”-duo.

Moreover, plenty of the central Helsinki bars, pubs and nightclubs are open throughout the Mid-Summer till 2am or 4am.

World Design Capital 2012

Helsinki is the World Design Capital 2012 (see <http://www.wdc2012helsinki.fi/en>).

European Athletics Championships, June 27 – July 1, 2012

The European Athletics Championships will take place in Helsinki (the 1952 Summer Olympic Stadium) on June 27 – July 1, 2012 (see <http://www.helsinki2012.fi/en>). Due to this sports event, the accommodation within the city will eventually be difficult to get; this especially in the view that even in an ordinary summer like in 2011, the hotels in Helsinki are often fully booked already during the spring.

Savonlinna Opera Festival, July 5 – August 4, 2012

Savonlinna is a small town having magnificent lakeside views and a beautiful medieval castle, where Savonlinna Opera Festival takes place (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savonlinna_Opera_Festival and http://www.operafestival.fi/In_English/Front_page.iw3), entertaining approximately 60000 visitors each year. In 2012, Savonlinna Opera Festival will be organized from July 5 to August 4, and they are celebrating their Centennary: the first opera festival there was in 1912, though the current annual tradition is dating only from 1967. In the season 2012, operas at the Festival include old favourites like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Richard Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* and Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*. New operas include *La Fenice* by Kimmo Hakola and *Free Will* by Marcus Fagerrud **and** by the world-wide networking community. ;) Savonlinna is located 340 km from Helsinki, 4 hours by car, 4–5 hours by train, also domestic flights from Helsinki–Vantaa airport.

Avanti Summer Sounds (*Suvisoitto*) in Porvoo

The Finnish orchestra Avanti organizes an annual festival of modern art music (20th century and contemporary) in Porvoo at the turn of June and July: see <http://www.avantimusic.fi> for more information. Typically the festival lasts from Wednesday to Sunday, this time June 27–July 1, 2012.