

Helsinki

You represent Helsinki, the world's most sustainable travel destination



Picture: Jussi Hellsten

Learn at least this content:

In customer service situations, you may get asked how sustainable tourism is in Helsinki and what sustainable options there are, which is why it is good to learn this material properly. You can influence customers to make responsible and sustainable choices during their visit.

Sustainable development – what it means

Sustainable development is continuous directed social change at global, regional and local levels, the aim of which is to ensure good living conditions for present and future generations so that the carrying capacity of nature is not exceeded.

In practice, this means that we take all aspects of sustainability (ecological, financial, social, cultural, ethical) into account in our daily life and work and make sustainable choices by, for example, supporting local business and products, switching to renewable energy, sorting our waste and enabling accessible services.

Make an effort in your workplace

Helsinki is committed to the [Sustainable Travel Finland](#) (STF) programme (not a certificate) managed by Visit Finland. In order for Helsinki to prove its sustainability, the companies operating here must be sustainable.

How is sustainability verified at your company, what measures have you taken, what will you do next

Does the company have a sustainability certificate and if so, which one

Does the company have an STF label or is it on the way there Who is the person responsible

Recommend and encourage, visitors can make an impact

Recommend to visitors:

- Companies that have been awarded the STF label
- Favour sustainable companies, services and products (be active and find companies that are profiled as sustainable, such as vegan restaurants, restaurants that use wastage, restaurants that offer local and organic food, handicraft shops, flea markets)
- For experiencing local life and meeting local people: Market halls and market squares, cafés, Oodi and other libraries, public saunas
- For exploring areas outside the city centre, nature and maritime Helsinki: Munkkiniemi, Lauttasaari, Lammaaari, Haltiala, Uutela, Vallisaari

Instruct visitors on how they can have an impact:

- Provide information on what responsible choices can be made in your company
- Exploring Helsinki on foot, by bicycle or by public transport (a compact, safe city)
- Drinking clean tap water
- Favouring STF-labelled companies
- Favouring local services (e.g. guided walking tours subject to a fee)
- Sorting waste, taking bottles and cans to recycling machines that can be found in every shop (tell the visitors about the Finnish system for recycling bottles and cans)

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Helsinki – a sustainable tourist destination

- The City of Helsinki is the most sustainable tourist destination in the world. Read more: [Tourism sustainability in Helsinki](#)
- Helsinki is committed to the [Glasgow Declaration for the international tourism industry](#), according to which emissions from tourism will be halved by 2030 and carbon neutrality will be achieved by 2050.
- The sustainability of tourism is measured using the Global Destination Sustainability Index ([GDS](#)). Helsinki has ranked number one in the GDS index in both 2024 and 2025.
- Helsinki obtained the [Green Destination](#) certification in [spring 2025](#), becoming the first city with over 500,000 residents to achieve this recognition. Helsinki aims to obtain the Sustainable Travel Finland label by 2027.
- Helsinki promotes social and ethical responsibility: Helsinki ranked 2nd in the European Commission's "[Access City](#)" competition in 2022 and 3rd in the Commission's [European Capitals of inclusion and diversity](#) 2023 competition.
- Inclusive tourism has been an area of development in recent years, [Inclusive Tourism Study and Action Plan 2023](#).
- Helsinki [actively monitors](#) its residents' views in relation to tourism and reacts if, for example, excessive tourism affects opinions negatively.
- Helsinki won the [European Capital of Smart Tourism Award 2019](#) awarded by the European Commission.
- Tourism in Helsinki employs many young people, immigrants and unemployed people.

Useful information: Sustainable Finland & Helsinki

Finland and sustainable development

- Finland is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of [Agenda 2030](#), as are all 193 other United Nations (UN) Member States.
- Finland rose to number one in the country comparison of sustainable development (Agenda2030) in 2021 and has remained in first place every year. [Finland's ranking](#)
- Finland's biggest challenges relate to combatting climate change, making consumption and production methods more sustainable, and stopping the loss of biodiversity.
- [Finland is striving to be carbon neutral](#) by 2035, the EU by 2050.
- [Finland's Tourism Strategy for 2025–2028](#) sets the goal of becoming the most sustainably growing tourism destination in the Nordic countries.
- The seven-step programme verifying responsible tourism in Finland is [Sustainable Travel Finland](#), controlled by Visit Finland. Similar national programmes exist in Norway, Slovenia and Switzerland.
- Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for eight consecutive years (2025) in the [World Happiness Report](#) that measures six key factors for happiness: social support, income, health, freedom, generosity and absence of corruption.

Helsinki and sustainable development

- **Strengths:** high-quality and equal learning opportunities, cultural and leisure services, good healthcare, well-functioning infrastructure and clean nature.
- **Challenges:** reconciling urban growth with climate change mitigation and adaptation, circular economy and biodiversity protection. [Helsinki sustainable development](#)
- Helsinki is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of [Agenda 2030](#) and the city is ranked 3rd in the European Cities SDG Index.
- Helsinki is committed to reducing its emissions by 85 % from 1990 levels by 2030, and to achieving net-zero emissions by 2040. [2025-2029 Helsinki City Strategy: A Helsinki we can be proud of](#)
- Helsinki's energy company, Helen, [stopped using coal](#) in the spring of 2025. The coal-fired power plants are being replaced by electric boilers, heat-pump and cooling facilities, and biofuel plants. Electricity is also generated with solar power.
- [Helsinki Airport has achieved net-zero carbon emissions.](#)
- [The Port of Helsinki has achieved carbon neutrality in its own operations.](#)
- Public transport in the HSL area maintained its fourth-place ranking in the international [BEST survey](#) and stood out particularly for improvements in service availability, information provision, and travel comfort.
- An example of new construction technology and how social responsibility and communality are taken into account: [The Airut city block in Jätkäsaari.](#)
- Recycling has been made possible for city residents, and [recycling centres](#) have shops where people can purchase “upcycled” products (13 shops + an online shop). Helsinki Airport also has a shop selling recycled products.

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