

# Happy Helsinki Toolkit

Helsinki

# Welcome to your happy place

For the ninth year running, Finland tops the global happiness rankings – and at the heart of it all is Helsinki, the happy capital. This toolkit is here for you, our stakeholders, to help share that story. In this deck, you'll find the messages, visuals, and inspiration to show the world what makes Helsinki stand out – a city where things simply work, and people truly thrive.

We are Helsinki Partners – the city's international marketing, investment, and talent attraction agency. Owned by the City of Helsinki, we're here to amplify Helsinki's global appeal through our Happy Helsinki approach. Whether it's a major campaign or a conversation over coffee, we spread the word about a city that's open, full of life and functional – and with your help, that story reaches even further.

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1

## What is Happy Helsinki?

Let's look at what it means – and how to talk about it in a real, authentic way.

2

**Six essentials for Happy Helsinki.** The pillars of Happy Helsinki – and how to explain them to someone new to the city.

3

**Happiness, in so many words.** Here's how it looks and feels to anyone who spends a little time in Helsinki.

4

**Can we prove happiness?** Absolutely. Facts, figures, and global rankings – the data behind the good life.





# The story of Helsinki happiness

At the southern edge of the happiest country in the world lies Helsinki – a city that shows happiness doesn't need to shout. Here, joy is in the everyday: the cultural rhythm that welcomes you just as you are, the seamless blend of sea and forest with urban life, and in the ease of moving around.

Helsinki isn't about chasing perfection. It's about being **real, not perfect** – finding contentment in small moments, in simple beauty, in a life that feels balanced and genuine. This is a city that doesn't hand you happiness on a platter, but creates the space for you to discover it – in your own way, at your own pace.

Things here just work, almost invisibly. A place that never asks you to fit in yet somehow makes you feel like you belong. That's Helsinki happiness – quiet confidence, thoughtful design, and a way of life that feels natural, not forced. You may not come here searching for happiness, but don't be surprised if you find it anyway.



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# A shorter story of Helsinki Happiness

At the southern coast of the world's happiest country lies Helsinki – a city that proves happiness is everything but loud. It's in the effortless flow of life, the balance of city and nature, and the ease of getting around.

The city won't hand you happiness but gives you the space to find it. On your own terms, at your own pace. Helsinki just works, so life can too. You might not come here looking for happiness, but don't be surprised if you find it anyway.

# Six things that make us feel content

What lays the foundation for Helsinki happiness? Here's six core pillars that shape the city's effortless vibe and make Helsinki a place to belong in – for everyone.

1

## **Culture amplified by nature**

Concerts, galleries, festivals – Helsinki has them all. And just steps away, rocky shores and quiet forests keep you grounded. In Helsinki, culture and nature flow together, each making the other shine.

2

## **Curiosity by design**

Helsinki is shaped by design – from bold architecture to the smallest everyday detail. Smart, human, and always a little surprising.

3

## **Wellbeing that works**

In Helsinki life and work exist in harmony, and happiness is built into the everyday. When a city works effortlessly, so can life too.

4

## **Here all belong**

Belonging in Helsinki isn't about blending in, but about having the freedom to be yourself.

5

## **Tomorrow's innovation today**

From quantum computing breakthroughs and next-gen AI models to advanced deep tech tackling global challenges, Helsinki is where innovation starts and scales.

6

## **Planet-friendly growth**

With dynamic industries, world-class expertise, and a welcoming network of professionals, Helsinki is the ideal place to grow and future-proof your business.



# Culture amplified by nature

Helsinki is a city of culture at every scale – concerts, galleries, exhibitions and festivals. But nature is always close, whether it's the forest trails of Keskuspuisto or the rocky seashore just a tram ride away.

This closeness gives the city its unique rhythm. Creativity feels effortless when life moves between museums and music halls, quiet walks and open-air events by the water. In Helsinki, culture and nature belong together – and that balance shapes how we live, create and find joy.

And in the city centre, it's all right there. Museums, theatres, concert halls, libraries and design hubs sit within easy walking distance, creating one of Europe's most concentrated cultural quarters. Step outside after a concert or exhibition, and the sea air is already waiting.

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*Did you know that*

50% of Helsinki is nature – parks, forest, and sea. Helsinki has 327 islands.

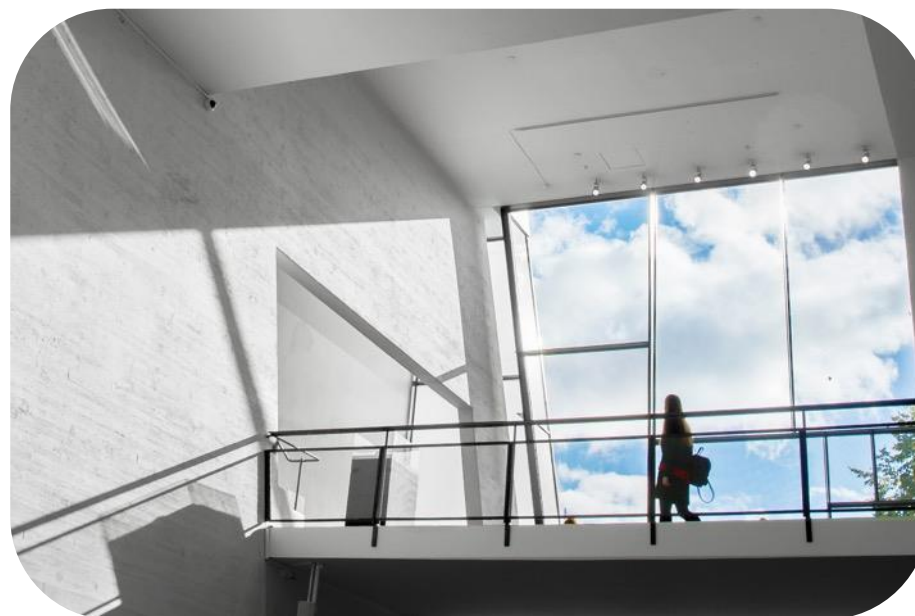


*See for yourself*

Go from world-class art at Amos Rex to a quiet walk in Kaisaniemi Botanic Garden.

Take the ferry from the Market Square and in ten minutes you're hiking on Vallisaari Island.

End your day with a concert at the Helsinki Music Centre, then see the sunset at Töölönlahti bay.



[Link to photos](#)

# 2 Curiosity by design

Helsinki makes you pause for a second look. What seems simple at first often has something more to it. A tram stop that's also a piece of public art. A library that feels more like a living room. A market square where modern design sits comfortably next to centuries-old traditions.

Here design is about making everyday life work better. Take the Helsinki Central Library Oodi, a stunning mix of service design and bold architecture. Or the city's accessible playgrounds, created to welcome children of all backgrounds. Wherever you go, you'll see and feel a city shaped by design.

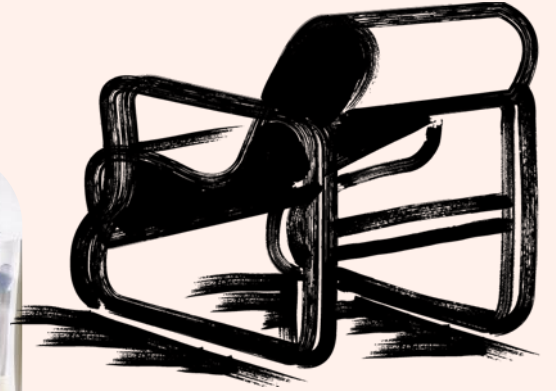
Good design makes life easier. Great design makes you curious. In Helsinki, you get both.

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"It's not about being outwardly over-the-moon every day but rather living with a certainty that everyday things are designed to make life feel stable."  
**Kaitlyn McInnis, Forbes, March 20, 2025**

*Did you know that*

Helsinki was one of the first cities in the world to appoint a Chief Design Officer. The CDO makes sure Helsinki's services are designed from the perspective of the people who actually use them.



*See for yourself*

Walk the streets of Kruununhaka, where Jugend-style facades sit quietly alongside modern design.

Try Oodi Library, and you'll quickly realise it's a living room for the whole city. Check out Design District to reveal art in unexpected forms.



[Link to photos](#)

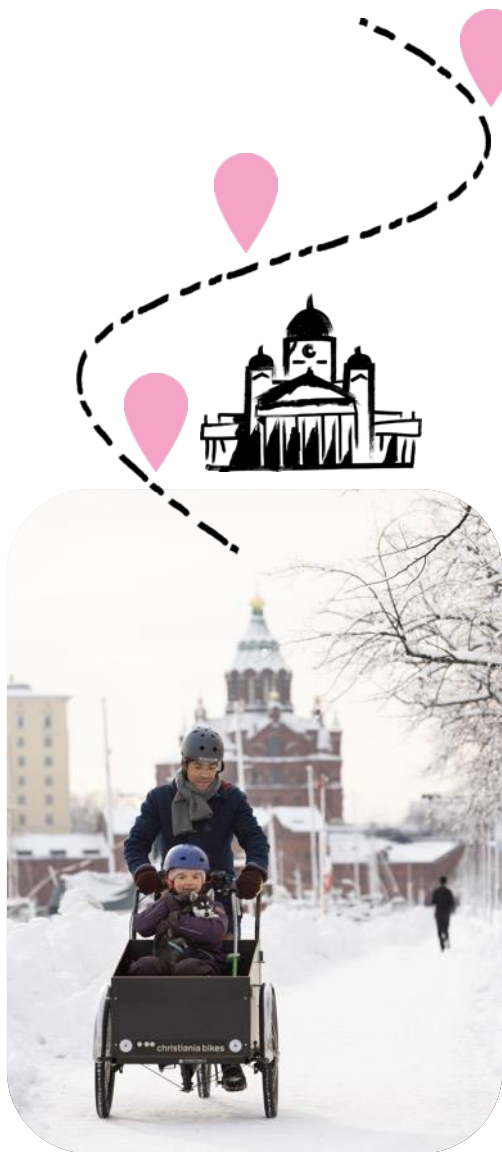
# 3 Wellbeing that works

In Helsinki, everyday life runs smoothly. Public transport gets you where you're going, schools serve every child a warm meal, and healthcare is there when you need it. Things just work – quietly, reliably, without fuss.

And when the basics are taken care of, there's room for what really matters. Time with family and friends. A moment to slow down. A sauna that resets both body and mind. In Helsinki, wellbeing isn't a luxury – it's the foundation that makes life feel balanced and free.

Science backs what Helsinkians have always known: sauna is good for you. Studies show it lowers stress, boosts mood, and even helps the body recover. Add a cold plunge in winter, and you get a natural reset that's as much about community as health. Sauna has been part of Finnish culture for thousands of years – and it still shapes everyday life in Helsinki.

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*Did you know that*

The city has 35 official beaches, 16 swimming halls, and 21 winter swimming spots for year-round dips. There are 13 indoor skating rinks and 165 outdoor rinks, plus 92 dog parks (yes, really) and 72 nature reserve areas.

Getting around is easy with 668 km of footpaths and 1,300 km of cycling routes. And if you prefer life on water, there are 12,000 mooring spots for leisure boats.

*See for yourself*

Hop on a tram during rush hour and notice that the rush is missing.

End your workday on time and head straight for a swim, or a park picnic. Just because you can.

Don't stress about not having an expensive health insurance – public healthcare is here to help – everyone



[Link to photos](#)

# 4 Here all belong

Belonging in Helsinki isn't about blending in, but about having the freedom to be yourself.

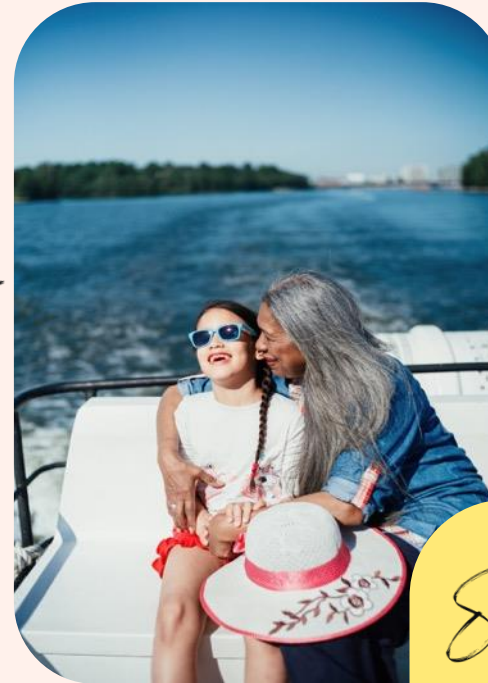
Everyday life here is designed to make space for everyone – because in Helsinki, every voice counts.

In Helsinki, people from all backgrounds are part of the decision-making, and city services are built on the idea that everyone's needs matter – even if they're not the same.

Whether you're here for a few days, a new chapter in your career, or a whole lifetime, the city welcomes you with openness, equality, and a true sense of belonging.

*Did you know that*

**The Presidential couple were the patrons of Helsinki Pride Week in 2025.**



*See for yourself*

160 days of paid leave for each parent.

Have a seat at a public sauna, where social status and background are left at the door.

Take part in free language courses and integration programs designed to help newcomers feel at home.



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[Link to photos](#)

# 5 Tomorrow's innovation today

From quantum computing breakthroughs and next-gen AI models to advanced deep tech tackling global challenges, Helsinki is where innovation starts and scales.

At the national level, Finland's upcoming tax reform will lower corporate tax to 18% by 2027, reduce income tax for key international talent, and streamline regulations to make cross-border VC investments faster and easier.

At the city level, the Helsinki Innovation Fund provides direct funding for pilot projects, deep tech experimentation, and public-private co-creation – turning the city into a real-world testbed for frontier technologies.

Whether you're growing a quantum lab, deploying AI at scale, or investing in hard tech with long horizons, Helsinki offers the infrastructure, talent, and political will to make an impact in the world.

## Innovations

From producing protein from CO<sub>2</sub> and electricity (Solar Foods) to building Europe's first large language model (Silo.AI) – everything started from Helsinki.

### Startup Magazine said it better than us:

"Helsinki's rise can be attributed to a confluence of factors: a highly educated workforce, robust tech infrastructure, and a societal fabric woven with principles of equality and openness."

Ranked among the top 25 most innovative cities globally by the World Economic Forum (2022), and 8th smartest city in the world by the IMD Smart City Index (2023), Helsinki combines a highly educated talent pool, world-class research clusters, and strong urban governance to scale technologies globally.



## See for yourself

Experience SLUSH, the world's leading startup event, where founders, investors, and innovators come together.

Walk through Wood City in Jätkäsaari, where sustainable wooden architecture meets smart solutions.

Use Helsinki's open data platform to explore how transparency fuels citizen-led initiatives.

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[Link to photos](#)



# Planet-friendly growth

In Helsinki, innovation and sustainability go hand in hand, as a thriving city must serve both people and the environment. From carbon-neutral buildings and emissions-free transport to shared mobility and cutting-edge clean tech, Helsinki's start-up-friendly ecosystem co-creates solutions that benefit both people and the planet.

The result is a flow of innovations that improve daily life, drive sustainable growth, and flourish in a supportive, community-minded business environment.

With dynamic industries, world-class expertise, and a welcoming network of professionals, Helsinki is the ideal place to grow and future-proof your business – offering a seamless blend of opportunity and responsibility that helps companies not just survive, but thrive.



## Innovations

**Wooden design, lasting impact.** – Helsinki's wooden architecture is timeless, sustainable, and rooted in nature.



## Did you know that

Helsinki is a global leader in quantum research.

Helsinki offers free soft-landing services.

Helsinki is the 2. most innovative region in Europe and 40% of Finnish startups are based in Helsinki.

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[Link to photos](#)

# Happiness breakdown

Helsinki happiness is something you notice in the everyday. It's balance, authenticity, and the feeling of belonging in a city designed for people. Here's how it looks and feels to anyone who spends a little time here.

## Helsinki happiness is...

- ...not feeling the need to fit in.
- ...living in a place that doesn't rush you.
- ...contentment woven into everyday.
- ...life-work balance that leaves room for more.

## Helsinki happiness feels like...

- ...that deep exhale after a sauna.
- ...a city that works so well, you barely notice.
- ...a place where public spaces truly belong to everyone.
- ...a summer sun refusing to set.

## Helsinki happiness looks like...

- ...balance that is as effortless as it looks.
- ...a city where architecture and nature co-exist.
- ...innovation that puts people first, not just progress.
- ...kids walking to school on their own.

## Helsinki happiness means...

- ...a lifestyle prioritizing living.
- ...a place where creativity and calm exist in balance.
- ...a city that welcomes everyone as they are.
- ...finding nature just a few steps from your door.

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# Can we prove happiness? Actually, yes.

Happy Helsinki – the capital of the happiest country in the world for nine years in a row.



Helsinki is the birthplace of Tove Jansson, the creator of Moomins – who are the true ambassadors of happiness.

40+

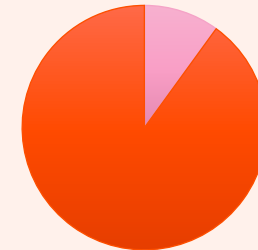
37 public libraries + several scientific ones.



More coffee, more conversations – the Finnish way.



Helsinki is a global leader in sustainability and in 2025, Helsinki was nominated The Most Sustainable Travel Destination by GDS-Index.



90%

of people living in Helsinki feel safe in their neighbourhood.

There's an island just for dogs.

Welcome to Rajasaari – a little slice of freedom where dogs can run off-leash through forest trails and splash around on their very own dog beach.

**Sauna – the natural way to let go.**

"When you go to the sauna, hormones that respond to physiological stress will increase. Levels of endorphins, our body's natural mood-boosters, our internal feel-good chemicals, will go up," says Ilpo Huhtaniemi, an endocrinologist at Imperial College London. By **Erika Benke, BBC 21/5, 2025**





[MyHelsinki.fi](https://myhelsinki.fi)

### Visitor and talent attraction



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