

Our town

— a guide for new residents who have moved to Finland from abroad



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



European Union
European Social Fund

ihj International
House Joensuu

Joensuu



Founded
in 1848

Population

- 77,521 residents (in the year 2022)
- 2,736 foreign citizens, the majority of whom are citizens of Russia, Syria, Bangladesh, Estonia and Thailand
- In addition to that, about 1,000 foreign students every year

Location

In Eastern Finland, in the province of North Karelia

Area

Total area is 2,751 km², of which 2,382 km² is land

City districts

Niinivaara, Karsikko, Noljakka, Marjala, Utra, Rantakylä, Kanervalä

Special features

- The 12th largest city in Finland
- Student city: University of Eastern Finland, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Riveria and other educational institutions
- The Pielisjoki river flows through the city and is the reason why the city was originally established at that place.

Further information

www.joensuu.fi

Tips for recreational activities:

<https://www.joensuuevents.fi/en/web/en>

- Culture and travel centre Carelicum
- Taitokortteli quarter that is full of the spirit of the past
- Butterfly garden Botania
- The traditional Ilosaari island in the middle of the Pielisjoki river

Hundreds of different events are held every year: festivals, concerts, sports events, fairs and flea markets. Examples of these are:

- Ilosaarirock in July
- Joen Yö in late August
- Suven avaus (the opening of summer) in Laulurinne in May–June
- Movie events Rokumentti and Cinemare in November

Central services:

- **Kela**
Koulukatu 24, 80100 JOENSUU
- **Employment and Economic Development Services**
Kauppakatu 40 B, 80100 JOENSUU
- **Pharmacies:**
 - Joensuu central pharmacy, Voimatie 2 (Prisma)
 - Joensuu new pharmacy, Siltakatu 10
 - Yliopiston Apteekki, Koskikatu 7
 - Naljakan Apteekki, Linjatie 2 (Pilkko K-Citymarket)
 - Niinivaaran Apteekki, Niinivaarantie 52
 - Apteekki Atolli (Rantakylä), Puronsuunkatu 1
- **Libraries:**
 - Joensuu Main Library: Koskikatu 25, 80100 Joensuu
 - Rantakylä Library: Puronsuunkatu 1
 - Karsikko Library: Kettuvaarantie 28
 - Nepenmäki Library: Kärpänkatu 7
- **Digital and Population Data Services Agency, Joensuu (magistrate)**
Kauppakatu 40, 80100 Joensuu
- **Social welfare office**
Rantakatu 23, 80100 JOENSUU
- **Immigration Services of Joensuu**
Malmikatu 5b, 4th floor, 80100 Joensuu
- **North Karelia Central Hospital**
Tikkamäentie 16, 80210 Joensuu

Dental clinics:

- Siilainen dental clinic: Naljakantie 17a, 80140 Joensuu
- Rantakylä dental clinic: Ruoritie 3, 80160 Joensuu
- Niinivaara dental clinic: Suvikatu 18, 2nd floor, 80200 Joensuu

Health centres:

- Siilainen health centre: Naljakantie 17, 80130 Joensuu
- Rantakylä health centre: Ruoritie 3, 80160 Joensuu
- Niinivaara health centre: Tikkamäentie 16, M building, 2nd floor, 80200 Joensuu,

Welcome to your new home municipality!

In this guide, we have compiled information about Finland and the services the municipality provides. This guide also includes important Finnish words and phrases. The purpose of this guide is to help you get to know places and people. We hope that it helps you settle into your new home municipality.

The municipality handbook is a product of Joensuu's Regional Centre of Integration Work and the Become Karelian! projects. It has been made possible by the Immigration Services of the City of Joensuu. Illustration: Taru Neuvonen and photo directory Papunet.

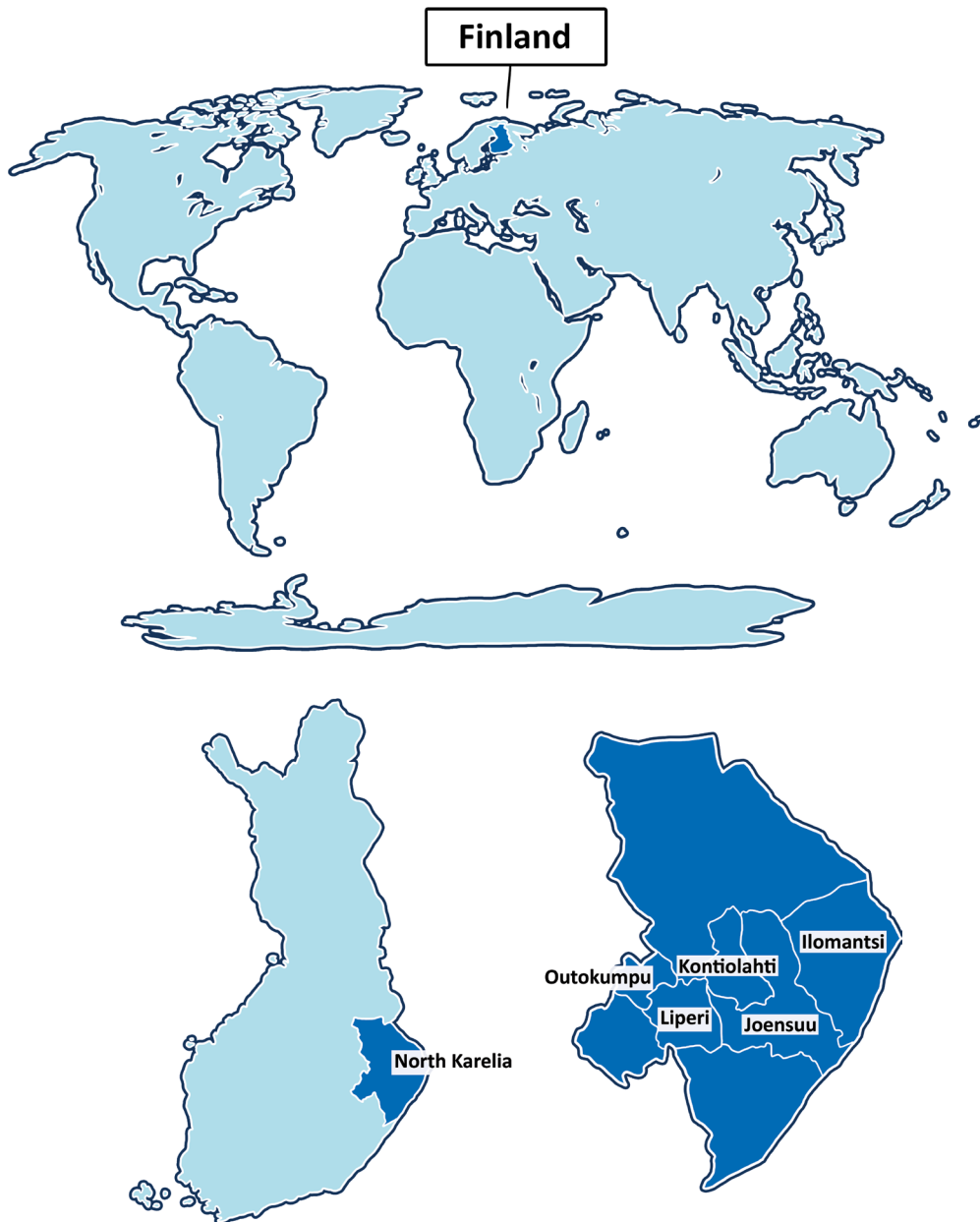


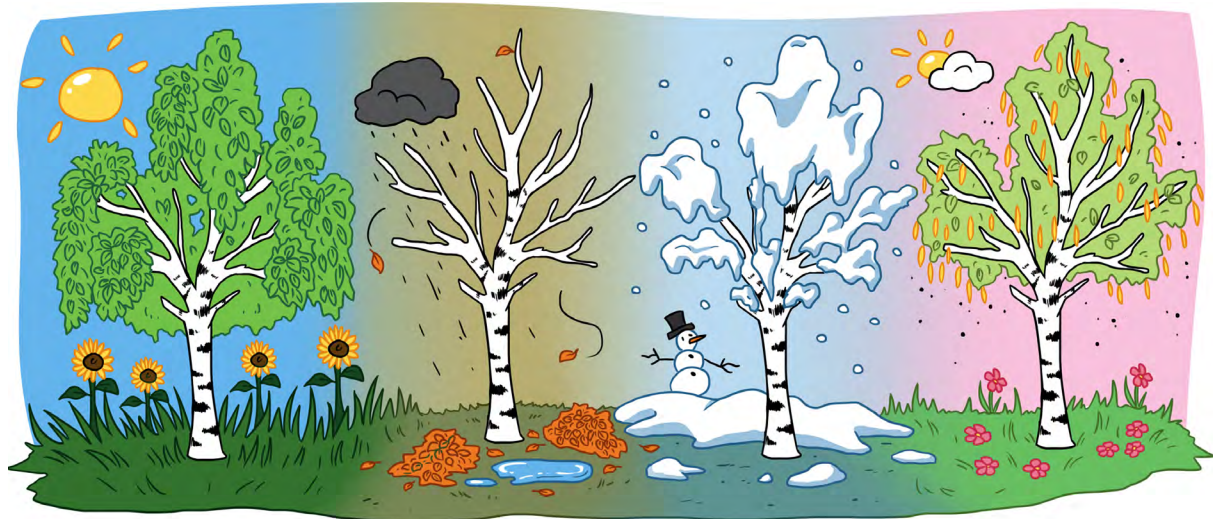
Contents

1. Welcome!	6
2. Personal details	8
3. Local operators and meeting places	10
4. Integration	11
5. Checklist for a person moving to Finland	12
6. Registering personal information in Finland	13
7. Identity card	15
8. Bank matters	16
9. Finnish social security	17
10. Services for families	18
11. The Finnish education system and studying in Finland	20
12. Work and job searching services	23
13. Living	25
14. Recycling and the environment	28
15. Health care services	31
16. Mental well-being	36
17. Facing discrimination	37
18. Pharmacy	38
19. Public transport and cycling	40
20. Visiting a store	42
21. Free time and hobbies	45
22. Do you need more help?	48
23. Useful Finnish expressions	49

1. Welcome!

Finland is a Member State of the European Union (EU). Finland is a sparsely populated country and the population is concentrated in its biggest cities. Over one million people live in the Finnish capital and the surrounding region. You are now living in the North Karelia region, which is located in Eastern Finland. The City of Joensuu is the capital of the region.





Things that are important to Finns include equality, especially gender equality, and education. Finns value their own privacy and the privacy of others. Therefore, many Finns may at first seem reserved. However, you should not shy away from starting conversations with Finns. After a few first cautious steps, we warm to conversation. Common hobbies in Finland in the wintertime include skiing, skating and ice swimming. We love going to the sauna, and many people have their own cabins where they spend their free time, especially during the summer and on public holidays.

Many Finns enjoy being in nature, in both the summer and winter. Finns respect nature. In Finland, we all have the right to roam, which means that we are allowed to move freely in nature (but not in other people's yards or immediate vicinity). We also have the right to forage for berries and mushrooms. This right also means a shared responsibility for nature. We do not litter and we take care of nature by following commonly accepted rules.



2. Personal details

Fill in your personal details in the table below and try to remember them as they are often required by the authorities and other places you visit.

Your details:

Last name	
Sukunimi	
First name (First names)	
Etunimi (Etunimet)	
Gender: female/male/other	
Sukupuoli: nainen/mies/muu	
Date of birth	
Syntymäaika	
Social security number	
Henkilötunnus	
Nationality	
Kansalaisuus	
Native language	
Äidinkieli	
Other language skills	
Muu kielitaito	
Occupation	
Ammatti	

Street address	
Katuosoite	
Postal code	
Postinumero	
Post office	
Postitoimipaikka	
(Home) town	
(Koti)kaupunki	
(Home) country	
(Koti)maa	
Phone number	
Puhelinnumero	
Email address	
Sähköpostiosoite	
Date and municipality	
Päivämäärä (pvm) ja paikkakunta	
Signature	
Allekirjoitus	
Name in block letters	
Nimen selvennys	



3. Local operators and meeting places

(Ask the integration counsellor or a municipal employee, for example, to fill this in!)

4. Integration

It is important for you to feel at home in Finland. This means that you should learn Finnish, be familiar with Finnish customs and how to act in Finland, and where you can find the information and services you need. It is also important for you to maintain your own language and culture. There are different kinds of services that support your integration. According to legislation, an immigrant is entitled to services that promote integration (Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, paragraph 3). Integration refers to the interactive development of an immigrant and society, the aim of which is to provide the immigrant with the information and skills required in society and working life.

An immigrant who is unemployed or is on income support on a non-temporary basis is entitled to an integration plan (paragraph 12). This can also be made for a student, employed person or person who takes care of their children at home and who is, based on an initial survey, deemed to need a plan to promote their integration. The first integration plan must be made, according to the legislation, within three years of the immigrant receiving their first residence permit or their right of residence being registered (paragraph 12). The integration plan is made together with the immigrant, either at the Employment and Economic Development Services or the municipality. It can also be made in cooperation between the Employment and Economic Development Services, municipality and the immigrant. An immigrant who is unemployed or is on income support on a non-temporary basis is obligated to attend the meetings agreed in the integration plan.

Your own role in the integration process is the most important one. The authorities and other operators are available to support you in your integration. It is important for you to actively utilise the services that promote integration. Learning everything is not the most important thing. However, learning how to find the answers you need is important.



5. Checklist for a person moving to Finland

This list has been compiled to help you understand the order in which you should take care of matters when you move to Finland.

- **Check whether you need a residence permit.** You must have a reason for residing in Finland and generally the permit is applied for abroad, before arriving in Finland.
- **Remember the Migri registration** within 3 months, if you are an EU or EEA citizen. Even an EU citizen must have a reason for residing in Finland.
- Get yourself **an apartment**.
- **Register as a resident of Finland at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency** in order to get a social security number if you did not apply for one with the residence permit. Find out about your right to a home municipality here.
- **Contact Kela and apply for a right to the Finnish social security.** Also apply for a Kela card, which you will need for health care services.
- **Get a new passport photo and apply for an identity card** at the police station. An identity card makes it easier to interact with banks and authorities.
- **Open a bank account at a bank.** You will be given a bank card and electronic banking password with which you can easily manage your affairs online.
- Get a **Finnish mobile phone subscription**. Prepaid subscriptions are available in many stores.
- **Register with an Employment and Economic Development Services office (TE-toimisto)**, if you are looking for work.
- **Get a tax card** from the tax office, if necessary.
- **Go for a walk** and get to know your new home!

6. Registering personal information in Finland

When you move to Finland, you must usually get a residence permit or register your residency. You also register as a resident of a municipality. Your personal information will be recorded in the Finnish population information system. This means that the authorities, such as healthcare and tax administration, can access your information. Please note that registering your place of residence in the Digital and Population Data Services Agency is not the same as the registering with the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri).

If you are a citizen of an EU Member State, Switzerland or Liechtenstein, you do not need a residence permit for Finland, but you do need to register your EU citizen's right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service if you want to stay in Finland for longer than three months. The residency must have a reason and you must have enough assets to support yourself (and your family) in Finland. If you are a citizen of a Nordic country, registering your residency at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency of your home municipality is enough. You do not need to register your right of residency with Migri.

If you are a citizen of a country that is not a Member State of the EU and you want to stay in Finland for longer than three months, you must apply for a residence permit. You must have a reason for residency in Finland. Usually, a residence permit is applied for when abroad before coming to Finland. You can also apply for a residence permit electronically. When abroad, the applications are submitted to the relevant Finnish embassy or other mission. When in Finland, applications are submitted to Migri. Even if you apply for a residence permit electronically, you must usually verify your identity at a Finnish embassy or other mission or Migri. Migri processes all residence permit applications.

You will receive a **social security number** when you are granted a residence permit. If you have not yet received a social security number, you will be given one when you register as a resident with the Digital and Population Data

Services Agency. In most cases, the registration cannot be done electronically and you have to personally visit the agency. You need a Finnish social security number when you interact with authorities and private companies, such as in healthcare services or when you open a bank account or get a phone subscription. You also need a social security number when applying for possible benefits.

A foreign person living in Finland can, with certain requirements, be appointed a **home municipality**. The home municipality is recorded at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. When you have a home municipality, you can use the services the municipality provides such as public healthcare and day-care services for children. Sometimes a home municipality is required so that a person can get services or benefits and support provided by the authorities.

Read more:

- Digital and Population Data Services Agency:
<https://dvv.fi/en/foreigner-registration>
- Migri: <https://migri.fi/en/permits-and-citizenship>



7. Identity card

An identity card is a document with a photograph that is granted to Finnish citizens and foreign citizens residing in Finland so that they can verify their identity. You can get an identity card, which can be used as a form of official identification if:

- you live in Finland permanently
- you have been entered in the population information system
- you have a valid residence permit
- or your residency has been registered

An identity card is valid, at most, for five years at a time, at most. The length of your residence permit's validity period affects the validity period of the identity card. You apply for an identity card by contacting the police. You need to take with you a valid passport or valid residence permit and passport photo.

Read more about identity cards on the police's website:

<https://poliisi.fi/en/identity-card>



8. Bank matters

You need a bank account into which your salary and benefits can be paid. Select the bank with which you want to open an account. Bank charges vary and it is recommended you compare them before selecting a bank. In order to open a bank account, you need **an official document establishing your identity** (a passport or identity card).

When you open a bank account, you may also be given **an electronic banking password**. The requirements for an electronic banking password are stricter than those for a bank account. That is, why they are not always granted. Often, a Finnish identity card is required before a person is granted extensive online bank access.

Electronic forms of interaction are commonly used in Finland. Due to this, an electronic banking password is almost a necessity if you want to manage your affairs easily. With the password, you can use electronic services or authenticate yourself when using an official service. Many authorities recommend using an electronic form of interaction since it makes things such as submitting attachments faster. An electronic banking password is also needed if you want to shop online.

Read more:

- The Finnish Financial Ombudsman Bureau (FINE), service available in Finnish and English: <https://www.fine.fi/en/>
- Finance Finland:
<https://www.finanssiala.fi/en/publications/expatriate-banking/>



9. Finnish social security

When you move to Finland permanently, you must apply for the right to a Finnish social security card and Kela card. In Finland, the purpose of social security is to ensure that people have sufficient income and that they are cared for in all situations in life. Social security consists of services and monetary benefits that ensure income. The Social Insurance Institution (**Kela**) makes the decision on whether a person is entitled to social security. If the decision is in your favour, you will be sent **a health insurance card, i.e. Kela card**, which you will need when you buy prescription medicine from a pharmacy or go to a doctor's appointment. With a Kela card, you can get reimbursement for the costs of private healthcare and medicine purchases. You are not entitled to social security if you are in the social security system of another country or residing in Finland temporarily. If you work in Finland but do not live here permanently, you may still be entitled to social security.

A person's main income in Finland is salary paid for work or income from business activities. **Kela can pay monetary support in different situations in life when other income decreases significantly.** The requirements for benefits are defined in legislation. You must apply for each allowance or benefit separately.

In matters related to Kela benefits: contact Kela, ask to make an appointment and for interpretation, if necessary.

**More information available
on the Kela website:**

<https://www.kela.fi/from-other-countries-to-finland-quick-guide>



10. Services for families

In Finland, there are different kinds of services for families. They support parenthood and families in different situations in life. Maternity and child health clinics and family counselling centres provide support when you are pregnant or when your child is under school age. The purpose of clinic and counselling services is to support parenthood and monitor a child's growth and development. The clinic and counselling services are provided by the municipality and are free of charge. You must independently seek clinic and counselling services if you are pregnant or you have, when you arrive in Finland, children who are under the school age.

Early childhood education is an important part of the Finnish education system. It includes **day-care centre operations**, family day care and club and play activities (open early childhood education). The purpose of early childhood education is to support parents as their child grows, teach the child and provide the child with care when the parents are working or studying. Early childhood education is for children between the ages 0 and 6 and every child is entitled to it, but it is not mandatory. The last year of early childhood education is **pre-school education**, which is compulsory for the child and therefore mandatory. Preschool education prepares the child for school. Early childhood education takes into account the child's special needs such as their proficiency in the Finnish language. Early childhood education in Finland is carefully planned and emphasises cooperation with families.

Good to know:

- You need to apply for a place in early childhood education, and it may not end up being the day-care centre closest to you home.
- You must apply for a place in preschool education, and the location of the education is determined according to your address.
- There are, among other things, discussions held at the day-care centre that a parent must attend. You will be provided with an interpreter for them, if necessary.

Additionally, a family has, if necessary, the possibility to seek other services for families with children. Clinics and day-care centres provide more information about them. Organisations and churches also have services for families.

In Finland, families also receive monetary support from Kela. Kela supports families in the form of maternity benefits, child allowances and parental leave, for example. Additionally, it is also possible to get support for taking care of your child at home.

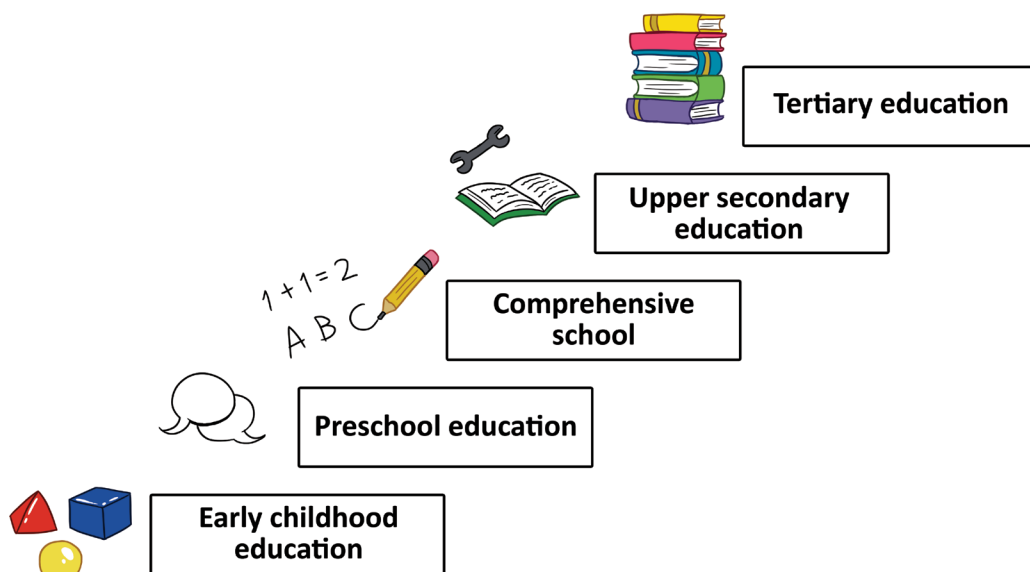
Read more:

- Social welfare and health care services for families in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/en/web/english/children-young-people-and-families>
- Kela benefits for families: <https://www.kela.fi/web/en/families>
- Early childhood education in Finland: <https://www.oph.fi/en/education-and-qualifications/what-early-childhood-education-and-care>
- Information and support for the everyday life of a family with children: <https://www.mll.fi/en/>



11. The Finnish education system and studying in Finland

Education and studying are respected in Finland, so everyone is encouraged to study. The Finnish education system consists of early childhood education (day-care centre), preschool education, rounded basic education (comprehensive school), upper secondary education (vocational training and upper secondary school education) and tertiary education (university and university of applied sciences). Furthermore, all levels of education also provide adult education.

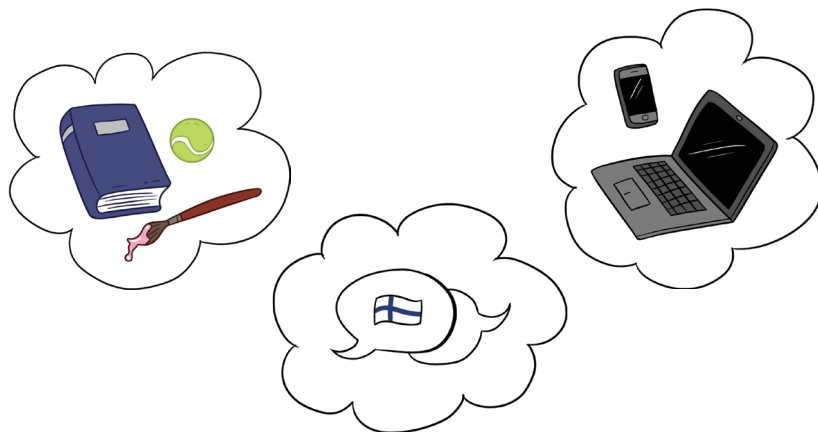


In Finland, **basic education** is based on legislation, and **compulsory education** concerns people between the ages of 7 and 18. Basic education covers years 1–9, and school begins in the year the child turns seven. You must independently register your child for basic education. After basic education has ended, the child must continue their studies in upper secondary education. In North Karelia, upper secondary education is organised by the vocational school Riveria and the several upper secondary schools in the region. You must independently apply for upper secondary education.

Basic education and upper secondary education are obligatory for all children living in Finland. They are free of charge and during the school day the children are provided with school food (lunch) that is also free of charge. School health care is free of charge as well. There are many kinds of support available for the schooling of an immigrant child. Schools organise preliminary education and different needs related to learning the language are taken into account. Additionally, the teaching of the child's native language and religion is supported.

After upper secondary education, it is possible to continue studying in institutions of higher education. In the North Karelia region, there are two higher education institutions, the University of Eastern Finland and Karelia University of Applied Sciences. Applications are received twice a year, through the joint application system. Studying in Finland almost always requires speaking Finnish or English, often both. **In North Karelia, immigrants are also provided with preliminary education that prepares them for vocational training and higher education institutions.**

- Preliminary training for vocational education (VALMA):
<https://www.riveria.fi/hakijalle/valma/>
- Training for immigrants for becoming a professional (MAMA):
<https://www.riveria.fi/maahanmuuttanut-matkalla-ammattiin/>
- Higher Education preparatory program for immigrants:
<https://www.karelia.fi/en/education-for-immigrants/>
- Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education: <https://simhe.karelia.fi/en/>



In Finland, it is also possible to take individual courses at different kinds of institutes. These studies do not usually lead to a degree and they are often subject to a charge. For example, at a civic college you can study things such as languages, handicrafts or IT skills. If you have a degree you have completed abroad, you can apply to have your degree recognised in Finland. You may need to supplement your education in order to work in Finland. Some professions also require an official licence before they can be practised. Additionally, different professions may also have different kinds of language requirements such as Finnish, Swedish and English. The required level of language proficiency depends on the profession.

Read more:

- About the Finnish education system: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/education/the-finnish-education-system>
- Karelia University of Applied Sciences: <https://www.karelia.fi/en/front-page/>
- University of Eastern Finland: <https://www.uef.fi/en>
- Vocational school Riveria: <https://www.riveria.fi/in-english/>
- Joensuu region adult education centre: <https://www.opistopalvelut.fi/joensuu/index.php?l=en>
- Ilomantsin kansalaisopisto: <https://www.ilomantsi.fi/kansalaisopisto>
- Kiteen kansalaisopisto: <https://www.kitee.fi/kansalaisopisto>



12. Work and job searching services

The Employment and Economic Development Services (TE services) help you integrate and find employment. If you want to search for a job in Finland, you can apply for one independently by going through the job advertisements on the website or you can register as a jobseeker at a TE Office. TE Offices provide unemployed jobseekers with different kinds of services that promote finding employment. The TE Office for your home municipality can also help you find employment. To register for TE services, you need to have your residence permit or EU residence permit registered, a form of identification and information related to your work history and studies. If you want to receive unemployment benefit from Kela or your unemployment fund, you must register as a customer of a TE Office.

As an unemployed jobseeker, you must participate in the activities agreed with the TE Office in order to receive unemployment benefits. The activity can be, for example, integration training. **In integration training, you learn Finnish and skills related to society and working life.** The courses improve your chances of finding employment. You can temporarily lose your unemployment benefit if you reject a job or training without a good reason.

Your own level of activity plays a big role in finding employment. Once you have a job, you need **a tax card**. You can get a tax card from a tax office. In Finland, you pay income tax on your salary. Your tax rate depends on how much you are paid. If you come from abroad to work in Finland, your taxation is affected by how long you stay in Finland and whether your employer is a Finnish or foreign company. A tax card is also required for benefits. In Finland, employed people are often members of **a trade union and unemployment fund**. A trade union protects the employees' best interests and helps in problem situations. Additionally, you can get earnings-linked unemployment benefit if you become unemployed. Earnings-linked unemployment benefit is usually more than the unemployment benefit paid by Kela. You can get earnings-linked unemployment benefit for a fixed period.

Learn the most important questions and answers for when you need to interact with a bureau:

What is your first/last name?	Mikä sinun etu-/sukunimi on?
My name is...	Minun nimeni on...
What is your nationality?	Minkä maalainen sinä olet?
I am...	Minä olen...
Where are you from?	Mistä sinä olet kotoisin?
I am from...	Minä olen kotoisin...
Which languages do you speak?	Mitä kieltä sinä puhut?
I speak English, Arabic and Russian.	Minä puhun englantia, arabiaa ja venäjää.
Where do you live now?	Missä sinä asut nyt?
I live...	Minä asun...

Read more:

- About trade unions: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/work-and-enterprise/employee-s-rights-and-obligations/trade-unions>
- About taxation: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/work-and-enterprise/taxation>
- Employment services: <https://tyomarkkinatori.fi/en>
- The Working in Finland guidebook provides information about Finnish working life in different languages: <https://www.ttl.fi/en/working-in-finland-information-for-immigrants-in-13-languages/>
- Business Joensuu offers services to companies and entrepreneurs in North Karelia concerning international matters: <https://www.businessjoensuu.fi/en/>
- Luotsi Joensuu provides employment services in Joensuu: <https://luotsijoensuu.fi/in-english>

13. Living

In Finland, you can live in an owner-occupied apartment or rental apartment. You can apply for a rental apartment from a private lessor or a rental housing cooperative. Municipalities and cities also offer apartments. You can look for rental notices for apartments online, in the advertising columns of papers or from housing agencies. When applying for city rental accommodation, you must submit an application.

A lease agreement must always be made **in writing**. It can be valid indefinitely or for a fixed period. Both the lessor and the lessee have the right to terminate the agreement. The terms of notice are recorded in the lease agreement. **It is recommended that you read through the terms and conditions of a lease agreement carefully before signing it.** When you move into a new apartment, submit **a notice of change of address** with to the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, postal services and others that send you post. You can submit the notice of change of address one month before the day of the move and, at the latest, within one week after the move.

Often, lessors ask for **a rental deposit**. This is the rent for 1–2 months. The deposit is paid as a security to the lessor and the lessor has the right to not return it to the lessee if the lessee has, for example, caused damage to the apartment or has not paid the rent. If everything is in order, the deposit is returned to the lessee after the lease agreement has ended. If the lessee does not follow the housing cooperative's rules or neglect to pay the rent, they may receive a warning or even end up being evicted.

A lessee should have **home insurance**, which they can get from an insurance company. The lessor may also require the lessee to get home insurance. Home insurance protects personal property in the home and covers costs in the event of an accident. In addition to rent, you **must pay separately for electricity and water, unless they are included in the rent**. For this reason, you should pay attention to the consumption of water and electricity. Using water and electricity economically saves money and is good for the environment. You must make an electricity contract yourself.



Finnish apartments often have a sauna or the housing cooperative facilities have a sauna that the residents share. You may not dry clothes in a sauna or use it as a storage. You may not place anything above the sauna stove as this creates a fire hazard. Always turn an electric sauna stove off after use. For a communal sauna, you usually have to reserve a time slot. It is important to follow the reservation rules. Usually, a housing cooperative also has a communal laundry room and drying room. These must also be reserved in advance.

Lessee's duties:

- Familiarise yourself with the housing cooperative's rules (these can usually be found in the stairwell, near the entrance door) and follow them (such as being quiet from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.).
- Pay the rent on time (the amount and due date of rent are in the lease agreement).
- Ensure that the apartment stays in good condition:
 - Smoking in the apartment and on the balcony is usually prohibited. You can find a smoking area outside.
 - Notify the lessor or housing cooperative if there are any faults in the apartment (e.g. a leaking water tap).
 - When you leave the apartment, check that all the electrical appliances and the water taps are turned off.
 - You may not dispose any food, sanitary towels or nappies in a toilet.
- Ask for permission if you want to make changes (e.g. to paint a wall).
- Make sure there are enough smoke alarms in the apartment and check that they are functional.
- When you move out, you must clean the apartment thoroughly.
- Breaking the rules of the lease agreement and housing cooperative can lead to warnings or possible termination of the lease agreement.

Read more:

- Rental guide for a lessee:
<https://www.kuluttajaliitto.fi/en/materials/rentalguide/>
- About living and moving in Finland:
<https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/housing/moving-house>



14. Recycling and the environment

You must sort your waste at home and take waste to the recycling point of your building, where, different materials have their own containers. If you live in a detached house, you must take care of recycling yourself. Additionally, places such as supermarket premises have recycling points. Burning waste is prohibited and no rubbish, food or chemicals may be disposed of in the toilet. You can sell unbroken items at **a flea market** or online or donate them to a charity or recycling centres. In Finland, it is normal to buy clothes or items second-hand from places like flea markets.

Good to know:

- Waste that cannot be recycled must be delivered to a landfill.
- You may not dump any rubbish in nature.
- Cooking oil may not be poured down a drain as this can block the drain. First, absorb the oil in a paper towel and then put it into biowaste or pour the oil into an empty container and into mixed waste.
- You can return empty bottles and cans using the machines found at grocery stores. The machine prints out a receipt that you can then use to pay for your purchases or exchange for cash at the checkout.

Read more about waste management and recycling:

<https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/housing/waste-management-and-recycling>

Biowaste

- Food scraps
- Fruit and vegetable peels
- Coffee grounds, tea bags
- Paper towels, napkins
- Flower soil, plants



Glass packaging

- Glass jars
- Glass bottles without a deposit



Paper

- Newspapers and magazines
- Direct mail advertisements
- Envelopes
- Copying paper
- Directories and books



Waste to be incinerated (=mixed waste)

- Dirty plastics
- Expanded polystyrene
- Packing and wrapping paper
- Dirty cardboard and paper
- Hygiene products
- Unusable clothes, shoes and household textiles
- Cleaning waste
- Cigarette ends

Cardboard packaging

Dry and clean:

- Milk and juice cartons
- Flour bags
- Egg cartons
- Toilet paper roll cores
- Cardboard boxes



Textiles

Usable, unbroken and clean:

- Clothes
- Shoes, belts and bags
- Household textiles, sheets and curtains



Metal

- Metal cans, caps and lids
- Aluminium foil
- Empty and dry paint tins
- Metal objects



Electric appliances

to retail outlets, waste stations or
a waste management company's
receiving site

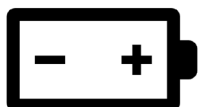
big and small devices that use
mains electricity or a battery:

- fridges, refrigerators
- TVs, vacuum
cleaners,
coffee makers



Batteries

to retail outlets



Plastic packaging

Empty, dry and clean

- Plastic packaging for food
- Detergent, shampoo and soap
packages
- Plastic bottles and tins
- Plastic bags and
wrappings



Dangerous household waste

to a waste management company's
receiving site



Pharmaceutical waste

to a pharmacy



15. Health care services

Health care services in Finland include basic health care and special health care. Basic health care is provided at the municipality's health centre. Special health care is typically provided at a hospital. The hospital for the North Karelia region is located in Joensuu and each municipality has a health centre. If you have a home municipality in Finland, you can use the municipality's health care services. There are also private health care services available, which can be used by anyone, regardless of their home municipality. Private health care services are more expensive than public services.

If you fall ill, you must contact the health centre in your area. An appointment with a public health nurse, nurse or doctor will be made for you. If you require special health care, a general practitioner at the health centre will refer you for further examination by a specialist doctor. In cases of accidents or illness that require urgent care, first call the health centre or the free-of-charge emergency helpline service on the number **116 117**. In situations requiring first aid, you can go to a health centre or the coordinated accident and emergency services of a central hospital without calling first. In cases of accidents and illness that are severe and life-threatening, always call the general emergency number 112.

In Finland, basic health care provided by nurse is free of charge for everyone. Children under the age of 18 do not need to pay for outpatient care and examinations. If you cannot attend a hospital, health centre or dental appointment, you must cancel the appointment well in advance. If you do not cancel the appointment, you will be sent **an invoice and required to pay**. If you cannot cancel your appointment by phone, you can always visit the location to cancel the appointment or make a new one or you can ask another person to help you cancel or/and make a new appointment.

In an emergency

The general emergency number is 112. You can call this number in all emergency situations, such as a fire, if someone has a seizure or there is a traffic accident. The person who answers the call will send the fire brigade, ambulance or police. You can call the emergency centre at any time. Calling the emergency

number is free of charge. Therefore, you can even make the call using a mobile phone that has no subscription left. For smart phones a 112 application is available. You can also call the emergency number using the application, in which case your location is relayed to the emergency centre automatically. You must never end an emergency call before the emergency centre has given you permission to do so. Do not call the emergency number in non-urgent matters.

Calling the emergency number:

I am...	Minä olen ...
There has been an accident. I need the police.	Täällä on onnettomuus, tarvitsen poliisin.
There is a fire. I need the fire department.	Täällä on tulipalo, tarvitsen paloauton.
Someone is having a seizure. I need an ambulance.	Täällä on sairauskohtaus, tarvitsen ambulanssin.
I do not speak Finnish. I need an interpreter.	En osaa suomea. Tarvitsen tulkin.
I am at the address...	Minä olen osoitteessa ...

Read more:

- Health centres in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/web/english/health-stations-and-emergency-care>
- Oral and dental care in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/web/english/oral-and-dental-care>
- Emergency clinics in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/en/web/english/health-stations-and-emergency-care>
- Laboratory services in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/web/english/laboratory>
- North Karelia Central Hospital: <https://www.siunsote.fi/en/web/english/north-karelia-central-hospital?inheritRedirect=true>

112

**Emergency
number:**

Call the emergency number **in case of an emergency**, such as:

- a car accident
- someone's life is in danger
- severe symptoms (sudden and strong chest pains, trouble breathing or paralysis)
- you need the police

**Coordinated
accident and
emergency
services of
North Karelia
Central Hospital**

Tikkamäentie 16
80210 Joensuu

Emergency helpline
116 117

Call the emergency helpline if **you have suddenly fallen ill or are injured**, and if you have, for example:

- heavy bleeding, a large bleeding wound
- a substantial injury and fracture
- a strong headache that started suddenly
- trouble breathing
- strong abdominal pains that started suddenly
- strong earache that a painkiller does not alleviate
- a newborn baby has a fever

The emergency helpline will instruct you on the phone on what you should do. If you are instructed to come to the coordinated accident and emergency services, take into account that patients are treated in order of urgency. You might have to wait for several hours, since urgent cases are always prioritised over others.

.....

**Terveyskeskus/
terveysasema =
a health centre**

(Mon–Fri
from 8 a.m.
to 4 p.m.)

A health centre is the right place for
“**all non-urgent basic healthcare treatment**”,
such as a prolonged cold.

It is recommended you call your own health
centre early in the morning if you want to have an
appointment on the same day.

.....

**Special
health care**

A health centre doctor will give you a referral to
see a specialist doctor (at a central hospital), if
necessary.

.....

**Private health
care providers**

such as Mehiläinen
and Terveystalo

If you want treatment quickly, you can visit a
private doctor.
However, this costs the customer more.
Doctors are equally competent in both the private
and public sectors.



Interacting with health care services:

Hello! I am...	Päivää! Minä olen...
Here is my Kela card.	Tässä on minun Kela-kortti.
I am ill.	Minä olen sairas.
I want to book an appointment with a doctor.	Minä haluan lääkäriaajan.
I have the flu.	Minulla on flunssa.
My back/foot/neck/ear/tooth hurts.	Minulla on kipeä: selkä / jalka / niska / korva/ hammas.
I have a fever of 39 degrees.	Minulla on 39 astetta kuumetta.
I have gastric flu.	Minulla on oksennustauti.
I have diarrhoea.	Minulla on ripuli.
I have a cough.	Minulla on yskä.
I have a cold.	Minulla on nuha.
I feel dizzy.	Minua huimaa / pyörryttää.
My father/husband/wife/mother/son/daughter is ill.	Minun isä/mies/vaimo/äiti/poika/tyttö on sairas.
My social security number is...	Minun henkilötunnus on...
I need a certificate for sick leave.	Minä tarvitsen sairaslomatodistuksen.
I do not understand Finnish.	Minä en ymmärrä suomea.
I would like an interpreter.	Minä haluan tulkin.
My native language is... Arabic/English/Russian.	Minun äidinkieli on ...arabia/englanti/venäjä

16. Mental well-being

Moving to a new country is always a big change and can cause both positive and negative feelings. This is normal and it takes time to adapt. The people around you can support integration. Therefore, we encourage you to participate in different kinds of social situations and make new **friends**. Sometimes, you may also need the help of a health care professional. In Finland, a variety of mental health services are available and it is perfectly normal for people to use them when experiencing challenging situation in life. You can talk to a nurse or doctor about mental health matters. They are obligated to keep everything discussed confidential.

You can also call:

North Karelia crisis centre:

013-316 244 (free of charge, you need to make an appointment, conversational therapy either face to face or online, can be done anonymously)

National crisis helpline:

010 195 202 (provides conversational therapy to all who are experiencing a crisis)

Read more:

- Mental health services in North Karelia: <https://www.siunsote.fi/en/web/english/mental-health-and-substance-abuse-services>
- North Karelia Crisis Centre: <https://www.mielenterveysseurat.fi/pohjois-karjala/north-karelia-crisis-center/>

17. Facing discrimination

In Finland, every person is equal and discrimination is prohibited by law. It is important that the people in our society follow the laws and rules. Everyone has the right to equal treatment, and no-one should be treated differently regardless their age, gender, nationality, language, religion, health, disability or sexual orientation. Discrimination involves treating another person inferior because of their place of origin, skin colour, nationality, culture, native language or religion. A racially motivated crime can be an act of violence, defamation, discrimination, threats, bullying or vandalism. If you encounter racism or discrimination, it is important that you report the incident to the police. Many organisations **provide the victims of crimes with support, counselling and guidance.**

Read more:

- About discrimination and racism: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/information-about-finland/equality-and-non-discrimination>
- Victim Support Finland: <https://www.riku.fi/en/>
- Eastern Finland Police Department: <https://poliisi.fi/en/eastern-finland-police-department>



18. Pharmacy

You can get self-care drugs and prescription drugs from a pharmacy. A doctor can give you an electronic **prescription**. You can view the electronic prescription in the My Kanta service and the pharmacy personnel can view it in their own system. You log in to the My Kanta service with your electronic banking credentials. You can pick up the medication immediately from any pharmacy. With a Kela card you can immediately get a social welfare-stipulated discount on the price of the prescription drugs.

Read more about the My Kanta service:

<https://www.kanta.fi/en/my-kanta-pages>

Visiting a pharmacy:

I have a prescription.	Minulla on (lääke)resepti.
Here is my Kela card.	Tässä on minun Kela-kortti.
What helps when...	Mikä auttaa, kun...
...I have a fever of 40 degrees.	...minulla on 40 astetta kuumetta.
...I have diarrhoea.	...minulla on ripuli.
...I have constipation.	...minulla on ummetus.
...I have a cough.	...minulla on yskä.
...I have a cold.	...minulla on nuha.
...I have an allergy.	...minulla on allergia.
I feel a strong pain in my head/ear...	Minulla on kova kipu päässä/ korvassa...

I need/am looking for...	Minä tarvitsen/etsin...
...a painkiller	...kipu-/särkylääkettä
...a plaster	...laastaria
...a good salve	...hyvää voidetta
...an elastic bandage	...ideaalisidettä
...a thermometer	...kuumemittaria



19. Public transport and cycling

Using **Joensuu's region public transport** (Jojo), you can move around by bus in the city and surrounding area. Liperi, Kontiolahti, Outokumpu and Ilomantsi are included in the service. The price of a journey depends on the area, customer, time and ticket type. Schedule brochures are available in Joensuu at Carelicum or on buses. The schedule information is also available online and in the Waltti mobile route guide. Joensuu also has a railway station and an airport.

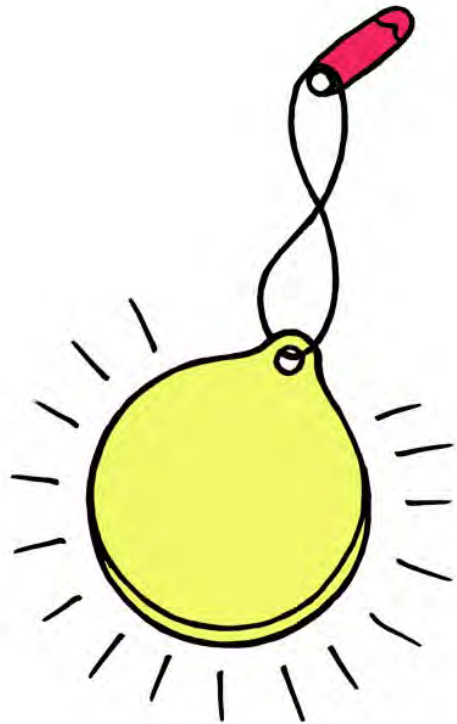
Cycling is a good option for shorter journeys. A bicycle must have a headlight, rear light, brakes and reflectors on both the back and sides. It is also recommended to wear a helmet. Second-hand bicycles can be bought, for example, from flea markets or on the tori.fi website. In larger cities, you can often also rent a bicycle. Winters and autumns are very dark in Finland. Therefore, it is very important you wear **a reflector** on your clothing whenever you are outside while it is dark. This helps drivers and other people on the road users see you.

Most important traffic rules for cyclists:

- cyclists must stay on the cycle path; on the street cyclists use the far right-hand side of the road, cyclists may ride carefully along a pedestrian street; only a child under the age of 12 may ride a bicycle on the pavement
- ride on the right and pass others on the left
- when a cyclist comes from a cycle path onto a road (e.g. when crossing a street), at a four-way intersection they must give way to other traffic (even a car coming from their left)
- when driving on a street, you must always give way to traffic coming from the right, unless traffic lights or traffic signs rule otherwise
- a cyclist always gives way to pedestrians
- use your hand to indicate your a direction before turning

Read more:

- Joensuu region public transport:
<https://jojo.joensuu.fi/en/web/jojo-english>
- Route guide: <https://joensuu.digitransit.fi/?locale=en>
- Matkahuolto:
<https://www.matkahuolto.fi/passengers/timetables>
- Train timetables and tickets:
<https://www.vr.fi/en/railway-stations-and-routes/joensuu>



20. Visiting a store

Finnish stores have a wide range of products. There are a lot of products for people with allergies or who follow a special diet. All packaged food items in stores have a use by date on them. You may use a product even after the best before date. You can use your common sense to assess whether the product can still be used. A store may not sell a product and the product may not be used after the expiration date. In Finland, you use in-store scales to weigh the fruit and vegetables. Wine and strong alcoholic beverages can only be bought at Alko.



Dairy products:

skimmed milk	rasvaton maito
semi-skimmed milk	kevytmaito
whole milk	täysmaito
Hyla milk, low-lactose	Hyla-maito, vähälaktoosinen
lactose-free (milk drink)	laktoositon (maitojuoma)
organic milk	luomumaito
soy/oat/rice milk	soija- / kaura- / riisimaito

Meat and meat-based products:

pork	porsaanliha / possu / sika
gelatin	liivate
gelatine	gelatiini
beef	nauta
minced meat	jauheliha
chicken	kana
fish	kala

dairy-free	maidoton
egg-free	munaton
gluten-free	gluteeniton
vegan	vegaaninen

expiration date	viimeinen käyttöpäivä
best before date	parasta ennen päiväys
packaging date	valmistuspäivä
country of origin	alkuperämaa

Can I help you? / Do you need help?	Where can I find the detergents?
Voinko auttaa? / Tarvitsetteko apua?	Missä on pesuaineet?

How much does this shirt cost?	It costs 13 euros and 30 cents.
Mitä tämä paita maksaa?	Se maksaa 13 euroa ja 30 senttiä.

Do you want a plastic bag?	Yes, thank you.
Haluatko muovipussin?	Kyllä kiitos.

Do you need anything else?	No, thank you.
Tuleeko muuta?	Ei kiitos.

Your total is 27 euros and 50 cents.	Yhteensä 27 euroa 50 senttiä.
---	-------------------------------

Do you want to pay by card or cash?	Cash.
Maksatteko (pankki)kortilla vai käteisellä?	Käteisellä.

Here you go!	Ole hyvä!
---------------------	-----------

Would you like a receipt?	No, thank you.
Haluatko kuitin?	Ei kiitos.

21. Free time and hobbies



You can meet new people and discover new things through the hobbies and recreational activities available in your municipality. It is important you find something you like to do, have new experiences and make new friends in a new place. **Do not hesitate to try new hobbies!**

A lot of different events are held in the summer in particular. By attending these, you can also learn about Finnish culture and meet new people. Finland has a lot of nature sites you can visit. There are several **national parks, camping routes and nature trails** in North Karelia. There are a range of organised events and excursions for doing things in nature. Cultural interests include a lot of options and many municipalities have a cinema and many kinds of museums. Joensuu has a municipal theatre and city orchestra. Concerts and music events are held in several different places.

Municipalities have different kinds of **outdoor and indoor exercise sites** that residents can use. These include public sports centres, tennis courts, outdoor gyms, ice rinks and public swimming pools. Sometimes, you need to book a time slot for an exercise venue. It is important to follow the rules and booking instructions of these places. In wintertime, there are plenty of ski tracks. In summertime, you can go for a jog along a sawdust track. Information about exercise sites can usually be found on the municipality's website. You can also contact the sports services of your municipality.

Skills centres provide instruction and training related to craftsmanship. You can also purchase crafts equipment from these places. In Joensuu, the skills centre is located in Taitokortteli. In Ilomantsi, it is in the Pirola yard. They provide courses and workshops (which are subject to a charge) in which you can learn more about crafts and handicraft tradition. Going to an adult education centre is an inexpensive way to learn languages, attend an exercise class, take all kinds of courses where you can learn new skills or try different kinds of hobbies.

Voluntary and communal work is a good way to meet new people and practise Finnish. Organisations and associations also organise a lot of different kinds of activities and events. Many residential areas have their own residents' associations and by participating in their operations you can get to know the people in your area and have your say in local matters.

From a library, you can borrow books, magazines, films, music, games and even musical instruments and exercise equipment. **In a library, you can also use a computer, study and attend different kinds of events** (such as fairy tale readings, crafts clubs and different kinds of exhibitions). You can use a library to borrow books in your native language. If a library does not have literature in your native language, you can ask the staff to order some. In order to borrow something, you need **a library card (which is free)**.

Read more about libraries in North Karelia: <https://vaara.finna.fi/?lng=en-gb>

I would like a library card.	Minä haluan kirjastokortin.
I woul like to borrow a book/books.	Minä haluan lainata kirjan / kirjat.
Here is my library card.	Tässä minun kirjastokortti.
I want to return a book.	Minä haluan palauttaa kirjan.

22. Do you need more help?

If you require additional assistance with something, the links below may help. Additionally, municipalities have different kinds of organisations and meeting places that help immigrants in particular. You can ask the immigration service in your municipality for more information about them. Do not hesitate to ask for help and tips from local people!

- General information about Finland and Finnish culture in several different languages: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/frontpage>
- The lahella.fi online service compiles information about associations, communities and their operations in the North Karelia region: <https://www.lahella.fi/>
- North Karelian Society for Social Security organises many kinds of activities and helps people in different situations in life: <https://www.pksotu.fi/in-english/>
- Joensuun seudun monikulttuurisuusyhdistys ry (JoMoni) promotes multiculturalism in the Joensuu region and organises all kinds of activities: <https://www.jomoni.fi>
- International House Joensuu (City of Joensuu's immigration services): <https://www.internationaljoensuu.fi/en/>
- Often, local churches offer all kinds of help
- The Finnish Red Cross (SPR) offers different kinds of support for different groups: <https://rednet.punainenristi.fi/node/13214>
- The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) organises a lot of activities for children and parents: <https://jarvi-suomenpiiri.mll.fi/>
- Welcome to Finland guidebook in different languages: <https://tem.fi/en/welcome-to-finland>

23. Useful Finnish expressions

Greetings:

Hello! Hi! Hey!	Terve! Moi! Hei!
Good morning! / Morning!	Hyvää huomenta! / Huomenta!
Good day!	Hyvää päivää! / Päivää!
Good evening! / Evening!	Hyvää iltaa! / Iltaa!
Good night! Night! Sleep well! Sweet dreams!	Hyvää yötä! Öitä! Nuku hyvin! Kauniita unia!
How are you? / How is it going?	Mitä kuuluu? / Miten menee?
Good, thank you. / Nothing special.	Kiitos hyvää. / Ei mitään erityistä.
And you?	Entä sinulle?

When saying goodbye:

Bye-bye! / Bye!	Hei Hei! / Moikka! / Moi! / Heippa!
See you!	Nähdään!
See you tomorrow!	Nähdään huomenna! / Huomiseen!

If you do not understand, you can say:

Can you please speak slower?	Voitko puhua hitaammin?
Sorry, what did you say?	Anteeksi, mitä sanoit?
I do not understand Finnish all that well.	Minä en ymmärrä hyvin suomea.
I only speak a little bit of Finnish.	Minä puhun vain vähän suomea.

How to ask for an interpreter:

Excuse me, I need an Arabic/Russian/English interpreter, please.

Anteeksi, minä tarvitsen...arabian/venäjän/englannin kielen tulkkia, kiitos.

Numbers

1	one	yksi
2	two	kaksi
3	three	kolme
4	four	neljä
5	five	viisi
6	six	kuusi
7	seven	seitsemän
8	eight	kahdeksan
9	nine	yhdeksän
10	ten	kymmenen
11	eleven	yksitoista
12	twelve	kaksitoista
13	thirteen	kolmetoista
14	fourteen	neljätoista
15	fifteen	viisitoista
20	twenty	kaksikymmentä
30	thirty	kolmekymmentä
100	hundred	sata
1,000	thousand	tuhat
2021	two thousand twenty-one	kaksituhattakaksikymmentäyksi

Expressions of time

Time is important to Finns. Finns stick to schedules and agreements. Being late to a meeting is impolite. Therefore, it is polite to notify the other person if you are running late or cannot make it. In Finland, the dates are written so that first comes the day, then the month and then the year (for example, Finland became independent on the sixth day of December in 1917 i.e. 06.12.1917).

What day is it today?

Working days:	Arkipäivät:	When?	Milloin?
Monday	maanantai	on Monday	maanantaina
Tuesday	tiistai	on Tuesday	tiistaina
Wednesday	keskiviikko	on Wednesday	keskiviikkona
Thursday	torstai	on Thursday	torstaina
Friday	perjantai	on Friday	perjantaina
Weekend:	viikonloppu:	on weekend	viikonloppuna
Saturday	lauantai	on Saturday	lauantaina
Sunday	sunnuntai	on Sunday	sunnuntaina

Months

January	tammikuu
February	helmikuu
March	maaliskuu
April	huhtikuu
May	toukokuu
June	kesäkuu
July	heinäkuu
August	elokuu
September	syyskuu
‘October	lokakuu
November	marraskuu
December	joulukuu
year	vuosi

Time



14.00

It is two o'clock.

Kello on kaksi.

It is two o'clock sharp.

Kello on tasan kaksi.



13.45

It is a quarter to two.

Kello on varttia vaille kaksi.

It is fifteen minutes to two.

Kello on viittätoista minuuttia vaille kaksi.



14.15

It is a quarter past two.

Kello on vartin yli kaksi.

It is fifteen minutes past two.

Kello on viisitoista minuuttia yli kaksi.



13.30

It is half past one.

Kello on puoli kaksi.



14.30

It is half past two.

Kello on puoli kolme.

Asking for the time and telling the time

What time is it?	Mitä kello on?
Could you tell me the time?	Kuinka paljon kello on?
Do you have the time?	Paljonko kello on?
When/At what time... will you come?	Milloin / Mihin aikaan... sinä tulet?
I will come at... two.	Minä tulen... kello kaksi/kahdelta.

