

USEFUL INFORMATION IF GOING TO FINLAND AS A TOURIST IN A PLEASURE CRAFT.



Topic	Comment
Demographic data (population/no of clubs/members/boats)	<p>5.4 million Inhabitants, out of which 1.1 million in the Helsinki area. Finland has a distance of 1.100 km from the south to the north. The longest border is with Russia. 188.000 lakes and 180.000 islands. Totally about 39.000 km coastline. The average depth in the Baltic Sea is only 54 m, in the Gulf of Finland it is 36 m and in the archipelago even less. Millions of hard stones and granite. 90 % of the beacons or spar buoys are in Finland and Sweden. There are two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. In the self-governing Åland archipelago and along the coastline Swedish speakers constitute a majority. Time zone UTC +2, summer nights are very short further north in the Gulf of Bothnia. The Finnish Sailing and Boating Federation (since 2011) have 330 clubs with 60.000 members. Around 13.000 motorboats and 11.000 sailing boats are registered within clubs. The right to use the yachting club ensign is given to boats registered in the club and which are annually safety inspected. There are altogether about 800.000 boats and vessels, including small rowboats.</p>
Currency	<p>Since 2002 the Finnish currency is Euro. You can pay with credit card almost everywhere with the exception of small shops in the archipelago. We recommend you to have cash available.</p>
Formalities, Customs, passport control, visa	<p>A yacht coming directly from another Schengen country need not report to the passport control point nor is it required to sail within the official channels. All crew members must carry their passport or national ID card. Crew list signed by the captain required if transiting the Saimaa Canal. Not necessary to clear customs unless you are carrying more than the allowed amounts of tobacco / alcohol, normally allowed in Europe when entering by car. Foreign yachts arriving in Finland from a non-Schengen Area country must keep to the official Customs routes, and report to the nearest coastguard station or Port of Entry along the channel. Passport control station should be alerted by VHF Channels 68 or 16 or by telephone, approximately one hour before arrival. When sailing between Finland and non-Schengen country (i.e. Russia), a yacht always has to go to the passport control point and to file a Customs declaration. A clearance declaration is issued on completion of formalities and this must be shown to the authorities at the port of departure. Visas required for visitors from and to Russia (also Kaliningrad). Finnish Customs: phone +358 9 6141, telefax +358 20 492 2852, www.tulli.fi The Finnish Border Guard: phone +358 71 872 0000, www.raja.fi</p>
Boat's documents required	<p>For EU boats, proof of VAT status is required also Ships Radio Licence. One member of the crew must have a radio operator's certificate of competence.</p>
Insurance	<p>Insurance is not compulsory.</p>
Legislation certificate of competence	<p>Boats with an engine of 15 kW (over 20 hp) or a sailing boat exceeding 5,5 m, must be registered. Registered boats require that the captain is at least 15 years old but he/she needs no certificate of competence. For vessels over 24 m ICC (professional navigation certificate) is required. For visiting vessels flag state rules apply.</p>
Alcohol limits	<p>The alcohol limit at sea for leisure boats is 1.0/ml. Coast Guard and Police officers do random breath alcohol test. If you cause an accident, even with less than 1.0/ml, you can be charged and you risk paying a penalty. Requirements also apply to foreign vessels. For commercial vessels the limit is 0.5/ml.</p>
TSS, esp. new ones	<p>Mandatory ship reporting system (roughly aligned on SW - NE direction) in the international waters of Gulf of Finland (GOFREP) took effect on Jan 2011 in addition to territorial VTS systems. TSS established Norra Kvarken in 2013.</p>
Military exercise areas	<p>Military protected areas are marked with signs on shore as well as on ordinary sea charts.</p>
Major construction sites	<p>None at this moment. Probably the next new pipeline from St. Petersburg to Greifswald may, at a later date, be operated in the Gulf of Finland.</p>
Windfarms	<p>Today, only a few off shore turbines on the Gulf of Bothnia coast line. Some smaller wind farms on shore.</p>

Bridges	Finland has mostly fixed bridges. They are found on the lakes and on inland waterways. Some fixed bridges can be found in the archipelago. Vertical clearance for fixed bridges is shown on the charts. Opening times for opening bridges vary and must be checked individually. In the archipelago cable ferries are still in operation.
Habitats and other protected areas	Nature protected sea areas and islands are marked on the sea chart. On islands or shores also noticeboards inform of prohibited periods, e.g. during nesting times.
Flag traditions/ application of flag rules	The yacht club flags (around 330) are equal to the Finnish flag and raised at 0800 and lowered at sunset, or latest at 2100. As a special custom in Finland, the flag is flown at Midsummer from 1800 on Midsummer Eve until 2100 on Midsummer's Day. When sailing in Finnish waters visitors are expected to fly a courtesy flag under starboard spreader. On a motorboat it should be on a pole.
Weather forecast	There is a lot of free weather Apps available from the Finnish Meteorological Institute. www.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi . Turku Radio broadcasts weather information on VHF.
Harbours	Classified guest harbours total about 1.300; 500 coastal marinas and nearly 800 fresh water marinas, mostly on Lake Saimaa. Harbours are classified according to their service levels, about 100 harbours offering all services. Additionally, there are many nature harbours. For guest harbours see www.vierassatamat.fi
Swinging mooring buoys for pleasure yachts	Some local clubs have their own harbours for members only. All buoys are to be used by members only. The national Merikarhut/Sjöbjörnarna (Sea Bears) have green buoys in their own private harbours where the same rules apply.
Anchoring and free access ashore	The Finnish "Everyman's right" allows free right of access to the land and waterways, freedom to explore and enjoy nature. Boats may anchor temporarily without special permission. The basic rules are; do not disturb or destroy. Information is available in Swedish, English, German and Russian. In a natural harbour, do not go close to other anchored boats, if there is room further away. You can stay in the same place for a day or two without asking the landowner's permission. Some places are seal or bird preservation areas and going ashore is prohibited during some periods. Preservation areas are marked on the sea charts. Because of the quite challenging waters, we recommend to use the guest harbours.
Good harbour manners	In Finnish harbours it is usually quiet after 2200. As a guest you can use any available mooring/berth in the harbour. Very often red/green signs are used and you may find a green sign with a notice of the return date of the owner.
Safety in harbours	In a guest harbour boats should be placed in a way that the spreading of a fire is hindered and the removal of boats is easy in case of fire. The boats have to be placed so that they can be reached by the harbour's fire extinguishers. Everyone on board should act carefully and avoid fires. Boats used for overnight accommodation should have smoke alarms and fire extinguishers installed. Finnish boaters may want to keep to themselves and therefore moor away from other boats.
Staying during the winter	Some marinas in Turku, Helsinki and Kotka provide winter storage. Along the coastline smaller storages may be found.
Antifouling regulations	In accordance with EU biocide directive.
Fuel availability	In marine fuel stations 95/98 petrol and diesel is available. Biodiesel includes 6% additives. Both marine and road diesel contain 6% biodiesel. Coloured diesel with reduced tax, is sold in just a few stations and may be used only for commercial vessels (be alert).
Gas availability	Bottled gas in the most common systems available.
Pump out stations for fuel and oily water	All yachts, including foreign flagged visiting yachts, are forbidden to discharge sewage within Finnish territorial waters (limit of 12NM from the shore). All Finnish flagged yachts are required to be fitted with a toilet holding tank capable of being emptied via a deck fitting at a pump-out station. Network of pump-out stations is extensive compared to other European countries. Grey water tanks are not required.
Public transport	In the larger cities there are public transportation systems; Helsinki also has trams and a subway. Tourist tickets for one or several days are available, but should be bought in advance.
Shopping hours	The opening hours vary depending on where you are. In the larger cities most shops are open until 2100, in the archipelago it varies from island to island. Walpurgis Night or Vappu (in Finnish) on 1 May and on Midsummer Day shops and services are closed.
Important phone numbers, home pages and useful links	Customs: phone +358 9 6141, telefax +358 20 492 2852, www.tulli.fi Border Guard: phone +358 71 872 0000, www.raja.fi . www.visitfinland.com and http://wikitravel.org/en/Finland .

Practical advice	Check the weather report daily and remember to keep in touch with your relatives and inform them where you are going. You can easily find shelter in the archipelago and along the coast lines.
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BSCN/Useful Information/FIN-KW

DATE: February 2014