



HELSINKI GUIDE

How to get started?



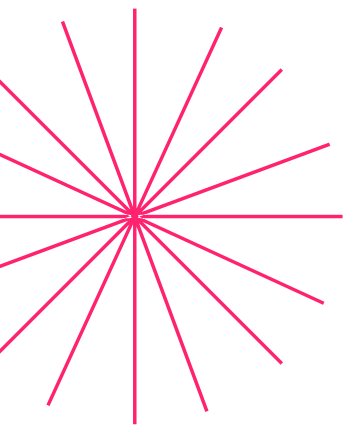


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WELCOME TO HELSINKI

Welcome to Helsinki! We hope that the orientation days will be helpful in getting to know the city and also inform you about how to begin your studies. It has been a couple of years since the University has functioned "normally" so we wanted to make a guide for the new and old students showing off our favorite spots in the town and also give some helpful tips about what you might want to see and do. Furthermore, we have also added explanations about the most common student life activities and events we have here in Finland. We hope to see you at our future events and wish you a great start to your studies!

Best wishes from CISSI team!

What is CISSI?

CISSI is one of the newest student associations at the University of Helsinki and we aim to bring together all the international social sciences programme students. We organise an array of different events and also work together with other student associations to make our university an even better place to study. All of our events are held in English, so do not be afraid to join even though you would not speak Finnish. After the exceptional times of the past couple of years, we hope to make this upcoming year the best one CISSI has yet to have. In the upcoming months, we are going to be hosting 'sitsit', outdoor excursion, pub nights, and a visit to an embassy (fingers crossed).



If you have any suggestions for events we could organise, do not hesitate to contact us on [IG](#), [FB](#), or over email! Joining CISSI is free and you can do so through this [link](#). The deputy member election is coming soon so if you are interested in being involved in the management of a student association, you can get a preview by becoming a deputy member.



CISSI



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Who are we?



Sami Salovaara, Chair

Hi all! I'm a soon to be 3rd year Master's student in Global Politics & Communications (luckily only thesis left). Currently, I'm at the Finnish embassy in Czech Republic doing my internship. That's why you won't meet me until October, but I am looking forward meeting you all! I'm the current chair of CISSI and I see that things run smoothly in our organisation! I also do various other things such as create the agenda for our board meetings and lead them, I am taking care of more "official" administrative matters, and keep CISSI a nice and enjoyable place for everyone. As the chair, you get to shape your own position. You can take the lead on shaping the organisation together with your board, and you'll learn valuable skills while doing this (and it's also fun!). Joining a student organisation is a great way to get involved and influence the student culture at our university so I hope to see a lot of you joining us!

Jenni Kirkinen, Treasurer and Events manager

I am a second-year European and Nordic studies student and currently work at the Aleksanteri Institute as a research and conference assistant. In addition, I work for the European Commission at the EU@Oodi information desk. At CISSI, I am responsible for budgeting and organising events. Most importantly, I keep track of our finances. The best part of joining a study association for me has been meeting new people who I would have not otherwise met. In my positions at CISSI, I have been able to build new skills and be a part of amazing events! I have also made this guide :)



Alexis Engrand, Secretary

Hi! I'm Alexis, second year student in ENS (European and Nordic Studies), I am also working part-time and in my free time I like to explore Helsinki to find nice wild areas (that Helsinki is full of!).

I am also CISSI's secretary: I take notes during meetings and make sure all our documents are up to date and in the right place (in a nutshell: I do all the super fun stuff :D). I also help the rest of the board for any event we have to organise! I joined CISSI as a board member in January 2022, and I have had a lot of fun so far, as it has been a good place to meet other students.



Who are we?

Ilmari Läntinen, Vice chair

Ilmari is a third year ENS student and has been busy touring Finland this summer because he plays in a band or two. His own band Westway will be performing in Valtava festival 03.09 which is open to all social sciences faculty members! You will definitely be seeing Ilmari in our events later on this autumn!



Lucy Rudloff, Deputy member

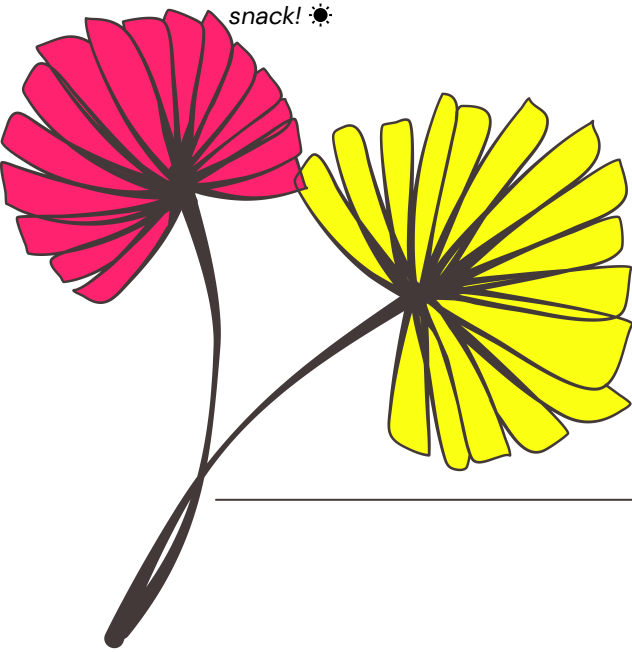
Hi! I'm a second year European and Nordic studies student too and will start an internship at the department of international affairs at Uni Helsinki in September. I mostly spent the summer working as a tour guide introducing tourists to Helsinki's history and hidden gems. As a deputy member, I'm working on CISSI's social media. Whenever you send us a dm you'll probably be in contact with me or Sami. I'll also organise a tour around the campus during welcoming week. Keep an eye out for more details if you are new in the city! Student organisations are a great way to expand your university network. CISSI's events are also a great escape from heavy university workload and an easy way to dive into Finnish student culture.

Alice De Fabro, Deputy Member

Heey! I'm a second year Contemporary Societies student, majoring in socio-cultural anthropology AND a fourth year Intercultural Encounters student, writing her thesis and graduating in the fall. When I'm not writing about masculinity performances in Japanese anime or diasporic identities, I am working at Fat Ramen Hietalahti. If you are around, come say hi and stay for a snack! ☀️

Back in Italy, I have two dogs and I miss them daily, so I'm always open for doggy dates or to cry over our pets being far away. I also like crocheting and lemons ☺️

At CISSI, I'm a deputy member which means that I help around during events and with brainstorming ideas, but I also take part in fairs and soon I'll organise an event on my own! So far I've loved CISSI because of its easy going environment. Everyone has a say in everything we do and, when there's a will, there's room to try out things, from SoMe to budgeting.



The University of Helsinki

How to get to your class? Where to study? Those are great questions and we most likely have an answer for you. Navigating the university buildings might feel complicated at first but we aim to help you out. Fortunately, the city centre campus buildings are very close to each other so it won't take you forever to go from building to building.

Main building, Fabianinkatu 33

Located at Senate Square and marked as U in your calendars. For instance, U4080 means the main building fourth-floor room 4080. Has a Unicafe and some rooms for studying if not reserved for teaching.

Porthania, Yliopistonkatu 3

One of the interconnected buildings of the city centre campus. Located conveniently on top of the metro station. Access to the language centre, Aleksandria and the library through the 3rd floor. Unicafe is located on the 2nd floor.

Language centre, Fabianinkatu 26

If you take language classes it is most likely that you will be getting very familiar with this location. It is a part of the "Fabianinkatu" complex that also has the theology department. The language centre is between Porthania and the Library.

Aleksandria, Fabianinkatu 28

Next to the library and access also through the library. Aleksandria has computers, printing, quiet workspaces, and reservable work rooms. You can request a key to the building from the university allowing you to stay independently after hours.

Library, Fabianinkatu 30

Access straight from the Metro, through Porthania, or Unioninkatu in front of Topelia. Many study spots, rooms that you can reserve, and books. Lots of them 😊

Metsätalo, Unioninkatu 40

At the end of Unioninkatu next to Kaisaniemenpuisto tram stop. Houses many lecture rooms and a Unicafé in the cellar. The Aleksanteri Institute is also located here.

Swedish School of Social Science, Snellmaninkatu 12

Located behind Metsätalo. Some courses are organised here even though the language of instruction would not be Swedish. In your calendars, it is marked as soc&kom. The building has nice study spots and a Swedish language library.

Topelia, Unioninkatu 38

Across from the library. It houses many offices of our lecturers but most importantly, the Thirsty Scholar. It is a pub with student-friendly prices and you might even catch a beer with your professor here.

Think Corner, Yliopistonkatu 4

In front of Porthania. Does not have any lecture rooms but an ample amount of study spaces on 3 floors. It also has a café, university shop, Unisport gym, and event space where many politicians, academics, and other important figures have been speaking at different events.

The library and printing

To loan books from the library, you need a library card. You can either get the physical one or have one online. The library staff is available during office hours and is happy to help you with searching for a certain item. You can also access Helka, the online library, with your university credentials. Printing at the university is a bit complicated but they have a great [information page](#) online. If you hold an HSL card, you can use that as your printing card. If not, then you can purchase a Unigrafia printing card from the university. Printers are located for example, on the ground floors of Alexandria (under the stairs) and Porthania (behind the elevators).

Practical information

The Finnish government supports university students by paying for a part of the **lunch** that is being served at Unicafe locations in Helsinki. You only pay 2,60€ for the vegan lunch or 2,70€ for the meat/fish option. There are Unicafe's in almost all of the main university buildings and for example, on the Kumpula campus as well. You get the discount by showing your (Finnish) student card at the register. Downloading the Frank app is the easiest way to do so.

If you are planning to use **public transportation (HSL)**, you should get the monthly pass with a student discount. The most convenient way to get it is through the app but unfortunately, you can only do so if you have a Finnish bank account. Thus, you should book your appointment with Migri (EU students) to register yourself as soon as you can to be able to open up a **bank account!** Finnish people love to do everything online and almost everything requires you to sign in through online bank apps. In some cases, it is possible to get the student discount on a physical HSL card but that requires you to visit the HSL service desk at the Central station. You will also need proof of registration from the university and a student discount application form from HSL.

Student services will be able to help you with any practical study-related questions. For example, about elective studies, exchange, language requirements, certificates, etc. There are many locations for student services but you get the best advice and help from the specific location to your study area. For instance, Social Sciences students use the Kruununhaka student services.

As a student in Finnish higher education, you are required to pay the **healthcare fee** which allows you to receive health care in the Finnish Student Health Services in Töölö. This includes normal general practitioner services, dental care, and sexual health-related visits for example.

Unisport offers gym membership for super cheap to students. There are a few different locations and you can use all of them with the same membership. Unisport also offers group lessons in various sports. You can book your spot online. It is also possible to, for example, rent out a badminton court and the racquets for a couple of euros.



What to see?

Helsinki is geographically quite a spread-out city but the city centre itself is very manageable by foot. In this section, we have collected some essential stops in Helsinki which make you more familiar with the city. If you are joining the city walk organised during the orientation week, you will be seeing a couple of the places already.

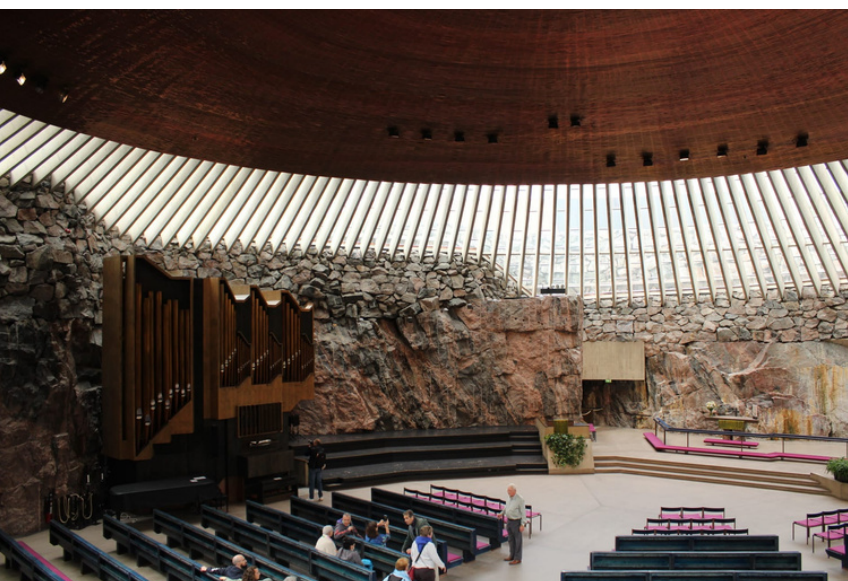
Senate Square and the Helsinki Cathedral

One of the most photographed spots in Helsinki. Easy landmark to meet up with people in and a good starting point for exploring the market square and Esplanadi (Espa). There are different kinds of events hosted at senate square and it is also a popular spot to hold demonstrations. The main building of the university and the national library are in the vicinity of the square.



Market Square

Nice to visit briefly but we don't suggest buying anything (food) since seagulls will attack like a lightning strike. However, from the market square, you can catch different boats to for example, Suomenlinna, Vallisaari, and Korkeasaari (Zoo). Allas Sea Pool is also located next to the market square so if you are interested in going to the sauna and swimming, it's the place to go.



Churches

Even though you wouldn't be a believer, some of the Churches in Helsinki are worth a visit. For example, the Uspenski Cathedral (Orthodox) and Temppeliaukio Church (Lutheran).



Suomenlinna/Sveaborg

Catch the boat from the market square to Suomenlinna and explore the old fortress built during Swedish rule. We suggest going rather sooner than later since the island is the best to visit when it is not raining or snowing. There are many spots to have a nice picnic in, visit museums, and explore the ruins. If you have the monthly HSL AB(C) ticket, you can catch the city-run boat for free and it goes around every twenty or so minutes.

Sibelius Monument

Nice to see once but more importantly you should go to Café Regatta afterwards. It has become a little touristy but it is super cute and you can get a coffee and a cinnamon bun for a nice walk along the coastline.

Botanical Gardens

The University of Helsinki owns two botanical gardens in Helsinki. Kaisaniemenpuisto is the closest one to the city centre campus and has a beautiful outdoor garden you can visit for free! Take a book with you and enjoy some peace and quiet in beautiful surroundings.

Museums

There are many to choose from but our top picks would be the National Museum, Ateneum, and Kiasma. Unfortunately, Ateneum which houses the most significant Finnish art pieces is in renovation till early 2023 so you have to wait for a little bit to visit. The National Museum you can visit for free on Fridays from 4 to 6 pm. If you are not very familiar with Finnish history yet, we highly suggest you take advantage of the free hours. Kiasma, which is a modern art museum, has free admissions every first Friday of the month. If you are really into museums and know you are going to visit many, you should look up "Museokortti". It allows you to visit over 300 museums all over Finland for the price of the card (around 75€). The Helsinki city museum is free to visit but to be honest, it is a bit weird. But if you are bored, go and have a look.

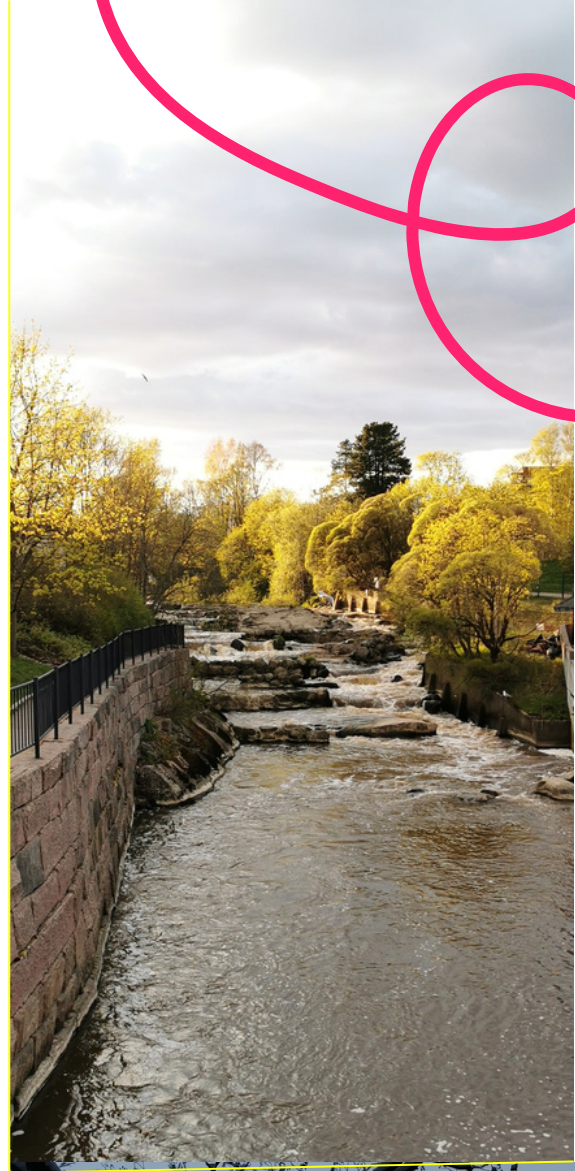


Oodi

The central library was built to become the living room of Helsinkians and that purpose it for sure has filled. It is not an ordinary library but a multipurpose space where you can rent a study space, recording studio, gaming room, can 3D print, use sewing machines and much more. You can get a library card from the ground floor information desk or any other library in Helsinki and the surrounding cities since they all belong to the same library system. Oodi has good study spaces on the first and second floors and it is very convenient on Sundays especially when the university is not open. There's always something happening at Oodi and some of the events are also held in English.

Outdoors

Finnish people love to be outdoors and thus, we have many places to go into nature even within the city. Helsinki has a 15-minute policy (goal) about reaching a “nature destination” from your door. As already mentioned, Suomenlinna is a nice place to go spend the day outside but there are also other islands that are fit for a day out in nature. The most notably, **Vallisaari** and **Seurasaari**. **Lammassaari** is a nice destination as well but won't take the whole day. Hence the name, Lammassaari (Sheep Island), there are sheep roaming around the island during the summer months. You have to walk there through the nature reserve area of **Vanhankaupunginkoski** which is also a really pretty area with some old industrial buildings and a dam. If you want to just do a stroll on the beach/coastline, **Kaivopuisto** (Kaivari) and **Eira** areas are perfect. If you want a little bit more privacy, the coastline in **Lauttasaari** is usually peaceful and you can almost walk around the whole island (around 10km).





Alppiruusupuisto (Rhododendron Park) is lovely to visit even though the roses would not be blooming. There is also a Japanese section in the same park. Helsinki central park is the largest green area that Helsinki has to offer in proximity to the city center. Many bus lines go next to the park so you don't have to walk all the way there before going walking/running. But please don't be a noob and dress accordingly, in sports clothes xD If you are looking for a hiking spot, then Nuuksio national park in Espoo or Sipoonkorpi national park in Sipoo are great places reachable with public transportation. It takes a bit of planning but is worth the effort. CISSI will organize a trip to Nuuksio later this autumn so you can also join us! There are plenty of beaches in Helsinki such as Hietaranta (Hietsu), Eiranranta, and Mustikkamaa but one special spot is in Pihlajasaari. You have to take a boat to get there but it is such a nice place to go swimming that is definitely worth the trip. If you are feeling liberated from social norms, there are also nudist beaches in Helsinki and the easiest to get to is in Seurasaari.





Where to eat?

There are plenty of places to choose from when grabbing a bite in Helsinki. We selected our favourite student budget/on the lower price point spots. Finnish people might not be that into brunch but we do love lunch. Many restaurants have lunch deals or lunch menus and average price for lunch is around 11,30-13€. We also enjoy a good buffet and generally those are quite affordable.

Daddy Green's

One of the best places to get pizza in Helsinki. Has vegan and gluten-free options in all of their 3 locations.



Deliberi

Serves everything from poke-style bowls to burgers, pizza, risotto and salads. A little bit of everything and a great drink selection. From Sunday to Thursday beers on tap are 5€ and the house white/red/sparkling bottles are always 20€. Gluten-free options are available, vegan selection is unfortunately weak.



Fat Ramen

The first ramen restaurant in Helsinki with the most delicious dishes. You can't go wrong with the tofu ramen or the pork bao buns! Say hi to Alice if she is at work! Plenty of vegan and vegetarian options offered.

The owner has kindly agreed to give -10% for students!



Lazy Fox

All-day breakfast spot. Owned by an Aussie, Belgian, and a Finn so there's a good old fry-up and Belgian waffles on the menu. On Fridays, you can also participate in an open mic. They have some instruments or you can bring your own. Good drink selection including Belgian beers and some cocktails.



Lie Mi

Basic Vietnamese food but there is a small twist with “tacos”. Shanghai tacos are a cult favorite and you have to try them. To get your money's worth, go during lunch hours or “afternoon special” time.



Momo toko

This Japanese restaurant chain makes their noodles themselves which is one of its selling points. If you like your food spicy, they can help you out. Our favorites are the Kimchi Cheese Vege and Laksa Curry. Big portions that won't leave you hungry.



Ravintola Piilo

One of the hidden gems of Helsinki. It is located in the Hietaniemi marketplace (Fat ramen location as well), and it serves everything from breakfast to dinner and on the weekends, brunch. The Breakfast selection is around 15€ and for sure worth it. The weekend brunch has an amazing selection and costs around 25€ per person which is quite normal for a buffet of that kind on the weekend. The location itself is also super pretty.

Seksico Tacos

Tasty tacos. Not much to say. Cool branding and influencer approved.



Woolshed

Australian gastro pub behind Oodi. Monday to Wednesday, their burgers and stakes are only 12€ and they have happy hour deals on their drinks every day.

Unicafe

Yes, Unicafe mentioned again. It is just the cheapest place to get food as a student so we can't overlook its significance in the life of a university student.

Via Tribunali

Like Daddy Greens, amazing pizza. Via Tribunali next to senate square is the first certified Neapolitan pizzeria in Finland. It is rather expensive but on a special occasion, why not? If you want to go, you should reserve a table. Other locations might not be as busy as the one in the city center.

Where to drink?

Drinking in Finland can become very expensive if you don't know where to go. On average, a pint of beer is around 7-9€ in the centre. A shot of vodka or tequila 7-8€. If you wander further away from the centre, all drinks become cheaper. When going clubbing, you might want to start at home with pre-drinks. You might have already noticed that there is no strong alcohol in supermarkets. To get anything above 5.5%, you have to go to Alko; Mon-Fri 09-21, Sat 09-18, Sun closed. Also, you cannot buy anything over 21% if you are under 20 years old.



APOLLO

LIVE CLUB



Apollo Live Club

One of the most popular bars in Helsinki. It is centrally located so tends to always be full. There is live music, DJ, and karaoke so all in one place. The age limit is 24 but they are somewhat flexible with groups that have a few “underage” people.

Bar Tappen

In the heart of Kallio, this tiny bar has welcomed us again and again. Our favourite is the ice cold one-litre beer that is basically the cheapest in town. Essentially, all CISSI pub nights are hosted here!

Brewster

Also, somewhat a small bar but it's nice and chill and has a good variety of drinks. Easy to get to by tram and is located super close to Flät no 14 next to Karhupuisto.

Femton

Cozy pub with a good selection of craft beers.



Kvääristö

Drinks, food, events, and parties all in one. LGBTQ+ friendly and accessible establishment that also allows pets. They have many events related to minorities however, the events are mostly in Finnish.

Roasberg

Not only is Roasberg a great place to study since it has coffee till late in the evening but they also serve good drinks. They have after-work prices during the week so stop by for a glass of wine or grab a beer. More seats downstairs!

Liberty or Death

One of the better cocktail bars in Helsinki. Their drink products are creative and existing and taste a m a z i n g. A bit pricy but sometimes it is good to treat yourself!

Maxine

A nightclub in the centre of Helsinki. Hosts Latin nights every now and then!

Thirsty Scholar

Located in the Topelia building. Very student-friendly prices with their student discount card (5€). The first time you go, ask to buy the discount card (you have to show your student ID) and enjoy the benefits as long as you are a student. They have a nice terrace area in the courtyard as well so get a drink before the winter comes.

All CISSI events

Most importantly, the best place to go for a drink is CISSI events! It could be a bar, it could be a venue TBA, or even outside.

Cafés

Do you love to study in a café or just love coffee in general? Fret not, Finnish people love coffee and it is available everywhere. For many years Finland has ranked as the #1 country in coffee consumption per capita. Unfortunately, last year we lost the spot to the Netherlands so please help us to become the number one. #makeFinlandgreatagain



Andante

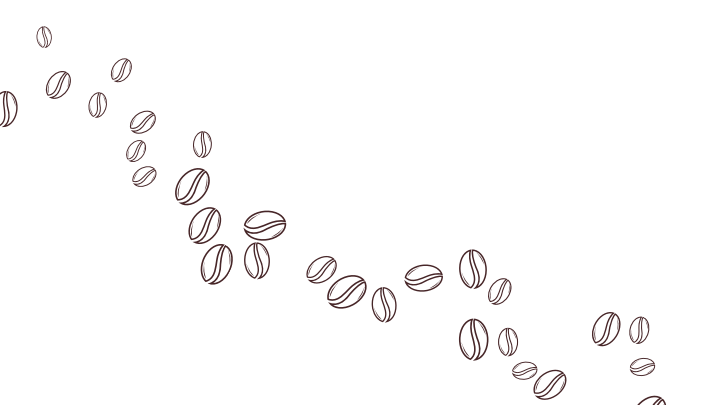
Cute cafe in Punavuori which does not sell WIFI but coffee (their words not ours). However, still one of the best places to study since the café is usually super peaceful even if there would be people. True coffee enthusiasts will appreciate this place!

Boho café & deli

Good selection of sandwiches, smoothies, cakes, pies, etc. They make almost everything themselves daily so you will always get fresh products. The service there is top-notch! P.S. this is also one of the IG cafés.

Café Cardemumma

Lovely place to stop by for lunch or a coffee. We recommend the (huge) salads and the cinnamon buns they have! No laptops allowed.



Ekberg

Want something extra to your everyday life? Go here. The café is older than Finland and radiates Parisian café culture. Expensive but the product, service, and venue make up for it. They serve breakfast, lunch, brunch, etc. Would not go here to work but to enjoy the little joys in life.

Enchanté

French cafe with French-approved croissants and pain au chocolates. Nice atmosphere and good coffee. They also have a student discount!



Ihana kahvila

Next to the main university building on Aleksanterinkatu. There's no indication of the name anywhere but it is next to the Ministry of Environment. They have a wide selection of cakes and other baked goodies. Most of them are also vegan! They have some signs on the table about times when they do not wish you to have a laptop but use your common sense with that one.



Café Regatta

The have a wide selection of "Finnish specialties" and a great view to the bay. Note that this place is completely outdoors so dress accordingly! During winter they have a semi-heated tent.

Relove

This is a café and second hand store all in one. Deliciously tasting and looking products served in a beautifully decorated space. They have locations inside of Stockman, Töölö, and Punavuori.

Roasberg

As mentioned before, this café also serves as a bar in open late till the evening every day. Great place to study and have a coffee! Avocado toast is visually pleasing but a tiny bit over prices. However, the salads they have are huge and worth the price which is btw average price.



Important events

There are many different holidays and special celebrations you should know about but here are the most important.

The first one to come is Christmas and Finnish people like to celebrate from November on. There's going to be plenty of Christmas themed events/parties called "pikkujoulut". On the 6th of December, we celebrate the Finnish independence day with watching our president and his wife shaking hands with 1000-2000 people.

The autumn period includes some "vujut" which basically are annual parties of different associations of the University. The biggest one organised is the Helsinki University Student Union (HYY) vujut where everyone is welcome no matter what they study. In the annual parties, you wear evening gowns and suits. The night includes speeches, food, drinks, dancing, after party, etc.

Sitsit are organised by study associations and student nations. Those are similar with vujut but less formal and more party like. Sitsit can also have different themes so you will always have something different. Be prepared to sing!

After Christmas and New Years, we celebrate laskiainen. The date for this changes every year according to lent. You go sledding in a competition in Ullanlinnamäki and have some "minttukaakao". Also, laskiaispulla is a must.

Vappu is the main event of the whole year for students. The people over at Aalto University start celebrating a whole month earlier. Vappu is the celebration of the working class and students. People who have graduated from Finnish high or vocational school wear these sailor hats to show they've graduated. There's a bunch of events and parties related to vappu and you definitely do not want to miss the "hatting of Havis Amanda". Get your friends together and get wasted!



