

Italy

Italy unification took place in 1861.

Size: 301 338 km²

Population: 60,6 millions

Population density: 201 inhabitants per square kilometre

Finland

Finland got its independence from Russia in 1917.

Size: 338 424 km²

Population: 5,5 millions

Population density: 17 inhabitants per square kilometre

The two main official **languages of Finland** are Finnish and Swedish, but there are also several official minority languages: three variants of Sami, Romani, Finnish Sign Language and Karelian. Finland is a predominantly Christian nation where some 73% of the 5.5 million overall population follow Christianity; the vast majority being members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (Protestant).

The biggest immigrant groups in Finland appear to be Russian, Estonians and Somalis.

The biggest city in Finland is Helsinki with 616.690 inhabitants.

Lakes:

There are some 187,888 lakes in Finland larger than 500 square metres. The largest lake in Finland is Lake Saimaa, which is 1,377.05 square kilometers in area.



Lake Saimaa, Finland

Mountains:

Halti is the highest point of Finland (elevation 1,365).



Finnish mountains

Vegetation and Animals:

Much of Finland is dominated by conifers, but in the extreme south there is a zone of deciduous trees. The conifers are mainly pine, birch and spruce. Finland is relatively rich in wildlife. Native woodland animals include bear, elk, wolf, wolverine, lynx, and Finnish elk. Salmon, trout, and the much esteemed *siika* are relatively abundant in the northern rivers.

Seasons:

The stark contrasts between the four seasons are the main characteristics of the annual natural cycle in Finland. The summer isn't endless in Finland, but there are almost endless summer days. It ends with an explosion of color in the forests. This is the season known as 'ruska', when the autumnal reds, browns and yellows are especially beautiful on the fells of Lapland. The snow season in northern Finland begins in November and lasts at least until May. Summer is short in Finland and spring is even shorter. In southern Finland there is often snow on the ground at the beginning of April.

Midnight sun:

Summer in Finland is a spectacular time of the year. For those who venture north of the Arctic Circle, the sun does not set at all from May to August, while further south the sun can be visible for nearly around the clock during June and July.

When nights are almost as light as day it is possible to do all the same things that you would do during the day.

Baltic Sea:

Baltic Sea extending northward from the latitude of southern Denmark almost to the Arctic Circle and separating the Scandinavian Peninsula from the rest of continental Europe. The largest expanse of brackish water in the world. The Baltic Sea covers about 149,000 square miles. Other major cities around the gulf include Helsinki and Tallinn. The eastern parts of the Gulf of Finland belong to Russia.



Baltic Sea, Finland

Northern Lights

