

Newcomer's Guide

Welcome to Turku

Moving

Living

Working and Studying

INTERNATIONAL
HOUSE
TURKU



Newcomer's Guide

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Welcome to Turku



Greetings from Turku city Mayor Piia Elo

Dear international newcomer,

Welcome to Turku—your new home! Whether you're here for a job, school, or just a fresh start with your family, we're genuinely thrilled to have you.

Turku's got a lot of history—it's Finland's oldest city, after all—but it's the future we're really excited about, especially now that you're part of it. People from many different backgrounds have chosen

to settle here, making our city a lively and diverse community where many languages are spoken and cultures come together in everyday life.

We're working hard to make your move as smooth as possible. That means more English-language services, better support for settling in, learning the language, and finding your groove. Whether you're job-hunting, sorting out school for your kids, or just figuring out how things work around here, we've got your back.

We're also putting extra effort into supporting women and mothers, because we know they're the heart of strong communities. From childcare to job opportunities, we're building ways for everyone to feel at home and thrive.

This guide is your starting point. It's packed with practical tips, contacts, and info about what Turku has to offer for you.

Once again, welcome to Turku. We're happy you're here and look forward to the future we'll build together.

Warmly,
Piia Elo
Mayor of Turku

International House Turku services

International House Turku brings together counselling and guidance services promoting and supporting the integration of immigrants and international newcomers in Turku and the Turku region. The services are offered in many languages, across multiple channels and they are easily accessible.

-  **Call us** +358 (0)44 790 0561
-  **E-mail us** talent.advisor@turku.fi
-  **Visit our webpage** turku.fi/en/integration-services

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE TURKU

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Customer service: | Opening hours: |
| Kauppatöiden Monitori | Mon–Wed 9.00–16.00 |
| Kop-kolmio Aurakatu 8 | Thu 10.00–16.00 |
| 20100 Turku | Fri 9.00–15.00 |

-  **Facebook** [internationalhouseturku](https://www.facebook.com/internationalhouseturku)
-  **LinkedIn** [international-house-turku](https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-house-turku)
-  **Instagram** [internationalhouseturku](https://www.instagram.com/internationalhouseturku)

1.1 (B)oldest city in Finland

Turku is the oldest city in Finland and today it is the cultural and economic centre of its region. Turku has a clean and diverse nature, a breathtakingly beautiful archipelago and it is a historic city of culture.

Welcome to Turku – Where History Meets Modern Life!

A Vibrant City with a Regional Heartbeat

Turku is home to around **207,000 residents**, while the greater Turku region boasts a population of **352,000**, making it one of Finland's most dynamic urban areas.

A Hub of Learning and Innovation

With **five higher education institutions** and over **40,000 students**, Turku is a youthful and forward-thinking city that thrives on knowledge and creativity.

Finland's Oldest City – Turning 800 in 2029

Founded in the 13th century, Turku is the **oldest city in Finland** and will celebrate its **800th anniversary** in 2029.

A City of Many Voices

Turku is proudly multicultural, with **around 100 different languages** spoken—reflecting its open, inclusive, and international spirit.

Finland's First Capital

Turku served as the **first capital of Finland** until 1812, when the title was transferred to Helsinki by Tsar Alexander I.

A Name Rooted in Trade

The name “Turku” comes from the ancient word ‘**türgü**’, meaning **marketplace**—a nod to its historic role as a center of commerce.

The City of Christmas

Every Christmas Eve at noon, the **Declaration of Christmas Peace** is read from the Old Great Square—a tradition dating back to the 1300s.

Neighbour of Moominworld

Just a short trip from Turku in **Naantali** lies **Moominworld**, a beloved theme park based on the iconic Finnish Moomin characters—fun for all ages!

European Capital of Culture (2011)

In 2011, Turku was honored as a **European Capital of Culture**, celebrating its rich arts, music, and culinary scenes.

“The Paris of Finland”

With its charming **riverside cafés**, **vibrant cultural life**, and **romantic atmosphere**, locals affectionately call Turku “The Paris of Finland.”



Turku – A Bilingual City

Turku is officially bilingual, with both **Finnish** and **Swedish** used in public services, signage, and education. Around 5% of residents speak Swedish as their first language, making Turku a great place to experience Finland’s two national languages.

Gateway to the Archipelago

Turku is the starting point of the breathtaking **Archipelago Trail**, a scenic route through **over 20,000 islands**, perfect for biking, boating, and road trips.

Photo: Jarmo Piironen, Turun Satama Oy

1.2 The Turku Dialect

Turku has its own charming dialect, known as “Turun murre”, which adds a local flavor to everyday Finnish. Turku’s dialect, part of the Southwestern Finnish dialect group, has a soft, melodic tone and some quirky twists.

Below are some phrases to help you blend in—and maybe even make a local smile!

☆ Fun tip:

Locals often drop final vowels and soften consonants. It’s all about sounding relaxed and friendly!

💡 Did you know?

Soapstone seller – The Finnish word saippuakivikauppias (a soapstone seller) is a palindrome and a fun linguistic curiosity.

If you are eager to find out more about the Turku dialect, check out International House Turku’s podcast episode on:

[“How to speak Finnish in Turku”](#)

Standard Finnish	Turku Dialect	English Meaning
minä	mää	I / me
sinä	sää	you
ei ole	ei ol	isn’t
paljon	pal	a lot
mitä kuuluu?	mitäs kuuluu?	how’s it going?
minä menen	mää meen	I’m going
sinä tulet	sää tuut	you’re coming
ei ole mitään	ei ol mittä	there’s nothing
paljon kiitoksia	pal kiitoksii	thanks a lot
mitä sinä teet?	mit sää teet?	what are you doing?
en tiedä	en tiärä	I don’t know
kyllä	kyl	yes / sure

Moving to Turku

Congratulations – you have decided to move to Turku! First of all, you should congratulate yourself on making such an excellent decision.

However, before you can fully start to explore everything your new home has to offer, it is likely that there is some paperwork to take care of... Finland is infamous for its bureaucracy, and unfortunately nowhere is this more apparent than when someone moves to the country from overseas.

Therefore, this section aims to guide you through the registration process by outlining the different Finnish social institutions as well as your responsibilities as a new resident. Taking care of this now means that your life will be much easier going forward!

All of the information in this section was accurate as we went to press (August 2025), but we encourage you to check the individual websites of the different institutions for the latest procedures. Some of the forms you will need to submit may be a little hard to interpret at first glance... Please contact us at International House Turku if there is anything we can help with!

Contact us!



Photo: Henri Rantala

2.1 The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri)

2.1.1 What is Migri?

The Finnish Immigration Service, usually referred to as **Migri**, is almost always the first port of call for international newcomers. Migri makes decisions in matters relating to immigration and is responsible for issuing residence permits and Finnish citizenship. (Migri is not responsible for new immigration laws, which are enacted by the Finnish Parliament.)

Migri's website is available in English and is very comprehensive. We recommend first using the 'Application Finder' to identify the most suitable application for your situation.

Finnish Immigration Service (Migri)

I want to apply – Application Finder

The website also includes 'Enter Finland', an online application portal. You can apply online for the majority of Migri applications (and this is usually cheaper than a paper application, so we recommend it!). An email address (or Finnish 'e-identification' – see [section 2.1.4.](#)) is required to create an account.

EnterFinland eServices

In addition to the website, Migri also has several service points around Finland. The nearest service point to Turku can be found in Raisio, around 25 minutes away by bus.

Migri Raisio

 **Address:** Nallinkatu 8, 21200 Raisio

 **Bus Routes:** 6 / 6A

 **Open:** Monday–Wednesday and Friday at 8–16.15 (closed on Thursdays)

Migri's service can be reduced during the summer months. Please check seasonal opening hours from their website.

[All service points of Migri](#)

2.1.2 How to apply to Migri

If you are a **Nordic Citizen** (Sweden, Norway, Denmark or Iceland), congratulations! You do not need to register with Migri. Please move straight to [section 2.2](#).

If you are an **EU citizen**, or a family member of an EU citizen moving to Finland, you need to register your right of residence with Migri if you are staying in Finland over 90 days. This process consists of submitting an online application form through Enter Finland and then visiting a Migri service point. You must declare a reason for your move on your application (e.g. work, study or family reasons).

If you are a **non-EU citizen**, the process starts to become a little more complicated. Non-EU citizens staying in Finland over 90 days require a residence permit. There are many different types of residence permit, depending on the reason for moving to Finland. The most common types include:

- Coming to Finland for work
- Moving to Finland to be with a family member
- Studying in Finland

However, there are many specific applications within these categories (e.g. depending on the type of work you will be doing in Finland, or the nationality of your family member).

In the majority of cases, the application process is the same – the online application form through Enter Finland followed by a visit to a service point.

2.1.3 Advice when applying to Migri

Apply on time!

Migri deals with a very high number of applications all year round, so the process can take up to several months. Therefore, you should start your application as soon as possible. Migri has estimated processing times for all of its applications.

[Processing times](#)

Bring your documents!

When you visit a Migri service point, they will usually want to see the original copies of the documents you have included in your online application, such as passports, work contracts, birth certificates or marriage certificates. Any documents from outside of the EU must be legalised before Migri can accept them.

[Instructions for legalisation](#)

Apply individually!

Family members, including children, must submit their own online application forms. However, you can visit the Migri service point at the same time.

Know your rights!

Your immigration status dictates whether you can remain in Finland whilst your application is being processed, as well as your right to work in Finland. You should always check the regulations on the Migri website before you make your application.

2.1.4 Personal Identity Code

As part of the Migri application process, you may receive a Finnish personal identity code. This code consists of your date of birth followed by five other characters. The code is essential for dealing with authorities in Finland, and therefore represents a big step forward for your registration process.

If you do not receive a personal identity code through Migri, don't panic! It is also possible to receive one from the Finnish tax office (Vero) or the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV).

2.2 The Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV)

2.2.1 What is DVV?

The Digital and Population Data Services Agency (almost always referred to as DVV, or 'Maistraatti' if you speak to older Finns) handles information about the population of Finland. Now that Migri have allowed you to stay in the country, you can register with DVV as a permanent resident of Finland.

DVV can grant you a 'municipality of residence', which essentially confirms you as a resident of a specific part of Finland. This provides access to local services as well as the same rights as other residents. Confirmation of your permanent address in Finland can also speed up other parts of the moving process, such as opening a bank account.

Beyond this, DVV provides services for 'life events', including births, deaths, name changes and marriage (so if you expand your family during your time here, you will become quite familiar with the organisation!).

2.2.2 How to apply to DVV

The process for registering with DVV is similar to Migri – you download a registration form from their website and book an appointment at a service point.

Registration of a foreigner

The local office here is in Turku city centre, a 15-minute walk from the Market Square.



Address: Itsenäisyydenaukio 2, 20800 TURKU



Open: 9.00–15.00, Monday to Friday

2.2.3 DVV Advice

- DVV often gets confused with Migri as the registration process for internationals is so similar and both organisations can provide the personal identity code. However, they are different institutions with their own forms, service points and – crucially – waiting times.
- As with Migri, any documents you are required to show at the service point (marriage certificates, birth certificates, etc.) must be officially translated into Finnish, Swedish or English as well as legalised if they are from outside of the EU.
 - You should always check if there are any specific requirements for documents from your home country.
- The processing times for DVV vary depending on the time of year, but as a rule applicants here for work or study are processed quicker than family members. You can check the current processing times on the DVV website.

Processing times

2.3 Kela

2.3.1 What is Kela?

One of the first things that comes to mind when considering Finland is a strong social welfare system. Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, is the organisation responsible for this. Social security in Finland aims to reduce income disparity and guarantees an adequate standard of living for everyone.

Kela provide financial benefits for different groups, for example the unemployed, the elderly, families with children and those who are sick. As a new resident of Finland, you are also eligible to be supported by Kela, so it is important to know your rights and what you are entitled to.

Kela takes your personal circumstances into account when making a decision, so we recommend speaking to Kela directly regarding any queries or issues you may have. International House Turku cannot make any decisions on Kela's behalf.

Kela's services

2.3.2 Contacting Kela

Kela offers customer service in Finnish, Swedish, English and Sami. It is also possible for Kela to arrange an interpreter.

Do you need an interpreter?

You can call Kela in English.

Call Kela

The Kela website has a lot of comprehensive information in English, in addition to brochures in several other languages.

Service in other languages

Kela also has an e-service, where you can make claims and send messages, but this is currently only available in Finnish or Swedish.

Each city has its own local Kela office, where you can visit in-person and speak to an advisor. In Turku, Kela can be found in Monitori Market Square, in the same building as International House Turku.



Address: Aurakatu 8, 20100 Turku



Open: 9.00–12.00, Monday to Friday
(without appointment) and with an appointment on other times.

Other towns in Southwest Finland usually have their own Kela office, including Kaarina, Raisio, Naantali and Salo.

Visit Kela



Photo: Jonne Mattila

2.3.3 The Kela Card

Once you have a municipality of residence from DVV, you should apply for a Kela card. This confirms your right to Finnish social security coverage, for example when you visit health centres or pharmacies.

The Kela card is free of charge and the application forms required can be found on the Kela website.

Kela card

2.3.4 Kela Healthcare fee for students in higher education

All students studying at a Finnish university or university of applied sciences must pay a student healthcare fee to Kela at the start of each term. This is the case for the majority of students, even those covered by other healthcare systems.

Further information, along with a list of exemptions, is available on the Kela website.

Kela Healthcare fee

2.4 Banking

2.4.1 Finance in Finland

A Finnish bank account is essential for living here. Partly because it makes receiving and spending money much easier, and partly because of the Finnish e-identification codes provided to customers.

Finland is rapidly becoming a mostly cashless society, so expect to see card machines everywhere (even at market stalls!). As long as you can use an existing debit card here, we do not recommend arriving in the country with large amounts of cash. If you do need to rely on cash at first, it should be in Euros.



Photo: iStock

2.4.2 Opening a Finnish bank account

There are over ten different banks in Finland, so you should check to see which one best suits your needs. For most international newcomers, the language of customer service is essential; the biggest banks are usually comfortable operating in English.

Opening a bank account almost always requires a valid form of ID (such as a passport) and confirmation of your permanent residency in Finland (from DVV). Consequently, it is usually not possible to open an account before your Migri and DVV registrations have been completed. You should therefore account for this when planning your finances for the first few weeks in Finland.

2.4.3 Foreigner's Identity Card

One piece of documentation that has been known to speed up the process of opening a Finnish bank account is a foreigner's identity card. This is provided by the Police, and you can apply for a card once you have completed your Migri and DVV registrations. As it proves that you are a registered resident here, it saves time for the bank when they are processing your application.

The card currently costs €60 and is usually ready within 10 days of submitting the application.

[Apply for an identity card](#)

2.4.4 e-Identification and bank codes

Many official digital services in Finland require e-identification, which goes beyond the standard username and password. The most common form of e-identification is your online banking ID, where you log-in to your banking app at the same time that you are logging into the service.

There are alternative e-identification methods, including ID codes from certain European countries. But overall, receiving online banking credentials when you open a bank account is the most straightforward method.

[Instructions for Suomi.fi e-Identification](#)

2.5 Taxation

Finland has a reputation for being a land of high taxes... and this reputation is probably justified. The difference between your gross salary and your take-home pay could be a little wider than you are used to. However, most residents agree that the social benefits of taxation – such as healthcare, public transport, education – are more than worth it.

The amount of tax you pay increases accordingly with your salary, so all members of Finnish society contribute in a similar way. As we say here, “not only is our society progressive, our tax system is too!”

If you receive any income in Finland, you will need to apply for a tax card from the Tax Office (Vero). The tax year runs from January – December. If your income changes, then you should inform the tax office and request a new tax card. If you have paid too much or too little tax, then Vero will contact you during the following tax year. Therefore, it is good to keep them informed, so you are not hit with a large tax bill later down the line.

Vero offer a comprehensive customer service in English both online and in-person, so we recommend contacting them directly if you are unsure about your situation. As above, speaking to Vero sooner rather than later about any issues will always be best in the long run.

[vero.fi/en](#)

Living in Turku

Phew! Now the registration paperwork is taken care of, you can turn your attention to getting to know your new home.

We assume that you might not be that familiar with Turku before moving here, so we wanted to highlight some of the best things the city has to offer.

Therefore, this next section offers information about the most important aspects of living in Turku, including finding somewhere to live, the local healthcare system and free-time activities. We hope you find what you are looking for! If not, feel free to contact us, as always.

3.1 Housing

3.1.1 Where to find rental housing

Apartments are rented by rental companies, foundations and privately by people. The City of Turku has its own rental apartments offered by TVT Rental Housing. As a rule of thumb, rental prices offered by City housing are lower than the private market counterparts.

Rental apartments can be found via national search services:

Vuokraovi.com

Oikotie.fi (in Finnish)

Know your Hoods is a tool you can use to find the most suitable area of the city for you. Rental contracts are often a minimum of 12 months, be sure to check this before signing a contract. Pets and smoking are usually specifically permitted or banned.

Be ready to provide your Finnish personal identity code before signing the contract; some landlords might not

be willing to sign a contract before you have this (for more information on personal identity codes, see **section 2.1.4.**)

The City of Turku provides a housing counselling service, if you require further guidance.

More information:

Housing counselling



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

Glossary:

- **vuokrahuoneisto** = rental apartment
- **kt** = kerrostalo = block of flats
- **rt** = rivitalo = row house
- **okt** = omakotitalo = detached house
- **H** = huone = number of rooms
- **K** = keittiö = kitchen
- **P** = parveke = balcony
- **S** = sauna
- **Kh(h)** = kodinhoituhuone = utility room
- **vuokra/kk** = rent per month
- **(vuokra)vakuus** = rent deposit
- **vesimaksu** = water rate
- **oma sähkösopimus** = you have to sign your electricity contract separately



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

3.1.2 Price level of housing

As of 2025, the average monthly rent for apartments in Turku is approximately:

- Studio apartment: €560
- 1-bedroom (2-room) apartment: €680
- 2-bedroom (3-room) apartment: €870

In terms of price per square meter, non-subsidized rental rates in Turku average around €14.8–€15.8/m², depending on the location and whether the contract is new.

Rental apartments require home insurance. There are many private providers who offer a wide range of options. Always be sure what your insurance covers and what the excess amount to cover by yourself is.

Depending on your rental contract, some utilities may be included. Other times there is either an extra cost or you need to make your own subscription. Typically, water is either included or charged monthly in advance. In contrast, an electricity contract usually needs to be ordered individually. Internet can be included in the rental contract and often you can upgrade your Internet connection with an extra charge.

3.1.3 How to buy your own house

Now you have decided to take the next big step into settling here and becoming a *turkulainen* (=Turku resident). The city offers a variety of housing types—from apartments in vibrant urban areas to houses in peaceful suburban neighborhoods.

Note, however, that the search of your dream home may be a long process. Before making a purchase, it's important to understand the Finnish housing market, legal requirements, and financing options. You'll need a Finnish personal identity number and usually a Finnish bank account to proceed with buying property.

We recommend starting your research early and consulting reliable sources. A good place to begin is [InfoFinland.fi](https://infofinland.fi), which provides clear guidance on the home-buying process in Finland, costs and taxes related to property purchase, tips on finding available homes and things to consider before signing the contract.

3.2 Education services in Turku (0–18 olds)

Moving to Turku with your children? Finland is famous for its high-quality education system, and Turku is no exception. As usual, the key is to start the enrolment process as soon as possible, ideally before you have arrived in Finland.

3.2.1 Day Care and Preschool Enrolment

Children 5 years old and under have the option of early childhood education ('day care'). There are various options for children's day care in Turku:

- municipal day care and family day care
- private day care, family day care and group family day care

Depending on the day care you choose, you apply for a place for your child using the City of Turku's electronic service or by contacting the day care directly. Please send your application at least four months before your child is due to start day care. If this is not possible, please send it as soon as you can.

More information:

Early childhood education and preschool education

The majority of day cares in Turku are Finnish speaking, although international children are welcome to attend. There are two private English-speaking day cares, Daycare Daisy and Wendy House, for children aged 3–5. There is currently no English-speaking day care availability for ages 0–2.

More information:

daisy.fi

wendyhouse.fi

Day care in Finland is not free of charge, although it can be subsidised through a service voucher. The maximum fee for one child in full-time care is €311 per month, and the amount you have to pay is calculated according to your household income.

Fees, financial support and service vouchers

At age 6, children attend one year of preschool education before they start school. This is compulsory and free of charge. Preschool is offered by certain day cares and schools, including both Daycare Daisy and Wendy House.

Preschool education in Finnish

Early Childhood Education Service Guidance

You can receive guidance in English regarding day care and pre-school both online or at the Monitori customer service point:

✉ varhaiskasvatus@turku.fi

Early childhood education and care service guidance

3.2.2 Basic Education

Basic education refers to the general education for children between 7 and 16 years of age. Basic education is free of charge and aims to prepare and qualify students for upper secondary education.

In Turku, a student is guaranteed a place at a school according to their home address. There are no league tables or 'private' schools offering paid tuition. The majority of schools would teach in Finnish or Swedish, with some notable exceptions (see below).

Further information:

Basic education

Turku International School offers primary (grades 1–6), lower secondary (grades 7–9) and upper secondary education (IB Diploma Programme) in English. The school is intended for international families moving to the Turku region. New students start in August and admission tests are held once a year after the online application. The application process is very competitive, so a place at this school is not guaranteed.

More information:

Turku International School

In addition to Turku International School, there are some schools which offer bilingual programmes, or provide language-oriented classes in English, French, Russian and German.

More information:

Language oriented classes in basic education

Valmo

If your child does not get a place at Turku International School, don't panic! Valmo is a preparatory course designed to help children who have just moved to Finland. The course offers Finnish language support and other necessary skills for school.

Valmo typically lasts for one year, after which students would start at a Finnish school, with teaching in Finnish as a second language.

Preparatory education for basic education



Photo: Jussi Vierimaa

3.2.3 Upper Secondary Education and Vocational Basic Education

In Finland, after basic education all students must continue in full-time education until they are at least 18 years old.

More information:

Upper secondary school and vocational basic education

Upper secondary education ("lukio") gives students an all-round education preparing them for working life or for higher education, either following the Finnish curriculum or an international diploma such as the International Baccalaureate.

An alternative to upper secondary education is vocational basic education. These courses are more practice-oriented and would usually involve workplace training. Vocational education in Turku is provided by Turku Vocational Institute (TAI).

More information:

Turku Vocational Institute

3.3 Language studies

Now that you are living in Finland, we highly recommend learning to speak Finnish! Whilst English is widely spoken in Turku, even a basic understanding of Finnish will make life easier and help you feel more at home here. Finnish may have a reputation for being a tricky European language, but we guarantee that the effort is worth it!

Finnish language courses are offered in multiple places:

Turku Adult Education Centre

Turku Evening School

Aurala

Search for courses held online:

Finnishcourses.fi

Information about available Finnish language courses can also be found on our website:

Finnish language courses

The Kielibuusti ('Language Boost') website has some great tips for starting your Finnish language journey, including ways you can self-study before you arrive in Finland:

Kielibuusti

Suomipassi (= "Finnish language passport") is an app developed at the University of Turku to encourage the learners to use the language in everyday situations:

Suomipassi

☆ Fun Fact:

Finnish language inspired Tolkien – The Finnish language (including dialects like Turku's) helped inspire J.R.R. Tolkien's Elvish languages in The Lord of the Rings.

3.4 Health care

The public healthcare service in Turku is provided by the wellbeing services county of Southwest Finland, now called 'Varha'. If Turku is your home municipality, you get access to public health services in the area. You will be charged the same user fee as other local residents. If you are not entitled to use the services of public healthcare, you can seek help from a private health centre.

If you are an **EU citizen**, you can use your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to receive the same treatment as locals, even if you have not yet registered as a resident.

Many workplaces provide occupational health care. Confirm with your employer what it includes.

As a **degree student** you will have access to the Finnish Student Health Services (in Finnish Ylioppilaiden terveydenhoitosäätiö YTHS). More information on **FSHS**.

You can check your need for treatment 24 hours a day and contact public social welfare and healthcare professionals if necessary through **Omaolo**. When you identify yourself in Omaolo, you will need e-identification (see **section 2.4.4.**).

You can view your health data in MyKanta (in Finnish OmaKanta). You can also request a prescription renewal or check the results of laboratory tests and X-ray examinations. You can log in to MyKanta using your online banking ID or similar. Log into **MyKanta**. Unfortunately, the service of MyKanta is only in Finnish or Swedish.



Photo: iStock

More useful information

The wellbeing services county of Southwest Finland

Important phone numbers of the healthcare and social welfare services

eu-healthcare.fi

Turku health stations appointment:

☎ tel. +358 2 266 1130 (Mon.–Fri. 8:00–15:00).

Social and Health Services switchboard (Turku)

☎ tel. 02 266 0000

Varha app

Many healthcare services can now be used via the Varha app! You can access the app with your e-identification credentials. Currently the app is only available in Finnish or Swedish.

[More about Varha app](#)

3.4.1 Pharmacies and existing prescriptions

Only pharmacies are entitled to sell medicines in Finland. Prescriptions are given in electronic format. It may not be possible to purchase medicine in Finland using a prescription from your home country. There are also limits on how much medication you can bring to Finland. We highly recommend checking these matters well before arrival.

More information:

eu-healthcare.fi/medicines

3.4.2 Urgent care

The Emergency services provide urgent care. This includes the care of sudden illnesses, injuries, difficulties with a long-term illness or a decrease in functional capacity which requires immediate assessment and care.

Your health station is the primary treatment facility in case of illness. The Emergency services are available on weekdays from 8:00 to 16:00.

In the evening, at night and during the weekend, in urgent cases (including respiratory tract infections) contact Tyks Acute (T Hospital).

Emergency services are also provided in oral and dental health care matters. The oral and dental health care emergency services are available on weekdays 8:00–16:00 at your own health station. In the evening, at night and during the weekend, the regional dentist emergency services in the Tyks T Hospital are available for all clients of the municipalities of Southwest Finland.

[Emergency services](#)

In case of emergency

📞 CALL 112

3.5 Leisure time

3.5.1 Sports

The City of Turku has many sports facilities which are open to its residents. Some of the facilities require a reservation in advance.

[Sports Facilities](#)

You can buy an [exercise wristband](#), that grants you access to sports and exercise facilities. The number of times you can enter is loaded into the wristband, and a series of ten entries is the minimum you can load at a time. The advantages of using the wristband are cheaper prices compared to one-time payments and being able to avoid queuing at the counter.

Turku has many private operators in different sports, including gym, football, yoga, dancing, etc. Even if they don't specifically include English-speaking participants, there are operators happy to welcome international participants and offer instructions in English when requested. Sports and hobbies are also a great way to practice your Finnish!

Affordable culture and sports for students

CampusSport offers affordable sports services and classes for the students and staff of the higher education institutions in Turku.

[CampusSport](#)



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

3.5.2 Culture

Turku is a vibrant city of culture. In Turku you can enjoy music, art, theatres, museums, and all other kinds of cultural activities.

Turku offers a wide range of different museums where everyone can find their favourite, including:

- Turku castle
- the Luostarinmäki Handicrafts Museum
- Qwensel House, the oldest wooden house in Turku
- Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art
- the Biological Museum
- Kylämäki Village in Kurala (a favourite with children)

Turku also has a great underground art scene, with lot of different operators. You can always check out the Turku region event calendar for everything that is happening here!

Turku region event calendar

You can also get a free Culture Card and monthly newsletter:

Culture Card

More information:

- Culture in Turku
- Turku Philharmonic Orchestra
- Turku City Theatre
- Art House Turku
- Turku Museums
- What else to do in Turku?

Fun Fact:

Since 1970: **Ruisrock** is the oldest rock festival in Finland and the second oldest rock festival in Europe.

Turku Day – Celebrated every September, this city-wide event features open museums, concerts, and fireworks.



Photo: Mika Kurkilahti



Photo: Rami Saarikorpi



Photo: Anne-Mari Savola

3.5.2.1 Food Culture

Turku proudly holds the title of Finland's food capital. The city's culinary scene is a vibrant mix of traditional Finnish flavors and global influences, offering something for every taste.

In addition to classic Finnish dishes like kalakeitto (creamy fish soup), lihapöykät (meatballs), and ruisleipä (rye bread), Turku is home to a wide range of international restaurants. You will find high-quality options of Indian, Italian, Japanese, or Middle Eastern cuisine across the city.

From cozy cafés and riverside bistros to award-winning fine dining, Turku is the place to explore a rich and diverse food scene. For more information on dining options and local food culture, visit:

Restaurants, cafés, and more in Turku

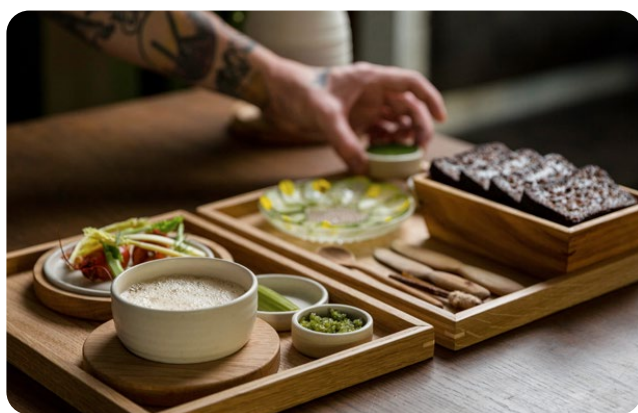


Photo: Jarno Terho

☆ Fun Fact:

You can recognise a local if they say “**piispanmunkki**” instead of “berliininmunkki” when having a jam doughnut. For example, if you want to order five of them, you can just say “Pist siit sit viis piispist!”.

International House Turku also offers Piispisperjantai, International Coffee Mornings!



Photo: Markku Liukkonen

Home of Aura cheese – The famous Finnish blue cheese, Aura, is named after the Aura River that flows through the city.

3.5.3 Library

Turku Main Library is the central branch of the City Library, a true landmark in the city centre and a welcoming “living room” for residents. In addition to its wide selection of books, the Main Library hosts various events and exhibitions and offers plenty of cozy reading spots. Across the region, 10 smaller branch libraries also serve local communities, offering group activities and acting as gateways to other public services.

All of these libraries are part of Vaski, a library network that connects 18 cities in Southwest Finland. Through Vaski, users enjoy access to a shared collection of materials, which can be delivered to the library of your choice. With just one library card, you can borrow and return items at any Vaski library—making the entire region's library services easily accessible.

More information on the Turku website:

Turku City Library

Search for content on Vaski web library site:

Vaski Web Library



Photo: Frida-Maria Pessi

☆ Fun Fact:

You can also borrow musical instruments and book a time for sewing machines or even a 3D printer.

varaamo.turku.fi

3.5.4 Nature and Outdoor Recreation

You can start enjoying the outdoors immediately by the river Aura, which many Turku residents name as their favourite place. Turku and nearby regions offer also multiple options to enjoy the outdoors and the beautiful Finnish nature.



More information:

- [Cultural exercise routes](#)
- [Parks](#)
- [Nature trails](#)

Turku is also the gateway to the Archipelago:

[Experience the Finnish Archipelago](#)



Fun Fact:

Some of the departures of Föli lines 21 and 23 will run all the way to Kurjenrahka National Park in Kuhankuono from spring till autumn.

Check out current information from Föli website:

[Kuhankuono](#)



Photo: Ruissalon Telakka



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

3.6 Multicultural organisations

There are many different organisations that offer activities locally and nationally. Please note the list on the webpage might be incomplete. The organisations are responsible for their webpages themselves.

[Multicultural Operators](#)



Photo: Henri Rantala

3.7 Getting around

Turku is located in Southwest Finland, a couple of hours' drive from Helsinki. With an airport, a harbour, bus station and three railway stations, it is easily accessible no matter how you choose to get here!

3.7.1 City map

Turku is a very walkable city, most of the shops and living areas are in short distance of each other. Walking along the river Aura is one of the most pleasant routes around the city centre.



Photo: Hanna Oksanen



Map: Design Studio Muotohiomo

3.7.2 Föli

The Turku regional traffic provider is called Föli. It includes the regional buses year-round and, in the summertime, the Fölläri rental bikes and the water bus to Ruissalo. All the Föli buses go through the market square. The Föli region includes Turku, Kaarina, Raisio, Naantali, Lieto ja Rusko.

More information:

foli.fi/en



Photo: Vesa Tyni

Fölläri city bikes

The city bike system includes stations with physical racks as well as virtual stations. Users can check the location of the stations from the app.

More information:

[Fölläri city bikes](#)



Photo: Vesa Tyni

How to travel with Föli



1

Check bus routes and timetables online at reittiopas.foli.fi or download the Föli app onto your phone.



2

Go to a stop. Wave your hand to the bus and get on board.



Set your card or mobile ticket on the reader.

3

Pay for your trip with:

- Contactless payment
- A Föli card, which you can buy at a Föli service point.
- The mobile app
- Coins



4

Enjoy your trip!

Infographic: Föli – Turku region traffic

3.7.3 Long-distance trains and buses

VR is the railway company owned by the Finnish state. Turku has three railway stations, and some trains only run to either Turku Central station or Kupittaa Station. You should check the current information on the VR website before booking your journey. It is usually cheaper to buy your ticket in advance. Student discount is available for train tickets.

Tickets and more information:

vr.fi/en



Photo: ©VR Group, Pekka Keskinen

Long-distance buses are operated by private companies. It is usually preferable to buy tickets online in advance.

Tickets for Matkahuolto can be purchased directly from their website. The timetables are available in Timetable Search.

matkahuolto.fi/en

Tickets for Onnibus can be purchased directly from their website:

onnibus.com

☆ Fun Fact:

The ferry Föri started operating in 1904 cross the Aurajoki river.

Turku people say “Täl pual jokke” (“tällä puolella jokea”) when they mean this side of the river, which is the same side as the Turku Cathedral. On the contrary, “Tois pual jokke” (toisella puolella jokea) is the other side of the river.



Photo: ©Heikki Räisänen

Working and Studying in Turku

4.1 Working life in Turku

Welcome to the region where work and life balance!

Turku and Southwest Finland is a dynamic business region, with over 23,000 companies and world-leading expertise in the Maritime, Renewables and Health Technology fields. We are delighted you have decided to develop your career with us!

Finding a job in Finland may take time, especially when you're new to the country. It's helpful to reflect on your previous experience and transferable skills, and consider how they align with the Finnish labour market. Being open to different roles or industries—especially at the beginning—can lead to valuable experience and long-term growth.

International House Turku, along with other local support services, are here to support you every step of the way! You can contact us about the following issues:

- Career counselling and job search support
- Language training and integration programs
- Finnish work culture and employment rights
- Help with CVs, applications, and interview preparation

4.1.1 Work-life balance

When thinking about the advantages of working in Turku, work-life balance has to be near the top of the list.

Employee-friendly working hours, paid parental leave and respect for your personal life mean that here, there is more to life than work!

For workers with children, finding the time for the school run within the workday is very possible in most industries. Hybrid working in a post-Covid age has also added to this flexibility.

You might find that your Finnish colleagues take a very long summer vacation, and thus many organisations here offer a reduced service in July and August. The Finnish philosophy assumes that you need at least two weeks of time off work before you can consider yourself 'on vacation'. Give this a try yourself! Generous vacation day allowances make this possible.

Work-life balance



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

4.2 Workers' rights in Finland

4.2.1 Work Contracts

Every job should offer you a contract before you start working. Before signing an employment contract, you should always read through the document very carefully, as it outlines a number of legal obligations for both you and your employer.

The contract should clearly state your salary in addition to the time period you will be employed. If your employer wishes to terminate your employment before the end of your contract, they must inform you of the grounds for dismissal.

You should ask for a copy of the fully signed contract, as often this will be required for other applications (e.g. your residence permit).

Employment Contract

Employment Relationship

4.2.2 Unions

It is very common in Finland for working professionals to join a union. A union negotiates salaries and working conditions within particular industries and can also usually offer individual guidance to its members. For example, if you are unclear about an aspect of your employment, or if you believe you are being discriminated against, your union representative is well-placed to advise you on these issues.

There are around 80 unions in Finland, organised according to industry. You can check online which union would be most suitable for your type of employment (you can also ask your colleagues). These unions are organised under three main trade union federations:

The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)

Represents mostly blue-collar workers.

The Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK)

Represents professionals in various fields.

The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava)

Focuses on highly educated professionals and academics.

Union membership involves paying a small percentage of your salary to the union each month. This fee also contributes to the union's unemployment fund, which supports members when they are out of work. As a member, you would also be able to access this if needed (see below).

If you are not a union member, but you still want to protect yourself in case of unemployment, then you can pay into a separate Unemployment Fund.

The Federation of Unemployment Funds in Finland (TYJ)

Occasionally a union might vote to take industrial action (a strike) according to certain conditions. If you are a member of a striking union, then you would also be expected to go on strike in solidarity if these conditions were applicable to you. Unions would usually cover the salary of striking members.

4.2.3 Unemployment

At times, you may find yourself facing unemployment in Finland—perhaps due to the end of a work contract or unexpected changes within your company. While this can be challenging, it's reassuring to know that Finland offers a strong safety net. There are local municipal services available for these types of situations: e.g. the Turku employment region, which includes 23 municipalities in Southwest Finland, Turku being the host/central municipality.

Turku Employment Region contact details

 Kauppatorin Monitori, Aurakatu 8, 20100

 +358 2 262 3880

 kirjaamo.tyollisyysalue@turku.fi

Full contact details

Turku Employment Region organises services and support for jobseekers. You should contact your own municipality's Employment Services to register with them. It is recommended that you register on your first day of unemployment.

Follow the guide of the Turku employment region on what steps you should take when you are newly unemployed or facing unemployment:

What to do when you become unemployed or facing unemployment?

If you have been working in Finland, you would usually be eligible for unemployment benefit to support yourself whilst you are out of work. The Employment Region would make an assessment about this.

Unemployment benefits typically include:

- Basic unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from Kela (the Social Insurance Institution):

Kela

- Earnings-related allowance if you're a member of an unemployment fund
- Job-seeking support, career coaching, and training opportunities through your local employment office:

Support for jobseekers

You can manage your job search and benefits through the national Job Market Finland platform.

Unemployment

More information on when your employment ends:

End of employment

Unemployment Guide

4.2.3.1 Unemployment and residence permit based on employment

If you are living in Finland on a residence permit based on employment, it's important to inform the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) of any changes in your job status—such as your contract ending or your employment being terminated.

As of June 2025, new legislation provides a protection period for those whose employment ends unexpectedly:

- most permit holders have three months to find a new job.
- If you are a specialist, manager, or have held a work-based residence permit for over two years, you are granted six months to secure new employment

During this time, your residence permit must remain valid. If you do not find a new job before the protection period ends and your permit expires, you may be required to leave Finland. Make sure to check your rights on the [Migri page](#).

4.3 Regulated professions in Finland

There are a number of professions in Finland which are regulated by national agencies. This means that you cannot immediately start working in that field, even if you have qualifications or work experience in your home country. These professions include healthcare professionals, teachers, lawyers, social welfare professionals, rescue and emergency service workers and professionals in technical and safety roles.

In order to receive the right to work in a regulated profession in Finland, you must apply to the relevant national agency. We have listed the largest agencies below, and you can contact International House Turku if you are unsure about the status of your profession in Finland.

Rights to practise in social welfare and healthcare

Valvira – National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health

Regulated professions in Finland

Finnish National Agency for Education

Information for a holder of a foreign qualification

Finnish National Agency for Education

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in Finland

Finnish National Agency for Education

4.4 Entrepreneurship

Are you interested in starting your own company? This is a realistic option for many internationals in the Turku region due to our support services for startups and strong community spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

If you have a business idea, but you are not sure what to do next, the Business Advice team at Turku Employment Region is the right place to start. During this meeting, you can discuss all aspects of your business plan, including funding, marketing and location.

Starting a business

More support when starting a business or when you need a financial support:

Enterprise Finland advisory service (KEHA)

Financial difficulties and prevention services (ELY keskus)

Entrepreneurship can start at any time in your career, even as a student! Boost Turku is an NGO that has been inspiring growth-minded students and young entrepreneurs since 2009.

Boost Turku

If you already have a company, it is possible to bring it over to Finland. World Trade Centre Turku provides support for SMEs looking to enter the Finnish market.

WTC Turku

4.5 Studying in Turku

Welcome to all new students! Turku has a reputation as an opiskelijakaupunki (a student city) – and for good reason. With over 40,000 learners across five higher education institutions, almost 1/5 Turku residents are students. International students make up around 12% of this total, and the number of English-language courses is growing every year. As a result, new international students are made to feel very welcome here. We hope that you study – and stay – in Turku!

4.5.1 Services for Students

International students are very well looked after by all the universities here, which offer a range of services designed to support students throughout their time in Turku. If you are in need of information or assistance, your university's international office is usually the first port of call:

University of Turku

Åbo Akademi University

Turku University of Applied Sciences

Novia University of Applied Sciences

Humak University of Applied Sciences

International House Turku offers the **International Student Support Service**, where international students can meet with an advisor and discuss any issues they are experiencing in Turku. The service is particularly helpful for those students thinking about staying in Southwest Finland after graduation. Family members of international students are also welcome to use this service.

Appointments are available both in-person and online, and can be booked through the **International House Turku website**.

A Student Union is also a very useful point of contact for any student who needs additional support. Each university has their own union, and membership is often compulsory for full-time students.

TYY

The Student Union of the University of Turku

ÅAS

The Student Union of Åbo Akademi University

TUO

The Student Union of Turku University of Applied Sciences

Novium

The Student Union of Novia University of Applied Sciences

Humako

The Student Union of Humak University of Applied Sciences



Photo: Mama Creative Oy

4.5.2 Study in Turku Fair

Are you a new student in Turku or considering studying here? The Study in Turku Fair is the perfect place to start your journey! Held every autumn, this event brings together local higher education institutions, student organisations, city services, and cultural and recreational partners—all under one roof.

Whether you're looking for information on student discounts, housing, healthcare, or how to get involved in student life, the fair offers a warm welcome and practical guidance for navigating your new home. On top of meeting representatives from universities and official organisations, the fair helps you discover hobbies and free-time activities, connect with international student services and get integration support, as well as enjoy giveaways and even play games.

The fair is open to all new students in Turku, both international and Finnish. Whether you're here for a full degree, an exchange semester, or just exploring your options, the Study in Turku Fair is a great way to get oriented and feel at home.

The event is typically held in the end of August at Turku University of Applied Sciences' campus. Keep an eye on the [**official website**](#) for the latest updates.

See you at the fair!



Photo: Markku Liukkonen



Photo: Hanna Oksanen

Any questions?

We're happy to help!

Contact International House Turku
and follow us to find out more.

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE TURKU

-  **Call us** +358 (0)44 790 0561
-  **E-mail us** talent.advisor@turku.fi
-  **Visit our webpage** turku.fi/en/integration-services

-  **Facebook** [internationalhouseturku](https://www.facebook.com/internationalhouseturku)
-  **LinkedIn** [international-house-turku](https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-house-turku)
-  **Instagram** [internationalhouseturku](https://www.instagram.com/internationalhouseturku)



Photo: Henri Rantala

Customer service:
Kauppatorin Monitori
Kop-kolmio Aurakatu 8
20100 Turku

Events and other activities:
IH Turku Hub
Linnankatu 31
20100 Turku

