Finland by Rail: Helsinki, Turku & the Lakes

FINLAND · HELSINKI · TURKU · PORVOO · TAMPERE

6D 5N

See Finland at an easy, independent pace on a rail-led journey through its coastal capital, historic towns and lake country. Begin in Helsinki with grand civic architecture, Suomenlinna's sea fortress and a waterfront sauna, then step into the wooden old town of Porvoo. Continue west to Turku for its medieval castle and lively Aura River before travelling north to mTampere, set between two vast lakes and celebrated for its public sauna culture. The final days return to Helsinki for the Rock Church, Oodi Central Library, Nordic dining and Finnish design shopping. Designed for late spring through autumn, this route balances cultural landmarks with unhurried neighbourhood exploration and simple public transport connections.

DAY

01

HELSINKI · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Helsinki — design, history and the Baltic

Senate Square, Suomenlinna and a waterfront sauna

Begin at Senate Square beneath the white Helsinki Cathedral, then walk to Market Square for seasonal berries and a korvapuusti cinnamon bun. Take the short public ferry across the harbour to Suomenlinna, an 18th-century sea fortress spread across six islands, and explore its stone passages and coastal paths. In the evening, experience a traditional wood-fired sauna at Löyly, Helsinki's striking waterfront sauna complex, with the option of a bracing dip in the Baltic Sea.

OVERNIGHT

Helsinki

DAY

02

PORVOO · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Porvoo — old-world charm by the river

A day trip from Helsinki

Travel by bus from Helsinki to Porvoo, one of Finland's oldest towns. Spend the day wandering the uneven cobblestone streets of Old Porvoo, browsing small boutiques and photographing the distinctive red wooden warehouses lining the river. Stop at the historic Brunberg shop for Finnish chocolates before returning to Helsinki. The evening is free for dinner in Kallio, a relaxed neighbourhood known for independent eateries and local bars.

OVERNIGHT

Helsinki

DAY

03

TURKU · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Helsinki to Turku — Finland’s former capital

Board the train west to Turku, Finland’s historic former capital. Follow the Aura River through the centre, where cafés, cultural venues and permanently moored restaurant boats line the banks. Visit Turku Castle, a medieval fortress founded in the late 13th century, then settle in for dinner beside the river. During the long summer evenings, the waterfront remains lively well into the night.

OVERNIGHT

Turku

DAY

04

TAMPERE · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Turku to Tampere — Finland’s lake and sauna city

Travel north to Tampere, a compact city positioned on an isthmus between Lakes Näsijärvi and Pyhäjärvi. Experience Rajaportti Sauna, Finland’s oldest continuously operating public sauna, then walk through the Pyynikki ridge landscape to its observation tower. From the top, take in wide views over pine forest and water before stopping for one of the tower café’s cardamom doughnuts.

OVERNIGHT

Tampere

DAY

05

HELSINKI · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Return to Helsinki — architecture carved in stone

Return to Helsinki by train. Visit Temppeliaukio Church, excavated directly into solid granite and covered by a broad copper dome, then continue to Oodi Central Library for a contemporary expression of Finnish public architecture and everyday design. End the day with a modern Nordic dinner built around seasonal local ingredients such as forest mushrooms, wild game and cloudberries.

OVERNIGHT

Helsinki

DAY

06

HELSINKI

Helsinki — Finnish design and departure

Spend the morning browsing Helsinki's Design District for Finnish textiles, glassware and homeware, including well-known names such as Marimekko and Iittala. Later, collect your luggage and take the direct commuter train to Helsinki Airport for your onward flight.