

Newcomer's Guide

Welcome to Turku

Moving

Living

Working



**INTERNATIONAL
HOUSE
TURKU**

Newcomer's Guide Index



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Welcome to Turku

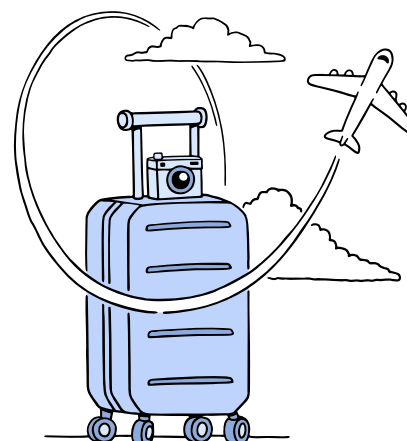


Photo: Mira Tenhunen

Dear international newcomer,

I am delighted that you and your family have chosen Turku as your new home!

As the oldest city of Finland multiculturalism is strong in Turku's DNA. Over a hundred different languages are spoken here and our residents represent over 130 nationalities. Turku is an open-hearted culture city.

Turku is also full of exceptional amount of skill and expertise. With a total of six universities and a diverse business scene our city is guaranteed to be brimming with smarts and creativity, offering exciting opportunities for professionals from around the world.

Finland has been crowned the happiest country in the world five times in a row and surely one key to this success is a good work-life balance. This means employee-friendly work hours, strong social welfare programs, including free education and affordable healthcare for all. Success in Turku is also guaranteed by an extensive network of both public and private actors ready to support expats and their families. Helping newcomers settle in is vastly important for us.

A warm welcome to your new home Turku!

Minna Arve
Mayor of Turku city




INTERNATIONAL HOUSE TURKU




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.



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

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

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

-  **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)

(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.

‘Türgü’?

Turku got its name from the word ‘türgü’, which means a trading place.

First capital

Turku was Finland’s first capital before Helsinki was named as a new capital in 1812.

There are around 200 000 residents in Turku.

200 000

Turku, the oldest city in Finland, will be

800

years old in 2029.

The city has five higher education institutions with 40 000 students altogether.

40 000

100

There are around 100 different languages spoken in Turku.



Photo: Anna-Rosa Eerikäinen

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 (February 2024), 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!



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 / 7 / 18 / 300 / 301 / 302

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 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.

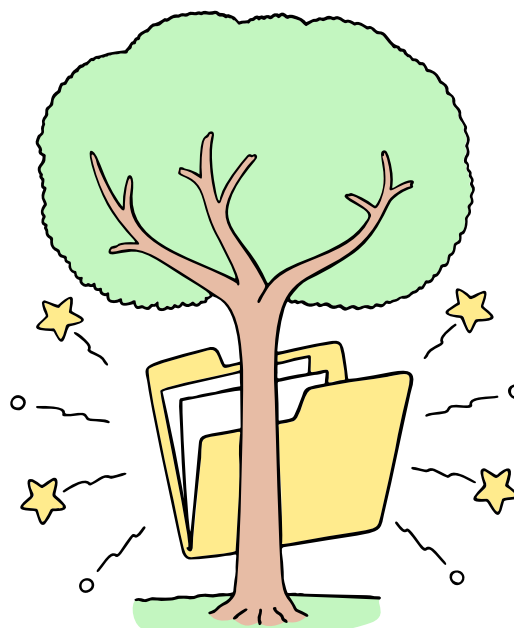
Instructions for legalisation

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.
- You should complete the registration form in advance, which saves time during the meeting.
- 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.

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.



Photo: Jonne Mattila

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

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.



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.

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.

[Tips living in Turku](#) (ihturku.fi)

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.](#))

More information:

[Rental Apartments](#) (turku.fi)



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 sähkösojimus** = you have to sign your electricity contract separately



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

3.1.2. Price level of housing

The average rent per square meter for studio apartments is 13,4 – 24,1 euros per month, for two-room flats 10,8 – 20,0 euros and for three-room flats 10,1 – 18,3 euros.

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). Congratulations! Note, however, that the search of your dream home may be a long process.

The average price per square meter in May 2023 was 2 695 euros.

More information:

Buying a home (infofinland.fi)



Photo: Heikki Räisänen

3.2. Education services in Turku (0-18 olds)

3.2.1 Day Care and Preschool Enrolment

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

You can apply for a place for your child in day care using City of Turku's electronic service. 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 possible, you can already send it before arriving in Finland.

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 3-6. There is currently no English-speaking day care availability for ages 0-2.

More information:

daisy.fi

wendyhouse.fi

More general information:

Day Care in Turku

In Turku, children attend one year of preschool education before their compulsory education starts:

Preschool Education in Turku



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**

Day Care places and services

3.2.2 Basic Education

The Finnish education system is well-known and appreciated. Basic education refers to the general education for children between 7 and 16 years of age. It consists of year levels 1–9. Basic education is free of charge and aims to prepare and qualify students for upper secondary education.

In Turku, basic education is available in Finnish, Swedish and English in city-owned schools. In addition to the schools owned by the City of Turku, there are privately owned schools in the area. A student's home address determines which school they will attend.

Turku International School offers primary (grades 1–6), lower secondary (grades 7–9) and upper secondary education (IB Diploma Programme) in English. In basic education (grades 1–9) the Finnish National Core Curriculum is implemented, while the upper secondary education is based on the IB Diploma Programme. The school is intended for international families moving to Finland, either temporarily or permanently in the Turku region. New students start in August and admission tests are held once a year after the online application. The places are very competitive. Turku International School will expand in 2025.

More information:

Turku International School

In addition to Turku International School, there are some schools which emphasise different languages such as English, French, Russian and German. The language of instruction remains Finnish in these schools, so they do not replace the International School.

More information:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Turku

Please check your options in advance.

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.

Multicultural Education in Turku

Schools and Services in Turku



Photo: Majja Linnala

3.2.3. Upper secondary education

In Turku, you can attend upper secondary school either in Finnish-speaking day upper secondary schools or in the Evening High School of Turku. Swedish-speaking upper secondary school education is offered by the school Katedralskolan i Åbo and English-speaking education by Turku International School. In addition to these schools owned by the City of Turku, upper secondary school education is also offered by the Teacher Training School of Turku University and by Turku Steiner School.

You can apply for upper secondary school with a basic education diploma or an equivalent certificate in the national joint application process.

3.2.4 Vocational Basic Education

Vocational adult education and training (VET for adults) consists of basic degrees, which are completed by passing the competence-based qualifications, and of further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. Young persons and adults can study the same basic degrees. Vocational further education and training as well as continuing education are possible at different phases of career. In addition to education institutions, learning also takes place at workplaces.

More information:

[Turku Vocational Institute](https://turku.fi) (turku.fi)

[Turku Vocational Institute](#) (homepage)



3.3. Language studies

Finnish language courses are offered in multiple places.

Turku Adult Education Centre

Turku Evening School

Search for courses held in-person and online:

Finnishcourses.fi

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

Finnish language courses (ihturku.fi)



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: Heikki Räisänen

More useful information

The wellbeing services county of Southwest Finland (varha.fi/en)

Important phone numbers of the healthcare and social welfare services (varha.fi/en)

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



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.

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.

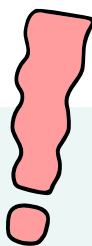
In the evening, at night and during the weekend, in urgent cases (including respiratory tract infections) contact Tyks Acute (T Hospital).

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 \(varha.fi/en\)](https://varha.fi/en)

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 citizens. Some of the facilities require a reservation in advance.

Sports Facilities

Sports for Immigrants

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

Affordable for Students

CampusSport offers affordable and versatile sports services 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, theaters, museums, and all other kinds of cultural activities.

Turku offers a wide range of different museums where everyone can find their favourite e.g.

- Turku castle
- the Luostarinmäki Handicrafts Museum
- the old bourgeoisie home and oldest wooden house in Turku the Qwensel House
- Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art
- the children's favourite museum Kylämäki Village in Kurala
- the Biological Museum

The city is strategically developing culture in Turku with the **Cultural Promise**. You can also get a free **Culture Card** and monthly newsletter.

Turku 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



Photo: Mika Kurkilahti



Photo: Rami Saarikorpi

More information:

- [Turku Philharmonic Orchestra](#)
- [Turku City Theatre](#)
- [Art House Turku](#)
- [Turku Museums](#)
- [Cultural Services](#)



What else to do in Turku?

Activities in Southwest Finland

Fun Fact:

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



Photo: Anne-Mari Savola

3.5.2.1 Food Culture

Turku is the food capital of Finland. Besides traditional ones, there are restaurants with flavours from all over the world! Turku also received its first Michelin star restaurant in 2022.

More information:

[Turku as a Food Destination](#)

[Food City Turku](#)

[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!

[Piispisperjantai](#)



Photo: Markku Liukkonen

3.5.3. Library

Turku Main Library is the chief branch of the City Library. It is a landmark of the city centre and a common living room for citizens. In the Main Library there are several event and exhibition spaces and many reading spots. 12 branch libraries function as community centres of their local areas and, in addition to knowledge, experiences, and information technology, offer group activities and a gateway to other services in the area.

Vaski is a library cooperation between 18 cities. The Vaski libraries have a joint collection, and the materials are transported to the library of your choice. The same library card is valid at all Vaski libraries, and you can return your loans to any Vaski library. You can borrow anything from books in different languages to magazines to board games or even instruments.

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. Outdoors

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
- Trails, routes, ski parks
- Nature Reserves



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:

Kuhankuono (foli.fi/en)



Photo: Ruissalon Telakka



Photo: Heikki Räisänen



Photo: Esko Keski-Oja

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



3.7 Getting around

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 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 \(foli.fi/en\)](https://foli.fi/en)



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.



- 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. There are long term (2022–2026) track works going on for the Helsinki route, which means that the trains between Helsinki and Turku operate from Kupittaa station only. The trains to/from Tampere operate from Turku central station and Turku harbour station. 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 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 new job in Finland can take a bit of time. It is good to reflect upon your previous skills and experience, and see how they can be best applied to the Finnish labour market. We recommend that you be open to different opportunities, especially when you are starting your career here.

International House Turku, along with other local support services, are here to support you every step of the way!

More information:

You can find out more about the working environment of Turku and Southwest Finland here:

[Working in Turku](#) (IHTurku services)

[Working in Southwest Finland](#)

[Working in Turku](#) (Study in Turku page)



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](https://careerinsouthwestfinland.fi) (careerinsouthwestfinland.fi)



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 (suomi.fi)

Employment Relationship (tyosuojelu.fi)

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).

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.

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.

The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)


The Federation of Unemployment Funds in Finland (TYJ)


4.2.3 Unemployment

Unfortunately, it is possible that you might find yourself unemployed in Finland, for example due to your contract ending or your company closing down. It is a good idea to be prepared for these circumstances by being aware of the local services available for jobseekers.

TE Services are the unemployment services in Finland. On your first day of unemployment, you should contact the local TE Office and register as a jobseeker.

Turku TE Office contact details

 Itsenäisyydenaukio 2, 20800 Turku

 +358 2 9502 0713

 kirjaamo.varsinais-suomi@te-toimisto.fi

tyomarkkinatori.fi/en

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 TE services would make an assessment about this.

To receive unemployment benefits, you have to follow certain conditions set out by the TE services, such as applying for a certain number of jobs per month or attending training courses designed to increase your employability.

If you are a member of a union, you can request to access their unemployment fund whilst you are looking for a new job.

If you are staying in Finland on a residence permit on the grounds of work, then any changes in your employment status must also be reported to Migri.

Unemployment (Job Market Finland)

Unemployment Guide (suomi.fi)

Quick guide to unemployment benefits (kela.fi)



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, rescue and emergency service workers, and social welfare professionals.

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.

Regulated professions in Finland

(Finnish National Agency for Education)

Rights to practise in social welfare and healthcare

(Valvira – National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health)

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, our Business Advisor at International House Turku is the right place to start. During this meeting, you can discuss all aspects of your business plan, including funding, marketing and location.

Business Advisor

Entrepreneurs can also receive support from Business Turku. They offer individual guidance, peer support and workshops.

Business Turku

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

The Startup scene in Turku is based at SparkUp. The premises here can be used by all entrepreneurs – free of charge!

SparkUp

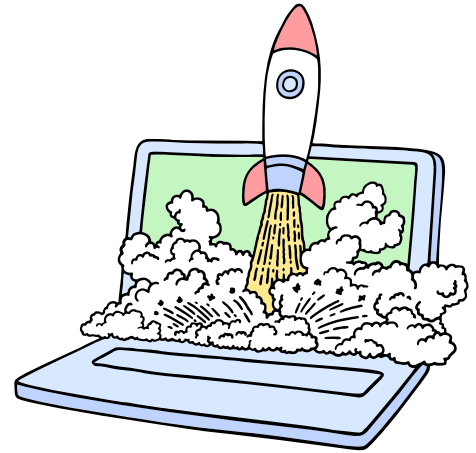
If you already have a company, it is possible to bring it over to Finland. World Trade Centre Turku provides support for SMEs looking to enter the Finnish market.

WTC Turku

▶ From Idea to Enterprise

The From Idea to Enterprise video series was developed to help start a business in the Turku region. These videos address topics ranging from company forms and how to build a business plan to accounting and obligatory financial reporting.

From Idea to Enterprise video series






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
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-  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