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CRUISING IN FINLAND

EVERY YEAR, MORE AND MORE BOATS WITH FOREIGN FLAGS ARE VISITING FINLAND. MANY OF THEM ARE TOURING THE BALTIC. SOME ARE JUST CRUISING AROUND THE FINNISH COASTLINE AND ENJOYING THE THOUSANDS OF ISLANDS.

Finland has a relatively long coastline. It extends from the Swedish border at Tornio at the most northerly point of the Gulf of Bothnia to the Russian border at the eastern point of the Gulf of Finland. The Åland Islands lie fifty miles off the south-west corner of the mainland.

The south-western archipelago and the Åland Islands together form the Archipelago Sea. With over 40,000 islands, it is the largest archipelago in Europe and one of the largest in the world. These sheltered waters are a real cruising paradise.

The cruising season in Finland starts in early May and continues until late September. The summer months from June to August are the high season. During holidays, some of the most popular harbours may be very crowded. Most of the guest marinas close their doors at end of August. Mooring is also possible at other times, but services may be restricted. In Finland, it is also possible to moor at natural harbours. You can legally moor, swim and rest anywhere as long as you do not disturb other people and provided that access has not been restricted for defence

or environmental reasons. Needless to say, you must not moor too close to private homes or private boat clubs.

During the summer months, the days are long and it never really gets dark in archipelago. The weather is usually very predictable. Strong winds are rare during summer. At worst, it may be wet with temperatures around 10°-15° C. At best, summer temperatures may exceed 30° C and the sun is so strong that it's hardly possible to walk on the deck with bare feet. Thunderstorms may occur suddenly >>

Traditional boathouses at Lappo, Åland



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even during good weather. But the archipelago, with its thousands of islands, provides sheltered waters where it's safe to cruise even in bad weather.

Cruising and navigation in Finland are relatively easy. However, it's essential to have up-to-date charts. The Finnish coast and archipelago are well known for underwater rocks, so following recommended channels is advisable. These channels are very well marked with guaranteed draught.

There are plenty of things to do besides enjoying the marine life and beautiful views. The archipelago is full of history going back to seal hunters living in the area over 3,000 years ago. During the Viking times, many important sea routes crossed the Archipelago Sea. Finland was part of Sweden until 1808 and subsequently the most westerly part of the Russian Empire for over one hundred years. These periods also left their mark on the cities, villages and islands across the archipelago. Nearly every island or village has its own museum or exhibition introducing the local history. There are wonderful walking routes taking in historic places and local wildlife. Boat enthusiasts can also enjoy water sports, as well as other activities including tennis and golf. Perhaps the greatest attraction in the Finnish archipelago is the local food and the culinary experiences that can be enjoyed in various small restaurants and shops. There are plenty of local specialities, but the most famous are smoked fish and local bread.

Marinated cold smoked salmon at Restaurant Smakbyn in Kastelholm Åland. The owner and chef Michael Björklund has been nominated as Chef of the Year in both Finland and Sweden.

A view from Lappo guest marina in Åland



Näsby guest harbour at Houtskär Island, Archipelago Sea

The best way to start planning your trip to Finland is to contact

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