

## List of activities and fun stuff for kids in Helsinki

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## Museums

Helsinki has many excellent museums, all of which can be found with just a simple Google-search! Here are five of the most renowned and popular:

### Natural History Museum of Finland

<https://www.luomus.fi/en/natural-history-museum>

The Natural History Museum of Finland has botanical, zoological, geological, and paleontological specimens from all over the world in its collections. Displays on reconstructed skeletal dinosaurs, woolly mammoths, and numerous other kinds of fauna decorate this museum all throughout. Children under 7 can enter for free, and tickets for children between 7 and 17 are only 7€. Adult tickets are 15€. Guided tours in English can be arranged through contacting the museum, the information for which is available in the above link, and self-guided audio tours are also available in numerous languages.

### Suomenlinna

<https://www.suomenlinna.fi/en/>

Suomenlinna is a grand and impressive old fortress from the mid-1700s which sits upon a group of islands right across from the downtown core of the city. It costs 5€ to access by ferry, which runs all year round and which takes about 15 minutes to reach the site. There is more than enough to see around the set of islands without having to pay any more than just the 5€ ferry fee, but there are also a few other tinier museums at the site which have small paid entry fees of their own and which may be of interest to those who like military history. If you intend to visit, make sure to give yourself a few hours if you plan on doing a lot of exploring. There are guided tours available in English as well. If you go in when the weather is warm, know that Suomenlinna is a great spot for a picnic and there's also a swimmable beach there too.

### National Museum of Finland

<https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/en/kansallismuseo/frontpage>

The National Museum of Finland covers the story of the country from the Stone Age into modernity, with great displays on numerous defining periods and eras in Finnish history. There are some guided tours in English, and these options are further elaborated upon on the museum website. If you're really keen on looking at all of the displays for what they have to offer, make sure to give yourself at least two hours to enjoy the museum fully. It is also just a few blocks away, and within an easy walking distance from the Natural History Museum, so both can certainly be done within a day together.

Adult tickets cost 12€, and children under 18 enter for free. Fridays between 4 and 6 PM are also free for all, as is the 18<sup>th</sup> of May each year, which is International Museum Day.

### Seurasaari Open-Air Museum

<https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/en/seurasaarenulkomuseo/frontpage>

Seurasaari is one of the many islands off of the mainland coast of Helsinki, and it is beloved because of its great abundance of wildlife (its many red squirrels and hares in particular), especially considering just how close it is to the downtown core. Although the museum's attended services and building interiors are only seasonally open in the summertime (starting next on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2020), one can easily and happily walk around and enjoy the site's many aged wooden houses and a small nature hike at any time. Seurasaari is very easily accessed with local public transit, and is 30 mins by bus from the city center.

### **Helsinki City Museum**

<http://www.helsinginkaupunginmuseo.fi/en/exhibitions/>

Not only was the Helsinki City Museum the most popular Finnish museum of 2018 with 364,543 visits, but it also resides within the city's oldest building – itself a relic of a bygone era, and one of the last remnants of Swedish architecture in the city. The museum also sits snugly in one of the corners of the city's beautiful Senate Square, and diagonally across from the towering and magnificent Helsinki Cathedral. Additionally, the museum's exhibits have covered a very wide variety of subjects over the many years of its operation, and currently there is one called *Children's Town* which is not only free of charge to enter, but which provides young ones with an opportunity to learn about Helsinki's history through own experiences and joint activities. The displays change fairly often, and not all of them are free, so be sure to keep your eye on the museum's website to see what is available and when!

Furthermore, the Helsinki City Museum owns several locations, one of which is the Tram Museum located just outside of the city centre, for example, which can be read about here:

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/sights/tram-museum>

## **Art Museums**

### **Ateneum**

<https://ateneum.fi/?lang=en>

Ateneum is hands down the most recognizable art museum in the city, and that's saying a lot given that Helsinki has so many with famous and sharp architectural exteriors. This is because Ateneum is right across from the Helsinki Central Railway Station, and since it is an iconic element of the city's busiest and most central atrium. It has the biggest collection of classical art in Finland, a great deal of which is highly important to Finnish history and culture, but also works by artists like Van Gogh. In fact, Ateneum was the first museum in the world to own a Van Gogh painting. There are various kinds of tours available, the respective options and prices of which can be found on the museum website. The regular admission fee is 17€, and children under 18 enter freely.

### **Kiasma**

<https://kiasma.fi/en/>

Kiasma is a contemporary art museum located within a very close walking distance to Ateneum, and is right next to the Helsinki Central Railway Station on its eastern side. The museum's unique appearance was designed by the famous American architect Steven Holl, whose competition submission bested over 500 others, many of which were submitted by other famous architects from around the world. In 2016, it brought in over 310,000 visitors. It has free admission for all on the first Friday of each month, and the regular admission fee is 15€, with free entry for those under 18.

### **Amos Rex**

<https://amosrex.fi/en/>

The Amos Rex art museum is Helsinki's newest, having opened in 2018. Its exhibitions can vary greatly, with modernist, impressionist, and other movements of art on display within its unique museum grounds. Entry for those under 18 is free, and the regular admission fee is 15€. There are various kinds of tours available, the respective options and prices of which can be found on the museum website. It is open all days of the week except for Tuesdays. Specifics for children/those with children can be read here: <https://amosrex.fi/en/visit-us/amos-rex-for-kids/>

### **Sinebrychoff Art Museum**

<https://sinebrychoffintaidemuseo.fi/en/>

Together with the aforementioned Kiasma and Ateneum institutions, the Finnish National Gallery is completed with the Sinebrychoff Art Museum, which is located just south of the heart of the city where the other two art museums are found. This art museum in particular focuses on the 14th to 19th centuries of European art, and it is also housed within the Sinebrychoff family manor from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the website, entry is free for those under 18, and entry is free for all between 5-8pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Regular Admission is 15€, however, there is also a 13€ discount admission for students and teachers.

### **Helsinki Art Museum (HAM)**

<https://www.hamhelsinki.fi/en/>

The Helsinki Art Museum (often abbreviated to HAM) is owned and operated by the city of Helsinki, and it contains over 9000 works in its collection, nearly half of which are on display throughout the city in public places such as parks, streets, schools, and libraries. The designated museum space itself has permanent exhibition on the globally famous Tove Jansson, who propelled Finland into fame through her much beloved Moomin creations. Those under 18 may enter HAM for free, and the regular admission price is 12€. Some exhibits are always free for all.

## **Zoos & Aquariums**

### **Korkeasaari Zoo**

<https://www.korkeasaari.fi/en/>

The Korkeasaari Zoo is open all year round and is located on the tiny inner-city island of the same name. Although it's on an island, there is a bridge which connects it to the Helsinki mainland, and there are multiple easy routes to get there, all of which are listed and explained on the main page of the zoo's website. Children under 4 enter for free, and the regular children's price is 8€. Adults enter for 14€, and small groups (which are defined on the website) can go together for 44€.

### **Sea Life Helsinki Aquarium**

<https://www.visitsealife.com/helsinki/en/>

The Sea Life Helsinki Aquarium is located within the Linnanmäki amusement park (more information on that later down the list). There are a great variety of tickets available, including evening and Sunday tickets for 10€ (which can only be purchased online!), so it is recommended that you view the given website first before visiting. An average adult ticket can be purchased online for 15€, and a child's for 12€, however, keep in mind that these are the online prices, whereas they are respectively 16.50€ and 13€ at the aquarium itself. Children under 3 also may enter for free.

### **Tropicario Tropical Indoor Zoo**

[http://www.tropicario.com/eng\\_index.html](http://www.tropicario.com/eng_index.html)

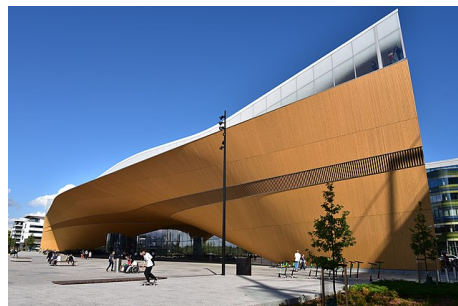
Many Google reviewers have said that the place is on the smaller side and can likely be done in an hour or less, however they widely praise it for its impressive selection of reptiles and rare species, such as with their crocodile and their hornbill bird. Children aged 4 to 14 enter for 8€, adults for 13€, and a group of two adults and two children can enter for 38€. Tropicario can be very easily accessed by taking the number 6 tram from the city's central railway station, which takes about 17 minutes.

## **Libraries**

Being a county with a great care towards education for all of its residents, all libraries and their resources in Finland are publicly accessible and free – even for those who are not Finnish citizens. Helsinki sports a great many libraries all throughout the city, such as the newly completed and highly impressive Oodi Library, which has already been nominated for and won numerous awards for its sleek and sharp modernist design. But Oodi is just one of many worth visiting in the city, and libraries all throughout Finland usually carry an excellent variety of English-language books for all ages. The Oodi Library in particular is not only very centrally located, but it also has a large children's area. Keep in mind that libraries in Finland are not just for books, but they often also function as large community centers with much to offer those who visit.

Libraries within the city limits of Helsinki include:

- Helsinki Central Library Oodi
- The National Library of Finland
- The University of Helsinki Library
- Rikhardinkatu Library



- Töölö Library
- Pasila Library
- Viikki Library
- Kallio Library

There are lots of smaller neighborhood libraries out there; these are just some of the big ones!

<https://www.libraries.fi/> is a great website to visit in order to locate the library which is closest to you.

## Indoor Playgrounds

### Leikkiluola

<http://en.leikkiluola.fi/>

Leikkiluola is an indoor playground in Hakaniemi, located conveniently close to the Fulbright Finland Foundation offices. It is open daily from 9am to 8pm, and the entry prices vary depending on the ages of the children. It maintains a 4.0 star user rating from its Google Reviews, most of which commend the place on how much their children have enjoyed it. One former Fulbrighter described the place as being a “lifesaver” for her husband and son while she had been occupied with Fulbright events throughout the day. She also said that it was a great convenience for them, and she hopes the same for others as well.

### HopLop Ruoholahti

<https://www.hoplop.fi/en>

HopLop is also an indoor playground facility, and there are two locations in the area of Helsinki. The first is in Ruoholahti, which is straight west of the core city centre, and the second location is on Konala, a northwestern neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. Both are accessible with public transit, but of course the Ruoholahti location is significantly closer to the heart of the city. There are several different pricing options available online, so it is strongly recommended that you look and see which would be most appropriate for your child(ren). These facilities are also significantly larger than Leikkiluola, and are more suitable for children who are a bit older, as is evidenced by their rock-climbing walls, for example. With many hundreds of visitor reviews behind them from Google, both locations maintain a 4.4 out of 5 stars from parents.

A new location has also opened up at the Tripla Mall, which is immediately at and above the Pasila Railway station – the first station stop north of the city centre and which is only 5 minutes away.

### SuperPark

<https://superpark.fi/en/park/vantaa/>

This SuperPark location is in Vantaa, a large neighboring municipality of Helsinki, and you may recognize the city name from where the Helsinki airport is. On that note, this SuperPark is within quite a close proximity to the airport, and it can be reached with public transit and just a few minutes of walking. The same former Fulbrighter who recommended Leikkiluola also recommended this place, saying that it is

good for children of all ages, and that includes teenagers as well. The reviews online say the same, with many adults saying that they also enjoyed themselves there, and the Google Review user score stands strongly at 4.3 with over 2000 reviews. Much like the last two places mentioned on this list, SuperPark also has a rather wide variety of entry ticket prices, and furthermore since tickets are sent by email, online purchase beforehand is likely your best bet.

## Outdoor Playgrounds

### Kaisaniemi Park

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/contact/search-address/toimipistekuvaus?id=21292>

Kaisaniemi Park is a spacious green area located right behind and alongside the city's central railway station. It is the oldest public park in Finland, founded in 1812, and it has a soccer pitch along with tennis and basketball courts. Naturally its features can be best enjoyed during the warmer months and seasons, however it is also home to the Kaisaniemi University of Helsinki Botanical Garden (more on that further down the list).

### Leikkipuisto Linja

<https://www.hel.fi/varhaiskasvatus/fi/leikkipuistotjaperhetalot/linja/>

This park is located just north across the small bay from Kaisaniemi, and during the warmer months of the year it has a public pool. Unfortunately no page is available for this park in English, however, the Google Chrome browser translation states that it is open from 9:30am to 4:30pm Mondays to Fridays, and that the programming varies throughout the week. It is recommended that you have a Finnish-speaking friend or colleague help you decide which of the programmes may be best for your child, and further down the page (also written in Finnish) there are guides for more child-oriented parks and programmes for throughout Helsinki.

You can read all about Helsinki's playground options on the city's own municipal website (in English!):

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/childhood-and-education/play/playgrounds/>

## Sports/Swimming Centers

The City of Helsinki has 4 swimming halls: Itäkeskus, Jakomäki, Pirkkola, and Yrjönkatu. There are also 9 swimming pools which are run by corporations with support from the City.

### Itäkeskus Swimming Hall

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/contact/search-address/toimipistekuvaus?id=41835>

The Itäkeskus swimming hall is located very close by to the easily accessed Itäkeskus metro station and shopping centre, within a brief walking distance from both of them. Children between 7 and 17 years old are 2.50€ per single entry, and adults are 5.50€. Other details can be read about in the sidebar of the URL above, which includes a mapped location of the swim hall. It is open most days of the week from 6.15am to 8.30pm, however Thursdays and weekends have different daily timings. The location also has other areas and services, such as sporting facilities.

### **Yrjönkatu Swimming Hall**

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/contact/search-address/toimipistekuvaus?id=41102>

The Yrjönkatu swimming hall is Helsinki's oldest, most recognizable, and most central swimming hall. It is located in the district of Kamppi, right within the heart of the city, and has the same prices as the Itäkeskus swimming hall for adults and children. The visitation times and the additional services which are provided at the swim hall can be read about on the URL shared above. Yrjönkatu is also known for its numerous different swim times, some of which are in regards to gender-specific or swimwear options, so it would be wise to check the listed offerings first before attending.

### **Pirkkola Swimming Hall**

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/contact/search-address/toimipistekuvaus?id=40774>

The Pirkkola swimming hall is located directly north of the city centre, albeit at a significantly further distance from there, but still within the city bounds. It shares its admittance prices with the other swim halls listed previously, and naturally also has its own varying open times and offered services which can be further read about through the provided URL. It also has sporting facilities on site like the Itäkeskus swim hall.

### **Jakomäki Swimming Hall**

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/contact/search-address/toimipistekuvaus?id=40838>

The Jakomäki swimming hall is the furthest from the city centre, located close to Vantaa and also quite closely to the Fazer Experience Visitor Centre, northeast of the downtown core. It shares the adult and children prices of 5.50€ and 2.50€ respectively along with the other listed swim halls, and similarly it also has its own different weekly opening times. Like the Itäkeskus and Pirkkola halls, it also has sporting facilities.

## **National Parks**

Finland is known to many both internationally and domestically as a land of plentiful and natural beauty. An appreciation for the great outdoors is also a value which essentially all Finns are raised with, and



something which means a great deal to the nation. Because of this, and because of how many large and impressive natural parks there are in Finland (there are 40!), it would certainly be a good idea to take your children for a hike or picnic to one of them when the weather is opportune, and if you have the time and availability to do so. The closest of these emerald areas is **Nuoksio National Park**, which is less than 30 kilometers from downtown Helsinki and which can be directly reached with public transportation.

## Places to go ice skating

### Jääpuisto Ice Park

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/activities/jääpuisto-ice-park>

Jääpuisto Ice Park is the rink which can be seen each winter in the main square right next to the Helsinki Central Railway Station. Judging by its centrality alone, it is probably also one of the most popular (and easily accessible) places to go skating in Helsinki. Skates can be rented there as well!

The City of Helsinki has also compiled a lengthy list of skating rinks around the city:

<https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/culture/sports/outdoor/artificial-and-skating-rinks/>

## Other Interesting Sites in Helsinki

### Fazer Experience Visitor Centre

<https://www.visitfazer.com/en/>

The Fazer Experience Visitor Centre is located outside the city centre and close to Vantaa. It can be reached very easily by taking the metro to Mellunmäki station, and then by taking a brief bus ride from there to the factory. There are multiple busses which pass by there, so it would be best to plan your trip in advance either with Google Maps or with the HSL mobile phone app. Guided tours are available and tickets are sold online, with an adult price of 15.50€ and a child (3 to 17 yrs.) price of 10.50€. The tour takes about an hour, but keep in mind that it concludes with a genuine although timed all you can eat selection of Fazer's most popular chocolates, candies, and cookies (and with quite a good variety at that).

### Linnanmäki

<https://www.linnanmaki.fi/en/>

With approximately one million visitors per year, Linnanmäki is Finland's foremost amusement park. Its yearly operational season spans from April until October, and it is located within the same premises as the aforementioned Sea Life Helsinki Aquarium (which is open year-round), both of which are accessible with public bus and tram transportation, and which lie just north of the downtown city centre core.

### **Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre**

<https://www.heureka.fi/?lang=en>

The Heureka science centre is Finland's biggest science centre, and it is located in the Tikkurila area of Vantaa, just outside of Helsinki, easily accessed via the train. At Heureka you can experience and learn about science and technology in an exciting hands-on environment, and they also have a planetarium as well. The current exhibitions showcase dinosaurs, brain functions, and circular economy, amongst other things. The science center is not only fun for children, but for adults as well. Ticket prices range from 15€ to 22€, with the children's tickets being the former and less expensive price.

### **Annantalo Arts Centre**

<http://www.annantalo.fi/en/about>

The Annantalo Arts Centre is located in the Kamppi neighborhood of downtown Helsinki, very close by to the Kamppi shopping centre and metro station. The venue is for art education, exhibitions, performances, events, and workshops, and it is demographically aimed towards children, young people, and families. Visiting the center is free of charge for all, and it is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm, and on weekends from 10am to 4pm.

### **Kaisaniemi Botanical Garden**

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/sights/kaisaniemi-botanic-garden>

<https://luomus.fi/en/kaisaniemi-botanic-garden>

The Kaisaniemi Botanical Garden is, according to the listed city website, one of the city's most visited tourist attractions. It is open all year round (save for a few particular holidays of course), and most days of the week from 10am to 5pm. There is also free entry on the first Friday of every other month. Regular admittance is 10€ and 5€ for children between the ages of 7-17 years old. Children under 7 enter freely. Family tickets are also available for 26€, for a maximum of two adults and four children.

### **Sibelius Monument**

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/sights/sibelius-monument>

The Sibelius Monument is a highly popular tourist attraction in downtown Helsinki, dedicated to its namesake Jean Sibelius, the revered and beloved romantic-era composer whose music helped the burgeoning nation to form its national identity. It was unveiled in 1967, and remains as one of the city's most recognizable structures.

### **Kaivopuisto**

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do-neighbourhoods/ullanlinna-eira-and-kaivopuisto/kaivopuisto>

Kaivopuisto is one of Helsinki's southernmost neighborhoods, and is where many embassies and old manors from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are located. Given that latter point in particular, it is a very beautiful neighborhood, and is excellent for relaxing afternoon strolls, especially within its sizeable and green

park nearby. The U.S. Embassy is also located in this area, which is a good place for all Americans to know upon arriving and staying in Helsinki.

### **Hietaranta beach**

<https://www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/activities/hietaranta-beach>

If you're in Helsinki for when the weather gets summery and warm, Hietaranta beach (sometimes called Hietaniemi beach) is the city's most popular sunbathing and outdoor swimming location. The water has been recorded as high as 20 degrees Celsius, which is exceptionally warm for Nordic countries. It sports shallow and safe swimming areas, as well as a play area destined solely for children, along with a close by café-bistro. There are also nearby tennis courts as well as a mini-golf course. The beach also doubles as a popular place to see the beautiful northern sunsets that Finland offers.

### **Ramsinniemi**

<https://vuosaari.fi/meri-rastila-ja-ramsinniemi/>

Ramsinniemi is a sizeable nature trail in the eastern end of Helsinki, and which is accessible by bus and metro routes. For example, one can enter the trail at numerous points, several of which are very close to the bus stops in Rastila, and also within an easy walking distance from the Rastila metro station. It extends over 50 hectares, and is a great spot for a small, inner-city hike. The picturesque site features many large boulders, and one area in particular is home to a small field of large, circular rocks which are left over from the Neolithic Era, when Finland was submerged below sea-level. The website listed above has more information on the area – be sure to use the Google Chrome page translation feature since the website is in Finnish.

**Here is a map for you with Google Maps, which can be used when navigating in Helsinki:**

<https://bit.ly/2YZ3Mxz>

The map includes all the locations listed on this document, and different types of locations have different icons. The map can be viewed both on browser and mobile.