



Finland

Republic of Finland

Suomen Tasavalta



About Finland:

Moi (Hi),

Welcome to forest-filled Finland, "Land of the Midnight Sun".

Bordering the Baltic Sea and nestled between the countries of Sweden and Russia, Finland combines indigenous heritage with Swedish, Russian, and European culture. Finland celebrated its 100th year of independence from its Russian neighbor during 2017. Normally, Finnish Independence Day is celebrated on December 6th.

Kelley (2016 IFYE) remarks, "Finland can be characterized as having dark, cold winters, but this is contrasted by warm summers with lots of sunshine. In fact, in the "Land of the Midnight Sun", during the summer sometimes the sun doesn't set until 3AM.

"There is much to explore in the outdoors of Finland, especially in the wilder north where reindeer, moose, and wolves can be seen. In the summertime, expect outdoor adventures such as hiking, backpacking, or swimming in Finland's many lakes. Wintertime activities can include skiing, dog sled and horse sleigh rides, or staying out on a cold night to catch a glimpse of the breathtaking *Aurora Borealis*. The country is famous for its saunas, many lakes, excellent water quality, and green deep forests around the sea, rivers, and waterways. In the northernmost part of the country above the Arctic Circle, the Midnight Sun can be seen in the summer and the Northern Lights in the winter."

Without boasting too much, Finns are proud to say Santa Claus calls their city of Rovaniemi "home". This claim is in addition to the numerous items created in Finland such as Fiskars and Nokia as well as the popular Finnish pastime shared around the world known as the Sauna. Of course, everyone's

favorite pastime and family tradition in Finland is the sauna. If you're lucky, you may even get to experience the rush of jumping into a cold lake or stream after being in the hot sauna.

Some common foods in Finland include fish, potatoes, and various berries, as well as *makkara* - delicious sausage usually cooked over a fire. You can also find some special delicacies made from reindeer or moose meat.

"Jump into everything wholeheartedly and you will enjoy becoming a Finn and gaining loving family members for the rest of your life. The Finnish culture may not embrace small talk, but you are sure to be invited to have coffee and fresh bread or Finnish *pulla* with new friends," ends Dickman.

What to Expect:

Caitlyn (2016 IFYE) says that "With Finland sharing similar physical features and population size with my home state of Minnesota, it was easy to feel at home in this Scandinavian country.

"The idea of small talk does not exist in Finland. Many people go about their day minding their own business and speaking only when there is something important to be said. Finns may come off as shy when meeting a foreigner, but do not be fooled. Most warm up pretty quickly and eventually you find yourself lost in conversations about Midsummer traditions, Eurovision, Formula One races, and never-ending berry seasons.

"For three months, I lived with families located in the southeast, central, and north central areas of Finland. As one moves through the rolling hills and forests filled with endless cedar and birch of the southeast to the vast farm plains, scattered lakes, and swampy bogs of central and north central Finland, it is easy to see why many Finnish people enjoy their time outdoors, especially in the summer months. With summer, comes endless daylight hours (the sun usually sets around 3 am in some places or not at all the more north you go). Many Finns spend their summers outdoors picking wild blueberries, hiking in the forests, grilling *makkara* (sausage), and going to sauna.

"Through the IFYE program, I experienced the ins and outs of Finnish dairy farms and learned about the regulations and practices many dairy farmers must maintain. Families introduced me to their way of life not only through their day-to-day routines but also through their kitchens. Many hours were spent baking traditional Finnish treats like *Pulla*, rye bread, and blueberry cobblers.

"And, it was not just farm families I spent time with. I practiced the methodical process landscapers use to create beautiful outdoor paradises and made numerous elementary school visits to share my own experiences with the students while also discovering why Finland has one of the most successful educational systems in the world. I was introduced to the Finnish waltz, how to prepare a fresh caught Pike, and explored the long ago hiding place of Finland's Robin Hood. Some of my favorite experiences were playing the different versions of UNO with my host siblings, trying to get pictures of the elusive moose, and spending late nights looking up to the northern skies as the *Aurora Borealis* danced above. After meeting so many wonderful families and immersing myself in the farms and forests of Finland, it will always be my home away from home."

NOTE: IFYEs will arrive in Helsinki and spend a couple of days there before going to host families via public transportation. IFYEs generally have 3-4 host families who will be rural-based.

IFYEs at Work and Play



PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Applications for the 2018 program can be found on the IFYEUSA.ORG website under the [Exchange Programs](#) tab.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 1, 2018

For further information, please contact:
Alan Lambert, IFYE National Program Director
alanelambert@ifyeusa.org