

## COUNTRY LIFE - FINLAND

9 nights / 10 days

Self drive



Quaint wooden quarters, and fascinating villages where you can stop and discover genuine country life. You have the chance to sample a variety of accommodations at charming locations, each one having its own personal touch. The self-drive tour offers you the freedom to discover the South Western countryside and the Lakeland in an independent way. We have suggested some points of interest to give you a few ideas of what to see and experience along the journey, but there are many more attractions worth a visit. The choice is yours. The lakes and forests offer great opportunities for lovely boat cruises and leisurely walks

### Day 1: Helsinki

Arrive Helsinki. Finland's capital offers a wide variety of things to experience ranging from an array of architectural gems, art, design and cultural offerings to great shopping facilities. Proximity to the sea and forest gives Helsinki its distinctive ambience.

Overnight at Hotel Linna in a distinctive setting. The historic granite building is a fine example of the Finnish Art Nouveau or Jugend style. Refurbished into an up-to-date hotel, it offers a perfect blend of old world charm and every modern convenience.

### Day 2: Helsinki – Turku, 175 km

To get the most out of the rural heritage landscapes in the stretch between the modern metropolis Helsinki and the historic town of Turku, leave the main roads and head for the quiet byways. This is where the King's Road tourist route winds through fascinating small towns, charming villages and scenic countryside. The historic road, which once linked the Kingdom of Sweden with the Russian Empire, offers a wealth of cultural heritage sites worth a visit, including, the Mustio Manor, the Fiskars Ironworks and the ruins of the Raasepori Castle. As the oldest city and the former capital of Finland, Turku is home to the most remarkable medieval landmarks of the country including the Castle and the Cathedral. Aboa Vetus Museum shows the history of Turku and remains of early settlements. The wooden workshop houses of the Luostarinmäki Handicrafts Museum tell tales about the trades and city life of days gone by.

Overnight at Park Hotel in Turku, a small and cosy hotel with a unique ambiance, each room having been decorated in its own personal way. The hotel has a peaceful location by the side of an idyllic park only a few minutes walk from the Market Square.

**Day 3: Turku – Urjala, 104 km**

Head for Tampere, driving through green farming lands, and stop in the Nuutajärvi Glass village. Finland's oldest glassworks is today a producer of world-renowned Finnish art glass. The Glass Museum shows the history of glass and glassmaking in Finland, and besides seeing glassblowers at work, visitors will also have the opportunity to try glassblowing. Overnight in the historic ambience of the Glass village, which provides accommodations in attractive guestrooms.

**Day 4: Urjala – Tampere, 53 km**

A leisurely drive to Tampere. With an industrial heritage, Tampere has an array of museums that show the culture of the working class such as Amuri Museum of Workers' Housing. Vapriikki museum centre is located in an old industrial complex by the Tammerkoski Rapids and Sara Hildén Art Museum houses a fine collection of modern art. Overnight at Scandic Hotel Rosendahl, In beautiful natural surroundings on the shore of a lake, only five minutes drive from the city centre

**Day 5: Tampere – Jyväskylä, 175 km**

On the Tampere-Jyväskylä route it is worth making the detour to Mänttä. Gösta Serlachius Museum of Fine Arts at Mänttä is home to an outstanding private art collection. The old wooden church at Petäjavesi with a history dating back over 250 years is a fine example of vernacular architectural tradition. Jyväskylä Region is renowned for buildings designed by the internationally acclaimed Alvar Aalto. Overnight at Hotel Yöpuu, a small and cosy hotel with a personal touch in the heart of Jyväskylä.

**Day 6: Jyväskylä – Mikkeli, 115 km**

In Mikkeli the Kenkävero handicrafts center, earlier the largest wooden vicarage in Finland, is well worth a visit. Overnight in the charming atmosphere of Tertti Manor, a family-run farm and manor hotel with a beautiful main building that has been preserved the way it was in 1894. The fascinating gardens around the house invite for a leisurely stroll.

**Day 7: Mikkeli – Punkaharju, 140 km**

Head for Punkaharju, noted for its magnificent ridge area. The medieval Castle in Savonlinna and the world's largest wooden church in Kerimäki are places of interest near to Punkaharju. Overnight at Punkaharju State Hotel, rich in traditions. The first hotel for tourists in Finland, it today is an important sight

**Day 8: Punkaharju – Lappeenranta, 125 km**

In the historical fortress area of Lappeenranta there are workshops of local artists and craftsmen. Wolkoff House museum from the 19th century portrays the life of a Russian trading family. The orthodox church bears witness to the eastern influences on the Karelian culture. Overnight at Scandic Hotel Patria.

**Day 9: Lappeenranta – Helsinki, 220 km**

From Lappeenranta it is possible to continue back to Helsinki via Kotka, a town with maritime heritage, and visit the imperial fishing lodge built on the banks of the Langinkoski Rapids. Another option is to drive via Kouvola and then turn off to Jaala to visit the unique Verla Mill Museum and Village. Other points of interest along the journey include the old ironworks village in Ruotsinpyhtää dotted with red 18th century workers' houses, and the idyllic old quarter of Porvoo with its narrow cobblestone lanes and handicrafts boutiques. Overnight in Helsinki at Sokos Hotel Torni, a historically interesting hotel in the heart of the city.

**Day 10: Depart for home**

Breakfast at the hotel and departure according to your own itinerary.

**- End of services –**

Price includes:-

Accommodation as specified

Breakfast daily

Tour valid from the 01<sup>st</sup> June – 01<sup>st</sup> August **2012**

Car rental prices are available on request