

Walking with Sightseeing in Helsinki and Oulanka National Park



Trip style:
Guided Walking Holidays

Destination:
📍 Finland

Walking Grade
1-3

Carbon Footprint:
🌳 1409kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Combine city sights with Finland's wild landscapes on this unforgettable Walking with Sightseeing holiday. Begin in Helsinki, where a guided walking tour reveals the fascinating history of this storied seafaring city and its rich maritime heritage. You'll also cross by ferry to Suomenlinna Sea Fortress for a tour of this UNESCO-listed island stronghold built in the 18th century. Then travel north to Oulanka National Park, a wilderness of pine forests, rushing rivers and dramatic gorges. Enjoy shorter walks, including along the scenic Oulanka Canyon Trail, as well as a thrilling bear-watching experience to see one of Finland's most impressive animals in its natural habitat.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- A guided tour of the Finnish capital, Helsinki
- Visiting Suomenlinna Sea Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Walking the most famous day trail in Finland, The Little Bear's trail
- An evening Bear Watching experience
- Lunch on the Arctic circle

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- The iconic Kiutaköngäs Rapids

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from the UK including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks and sightseeing with local leaders
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' touring accommodation in Finland
- 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport
- All excursions as detailed in the itinerary

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrival in Helsinki

Fly from London to Helsinki. On arrival, we enjoy a guided exploration of Helsinki's best sites today, starting with a visit to Temppeliaukio the famous 'Rock Church'. In Sibelius Park, view the Sibelius Monument before moving on to the Olympic Stadium and the impressive Oodi Library. Stroll along the city's main street, Mannerheimintie, and see its many exquisite buildings, including the Opera House, Alvar Aalto and the National Museum. We then continue to our hotel, with time to settle in before getting to know the group over dinner.

Day 2 Helsinki Archipelago & Suomenlinna Sea Fortress

Today we take a local ferry to Suomenlinna Sea Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The first hour you learn about sea fortress history with Suomenlinna guide and next few hours your nature walk guide will show you beautiful paths across the fortress runs from north to south via all the main sights as Russian merchants' quarter, Church Park, Great Courtyard, Piper's Park and the fortifications of Kustaanmiekka. Lunch will be enjoyed in the spirit of the archipelago before return ferry to Helsinki Market Square.

Day 3 Helsinki to Kuusamo

After breakfast we transfer to Helsinki airport for our flight to Kuusamo. On arrival, we meet our local guide for the transfer to Oulanka Basecamp. Later we enjoy a welcome dinner together and get to know the area and facilities

Day 4 Little Bear's Trail

Today, we are heading to the most famous day trail in Finland – The Little Bear's trail (Pieni Karhunkierros), which starts just by the entry doors of our hotel. The Pieni Karhunkierros Trail takes us to the southernmost part of Oulanka National Park. On this scenic day trail, you can admire the beautiful wilderness of Oulanka: the gushing rapids, the steep cliffs, and the sheltered forests. We will visit the Myllykoski rapids and Jyrävä waterfall – one of the most famous sights in the park. In addition to the spectacular sights, you can also explore a variety of species, including the mountain raven and the wild strawberry, on this trail. A picnic lunch will be enjoyed during the hike. We return to the hotel for dinner

Distance: 12km

Day 5 Oulanka Canyon Trail and Arctic Circle visit

After breakfast we will head to the northern part of Oulanka National Park. We will hike along “Kanjoniin kurkkaus” Trail, a circle trail that features the Oulanka Canyon. The river Oulankajoki, which runs along a narrow, stony canyon, is the gem of this trail. The northern part of the park is very peaceful, even during peak seasons. It runs along the famous Karhunkierros Trail for a while. On this trail, the small wonders of nature come close to you – will you find a block of flats occupied by hole-nesting birds

After the hike, we will continue to the village of Hautajärvi at the Arctic Circle line. This is also the starting point of the most famous long hiking trail in Scandinavia – a 82 km long Bear’s Trail (Karhunkierros). At the visitor centre, located right on the Arctic Circle, we will enjoy our lunch and get the “Arctic Circle Crosser” certificates before heading back to Basecamp Oulanka for dinner this evening.

Distance: 6km

Day 6 Time at leisure and Bear Watching

Today there is time at leisure to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the Oulanka National Park and perhaps even enjoy some lake swimming.

This evening we head to the northernmost bear-watching place in Finland where you can see the brown bears in their own, natural habitat. The location means that we have light throughout the summer. The bear watching season continues until the end of September. Each summer we get mother bear with cubs visiting Kuntlampi. As Kuntlampi’s name, “The Bear pond” indicates, there is a small pond in the area where the bears like to bathe. There can be more than a dozen different individuals visiting Kuntlampi during the night. Our guides will tell you about the visiting bears as well as other facts about Brown bears. You will get an experience that will make you feel as part of the Finnish nature!

Day 7 KIUTAKÖNGÄS RAPIDS & OULANKA VISITOR CENTER

Today will complete the long Könkään keino Trail, which is a circle trail with start and end at the Oulanka National Park’s visitor centre. Before heading to the trail, we will watch a short film at the visitor centre’s auditorium, giving us an overview of the natural wonders of the region’s four national parks. The River Oulankajoki has been carving its way through the sandy riverbanks for thousands of years. The Könkään keino Trail takes you to the ancient riverside route with a beautiful view towards the wide river valley. The most important sight along this trail is the Kiutaköngäs Rapids and its rusty red cliffs. The herb-rich forest covered by ostrich ferns by the Merenoja stream and the view opening out from Loseikko are charming. After our hike, we will enjoy lunch at the visitor centre’s restaurant. We return to our hotel for the remainder of the afternoon at leisure and our final dinner.

Distance: 8km

Day 8 Farewell Finland

We enjoy breakfast at the hotel before transferring back to Kuusamo airport for our flight to London via Helsinki.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 3

Slightly longer walks, mostly on well-trodden paths, with some gentle gradients plus stiles and steps possible. Typically, 5–6 miles (8–10km) with around 650ft (200m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Scandic Park

Overlooking Töölönlahti Bay and within walking distance of central Helsinki, this contemporary four-star hotel offers spacious rooms decorated in a clean Scandinavian style. Facilities include an indoor swimming pool, sauna, gym, restaurant and bar.

Basecamp Oulanka

Set beside Lake Juuma on the edge of Oulanka National Park, Basecamp Oulanka offers simple, comfortable accommodation with a strong commitment to sustainability. Rooms have either a double or twin beds, storage, a table and chair, and an en-suite bathroom with shower. There are no televisions, radios or minibars, creating a peaceful setting where the surrounding wilderness takes centre stage.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.

We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.

British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Italian resorts)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags

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- Rubbish bags
 - Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.](#)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Useful information

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your holiday and are delighted to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you. Please ensure you complete and hand in your registration form on arrival and let the leader know about any medical problems you may have. This may be useful in the event of a problem on the walk and will be treated confidentially by the leader.

In The Event Of A Problem

If you become separated from your group, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

Ticks

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>

Drinking Water

Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any

doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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