

# Untouched Finland

## 7 days | Starts/Ends: Mariehamn



Discover the stunning Aland archipelago in western Finland by car. Start in the capital Mariehamn drive to beautiful Eckerö before spending 3 amazing nights on your very own private island. Indulge in Finnish saunas, delicious local cuisine and natural beauty on this wonderful self drive tour.

- 6 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners
- 7 days car rental of Citroen C3 or similar

### What's Not Included

- Items of a personal nature and additional meals
- International flights to/from our tour start/end points and visas

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1 : Mariehamn



Upon arrival at Mariehamn airport you will be met by a representative from the car hire company. They will hand over the keys to you and the remainder of the day is at leisure. Tonight you will be staying in Eckerö - just an hour's drive from the capital of Aland.

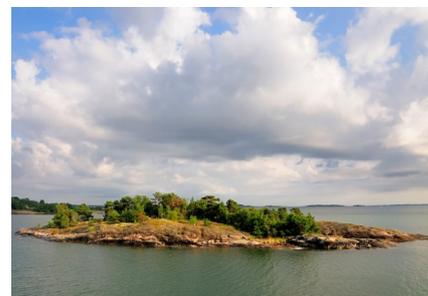
#### Overnight - Eckerö

#### Day 2 : Eckerö



This morning wake up in this lovely and peaceful part of the Aland archipelago. Following a delicious Finnish breakfast you are free to explore this beautiful seaside town. You can opt to go kayaking, take a day trip to a neighbouring island or just head out exploring on your own. **Overnight - Eckerö (B)**

#### Day 3 : Private island stay



Today is a good day to head back to the capital Mariehamn for some sightseeing. The maritime museum with its distinctive ship docked outside is well worth a visit. You can

### HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

#### Trip Highlights

- 3 nights spent on a private island with all meals provided, sauna access and Wi-Fi with your very own private host - Tom.
- Eckerö - pretty seaside town great for kayaking and discovering other islands.
- Mariehamn - capital of the Arland islands and home to the maritime museum and handicraft shops.
- Kastelholm - home to a well preserved castle, gastronomic delights and great cycling.

#### What's Included

- 3 nights B&B accommodation in Eckerö and Kvarnbo and 3 nights cabin accommodation on a private island with sauna, exterior WC, solar electricity and Wi-Fi.

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also take a stroll through the wooden houses or the maritime quarter which is famous for its handicraft shops. Later make your way to Vardo where your host Tom will be waiting for you. Tonight you will spend your first night on this private island.

**Overnight - Private Island (B, D)**

## Days 4-5 : Private island stay

Start your mornings on this island with breakfast brought to you exclusively from your host Tom. The island is yours and only yours for the next 2 days. You can enjoy the peace and quiet of this exclusive location or head out on the water on your very own motor boat. Every day all your meals are brought to you and all you need to worry about is working out how to heat up the sauna! A traditional Finnish sauna is a must for any trip to these islands.

**Overnight - Private Island (2) (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

## Day 6 : Kvarnbo



After your last breakfast on the island it is time to head back to Vardo. Once back behind the wheel of your car why not drive up to Kastelholm. Kastelholm is a very well preserved castle that is well worth a look. Once you've checked into your B&B in Kvarnbo you can head out cycling. Cycle lanes have been well preserved here on the island and it is a great way to see the island. For your final night on the trip we recommend a visit to the renowned Smakbyn restaurant in Kastelholm to experience some of this quaint group of islands best gastronomy. **Overnight - Kvarnbo (B)**

## Day 7 : Mariehemn



On your final day after breakfast at the B&B you'll drive back to the airport in Mariehemn for your flight home. We hope you had a wonderful time on the Aland archipelago.(B)

## Please note

This tour is run in conjunction with VoS (Vision of Scandinavia).

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 3 months from your planned date of departure from Finland, has at least two blank pages and has been issued within the last 10 years.

UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA passport holders do not require a visa for a stay of less than 90 days.

Finland is part of the borderless region known as the Schengen Area and South African residents require a Schengen visa in order to enter Finland. This schengen visa must be submitted at least 15 days before their intended departure for the Schengen member states. Visa forms can be down loaded at <http://formin.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?>

### Currency

The official currency of Finland is the Euro. However please note the 1 and 2 cent coins

are not used in Finland and everything will be rounded up to the nearest 5 cents. All major credit and debit cards are accepted in Finland. ATMs are found in every city, major town or resort and even some small villages.

### Time & Voltage

Finland works on GMT + 2 hours. It observes daylight saving with clocks going forward at the end of March and back again at the end of October.

Standard voltage is 230 volts, 50 Hz. Primary sockets generally require Continental or European plugs, of the two round pin variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

### Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Finland from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Tetanus is recommended. The medical facilities in Finland are good and available for free to European Union citizens with a valid EHIC form or its replacement ID card.

The water quality in Finland is excellent and tap water is always drinkable

### Food & Drink

Unsurprising for a nation surrounded by water, fish plays a very prevalent role in Finnish cuisine with salmon and herring often playing a starring role. Meat is also widely eaten with delicacies including reindeer, elk and bear. More commonly found is the HK Sininen Lenkki sausage. Many main meals are served with potatoes, berry sauce and gherkins/pickles and rye bread is often the bread of choice.

Alcohol is fairly expensive in Finland (compared to continental Europe) however it is very easy to find. Local beers like Lapin Kulta, Karjala and Olvi are easily found in local supermarket – they are branded by their alcohol content though. I is the weakest and cheapest whereas IV is the strongest and no doubt the most expensive. Anything harder than beer needs to be bought at Alko – a

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government run chain of supermarkets. They hold the monopoly on where you can buy anything pretty much over 4.7% in Finland.

## Daylight in Finland

Due to its location in northern Europe with the Arctic Circle crossing the north of the country, parts of Finland experience both extremes when it comes to daylight. The northern part of the country (Lapland) that sits above the Arctic Circle has at least one day a year when the sun never sets (usually mid to the end of June) and one day when the sun doesn't even appear (usually mid to the end of December).

Helsinki in the south has the least extreme of the daylight hours but still sees a lot more than most European capitals in the summer and a lot less in the winter. The earliest you are likely to see the sun rise in Helsinki is about 4am in the middle of June, on top of this you can enjoy up to 19 hours of daylight with the sun not setting until just before 11pm. The winter is obviously a very different story with the latest the sun rises being about 9:30am in late December, early January. The sun generally sticks around for just shy of 6 hours before setting around 3:15pm. After January the daylight increases slowly until June and then begins to decrease again until it's December again.

In Rovaniemi (the capital of Lapland) the story is a bit more intense. In June and most of July you'll be unlikely to see much darkness. From mid July the sun rises at about 2am and doesn't set until about 00:45am. Towards the end of December the sun doesn't tend to rise until 11:45am and barely sticks around for an hour, setting at 12:32 in the afternoon. As with Helsinki the daylight increases moderately from January to June and then decreases again in the second half of the year.

## What to Pack

For an extensive list on what to bring when travelling to Finland during winter see our Lapland Packing List on our Travel Guide on our website.

- Walking boots or snow boots (avoid wellies/gum boots), woollen socks (Merino if possible - avoid cotton)

- Long johns (wool or polyester - avoid cotton), jogging/sweat pants and ski trousers or waterproof trousers.
- Base layer (wool or polyester - avoid cotton), fleece shirts, woollen jumper.
- A down parka is ideal but pricey, otherwise a down shell jacket or a similar insulated jacket.
- Hat, gloves and mittens, scarf and balaclava (optional)
- Padded bag for camera
- Spare batteries and SD cards
- Swimming costume/trunks/swimming shorts if you plan to visit a sauna when you are in Finland

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