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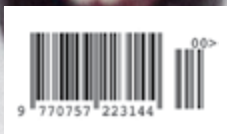
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EDITOR'S LETTER FINLAND AS A COUNTRY



Western Europeans perceive Finland as an unknown distant and cold country. Sweden looks more familiar due to its literature and movies. Swedish classic novelist Strindberg whose plays, along with books written by Norwegian playwright Ibsen, are often performed by European theaters, and Bergman whose movies were recognised as classic examples, turned Sweden into a country being mentally closer to other Europeans. But Finns cannot feature authors of the same level of greatness, with wonderful movies by the great Finnish film director Aki Kaurismäki seen only by few cinema lovers, such as your obedient servant.

Actually, Finland is most popular among Russians. Russians go there

for vacation, buy country houses, apartments, villas. Western Europeans perceive “North” as a disaffecting concept, while Russians understand it as their element! France excludes the definition “North” from the names of its Northern provinces. As such, Côtes-du-Nord (the North coast) was recently renamed Côtes-d’Armor immediately resulting in a worse region awareness.

For Western Europe, the term “North” relates to “cold”, “mucky weather”, “tempest” which negative meaning is obvious to anyone. With this, who wants to visit Finland that is almost the farthest to the North in Europe?

Despite its location and its “strange” language, Finland is an economically developed country maintaining a high standard of life. In disregard of wars and lack of territorial agreements, it has been – and still is – a privileged economic partner of the USSR and modern Russia.

Victor Loupan

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HIGHLIGHTS

VALUE OF REUNION

On 3 November the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe returned in governance of Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus'

VICTOR LOUPAN,
Head of the Editorial Board

The overcrowded Christ the Savior Cathedral, in the presence of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and many archbishops, priests and laypersons, saw long-awaited homecoming of the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe into the fold of mother church.

This event, unconditionally and above all, is understood as a church development. Many of us had been fighting long for it and even left hope for reunion at some point. Because the “tribe” standing against it and controlling governance process in the Archdiocese seemed to stay unconquerable. But suddenly a “miracle” happened. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople unexpectedly discontinued the Archdiocese with a scratch of the pen. The reunion would still have failed without such hard-to-explain action.

For a better understanding of a deep sense of these circumstances that happened on 3 November 2019, it should be noted that the Archdiocese of Paris had been a spiritual omphalos of Russian emigrants for decades.

Back in 1924 Ivan Bunin pronounced his famous speech in Paris about the mission of Russian emigration. It was the first minded attempt to comprehend this phenomenon. According to Bunin, the tragic fortune of Russia hid deep historical and spiritual significance on the background of the endless fight between good and evil.

Bunin said, the mission of Russian emigration will come to its final when an “angel will pull the stone off the coffin of Russia”. Emigrants fell into intellectual and spiritual isolation in

Western Europe. They kept knocking in vain attempting to reach European intellectual class intoxicated by Communism and then – fascism. Western community demonstrated uncanny inactivity in return to emigrants’ heartfelt cry. Paris, being the capital of Russian émigré community and the intellectual, creative capital of the world, did not adopt the great Russian outsiders.

One of the most important tasks of Russian emigration included commemoration of Czarist-era Russia. It was undertaken mostly by church-connected believers. They tried to consider a tragic experience gained with the revolution as a universal evil.

For a believer, everything on the globe makes sense. That is why the only emotion that can be expressed towards theological and ecclesiastical ideas generated by Russian emigrants, is reverence for fantastic success achieved by them in exile. Notable input made by our thinkers, such as Alexeev, Arsenyev, Berdyaev, Ilyin, Lossky, Shestov, should be also specially mentioned. They made an invaluable contribution to development of Orthodox concept. Its main, truly global center was established in Paris by Sergiy Bulgakov, Nikolay Berdyaev and others in the form of St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute (Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge). This was not only the place of birth of the famous “Paris school”, but

it also was a lighthouse radiating light of Orthodox Christianity. Today the “Paris school” often comes under criticism due to its Westernism and liberalism. There is a grain of truth in it, but only sub-truths. The former Marxist Berdyaev became a real conservative theorist and philosopher exactly in Paris. The fact is, that representatives of the forces destroying the historically consistent Russia, were present among the White Russian emigrants. Yes, they did not like the Bolsheviks. But before that they did not like Tsar and famed the February Revolution.

In the 1920s Russian Metropolitan Evlogy – who was a heavyweight for the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox church – established the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe with the blessing of Sanctifier Tikhon, who was Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus’ at the time. Owing to history, in the 1930s the Archdiocese was found to be under the omophorion of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Existence of the Russian emigrants’ religious institution in governance of Constantinople was initially and officially approved as a



Celebration at the Christ the Savior Cathedral devoted to the reunion of the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe with the Russian Orthodox Church

temporary condition until Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church cease domination of the antichrist.

At the moment when Communism and sadly remembered yoke finally failed, the Archdiocese was ruled by its last Russian Archbishop Sergiy (Konovalov). Once I asked him after the confession: “When will we reunite with the Russian Church?” But he answered: “Who will let us go?” As a new person for ecclesiastical matters, at that time I was wondered about his answer – it was found that we were not free.

Only few people knew that Archbishop Sergiy started secret negotiations with Moscow back in the 1990s. He was a real emigrant-born person combining a Russian heart with European culture. He spoke Russian, English, French, German, and Dutch fluently. In contrast to many descendants of the White emigrants, Archbishop

Sergiy held true to the ideals of his predecessors, that is why he quietly prepared not only transition of the Archdiocese under the omophorion of the Patriarch of Moscow, but also the establishment of the Metropolitan in Western Europe. With the understanding of the importance and delicacy of this great thing, Archbishop Sergiy personally printed draft charters avoiding delegation of tasks.

But Archbishop Sergiy suddenly died in 2003, and the documents felt into the hands of the Metropolitan administration which opposed his ideas; so, his close colleagues and right-hand men were replaced with newly hired people who directed the Archdiocese to follow anti-Moscow course pursued until willful abolishment of the Archdiocese by Constantinople. Ruling Archbishop Ioann (Renneto) courageously rejected such decision and

was supported by most church officers and parishioners that led to the above-mentioned just in few months.

The task obsessing some of us for many years long without success, was completed as if it happened immediately on its own. Moreover, some avid and powerful opponents of the Russian Church in the Archdiocese unexpectedly switched sides joining the reunion supporters whom they recently have been at swords’ points with. This is a brief backstory.

This transition of the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe under the omophorion of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus’ is the final historical stage of connection of the last division of the Russian Church (which remained divided as a result of the Bolshevik revolution) with the mother church.

Photo: Oleg Varov

USA: THREE FRONTLINES OF THE POLITICAL WARFARE

A power elite of the U. S. Democratic Party wishes to gain revenge after their defeat at the 2016 election

TEO GURIELI,
political analyst

Experts in monitoring of global mass media announce that now about every twelfth man on the Earth keeps a close eye on the political warfare in the USA. With this, the majority of such people in developing countries consider that they have access to a very limited scope of information regarding actual events happening on the American political scene, but in any way they still oppose the existing president.

American political analysts maintaining contacts with Donald Trump administration suppose that the U.S. Democratic Party (which has initiated the process allegedly leading to impeachment of the president) had never had a real chance for such development, and its top leaders just make every efforts – with the support of mass media controlled by the Party and activists being Trump's ardent opponents – to form both domestic and international public opinion preventing or extremely complicating his re-election.

Is that true? To be able to answer this question, let us check its con-

tent. As we know, a power elite of the U.S. Democratic Party has been seeking for a motive to gain revenge over the whole period of Trump's rule after their defeat at the 2016 election. Minor assault on him, acts of provocation and ungrounded accusations for many different reasons have not achieved any sufficient result. Democrats discovered a proper reason when the news broke that US President had a telephone conversation with the President of Ukraine where Donald Trump supposedly brought pressure



Democrats affirmed that Donald Trump supposedly brought pressure on Volodymyr Zelensky

on Volodymyr Zelensky pushing him to provide US authorities with data on illegal activities conducted by a former vice president Biden and his

son in Ukraine in return of extensive military aid to Ukraine. As Biden was named Trump's key opponent for the upcoming 2020 US presidential election, Democrats elevated this demand to an intimidation and started a massive campaign to discredit the president targeting him for impeachment.

This political warfare is held in three frontlines, and the main front is obviously the one giving Democrats a hope for impeachment.

However, neither Republicans nor Democrats prevail considerably in this frontline. First of all, it is due to the fact that both politicians and lawyers on each side have different, even contradictory viewpoints regarding Trump's actions.

Where Democrats declare that it was the intimidation aimed at gaining advantage during the election through neutralization of a rival, there Republicans support an opposite opinion of corruption which actually was not re-

pressed by Biden but was even promoted by him by putting pressure on Ukrainians to gain a real sinecure for his son Hunter. He also put pressure



on the Ukrainian chief prosecutor to prevent any investigation against real corrupt officials. From this point of view, Trump's behaviour seems to be very reasonable, as corruption must be beaten without respect of persons.

Moreover, according to several Republican lawyers, Trump did not do anything extraordinary in comparison with other US presidents. For global politics, pressure on leaders of foreign countries is a regular thing, and promises of military and commercial aid against abatements is an integral part of political actions held by some major states. There is a good reason that since the year dot politics has been featuring the Quid pro quo formula based on "something for something" idea where mutual services may differ in value. On this side, not many lawyers would be able to transfer this matter from ethical and moral sphere to a pure legal level. Especially with the consideration of

historical relations of the USA with other countries in the world.

Another frontline includes a proxy battle preceding the 2020 presidential election. Currently Democrats have significant advantages here. They succeeded in passing the resolution for investigation of "the Case for Trump" in the House of Representatives of Congress which aims to impeach him. The fact that the House of Representatives expectedly showed the majority of votes when adopting the resolution, is not under discussion: the votes were distributed almost according to their party identification (194 of 197 Republicans voted contra but 231 of 234 Democrats voted pro). Democrats gained the opportunity to use the support of mass media controlled by the Party, to the maximum for a better coverage of Americans with anti-Trump propaganda, no matter whether they take real actions for impeachment or not.

The investigation in Congress and relevant publications in mass media will allow Democrats to deploy enormous resources of mass media. They will publish a vast number of various interviews, reports, articles and evidences, that will provide the opportunity to interpret, comment and distort them in different ways. This battlefield is almost equally important to both parties, but it has a special importance for Democrats, because they will consistently and increasingly denigrate and demonise the US President during this publicity campaign – even worse than it was during the 2016 pre-election verbal punchfests. What is for Republicans, the abovementioned background will generate a complex task for them: they will need to present Democrats as babblers and conscienceless liars. Basically, almost a good half of American voters has the same belief, however it cannot be denied that behaviour of CNN and



Jill Stein

other similar television companies controlled by Democrats unavoidably affects the thoughts of ordinary people living in different parts of the USA.

We should also remember that every politician holding his/her position on the Hill will find oneself in the hot seat in case of defeat of their candidate, as he/she will become short of gravitas. Consequently, it will involve battles in the third frontline – in electoral wards and mass media through the country. It is hard to miss a notable increase in Democrats’ activity in local mass media of different states, as well as significant extension of their network of local community centers, revival of groups guided by Soros’ organisa-

tions, intensification of appearance of various celebrity Liberals in a number of American cities. Billionaire Democrats own huge resources which will doubtlessly be widely deployed to feed their pre-election efforts.

But is it achievable to American Liberals to succeed in dealing with Trump’s impeachment? Reasonable political scientists in the US and other countries who can take an unbiased look at Democrats’ chance for victory, suppose that it is far from reality. This is not because of a small chance of Democrats to prove Trump’s misuse of his power to commit something like “high Crimes and Misdemeanors” according to the Constitution of the

USA, so breaking his swear to support and defend the Constitution of the USA. It is common knowledge that there is almost no chance to believe that the Senate controlled by Republicans will finally vote for impeaching president, as Republicans hold a sufficient and comfortable majority in the Senate. Once Democrats’ attack fails, it will result in a sharp drop of their prestige within the country. One has only to think about those ominous consequences arising from Republicans’ attempt to reach Clinton impeachment in 1998.

US public opinion experts are coming to the conclusions which oppose the conclusions made by Liberals.



Tulsi Gabbard

They think that failure to impeach Trump will have an absolute and considerable impact on his support from the side of a large voters’ segment. His economic achievements and populist attractiveness of his domestic program will be extolled in every possible way, all while voices invoking people to stop Liberals – as they support Deep State in their attempt to prevent Trump from realisation of his political mandate – will sound louder and louder.

How do Liberals and Deep State activists plan to carry their point? As before – with the deployment of lies and libel. Recently Hillary Clinton accused two potential Democrat presidential nominees, Tulsi Gabbard and Jill Stein,

of being Russian intelligence officers and Putin’s agents. Many people in America perceived Hillary’s announcements as paranoia signs: Gabbard is a Member of the House of Representatives of Congress, veteran of Iraq, and US Army reserve major. Stein is a successful medical doctor and left-wing activist. Hillary accuses these two women of high treason not independently, but as an addition to another accusation: she represents that Donald Trump is a rubber stamp for Vladimir Putin. It is clear that accusation of a single person is not an easy task as it requires the proof of his personal fault. But if one accuses a group, then he or she like reveals a conspiracy...

A TV FoxNews prime-time host Tucker Carlson is right: “It’s about power. Because in Washington, everything, in the end, is about power. And for generations, a small group – a bipartisan group – has run the country into the ground. They’ve mismanaged the economy. They’ve wasted American lives in pointless wars abroad. They forced a weird and irrelevant gender theory on a baffled nation, while hundreds of thousands of Americans died of drug ODs. And they paid no notice at all to that because they didn’t care. We’ve never had a worst set of leaders in this country. So it’s not surprising that this group, the ones who wreck the country, don’t take criticism well. Don’t like the program? You must be a spy.”

HISTORY

MAIN OUTLINES OF FINNISH HISTORY

*Dr SEPPO ZETTERBERG,
professor of history, University of Jyväskylä.*

We'll run through the main events in Finnish history. Broadly speaking, it can be divided into three chapters: the Swedish period prior to 1809, the Russian period from 1809 to 1917, and the independent period from 1917 to the present day.

Until the middle of the 12th century, the geographical area that is now Finland was a political vacuum, though interesting to both its western neighbour Sweden and the Catholic Church there, and its eastern neighbour Novgorod (Russia) and its Greek Orthodox Church.

Sweden came out on top, as the peace treaty of 1323 between Sweden and Novgorod assigned only eastern Finland to Novgorod. The western and southern parts of Finland were tied to Sweden and the Western European cultural sphere, while eastern Finland, i.e. Karelia, became part of the Russo-Byzantine world.

The Swedish Reign

As a consequence of Swedish domination, the Swedish legal and social systems took root in Finland. Feudalism was not part of this system and the Finnish peasants were never serfs; they always retained their personal freedom. Finland's most important centre was the town of Turku, founded in the middle of the 13th century. It was also the Bishop's seat.

The Reformation started by Luther in the early 16th century also reached Sweden and Finland, and the Catholic Church consequently lost out to the Lutheran faith.

The Reformation set in motion a great rise in Finnish-language culture. The New Testament was translated into Finnish in 1548 by the Bishop of Turku, Mikael Agricola (1510–1557), who brought the Reformation to Finland and created written Finnish. The entire Bible appeared in Finnish in 1642.

During its period as a great power (1617–1721), Sweden extended its realm around the Baltic and managed, due to the weakness of Russia, to push the Finnish border further east. With consolidation of the administration in Stockholm, uniform Swedish rule was extended to Finland in the 17th century. Swedes were often appointed to high offices in Finland, which strengthened the position of the Swedish language there.

Finland as a Grand Duchy of Russia

When Sweden lost its position as a great power in the early 18th century, Russian pressure on Finland increased, and Russia conquered Finland in the 1808–1809 war with Sweden.

During the Swedish period, Finland was merely a group of provinces and not a national entity. It was governed from Stockholm, the capital of the Finnish provinces at that time. But when Finland was joined to Russia in 1809 it became an autonomous Grand Duchy. The Grand Duke was the Russian Emperor, whose representative in Finland was the Governor General.

Finland's highest governing body was the Senate, whose members were



Turku Castle is Finland's oldest medieval castle. Construction began in the 13th century and was completed in the late 16th century.



Helsinki in the late 19th Century

Finns. Matters pertaining to Finland were presented to the Emperor in St Petersburg by the Finnish Minister Secretary of State. This meant that the administration of Finland was handled directly by the Emperor and the Russian authorities were therefore unable to interfere.

The enlightened Russian Emperor Alexander I, who was Grand Duke of Finland from 1809 to 1825, gave Finland extensive autonomy thereby creating the Finnish state. In 1812, Helsinki was made the capital of Finland, and the university, which had been founded in Turku in 1640, was moved to Helsinki in 1828.

The Finnish national movement gained momentum during the Russian period. The Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, created by Elias Lönnrot, was published in 1835.

The Language Decree issued in 1863 by Alexander II marked the beginning of the process through which Finnish became an official administrative language. Although only one-seventh of the Finnish population spoke Swedish as its first language, Swedish retained its dominant position until the beginning of the 20th century.

The Finnish Diet was convened in 1863 after a break of more than half a century. From then on, the Diet met regularly, and active legislative work in Finland began. The Conscription Act of 1878 gave Finland an army of its own.

The obliteration of “Finnish separatism,” a policy also known as

Russification, started during the “first era of oppression” (1899–1905) and continued during the second era (1909–1917). The 1905 Revolution in Russia gave Finland a short breathing spell, while a new legislative body to replace the old Estates was created in 1906. At that time this was the most radical parliamentary reform in Europe,

because Finland moved in one bound from a four-estate diet to a unicameral parliament and universal suffrage. Finnish women were the first in Europe to gain the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

The Independent Republic

On December 6, 1917, Parliament approved the declaration of independence drawn up by the Senate under the leadership of P.E. Svinhufvud (1861–1944).

At the same time, the breach between the parties of the left and the right had become irreconcilable. At the end of January 1918, the left-wing parties staged a coup, and the government was forced to flee Helsinki. The ensuing Civil War ended in May with victory for the government troops, led by General Gustaf Mannerheim (1867–1951). Finland became a republic in the summer of 1919, and K.J. Ståhlberg (1865–1952) was elected the first president.

The independent republic developed briskly during the 1920s. The wounds sustained in the Civil War were alleviated by concilia-

tory measures such as including the Social Democrats in the government; in 1926–1927 they formed a minority government on their own.

Although Finland first pursued a foreign policy based on cooperation with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the League of Nations was already the cornerstone of Finnish security policy in the 1920s. When the inability of the League of Nations to safeguard world, peace became evident in the 1930s, Parliament approved a Scandinavian orientation in 1935.

In August 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact, which included a secret protocol relegating Finland to the Soviet sphere of interest. When Finland refused to allow the Soviet Union to build military bases on its territory, the latter revoked the nonaggression pact of 1932 and attacked Finland on November 30, 1939. The “Winter War” ended in a peace treaty drawn up in Moscow on March 13, 1940, giving south-eastern Finland to the Soviet Union.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, Finland entered the war as a cobelligerent with Germany. The “Continuation War” ended in armistice in September



In the Winter War Finland stood alone; other countries offered only sympathy and modest assistance. Finnish ski troops inflicted heavy casualties on the Russian army. Finland's survival against overwhelming Russian forces became legendary all over the world.

1944. In addition to the areas already lost to Russia, Finland also ceded Petsamo on the Arctic Ocean. The terms of the armistice were confirmed in the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947.

Marshal Mannerheim was made president of the republic towards the end of the war. He was succeeded in 1946 by J.K. Paasikivi (1870–1956), whose aim was to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

The Olympic Games were held in Helsinki in 1952, and in 1955 Finland joined both the United Nations and the Nordic Council. Among the major achievements of Nordic cooperation were the establishment of a joint Nordic labour market in 1954 and a passport union in 1957.

Urho Kekkonen, who was elected president in 1956, worked to increase Finland's latitude in foreign policy by pursuing an active policy of neutrality. This was evident for instance in initiatives taken by Finland, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki in summer 1975.

Kekkonen led Finland for a quarter of a century before resigning because of poor health. Mauno Koivisto was elected president in 1982.

Recent History

Spring 1987 marked a turning point in the government, when the conservative National Coalition Party and the Social Democrats formed a majority government that remained in power until 1991. After the 1991 election, the Social Democrats were left in opposition, and a new government was formed by the Conservatives and the Centre Party (formerly the Agrarian Party).

The upheaval that took place at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union, was evident in Finland in both a liberalised intellectual atmosphere and in greater latitude in foreign policy. Finland recognised Russia's position as the successor to the Soviet

Union and a treaty on good relations between the neighbouring countries was concluded in January 1992.

The need and opportunity for Finnish membership in the European Community (EC) increased greatly when Sweden submitted its membership application and the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991. Finland submitted its own application to the EC in March 1992 and the Parliament of the EC (by then the European Union), approved the application in May 1994. In a referendum held in Finland in October 1994, 57 percent of the voters supported membership, and in November 1994 Parliament approved Finnish EU membership as of the beginning of 1995 by a vote of 152–45.

In the 1995 parliamentary elections the Finnish Centre Party suffered a crushing defeat and Paavo Lipponen, the new chairman of the Social Democratic Party, formed a unique government by Finnish standards. Apart from its backbone, comprising the Social Democrats and the National Coalition, the government included Greens, the Left-Wing Alliance and the Swedish People's Party.

Parliamentary elections in spring 2003 also changed the political composition of the government. The National Coalition Party was excluded from Centre Party leader Anneli Jäätteenmäki's government, which comprised the Centre Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Swedish People's Party. Jäätteenmäki herself, under political pressure, soon had to resign and in June 2003 Matti Vanhanen became prime minister.

In 2006, an unexpectedly close presidential election took place. The incumbent, President Tarja Halonen, representing the left side of the polit-

ical spectrum, defeated her opponent Sauli Niinistö, from the conservative National Coalition Party, by less than four percentage points.

In the elections of 2007, the Parliament shifted noticeably to the right when the National Coalition Party scored a big victory and the Social Democratic Party suffered a marked loss. Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen,



On June 24, 1994 at the European Council in Corfu, Finland signed a treaty of accession to the EU. Seated (from left) are Veli Sundbäck, Secretary of State at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs- Pertti Salolainen, Finnish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for External Trade- Esko Aho, Finnish Prime Minister- and Heikki Haavisto, Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Photo: Jean Guyaux/European Communities

from the Centre Party, continued in his post, gathering together a conservative-centrist coalition government, which began its term in April 2007. Of 20 ministers, eight represented the Centre Party and eight the National Coalition Party. The Green Party and the Swedish People's Party were also granted ministerial posts.

Finland's security policy has recently been the subject of energetic debate. Adding their own spice to the discourse were the enlargements of the European Union and NATO in 2004, events that placed Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Finland's neighbours to the south, among the new members of both organisations. In June 2008, Finland's Parliament approved the changes to the constitution of the European Union in the Treaty of Lisbon.

HISTORY

PROMINENT RUSSIANS: ELIZAVETA PETROVNA ROMANOVA

OLGA PRODAN

December 19th marks the 310th anniversary one of the greatest Russian Queen

Empress Elizaveta Petrovna was the daughter of Peter the Great and ruled the Russian Empire for twenty years (1741–1762). Although she took the throne through a palace coup, her rule of the country was mild and allowed Russia to prosper in the arts and education. Her pro-Russian domestic policies increased the presence of the Russian nobility in the government. She also defeated the strongest warrior of Europe at the time, the Prussian king Frederick II, but died before her victory could be secured.

ed the possibility. Elizabeth instead took a lover from the guard squad – Aleksey Shubin.

After the death of Peter the Great and his successors Catherine I and Peter II, the throne went to Elizabeth's cousin Anna Ioannovna who highly favoured Germans, and put them in key positions in the country. She also felt threatened by Elizabeth's affair with Shubin and her popularity with the guards.

Anna banished Shubin to Siberia, but Elizabeth did not lament her loss for long. Soon she found herself another lover, this time the Cossack Aleksey Razumovsky, who, according to

some historians, later became her husband and the father of her children.

Rise to Power

During the ten-year reign of Anna Ioannovna and her successor Anna Leopoldovna, the German dominance of Russian politics and culture fostered great discontent within Russian society, especially expressed by the guards. People felt their national identity was being repressed and longed for the bygone times of Peter the Great. Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great, seemed like a logical

Child of Love

Elizabeth was born in Moscow in 1709 to Peter the Great and his mistress Catherine (the future Empress Catherine I) before they were officially married. Her education mostly cantered on learning French, as her parents envisioned marrying her into the Bourbon dynasty of French royalty.

As she grew up into a lively and beautiful woman, Peter proposed his plan to the French court. However, the young French king Louis XV reject-



Elizabethan rule brought a remarkable age of enlightenment to Russia



Elizaveta Petrovna Romanova

successor to the throne; a person who would be able to reverse the course of the country.

Ardently supported by the nobility and the guards, Elizabeth organized a military coup and seized the throne in 1741, marking the beginning of her 20-year reign. She generously rewarded all those who helped her by granting them noble titles, lands, and government posts. Naturally her greatest supporter and admirer Aleksey Razumovsky received every possible benefit after his lover's enthronement.

Twenty Years, Thirty Days

Just as she had promised, Elizabeth returned Peter's traditions to the country by dismissing the Cabinet of Ministers and restoring the Senate. Elizabeth replaced foreigners (mostly Germans) with Russians in all government posts. Her guideline was to keep

a foreigner at his post only if no Russian could do the job.

She also reduced the term of state service for the nobility and endowed them with lands and peasants that had been taken from the Germans. This generosity, however, practically secured the slave status of the serfs who spilled out in massive uprisings later.

Being a very religious woman, Elizabeth also abolished capital punishment – in all twenty years and thirty days of her rule not a single person was executed. All her good intentions to rule the country in a proper manner did not

last long however; she soon tired of politics and dived into partying, leaving the rule of the country in the hands of her favourites.

The Age of Enlightenment

Despite the Empress' vanity, Elizabethan rule brought a remarkable age of enlightenment to Russia. In 1747, she founded the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, and ten years later the very first university in Russia was founded in Moscow by Mikhail Lomonosov.

In 1756, the first public theatre was opened in St. Petersburg, and in 1758 The Academy of Fine Arts followed. Numerous other schools and academies also

sprang up across the country, and Elizabeth made education freely available to all social classes (except for serfs).

Elizabeth (who had been educated by a French tutor) exchanged the prevailing German language for French as the language of the nobility. It became so widely spoken that it remained in use all the way to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Even Leo Tolstoy wrote pages of dialogues in French, never bothering to translate them in the first edition of War and Peace.

Character

No one described the character and lifestyle of Elizabeth better than the Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky.

"Lively and happy, in love with herself, tall, big but with a good figure, with a constantly blooming face, she liked to impress. Knowing that she looked good in a man's dress, she held masquerades without masques where men had to come fully dressed as females and women as males.

She was the most legitimate of all the successors of Peter the Great,



Peter the Great



Peter III

however she had to seize the power by a coup. Elizabeth inherited the boundless energy of her father. She could have palaces built in 24 hours and could travel from Moscow to St. Petersburg in 2 days.

Elizabeth was lazy and capricious; scared of any serious thought, and hating any productive work, she couldn't get herself into the complicated international affairs of Europe or understand the diplomacy of her chancellors.

The throne gave her an opportunity to realize all the dreams she had as a girl. The Empress spent all her money on balls, masquerades, theatre, and trips. Her court sometimes resembled a theater filled with French comedy and Italian operas.

However, the living quarters, where Elizabeth and her guests rested from the extravagant ballrooms were astonishingly small, crowded, dirty, and shabby. Doors wouldn't shut, windows let in a draft, and water trickled down the walls making the rooms

damp and cold. There was so little furniture that it had to be transported whenever Elizabeth travelled from one residency to another – mirrors, beds and bedding, and sometimes tables and chairs had to be broken apart in order to be moved.

Elizabeth ruled in a golden poverty – she left 15 thousand dresses, two chests of silken stockings, a pile of unpaid bills and a massive half-built Winter Palace, which had already devoured giant amounts of the money from the treasury. Before her death, Elizabeth wanted very much to live in the Palace even if for a little bit, however, her architect Rastrelli couldn't even finish the living quarters – the French stores refused to sell their goods on trust."

The Seven-Years War

As Europe, Asia and America were engaged in what some argue should have been called the first world war,



Aleksey Razumovsky

Elizabeth felt compelled to join it as an ally of Austria despite the fact that the war didn't affect Russia at all. Great Britain had formed an alliance with Prussia and Elizabeth feared this treaty could pose a threat to the Russian Empire. She ventured out to fight the Prussian troops of Frederick II.

In 1759, she sent a nearly 100 thousand strong army to fight Prussia and defeated Frederick II, arguably the most skilled warrior of Europe. For the following two years Prussia remained on the defensive, although it had not completely surrendered to the Russian army.

In January of 1762, Frederick II was finally prepared to surrender and sign a peace treaty with Russia. A message was sent to St. Petersburg only to find that the Empress Elizabeth had died on January 5.

The irony of the situation is that Peter III, a great admirer of Frederick II, succeeded Elizabeth on the Russian throne. Instead of securing the new lands Prussia was surrendering, Peter III returned all the territories Russia had conquered.

This generosity cost Russia dearly – it lost more than a hundred thousand people in an unnecessary war and in the end gained nothing from it.

Legacy

Elizabeth was the last of the full blooded Romanovs to rule Russia. With a 300-hundred strong army at her command, she had a great opportunity to reshape the map of Russia and Europe. However, she preferred a life of partying and pleasure to politics.

In spite of this, her place in Russian history is widely respected for the educational and cultural revival she brought to the country; the giant baroque masterpieces of the Winter Palace, the palace at Tsarskoe Selo and Peterhof, and the Smolny Cathedral are still standing tall in St. Petersburg, guarding the reputation of their founder.

ICONIC FINNISH FOODS OF ALL TIME

Finns are passionate about their food and they know how to celebrate it. Finns are also fiercely loyal to their culinary roots.

Although you can buy just about anything your heart desires in Finland these days, go native when you are here and you will be in for a treat.

In Finland, market stalls everywhere overflow with seasonal produce and local delicacies. Festivals mark the arrival of favourite foods throughout the year.

Finns even name pastries after their poets!

We've compiled a list of ten iconic foods that you **SHOULD** try – go on, don't be shy.

Karjalanpiirakka

These pastries originated in the eastern province of Karelia. This is the mythical birthplace of Kalevala, the epic 19th century poem that has become an essential part of the Finnish national identity.

Karjalanpiirakka or Karelian pies, as they are also known, fit into your hand and melt in your mouth. The crust was traditionally made with rye flour and filled with potatoes, rice or carrots. They are particularly delicious with an egg butter spread on top!



Kalakukko

Kalakukko are similar to karjalanpiirakka, but bigger in size and made



with fish. They are most commonly filled with muikku, a small herring-like fish found in the Lake District of Eastern Finland. People used to think of kalakukko as a packed lunch, the pie containing everything you needed for a complete meal.

Grillimakkara

A Finnish summer is not complete without grillimakkara. These big, fat sausages made for grilling are eaten with mustard and washed down with



beer. Finns love them. Children grow up eating this snack food at the summer cottage but also during winter around a campfire.

Ruisleipä

Ruisleipä – rye bread – made from sour dough, is a staple of the Finnish diet. There are many varieties but the most popular



and widely available is reikäleipä, meaning “bread with a hole”. People used to hang their bread on poles from the rafters. It is dense and flat and very heavy, but Finns will have it sent through the post when they are living abroad. Never mind the cost.

Näkkileipä is the cracker version of rye bread and there are also many kinds, including the internationally-sold Finn Crisp cracker. They are eaten at breakfast with butter, cheese and other spreads, with soups at lunch or as an evening snack.

Korvapuusti

Korvapuusti translates into “slapped ears” in English but they are essentially cinnamon buns. And while Finland doesn't hold a patent on cinnamon buns, they might seriously make the best. Usually eaten with a cup of coffee (Finns consume more coffee and perhaps more cinnamon buns than any other European nation), it is difficult to stop at just one. Or two.



Mustikkapiirakka

In July and August bilberries paint the Finnish forest. They are everywhere and could cause a sense of panic if you are not used to seeing them in such abundance. You will want to pick them all and freeze them for winter. Which the Finns do but they are best enjoyed in the summer months, on their own or in homemade pies. Although all Finnish berries can be made into delicious pies, bilberries served with fresh milk is the one known and adored by all.



Another wild Finnish berry is the lingonberry which is tart and often made into jams and juices. But by far the most exquisite of the berries is the cloudberry, which grows in the north of the country. Bright orange and sour, it is a delicacy

whose appearance in the southern markets is fleeting and highly anticipated each summer.

Silli ja uudet perunat

New potatoes with herring (silli). New potatoes with fresh lake fish and chantarelle sauce. New potatoes with fish roe (mäti). New potatoes with just a knob of

butter, some dill and a little salt.

The variations are endless but equally mouth-watering – the Finns can talk about new potatoes for a long time, as the little spuds hold the promise of a summer still uncorked. They start to appear around midsummer and their harvest makes the local papers each year.

How can something so simple be so divine?

Rapu

Crayfish parties or “kraftskiva”, were originally a Swedish tradition that the Finns adopted and celebrate with finesse each summer. These small fresh water lobsters are considered a gourmet treat and they are not cheap. Which is why they are feted



in style. Elegant and elaborate parties are thrown in honour of the Crayfish season which runs typically between July 21st and early fall.

Poronkäristys

Reindeer are found in Finland's northern province of Lapland and their meat is one of the healthiest foods you can put on your plate according to recent



studies. It is high in B-12, omega-3, omega-6 and lean. And it is delicious!

Served with mashed potatoes, this dish is eaten throughout the country, in all seasons.



Leipäjuusto

Known in English as “Finnish Squeaky Cheese” and also called Juustoleipä or “cheese bread”, this mild cheese is most often made from cow's milk but can also be made from

reindeer or goat's milk. The milk is first curdled and then fried or baked in a pie tin and cut in wedges. It is most delicious with cloudberry jam!

You can find these iconic foods in the markets and restaurants across Finland but there is nowhere better to sample the local fare than in someone's home.



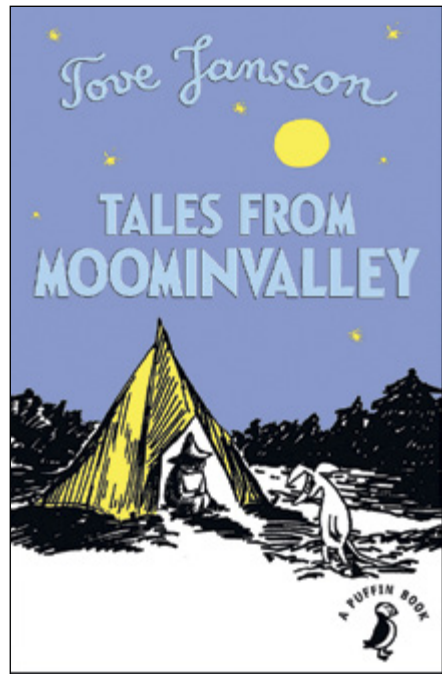
YOUR FAVOURITE FINNISH BOOKS

RENÉ-PHILIPPE THOMAS

The Finns' active cultural life is especially evidenced by their literary vitality. Many Finnish literary works are translated into multiple languages for global audiences, and the reputation of Finnish writers is expanding worldwide.

Tove Jansson: Tales from Moominvalley

A Swedish-speaking Finn, Tove Jansson (1914–2001) is primarily known as the creator of the imaginary Moomin characters, which she wrote about and illustrated in novels and comic strips. Books such as *Tales from Moominvalley* and *Comet in Moominland* continue to enjoy worldwide success among audiences of all ages. She also wrote novels and short sto-



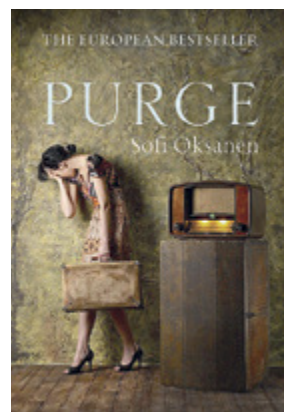
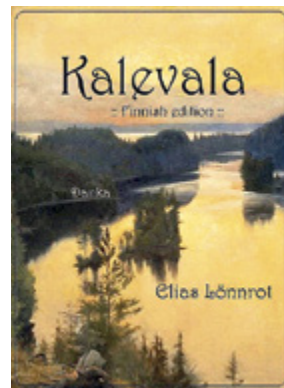
ries for grown-up readers; many of these works have recently been re-released in English.

Elias Lönnrot: Kalevala

Originally a rural physician, Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) took advantage of time spent in Kainuu, northeastern Finland, by collecting Finnish poems sung in popular oral tradition. Impassioned by his discovery, he published the fruits of his labour under the title *Kalevala*. The vast mythological epic helped awaken and cement the Finnish national consciousness of the 19th century. The *Kalevala* themes, complemented by trips to Karelia, have influenced many Finnish artists, including the composer Jean Sibelius.

Mika Waltari: The Egyptian

One of Finland's most renowned writers, Mika Waltari (1908–1979) created novels, poems, plays and screenplays. After the publication of his first novel, and inspired by a visit to Paris in the late 1920s, he



published many thrillers. In the wake of the Second World War he produced what many consider his best work, a historical novel called *The Egyptian*, noted for its faithful reconstruction of the lives of the Egyptian pharaohs.

Sofi Oksanen: Purge

Born in 1977, Sofi Oksanen became known in 2003 for the novel *Stalin's Cows*. In 2008 came *Purge*, which follows two different generations of women in Estonia during and after the Soviet occupation. The novel earned Oksanen international recognition, including the European Book Prize and the Prix Femina Étranger. Known for her feminist sensibilities, Oksanen regularly comments on social issues in the Finnish press. She is also a playwright.

Arto Paasilinna: The Year of the Hare

Arto Paasilinna (1942–2018) was born in Lapland. He found his place in literature after practising various trades. Author of numerous novels, he gained interna-

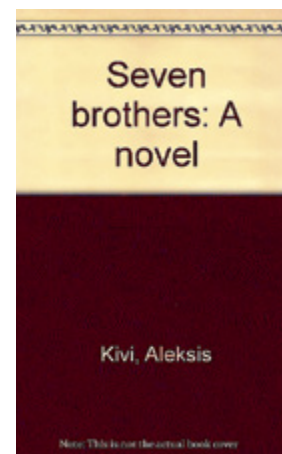
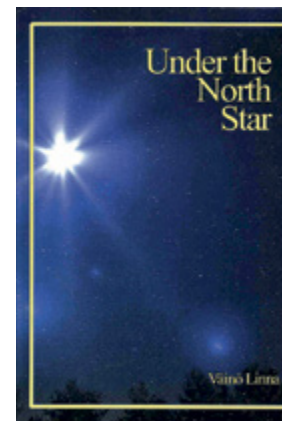
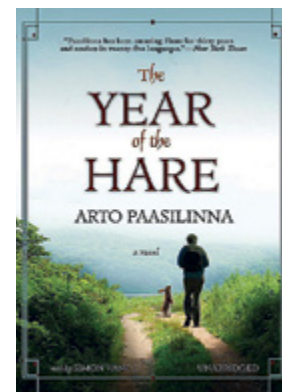
tional praise for *The Year of the Hare*, a story of pastoral tribulations by a narrator who befriends a hare. Translated into over 20 languages, this novel became the first in a long series of literary successes, particularly in France. Critics praised him for his use of sarcasm combined with an extraordinary sense of narration and farce, qualities that give his stories an unmistakable tone.

Väinö Linna: Under the North Star

Väinö Linna (1920–1992) forms one of the most influential Finnish writers of the post-war era. Originally a worker from a simple background, he took part in the Fenno-Soviet wars of 1939–1944. This experience led him to write a realistic novel, *The Unknown Soldier*, that earned him great success. In another book, *Under the North Star*, he painted a historical portrait of a Finnish family across many generations attempting to describe the social reality in familiar settings. Many of Linna's novels have been adapted into films.

Riikka Pulkkinen: True

Born in 1980, Riikka Pulkkinen caused a sensation with the 2006 release of her first novel, *The Border*, in which she



featured characters struggling with violent internal conflict. The book also covered topics such as Alzheimer's disease and euthanasia. She later confirmed her literary talent with two more novels, including *True*, in which she continued to explore struggles of the human soul. Highly regarded as a novelist, she also regularly writes columns in the Finnish media.

Aleksis Kivi: The Seven Brothers

Aleksis Kivi (1834–1872) began as a playwright. Of all his plays, *Heath Cobblers* continues to be the most popular. He spent ten years writing *The Seven Brothers*, which was published in 1870 to mixed reviews. It forms a scathing, yet truthful depiction of Finnish rural life. Exhausted by work and illness, Kivi passed away as a destitute man at the age of 38. Today he has been promoted to the rank of national writer, for he is reputed to have paved the way for Finnish-language literature (before him, the bulk of Finnish literature was written in Swedish). He also left behind many poems, some of which have been turned into songs.

Hannu Mäkelä: Mr Boo

Born in 1943, poet and novelist Hannu Mäkelä

has had a particularly productive career. His works for children, based on the imaginary Mr Boo, a farcical character who appears to children at night, earned him much success and international recognition. Since 1973 Mäkelä has published a series of stories based on this popular character. Mr. Boo's popularity has been amplified in the music of M.A. Numminen, a singer of unbridled imagination, who transcribed the adventures of this imaginary character into music, to the delight of young Finns.

Leena Lehtolainen: My First Murder

Since her first novel was published at the age of 12, Leena Lehtolainen (born in 1964) has become known for her thrillers, such as *My First Murder*, *Her Enemy* and *Copper Heart*, which feature police inspector Maria Kallio. Acclaimed for their well-crafted intrigue and captivating atmosphere, Lehtolainen's books have been translated into over 20 languages; some have been adapted for television and theatre.



FILMS

FINNISH MOVIES YOU SHOULD WATCH

LANI SEELINGER

One of the best ways to get to know a country is to watch its best films, and Finland is no exception. This collection of 11 of Finland's more important films will not only introduce you to this land of dark winters and eternal summer sunlight, but it will also give you a deeper and more nuanced knowledge of the country and its history and people. Check them out for yourself below.

The Unknown Soldier

The Unknown Soldier (Finnish: *Tuntematon Sotilas*) is at once a lesson in Finnish history and the most successful Finnish film ever made. It tells a story from the front line of the Continuation War, which Finland fought against the Soviet Union while World War II was raging farther south, from the perspective of a group of ordinary soldiers. It was released in 1955, only about a decade after the fact, and over half of the entire Finnish population saw it in theatres. Now, you can see it every year on television on Finnish Independence Day. It's based on the novel of the same name by Väinö Linna, which is probably the most important Finnish book ever written.

Inspector Palmu's Error

Another old classic, Inspector Palmu's Error (Finnish: *Komisario Palmun erehdys*, released in 1960) was recently voted the best Finnish film ever. It has a pretty standard premise – a wealthy man is murdered, and a detective comes to

check things out. Inspector Palmu had already been the subject of a 1940 novel, and people enjoyed his antics on film enough that three additional movies were made with the same characters. This film is still quite popular, so it's important to watch as you begin to educate yourself about Finnish cinema.

The White Reindeer

When The White Reindeer (Finnish: *Valkoinen peura*) was released in 1952, it immediately gained recognition worldwide, garnering an award for Best Fairy Tale Film at the 1953 Cannes Film Festival and winning a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film in 1957. It's a horror film that draws its inspiration from early Finnish mythology and the shamanism of the Sami people of Lapland, in Northern Finland. If for nothing else, watch this film for the scenery and costumes, which will take you right into the depths of winter in Northern Finland.

Steam of Life

There is nothing more Finnish than a sauna,

and there's no better way to understand sauna culture as a foreigner outside of Finland than by watching *Steam of Life* (Finnish: *Miesten vuoro*, 2010). The film stops in at saunas all around Finland, and audiences get to hear the deep thoughts of all of the men who enjoy them. Have you ever wanted to know what it would be like to go into a sauna with a bear? One of the men featured in *Steam of Life* can even tell you that.

The Winter War

Another feature about one of Finland's conflicts during World War II, The Winter War (Finnish: *Talvisota*, 1989) follows a set of Finnish brothers in the reserve army in 1989 as they go to fight against the Soviets. This happened right after Germany invaded Poland, and goes largely unnoticed in common European history. One thing to note is that whenever possible, the director used the actual war machinery and only created replicas when the originals were not available. The Winter War received much acclaim in the Finnish film world when it was released but has remained largely unknown outside of that.

Eight Deadly Shots

Eight Deadly Shots (Finnish: *Kahdeksan surmanluotia*, 1972) was originally shot as a mini-series before being converted into a film. It recounts the true story of a poor farmer who, over the course of many years trying in vain to support his family, becomes a violent alcoholic and draws the attention of the police. The film's director, Mikko Niskanen, is one of the most celebrated Finnish directors, and his acting roles also included the lead in *Eight Deadly Shots* and a part in *The Unknown Soldier*.

The Man Without a Past

The Man Without a Past (Finnish: *Mies vailla menneisyyttä*, 2002) was nominated for an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film and four awards at Cannes. The director is Aki Kaurismäki, one of Finland's greatest contemporary directors, who has already been quite prolific. This film, like many of his others, centres on the Finnish capital of Helsinki and takes a

cynical and darkly comedic look at the country – which, fittingly, is how many Finns would look at it.

Mother of Mine

Another great film based on the Finnish experience of World War II, *Mother of Mine* (Finnish: *Äideistä parhain*, 2005) tells the story of a Finnish boy who feels abandoned when his mother sends him to a Swedish foster family during the war. His foster mother is not immediately very welcoming, and his feelings of confusion deepen. The director, Klaus Härö, is a Finnish Swede, and at only 44 he had already had three of his movies submitted to the Best Foreign Film category at the Academy Awards, including *Mother of Mine*.

The Worthless

The aforementioned Aki Kaurismäki has a brother, Mika, who is also a film director, and *The Worthless* (Finnish: *Arvottomat*, 1982) is one of his most celebrated films. He co-wrote it with Aki, who also acted in it, and he won the Finnish Jussi Award for best director. It follows two men and a woman as they drive around Finland, chased by both criminals and the police. The ever-changing setting of the film is a great way to get a sense of what Finland actually looks like.

Frozen Land

One of the better films from this millennium, *Frozen Land* (Finnish: *Paha maa*, 2005) basically tells the opposite of the "pay it forward" idea, with one cruel action after another being transferred from character to character.

It all starts with a fired schoolteacher taking his bad mood out on his teenage son, and then the film follows the chain reaction that ensues. It won eight Finnish Jussi awards, including Best Film and Best Direction, in addition to a number of awards at film festivals across Europe.

The Year of the Hare

In *The Year of the Hare* (Finnish: *Jäniksen vuosi*, 1977), the main character, Vatanen, decides to act on what has probably been an idle dream for many – he quits his corporate job in the city to spend a year in the wilderness of Lapland. He ends up taking care of a hare that had been hit by a car, and the hare becomes his companion. When he has to take the hare to see a vet in the city, he is forced to bring his two lives into conflict. The film was based on a 1975 novel of the same name, and it is still a favourite of many.



TRAVEL

AWESOME WINTER ACTIVITIES TO EXPERIENCE IN FINLAND

SARAH KRISTEN

After experiencing summer in Finland, I fell in love with this European fairytale land. From the fresh berries that can be picked throughout the country to the frequent run in with reindeer in the forests, Finland is a nature lovers haven!

I had an incredible time experiencing the many things that summer in Finland has to offer. I knew I had to return to experience this magical country in the wintertime, and it didn't disappoint! While many of us try to avoid the cold weather and head to somewhere tropical and warm, I urge you to try to embrace winter season in a place that knows how to do it best. There are many reasons to fall in love with winter in Finland, but in this post I'm sharing the many adventurous winter things you can do in the country:

Dog Sledding

If you want to see an excited pup, head on over to Arctic Husky Farm in Luosto. Here, you'll get to meet a pack of about 180 Alaskan and Siberian Huskies who seriously love nothing more than to pull you on a sled. These dogs are born sled dogs and absolutely love to run to the point



that they will whine and cry if they don't get to (they don't run every day as they need to rest some days to stay healthy). There are a few different dog sledding excursions to choose from ranging from a one-kilometre spurt to an over-night adventure.

Reindeer Sleigh Ride

Who says Santa is the only one who gets to be pulled on a sled by reindeer?



At Kopara Reindeer Park, you can go on a Reindeer Sleigh Ride through a winter wonderland. You can also feed the reindeer and learn about the life of a reindeer herder. In Finland, anyone living within the area of Finnish reindeer husbandry who is a citizen of the European Union has the right to own

reindeer. In fact, every reindeer you spot in Finland is owned by someone but is free to roam around Lapland. Yes, it's true. You can own a herd of reindeer just like Santa.

Ice Climbing

If you want to test your physical strength and endurance, try ice climbing. The team at Bliss Adventures will make you feel comfortable and safe,



do it, you can! You'll be surprised at how high you can get. However, I must warn you that it's very possible you'll fall in love with ice climbing like I did. I can't wait to climb again!

Snowmobiling

There's no better (or exciting) way to get around Lapland in the winter than by snowmobile. Lapland Safaris offers snowmobiling tours through the forest and over lakes. All you need is a valid driv-



ers license from your own country, and you're good to go!

Snow Shoeing

No matter how deep the snow is, you can pummel through it with

snowshoes on. Snowshoeing brings winter hiking to a whole other level of awesomeness. If you're lucky enough to be in Lapland during a clear winter night and the Northern Lights are active, I highly encourage you to go on a snowshoeing adventure in search of the Aurora Borealis. Lapland Adventures also offers this duo adventure for those looking to have their mind blown by nature.

Even if you don't a chance to see the Northern Lights, the silence that will bestow you and the breath-taking beauty of the snow draped trees is enough to leave you speechless.

Ice Swimming

There are two ways to go ice swimming in Finland. The first way is to strip down completely and plunge into the ice-cold waters. The second





way is to put on a really goofy outfit that keeps you warm and dry and float in the Baltic Sea. Both options are sure to be memorable.

In Kemi, you can take a cruise on the Gulf of Bothnia on board Sampo, the former ice-breaker for the Finnish government. It's super cool to see this heavy ship break through thick pieces of ice like it's nothing. What's even cooler (but actually not really) is jumping into the ice-cold waters in the middle of the Baltic Sea dressed in warm impermeable survival suit.

Sleep in an Olokolo

Every year since 1996, the Kemi Snow Castle has been rebuilt and attracts locals and tourists from around the world. At the Snow Castle, you can choose to spend the night in one of the snow rooms or in an Olokolo. Both offer quite the unique sleeping situa-

Olokolo. That's what Siya and I chose and we had a great sleep!

These babies are equipped with a heating system, a comfortable mattress and sleeping bags providing you with everything you need for a great sleep. Oh, and it doesn't hurt that you can watch the stars at night and wake up to a sea view in the morning.

Eat at a Snow Castle Restaurant

What's "cooler" than eating at a restaurant located in a castle made of snow and ice? Menu items at the Snow Castle restaurant include an array of soups to keep your insides warm. For your main course feast on local salmon



filled sky but also the Northern Lights from comfort of your own bed. Each igloo comes with a cell phone so that the staff can send you a text when the Northern Lights are active. Each room also comes equipped with its own full washroom as well as Wi-Fi and free parking.

Sauna and Snow Rolling

You cannot visit Finland in the wintertime and not take a sauna and roll in the snow. It's just wrong! The sauna is a substantial part of Finnish culture. For Finnish people, the sauna is a place to relax with friends and family, and a place for physical and mental relaxation as well. Finns think of saunas not as a luxury, but as a necessity. This is a cultural tradition that I can definitely adopt into my life. Now, in the summertime it's typical to take a sauna and jump into a lake. Not too big of a shock, right? But in the wintertime, you can either take a sauna until you're hot and sweaty and then jump into a cold lake or roll in a blanket of fluffy snow. The choice is yours! Both are equally shocking

and perch served with steamed vegetables. You can also have the chance to order the special Blue or Red liquor which is served in an ice glass.

Sleep in a Glass Igloo

If you enjoy seeking out unique accommodations, then you must sleep in a glass igloo while in Northern Finland. The glass igloos at Santa's Hotel Aurora are intended for year-round use so you can enjoy them in both winter and summer. If you're lucky enough to sleep in the igloo on a clear night, you will not only get a chance to see a star



and have equally great health benefits. The benefits from a sauna session alone is great but when you add cold water therapy to the mix, you receive even more benefits including improvements in immunity, mood, sleep, and metabolism.

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LEGAL ADVICE

NEW CHANGES TO THE TIER 1 INVESTOR VISA

MERIAM ALTAF

Since March 2019 it is no longer possible to obtain a visa at £1m investment. While the minimum investment threshold increased to £2m existing investors are still able to extend their visas or apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) subject to the new deadlines.

During the course of 2019 and recently in October, the statement of changes published by the government made a number of further changes significantly impacting investors who applied under the old route. Those investors who applied before 29 March 2019 will not be able to secure ILR beyond new published deadlines unless they make changes to their investment portfolio and/or increase their investment.

The main deadlines are as follows, investors relying on £1m investment will need to file their extension application before 6 April 2020. If they are unable to meet the extension requirements by that deadline, they will need to increase their investment to £2m. However, their right to ILR will start from the beginning, meaning from the date they have received an approval of £2m investment application. Therefore, their previous residence under £1m investment visa will be disregarded.

Those invested prior to March 2019 and relied on government bonds investment potentially might face further complications. Govern-

ment bonds were banned from the list of available investments this year however, applications for extension and ILR are still excepted. Nevertheless, in order to be successful, extension applications must be made prior to 6 April 2023 and ILR applications before 6 April 2025. These deadlines are applicable to government bonds investors and anyone who applied before 29 March 2019.



In addition to the above, the March changes are still in force, mainly that the definition of 'acting and trading' companies is strengthened, so detailed evidence need to be provided to prove that companies are trading in the UK. Applicants will also have to demonstrate a source of funds during the period of 2-years.

The Home Office has a power to refuse an application if they have reasonable grounds to believe that funds were obtained unlawfully.

So what are the most common mistakes made preventing investors to successfully obtain their extension or ILR

applications? One of the issues is excessive absences from the UK in the qualifying period for ILR. Usually investors have other business interests either in their home countries or other parts of the world which require their physical presence, therefore unawareness of 180 days annual limit leads them to refusals in their future applications.

The second common reason for refusal is unsatisfactory evidence of English language. Each application requires a different level of English language, unawareness of this aspect might create unnecessary complications, delays and expenses.

Other issues include failure to pass the Life in the UK test, incorrect portfolio provision and inability to maintain the required level of investment for the certain period of time.

Investors should carefully prepare for their future immigration applications and take into consideration every required detail. As at this stage deadlines posed by the government are very tight and it is very important to meet them so to secure residence and investment in the UK.


Edmans & Co

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