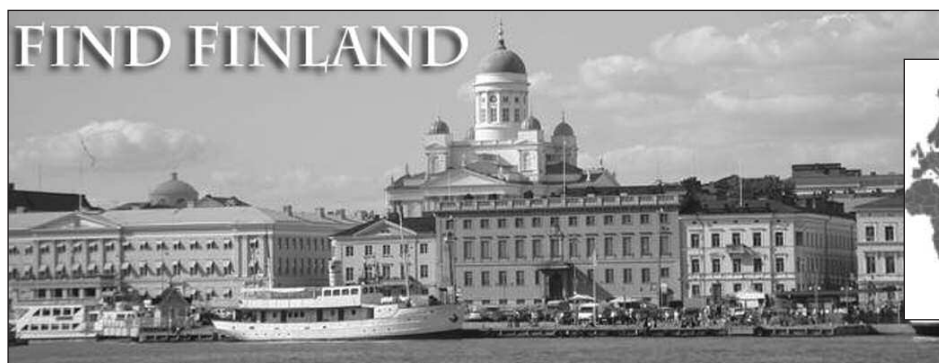
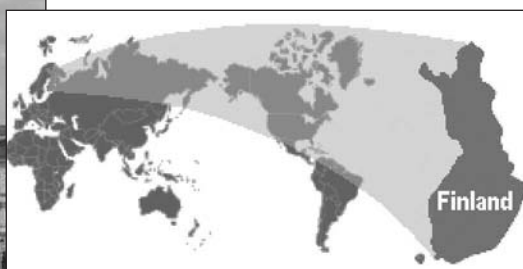


TERVETULOA SUOMEEN! Welcome to Finland!

By EurAuPair Finland Team: Solie Seoudi & Jan Särömaa



Helsinki, the capital of Finland



Map of Finland

Finland! One of the most northern countries in Europe, this distant corner of the world has always excited people's imagination. Home to Santa Claus and his reindeer in Lapland, Finland's culture has always been strongly influenced by the seasons (winter in particular) and nature.

In winter time the Northern Lights, or the aurora borealis, are a luminous natural phenomenon that at times lights up the Arctic sky. Snow also brightens up the landscape in Finland in winter when the hours of daylight are short. In Helsinki, the contrast between the unfrozen sea and fresh, white snow is striking. In spring, hepaticas and wood anemones blossom in the oak groves of Southwestern Finland.

The Midsummer festival is a highlight of the summer that finally makes people stir from the long hibernation. The sun doesn't even set at night! Finns feel happiest when sitting and relaxing on the jetty of their lakeside cottage on a summer evening. Nature is at its best in summer. A sailing trip in the Turku Archipelago, the most extensive archipelago in Europe with its 20,000 islands, offers a stunning experience!

After summer, when the autumn colors the whole scenery of Finland, you can see huge flocks of cranes or large swans flying across corn fields. They will return to Finland early the following summer, as will many Finnish expatriates, because nothing can beat the wonderful Finnish summer.

The people who live in the land of winter, snow and endless summer nights are often described to be quiet and even shy, but once you get to know a Finn, you'll find a friendly, honest and warm personality underneath the calm surface! Finns regard themselves as equals, respecting each other and democracy. Finns show consideration for other people and prefer not to be judgmental. In the sparsely populated country, the silence is almost tangible. Finns also respect the home by taking their shoes off indoors.

Finns are also very proud of their strong and independent women. Women in Finland were the first in the world to exercise their democratic right to vote and also stand for election. Nowadays, not only do most Finnish women work outside the home, but they do so full-time and have managed to combine work and family successfully. In the campaign for the presidential election in 2000 four of the candidates were women and three were men. The winning candidate was the then foreign minister Tarja Halonen, who thus became Finland's first woman President. As head of state, she has attained an extremely high approval rating among the Finnish public, across party boundaries.

Even though Finns are usually thought of as a homogenous nation, dis-

tinctions between the different tribes do exist. By tradition, we think of ourselves as belonging to one of four tribes, Pohjola, Savo, Karelia and Häme. People of Pohjola have made their way into the history books as being straightforward, but also pugnacious. They also are remembered as indefatigable warriors in the winter war. People from Savo are shrewd, quick and playful – words often used to describe a talented salesperson. As tellers of stories, they are beyond compare. People of Karelia are open and friendly. Their relaxed take on life defines the Karelian character and sense of humour. The southern Finnish tribes of Häme are usually thought of as slow and taciturn.

One word very dear and characteristic of Finnish people is the term, *sisu*. The harsh conditions of Finland have made Finns tough and unyielding. This attitude is called *sisu* (a combination of grit and guts). *Sisu* contains all of the power and strength that enabled farmers to turn forest into fields, felling tree after tree, shifting stone after stone. It also contains the untold suffering of the years of war when Finnish men were forced to fight as soldiers in the service of different masters, and the women had to take care of both the farming and the children. Even now, although the living conditions are quite high, *sisu* remains something that makes a Finn go through thick and thin.

It is not possible to talk about Finland without mentioning the sauna! Sauna is not just the only Finnish word to have entered the world vocabulary – it's a ritual, an institution, an essential element of the Finnish way of life. It can also be very relaxing, exhilarating and enjoyable, and no visit to Finland is complete without sampling the sauna. The Finnish sauna has its own unique character and traditions. Although it was



Traditional sauna by lake

once at the very heart of rural Finland, serving as a focus for family and community, these days the sauna is a common luxury, with about 1.6 saunas for every Finn!

A glint may appear in the eye of your Finnish host at the mention of the sauna, but you can attribute this to an

eagerness to share this most Finnish of experiences rather than to any evil intent. And if the idea of sitting naked in a heated chamber doesn't sound like your idea of a good time, you are likely to be pleasantly surprised.

While it is known as a land of vast wilderness areas, white snow and beautiful scenery, Finland is also so much more than just nature. Finns are very proud of their modern welfare state and describe themselves to be a silent, but strong nation with friendly and genuine people. So why not host a Finnish au pair today? They are eager to become a part of your family and share a little of the Finnish way of life with you!

FACTS

Total area: Seventh largest country in Europe; 338,145 square kilometers

Land frontiers: 586 km with Sweden, 727 km with Norway, 1,269 km with Russia

Coastline: 1100 km

Population: 5.2 million

Languages: Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish; the latter is the mother tongue of about 6% of the population.

Population density: approx. 17 inhabitants per square kilometer

Capital: Helsinki, pop. 560,000; the metropolitan area including the neighbouring towns of Espoo, Kauniainen and Vantaa has a population of 965,000.

Major cities: Tampere, pop. 197,000; Turku pop. 173,000; Oulu pop. 131,000

Religion: 89% Lutheran and about 1% Orthodox

DID YOU KNOW?

Finland Has:

- 1.8 Million Saunas - (approx. 500 are traditional smoke saunas)
- 180,000 Islands
- 230,000 Reindeer
- 100,000 Salmon
- 188,000 Lakes - (accounts for 10% of the total area)
- 465,000 Summer Cottages
- 35 National Parks
- 5.2 Million Mobile Phones - (Nokia is a Finnish brand)
- and 1 Santa Claus - (the real one!)

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About Us...

EurAuPair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges".

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Ask Dot!



A regular feature of the EurAupair Gazette, Dear Dot! gives EurAupair Au Pairs and Host Families the chance to get answers to questions about proper etiquette in the USA! Ms. Soskin is a trained etiquette instructor and columnist, as well as one of EurAupair's longtime friends.

Tips on Responding to Invitations



This time I would like to discuss the au pairs response to invitations from host parents, counselors and others as I have had various comments, mostly negative, about such entertaining.

In America, you must respond to invitations that ask you to (RSVP which stands for "Repondez s'il vous plait," or "please respond.") This basic, practical courtesy will never be out of date as a hostess will always need to know how many people are coming to their party.

Even if the invitation does not include the RSVP, it would be a good idea to let your hostess know that you have received the invitation. This is very important as the hostess might be buying food and drink and it is very disappointing when few guests show up.

Do not bring extra friends without permission. In addition, being on time is very important and shows respect.

When at such an event, it is important to speak English and not your native language, excluding other au pairs and hostesses.

I might also add that maybe a few au pairs together could bring a little bouquet of flowers or candy to the hostess.

Last, but not least, a thank-you note would be your finishing touch!

Kind Regards,
Dot

Keep the questions coming...

E-mail Dot at:

d1manners@sbc-global.net

EurAupair Au Pairs Carve Up Some Halloween Fun!



Above from left to right: Jessica Roy (Canada), Stephanie Roy (Canada), Sandy Boedec (France), Claudette Jansen Van Vuuren (South Africa), Lisa Galinier (France), Johanna Pfeiffer (Germany).



Above from left to right: Julie Merkel (Germany), Antje Heideroth (Germany), Stephanie Franke (Germany), Katrin Karschat (Germany), Claudia Rahm (Germany), Linda Sorensen (Denmark).

Each October, longtime EurAupair Community Counselor, Marie-Luise Vaughn, holds annual Denver EurAupair Pumpkin Carving event and this year's event proved to be as fun as ever. With temperatures reaching close to a "Rocky Mountain High" of nearly 80 degrees (26 centigrade), the group had loads of fun learning this very American tradition!

Funny stories and lots of laughs were exchanged, as prizes were handed out to the au pairs for their creativity and carving skills. Au pair Stephanie, along with her sister, Jessica, visiting from Quebec, Canada, combined their talents to create a real team masterpiece!

Thanks, Marie-Luise, for sharing this fun fall story and photo with The Gazette!



From left to right: Delphine Plault (France), Lisa Kuhn (Germany), Mally Bernard, (France), Marine Bagnaud (France), Karoline Dietz (Germany), Talita Fahel (Brazil), Olga Hildebrand (Germany), Diana Schmidt (Germany) Pictured center, Cole Clark (3).

At right, from left to right: Emmanuelle Diallo (France), Hsuan-Chen Su (Taiwan), Maija Harlula (Finland), Vicente (friend).



EURAUPAIR AU PAIR REACHES NEW HEIGHTS IN COLORADO!

When EurAupair Au Pair Stefanie Franke (Germany), first arrived to her EurAupair Host Family, the LaChances in Colorado Springs, Colorado, she didn't like mountains much, but that's all changed now!

Stefanie writes:

"I started to do a lot of hiking to get used to the high altitude, since Colorado is, on average, one mile (1.6km) above sea level. And, I had a goal for my stay here - to hike Pikes Peak! Pikes Peak is one of the 54 "fourteeners" (mountains over 14,000 ft high, that's 4 km!) in Colorado.

After four months of practicing, my friends and I were ready for the adventure! Maida (Bosnia), Nicci (Sweden) and I got started August 30th at 10 am in Manitou Springs. It was very hot outside and the sun was burning. We tried to take as few breaks as possible, as we wanted to reach Barr Camp (the halfway point) before afternoon thunderstorms hit, but we couldn't help it because the scenery was just gorgeous, so we stopped a lot to take pictures.

Sure enough, about one mile before we reached the camp, a big thunderstorm started forming above our heads, and getting caught in one while in the mountains is absolutely not nice! So, we were hurrying to reach the camp in time, as it started hailing and thundering really bad. Neil and Theresa, the caretakers of the camp greeted us with a friendly welcome, and we hung our clothes to dry and were given some nice hot soup. (Respect to the work of the caretakers: they do rescue missions in the worst weather and run this great camp all alone!)

After the storm was over, we pitched our tent and chatted to some other hikers we met there. Before we went to bed (around 6pm), I had to store our food "bear safe" in a tree, and yes, I had to climb it. I couldn't sleep very well that night, the excitement for the next day and some weird animal running around outside of our tent drove me nuts!



EurAupair au pair Stefanie Franke (Germany) and her friends Nicci (Sweden) and Maida (Bosnia) getting started.

We started at 4 am the next day, to see the sunrise at the A-Frame at the timberline. With our headlamps on, we headed to the summit. It was very dark so we were afraid of mountain lions. Every little noise stopped us, but we reached the timberline in perfect time to see the gorgeous sunrise. Wooooo... it was one of the prettiest things I've ever seen! It was so very cold up there, it was unbelievable! A hiker we met the day before was already there and offered us some hot coffee, just as if he was expecting us! Just two more miles to go... two very torturing miles!

Almost there, a part called "16 Golden Stairs" was the final half mile. The altitude and the steepness was the last part of an exhausting adventure. Finally, at 10 am, we reached the summit, after 12.6 miles, and we were happy! It is just amazing, how nice

it is up there! So quiet with amazing views of the Great Plains and you can see and hear marmots everywhere. We enjoyed the great views, drank hot chocolate at the summit house and were happy to see some hikers from the day before again. Since it was cold up there, we enjoyed some shafts of sunlight and then started our decent.

The way down was not that hard and it was fun to see everybody heading up while we were going down. We said goodbye to Neil and Theresa from the camp and reached Manitou Springs on August the 31st at 5 pm. After 25 miles, we finally hiked our first *Fourteener* and it was an amazing experience. I encourage everybody to try it out. I will definitely do it again!"

A BIG EurAupair Congratulations to au pair Stefanie and her friends Maida and Nicci!



At the top, the 3 friends take a well-deserved rest!

EurAupair Au Pairs See the World from St. Louis, Missouri!

EurAupair Au Pairs and Area Coordinator Nancy Caughlin saw the world this summer without even leaving their host community of St. Louis, Missouri! The group spent the hot August day taking in everything that The Festival of Nations had to offer. And there was plenty to take in! From food to music to dance to clothing, there was something for everyone!

EurAupair au pairs, Vanessa Kretschmar and Kristina Aygun got together to tell us a little bit about this very international day! "As there was so much to experience, we spent more than five hours to listen to traditional music and songs in Folk Grove," writes Kristina. "Danced and swung with traditional ethnic artists at the Forest Stage and listened to some of the world music favorites at the World Music Stage."

For Vanessa, however, it was the

food that held her interest. "Every country offered good plain cooking. I was interested to see what Germany would offer because I couldn't imagine... They offered potato pancakes and grilled sausages and that makes sense!"

For many in the group, some decisions proved too difficult. "We hardly could decide if we get the Bosnian baklava, the Turkish Doener or some of the Brazilian feijoada," writes Kristina. "At last, we tried a bit from everything!"

Both au pairs agreed that "despite the fact that it was more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 centigrade), it was definitely worth going!"

Thank you to Vanessa and Kristina for writing in with this international story!



Liisi Eenmaa (Estonia), Ana Carolina Romanelli (Brazil), Helen Runge (Germany), Vanessa Kretschmar (Germany) and Community Counselor Toni Braun.

Nina Lange (Germany - visiting her old host family and counselor), Mocca Hafner (Germany - visiting her old host family and counselor), Isabell Blender (Germany), Dorthe Lund (Denmark), Alina Leippert (Germany), Marit Kaiser (Germany), and Nadine Kuehn (Germany).



Pass the Ketchup - It's Barbeque Time!

EurAupair Community Counselor, Barbara Salzmann-Hogberg, fired up the grill for local au pairs in Wheaton, Illinois this past August. The group enjoyed a typical American barbecue with Barbara providing the grilled items and the au pairs bringing side dishes and desserts for this fun summer meeting!

And, back East in Falls Church, Virginia, EurAupair Community Counselor, Shannon Katz Diaz, had a combination farewell and welcome barbecue for a couple of German au pairs. "It had been raining all day, but stopped for a few hours to let us enjoy the August evening outside even though it threatened to rain throughout the meeting," writes Shannon. "We had a BBQ to celebrate Ramona's last meeting and Olga's first meeting!"



Above from middle left to right: Tik (a friend from Thailand), Karen Johannmeyer, Lisa Abraham (both Germany), Gabriela and Luana Monforte (Brazil), Natalie Schramm (Germany), Cecile Tauveron (France), EurAupair Community Counselor Barbara Salzmann-Hogberg, Nina Bustiuc (Moldova), Deliana Ocampo (Bolivia) and Gulcan Amak (Germany)



*Seated from left to right: Ramona Schulz, Sabrina Seitz, Olga Hess
Standing from left to right: Verena Weigert & Barbara Zeigler (all from Germany)*

Chicago-Land EurAupair Community Counselors Going "The Extra Mile!"

EurAupair Area Coordinator, Vivi Frumkin, wrote in to share September's group event, as well as give a preview for what's coming up this winter!

The massive group of 85 EurAupair Au Pairs and Community Counselors from both Illinois and Michigan boarded the Mystic Blue for a beautiful two hour cruise around Lake Michigan on a beautiful September afternoon.

Indeed, EurAupair Community Counselor Chris Merrill who organized the event couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day with plenty of blue skies and sunshine! With Chris providing nametags including the flag of each person's home country, no one had any problem mixing and mingling on the water!

Vivi goes on to write:

"The cruise took us out on Lake Michigan, served us a scrumptious lunch (chicken, beef, seafood, pasta, vegetables and more) followed by a dessert buffet which was chocolate, chocolate, more chocolate and carrot cake!

Some of the au pairs were brave souls and danced to the music the DJ played. Everybody had a marvelous time!

Other events coming up in our area? November has all the local EurAupair Community Counselors chipping in to make sure the Annual Chicago-land Thanksgiving Feast becomes a fun happening! And, in

January, EurAupair Community Counselor Barbara Hogberg will organize going to a Chicago Bulls Game for everybody!

These large group meetings give the Au Pairs a chance to feel part of a large organization, meet au pairs they saw in the New York City Workshop and make new friends.

As the Area Coordinator, I am lucky to have Community Counselors who go the extra mile!"

*All the Best from the Midwest,
Vivi Frumkin
EurAupair Area Coordinator*



EurAupair Au Pairs finding the best seat for the cruise!



Left front to back: Amelie Castre (France), Corinna Vogels (Germany), Pimjinut Kuunfert (Thailand), right front to back: Angelique Noury (France), Rabea Berghaeuer (Germany), Leticia Arlandes (France)



Chicago skyline in all its glory!

Coming Full Circle as a EurAupair Community Counselor!

When I applied for the EurAupair program nine years ago, I had no idea how much I would learn about the American way of living and myself. I had no way of knowing how I would be exposed to the variety of cultures and customs, as well as gain so many valuable friendships and memories.

Being a EurAupair Au Pair made me an even stronger, more driven and independent woman. Shortly after I completed the program, I returned to Germany. After spending some time back home, I decided to return to America. Through a lot of hard work, sacrifice, and tears from being thousands of miles away from my family, I finally established a living and lifestyle in the USA. Today, I live in St. Louis, Missouri, have a great career and recently completed my Bachelor's degree in Business Management.

Now, my EurAupair life has come full circle and it is my turn to give back to the community. Having become a EurAupair

Community Counselor, I want to help young, energetic, and adventurous au pairs explore the world and have the best time of their lives in the United States of America!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has made this amazing experience possible for me.

Thank you, EuAupair, for allowing young, enthusiastic individuals combine their love for children with their desire to explore new cultures;

Thank you, Mom, for understanding and letting me go;

Thank you, Groce Family, for taking me into your home and introducing me to your country;

Thank you, Nancy Coughlin, for supporting me during my stay in St. Louis, Missouri.

*Sincerely,
Karin E. Giese*

EurAupair Alum and Community Counselor



EurAupair Community Counselor Karin Giese smiles for the camera.

EurAupair Au Pairs in New Jersey Strike Fun on Bowling Outing!



Pictured left to right: Diana Selck (Germany), Stefanie Salm (Germany), Candy (friend), Simone Paluschka (Germany), Daniel (friend).

Photo submitted by Community Counselor Marita Falconer

EurAupair Au Pair, Julia Schulze, Not Afraid of Getting Her Hands (and Face!) a Little Dirty!

EurAupair Host Mom, Maria Kost, of Chicago, Illinois sent in this adorable photo of her newly arrived au pair, Julia Schulze (Germany) with her two sons, Lucas (left) & Logan (right). Julia had no problem getting down and dirty with her two new host brothers and so, in spirit of the Renaissance Faire Mud Show, they reenacted the mud show in their backyard!



FLORIDA AU PAIRS GET A BIT OF A HISTORY LESSON!



From left to right: Anastasia (friend), Miriam Milhouse (Germany), Lita Orellana (Bolivia) and EurAupair Community Counselor LauraWood.

EurAupair Community Counselor, Laura Wood of Orlando, Florida wrote in to share with the Gazette the latest outing with her local EurAupair Au Pairs.

The group went to the Museum of Seminole County History, located in Sanford, Florida. As the group toured

the rooms, they learned a lot about the building itself. For example, the museum is housed in a building the locals called "the County Home." The only "Old Folks Home" still in existence in Florida, this one of a kind building was constructed in 1926 when the county was only 12 years old!

The group all agreed that the dress for that time period was most uncomfortable and impractical for the Florida weather! They also learned that each resident had a private room, but all shared chores and activities that established a family atmosphere. A large orange grove provided some income, and a vegetable garden, chickens and dairy cows helped to make the home almost self-sufficient.

Laura and the au pairs noted that although it was a rest home open to all people, it was really geared toward the poor. In addition, there were separate living quarters and separate eating rooms for Anglo and African-Americans. They were not allowed to mingle. This was an eye opener for everyone in the group!

The museum itself had several rooms with many artifacts, clothing, and dishes of the period. One room in particular included the story and items associated with the celery culture prominent in Seminole County during the 1950's. Sanford's nickname was once "The Celery City."

Thanks to Laura, everyone in the group enjoyed learning a bit more about the local history and culture!

EurAupair Au Pairs Get an Eyeful at the Laumeier Sculpture Park!



Toni Braun who has just recently joined up as a EurAupair Community Counselor is wasting no time in organizing fun events for au pairs in St. Louis, Missouri area!

This October, St. Louis au pairs, their host families, and community counselors all met at Laumeier Sculpture Park for a day of food, fun, and culture.

Toni writes:

"It was a beautiful day to walk outside and view the sculptures spread throughout the grounds. We met on a covered patio and had a picnic lunch together. Several new au pairs and community counselors were able to meet with others for the first time at this event which made it even more unique. The children enjoyed the fresh air, sunshine and open play area as well. It was easy to see why this is well on its way to becoming an annual event!"

Under a watchful eye, St. Louis au pairs, host families and Community Counselors enjoy a great EurAupair event!

RAIN OR SHINE EURAUPAIR AU PAIRS GET TOGETHER!

Colorado au pairs from Evergreen to Boulder and everywhere in between met in Parker, Colorado on Saturday morning, August 16th for the most important meal of the day – breakfast!

With several inches of rain, it made for a very wet day. Nonetheless, everyone arrived safely to enjoy great food and conversation. It was a real mix of au pairs, with some arriving just the night before to start their year, while others were attending their last meeting before returning home.

A big EurAupair "thank you" to EurAupair Community Counselor Joyce Jones and Area Coordinator Kathryn Troy who organized the event!



Gazette Info...

The EurAupair Gazette is published four times a year. It is provided free of charge to EurAupair Host Families, EurAupair Au Pairs, EurAupair Community Counselors and staff, and friends of the EurAupair program around the world. Any copyright material is published with the written permission of the publisher and is so indicated. Any other material may be used for publication without permission of EurAupair.

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- WHEN
- WHAT
- WHERE

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We'll take it from there!

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