

Finland History

Finland is a Nordic country in Northern Europe bordering the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, and Gulf of Finland, between Sweden to the west, Russia to the east, Estonia to the south, and north-eastern Norway to the north. The capital and largest city is Helsinki. Finland is the eighth-largest country in Europe and the most sparsely populated country in the European Union.

Finland's population is 5.52 million as of July 2019, the majority of whom live in the central and south of the country and speak Finnish, a language unrelated to the Scandinavian languages. Swedish is the second official language of Finland, which is mainly spoken in certain coastal areas and on Åland. A large majority of Finns are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Finland was inhabited when the last ice age ended, approximately 9000 BC. Comb Ceramic culture introduced pottery 5200 BC and Corded Ware culture coincided with the start of agriculture between 3000 and 2500 BC. The Bronze Age and Iron Age were characterized by extensive contacts with other cultures in the Fennoscandian and Baltic regions. At the time Finland had three main cultural areas – Southwest Finland, Tavastia and Karelia. From the late 13th century, Finland gradually became an integral part of Sweden through the Northern Crusades and the Swedish part-colonization of coastal Finland, a legacy reflected in the prevalence of the Swedish language and its official status.

In 1809, Finland was incorporated into the Russian Empire as the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. In 1906, Finland became the first European state to grant all adult citizens the right to vote, and the first in the world to give all adult citizens the right to run for public office. Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared itself independent. In 1918, the fledgling state was divided by civil war, with the Bolshevik-leaning Red Guard, supported by Soviet Russia, fighting the White Guard, supported by the German Empire. After a brief attempt to establish a kingdom, the country became a republic. During World War II, Finland



fought the Soviet Union in the Winter War and the Continuation War and lost some land but maintained independence.

Finland remained largely an agrarian country until the 1950s. After World War II, the war reparations demanded by the Soviet Union forced Finland to industrialize. The country rapidly developed an advanced economy while building an extensive welfare state based on the Nordic model, resulting in widespread prosperity and a high per capita income. Finland is a top performer in numerous metrics of national performance, including education, economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life, and human development. It also ranked first on the World Happiness Report report for 2018 and 2019.



Finland joined the United Nations in 1955 and adopted an official policy of neutrality.

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