



# A GUIDE TO SOUTH KARELIA AND FINLAND

Saimaa Vocational College Sampo

Photo: Laura Kaarna



# Hei! Tervetuloa!

Welcome to Finland, South Karelia and Sampo!

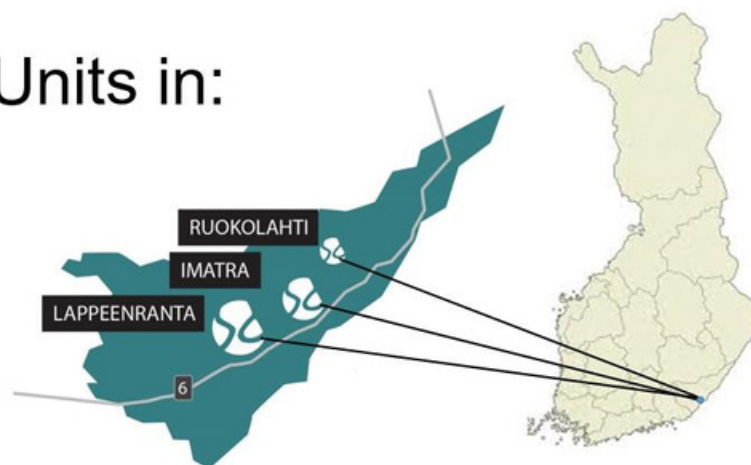
This package is made for the students and visitors, who will come to Saimaa Vocational College Sampo for their internship. Hereby you get a small package of information that will help you in your first steps before arriving and during your stay here.

We will try to satisfy your needs in the best way, but we also expect a respectful attitude from your part. Take the time to get used to your new home, to your new job and to people you will get to know here in Finland.

We hope that you will read this carefully because this is made to ease your stay.

Finland and South Karelia

Units in:



## ARRIVAL

Please, inform your contact person at Sampo of your arrival as soon as you know:

- o dates
- o arrival time and
- o how will you travel (by train, by bus).

We need this information to arrange your pick-up and to bring you to your flat. We need to know where and when to pick you up. The easiest way to get to Finland and Imatra/Lappeenranta is to fly to Helsinki airport. From the Helsinki airport take the circle train to Tikkurila railway station. From there on take a long distance train to Lappeenranta or to Imatra, depends where you heading to. Buy the train ticket beforehand; from airport to your destination (Lappeenranta/Imatra). That way it will be cheaper. VR is the sole provider of train travel in Finland. You can buy tickets from their website.

Lappeenranta



Photo: Otto Karikoski

Imatra



### Train tickets:

<https://www.vr.fi/cs/vr/en/frontpage>

### Bus tickets:

<https://matkahuolto.fi/en/>

<http://www.onnibus.com/en/index.htm>

<https://www.savonlinja.fi/en/routes-finland/>

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN LAPPEENRANTA

You can check the local bus timetables and routes from Digitransit (<https://lappeenranta.digitransit.fi/?locale=en>). Bus tickets can be bought from the bus driver either with cash or card. You can also find city bicycles and electric scooters in Lappeenranta city area. Taxi company Taksi Saimaa's phone number: +358 200 60 400.



Bus routes in Lappeenranta

### Tip!

You can find maps and different brochures about Lappeenranta from the town hall. Same thing in Imatra.



Lappeenranta town hall. Photo: Lappeenranta.kuvat.fi

### Public transport in Lappeenranta and Imatra:

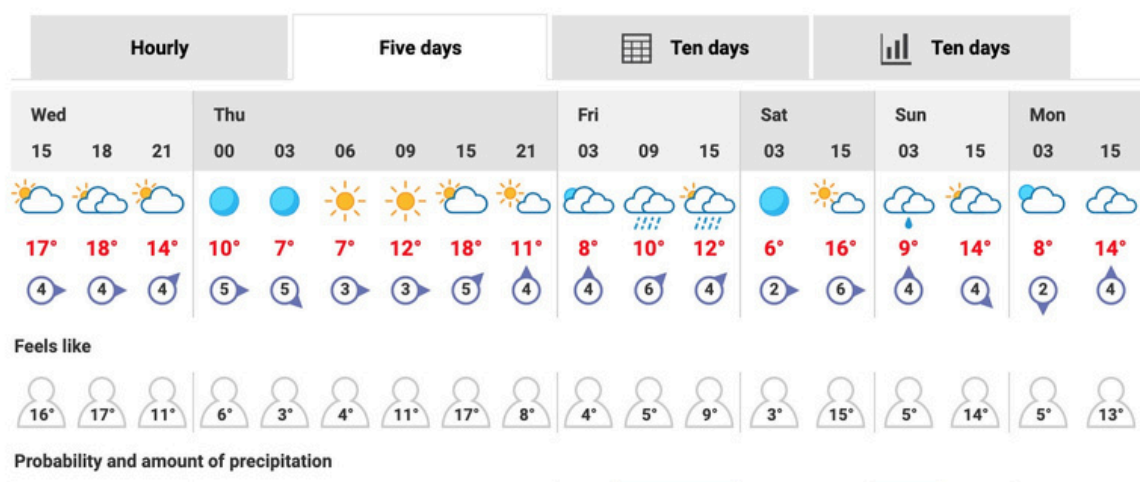
<https://www.lappeenranta.fi/en/Maps-and-transport/Public-Transport>

<https://www.imatra.fi/joukkoliikenne>

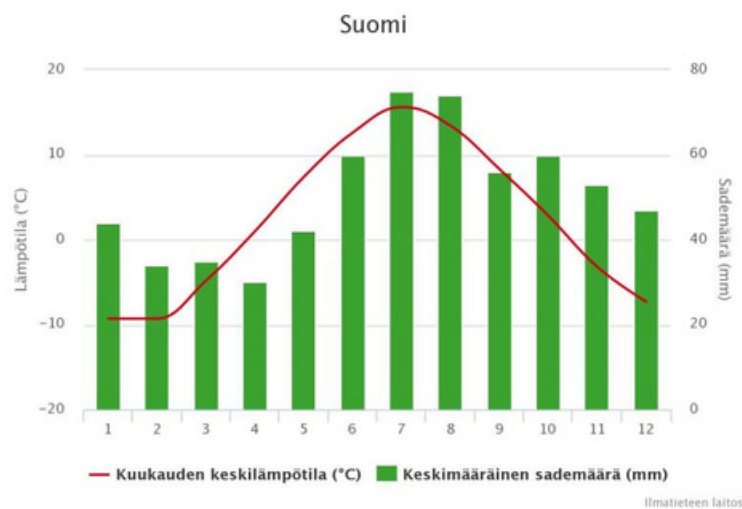
## CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

Most of Finland is situated in the subarctic climate which is characterized by warm summers and freezing winters. Summer lasts from late May to mid-September, during winter snow covers the land from late November to April. To have snow about half a meter is a normal situation in this part of Finland in wintertime. You get a good idea of climate in Finland by watching videos from [VisitFinland's Youtube channel](#).

### Weather forecast Lappeenranta



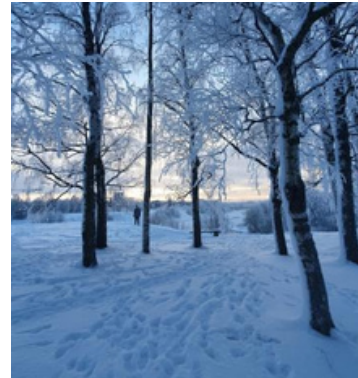
A typical weather during spring and autumn. It rains in Finland throughout the whole year, but temperatures are usually around +20°C from late May to early-September.



The average temperature throughout the year (red line) and rain in millimetres per month (greenbars).

Day temperatures in January-February may be under  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ , in March and sometimes even in April  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Naturally, at night it can be colder, which means that in the morning, when you go to work, it might be quite chilly. Especially in April, day temperatures rise rapidly and ground gets wet by melting snow. You need good winter jacket as well as gloves, a good winter cap/a beanie and suitable shoes, too.

The two opposites:  
summer and winter



Photos: Laura Kaarna

You can find a real-time weather forecast here:

Weather in Lappeenranta

(<https://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/weather/lappeenranta>)

Weather in Imatra (<https://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/weather/Imatra>)

## ACCOMMODATION

Recommended arrangements for an accommodation are hotels, guest houses, Airbnb or private housing. Local student housing company LOAS rents affordable apartments for students around Lappeenranta.

<https://www.loas.fi/>

## FREE TIME AND ACTIVITIES IN LAPPEENRANTA

- Lappeenranta Fortress
  - o History and cultural heritage since the Swedish and Russian occupations: try the fortress' virtual guide!
- Museums
  - o South Karelia Museum, Lappeenranta Art Museum, Wolkoff House Museum, Cavalry Museum etc.
- Parks
  - o Church Park, Kasino Park, Kissing Park, Arboretum
- Harbour
  - o Lots of events such as fairs, live music etc.
  - o Here you can try the local delicacy, vety ("hydrogen") and atomi ("atom"), the traditional Finnish meat pies that are filled with boiled eggs and/or ham and condiments.
- The Saimaa Canal cruises (during summer months)
- Water Tower (open during summer months)
  - o Great view of the town!
- Rakuunmäki
  - o Historical red-brick army barracks
  - o Restaurants, brewery
- Myllysaari beach area
  - o Swimming arena, outdoor sports activities
- Movie theaters Finnkino and Nuijamies (also cultural events)
- Lappeenranta city theater and Lappeenranta city library in shopping centre Iso Kristiina
- Hiking: you can spend few hours hiking in the areas around the city and enjoy the lake views. This region provides an excellent variety of routes for adventures. (More about hiking: <https://www.visitlappeenranta.fi/en/Themes/Lappeenranta-for-hikers>)

## FREE TIME AND ACTIVITIES IN IMATRA

- Culture house Virta
  - o Concerts, stand-up comedy, musicals etc.
  - o Library
- Museums
  - o Industrial Worker's Housing Museum, City Museum, Corridor Gallery
- Imatra city theater and movie theater Bio Vuoksi
- Sports
  - o Lots of great outdoor sports facilities for hiking and skiing, as well as tennis, padel and disc golf courts
  - o Ukkonniemi Stadium and sports field, Imatra ice hall
- The Imatra Rapids
  - o Famous tourist attraction since 1700s
  - o Great views and daily shows of opening the dam during summer months, Christmas and New Years Eve
  - o Hiking trails along the rapids
  - o The historical Imatran Valtionhotelli, a castle-like hotel, is situated next to the rapids



More information:

Sights in Lappeenranta (<https://www.visitlappeenranta.fi/en>)

Sights in Imatra (<https://www.imatra.fi/en/culture-and-exercise>)



## RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS

There are many restaurants in Lappeenranta where you can experience Finnish cuisine, such as Wolkoff, Nuotta and Sumu. You can find more information about the city's restaurants services from here: <https://www.visitlapeenranta.fi/en/Eat--Drink>

You can also enjoy vegan dishes at most of the restaurants at affordable prices. For example, Viet Bao Ravintola can be a good choice for vegetarians. More information about this restaurant: <https://vietbao.fi/>

The coffee shops are quite popular in Lappeenranta to sip over a cup of hot or iced coffee if you want to take break during the city tour. Moreover, these places can also be your primary choice if you want to work on your projects quietly with coffee. Popular cafes include Satamatie 6, Espresso House, Kahvila Luovuus, Konditoria kahvila Aleksandra and Majurska.

Imatra offers a diverse culinary scene of both local traditions and international influences. There are good options for both fine dining and more affordable restaurant. Don't forget to check the outside terraces near Imatra rapids in summertime.

Some notable restaurants in Imatra:

- Butschenhoff Restaurant: A fine dining establishment known for its elegant atmosphere and gourmet cuisine.
- Rosso Imatra: Part of a popular Finnish restaurant chain, Rosso serves Italian-inspired dishes.
- Ravintola Imatran Valtionhotelli: Located in the historic State Hotel, this restaurant provides a unique dining experience with a menu that blends Finnish classics with modern cuisine.
- Konditoria Imatrankoski: Café and bakery offering freshly baked pastries, cakes, and light lunches.
- You can also find information about restaurants in Imatra here: <https://gosaimaa.com/en/plan-your-holiday/restaurants/>



## FINNISH CULTURE AND OTHER REMARKS

Punctuality: In the Finnish working life, people are very punctual. So, in order to avoid unpleasant feelings, be always rather three minutes too early than 45 seconds too late. This should be also in your free time when you have appointments with your new friends.

Formality: Finns are quite informal when they speak to each other. You will soon notice, that you should not call your colleagues Mr./Ms. somebody, but by their first names. However, it is always polite to speak to an old person/somebody in a very high position formally. General we always call each other by our first names. E.g., you may always speak to teacher by using his/her first name, so do our own students too.

Finns might not be very talkative all the time. That is in our nature and we do not mean any harm by it or mean to be impolite.

Salutation: It is common to shake hands when persons meet the first time. For young people it is very typical to hug friends, but not for all the people. Finns are a bit reserved persons when it comes to meeting new people.

Door locks: Remember always to carry your apartment key with you. In Finland, we use such locks, which will lock the door automatically. This rule of carrying your key is valid actually everywhere, also at work. If your key will be lost or you forget it in your apartment, there is normally a door opening service available by phone, but the charge is easily 70-80 euros per case.



Shoes: when going for a visit: When Finnish person/family invites you for a visit, leave your shoes at the entry, when you go in. Probably you can see other shoes that already are there - you should leave yours there, too.

Shopping: Supermarkets are usually open until 21.00 pm, also on Sundays. Special stores and shops are usually open until 18.00 (19.00) Mon - Sat.

Water in the tap is drinkable. Actually, it is the best water in the world!

Local tutors: We always try to arrange our student(s) to be tutor(s) for our foreign visitors. Please, be also active by yourself in being in contact with him/her/them after the first meeting. If you are active by yourself, you will soon recognize Finns to be warm and friendly people. Many interns that were here have witnessed this

Free time: If you have some wishes in forehand or while staying in Finland, please let us know. We try to arrange program for you.

Saimaa Vocational College Sampo is nonsmoking college.

Finnish language: Learn some Finnish on web!  
(<https://www.kielibuusti.fi/en/learn-finnish/learning-materials-and-courses/find-online-learning-materials#/>)



Lappeenranta shopping mall IsoKristiina. Photo: Tuomas Vitikainen

Links to other pages in which you may find some facts about Finland and the area you will be staying:

[www.visitfinland.com](http://www.visitfinland.com)

Finland in facts (<https://finland.fi/facts-stats-and-info/finland-in-facts-2/>)

[www.lappeenranta.fi](http://www.lappeenranta.fi)



Photo: Laura Kaarna

We hope you have a wonderful stay in Sampo and Finland!

# Hyvää matkaa!

