

# Planning your elective: Finland

Mark Wilson gives you the low down on planning your elective in Finland

**S**ituated right in the north of Europe, Finland reaches up into the Arctic Circle. It has some beautiful countryside, great if you like walking, although the cost of living is quite expensive.

## Health care in Finland

Finland has a sound healthcare policy, the remit of which is to constantly improve both the standard and distribution of healthcare. The healthcare system is run by health authorities through 21 hospital districts. Healthcare costs are met through taxation (75%), by direct payment from patients (21%), and from the state sickness insurance, which is funded by local employers (4%). There are 450 municipalities for primary care and the country is divided into 20 regions providing hospital care. There are five university hospitals.

The facilities in many hospitals are better than those in many other parts of Europe. Despite this, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases are still the big causes of mortality. Interestingly, male life expectancy is low for Europe although women have an above average life expectancy. Violent deaths—suicides, traffic accidents, and so on—occur more frequently in Finland than the rest of Europe, but cancers are below the expected level.

## Visas

Nationals of the European Union do not require a visa for a three month stay. Technically, students should obtain a residence permit, although some elective students have not found this necessary.

The National Board of Medicolegal Affairs (TEO) is the competent body that recognises all health care professionals qualifications. They have a great deal of information on their website.

**Mark Wilson** author of *The Medic's Guide to Work and Electives around the World*  
Mark@medicstravel.com

## Useful addresses

Finnish Embassy in London, 38 Chesham Place, London SW1X 7JT (tel 020 7838 6200; fax 020 7235 3680; email sanomat.lon@formin.fi; ww.finemb.org.uk)  
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, PO Box 267, 4-6 Snellmaninkatu, Helsinki 0017  
National Board of Medicolegal Affairs (TEO), Lintulahdenkatu 10, PO Box 265, FIN 00 531, Helsinki (tel +358 9 772 920; fax +358 9 772 921; www.teo.fi)



Suomenlinna island fortress, Helsinki

VALLAS/REX

## Medical schools and the main hospitals

There are five universities with medical schools that tend to deal with the more specialised treatments.

University of Helsinki, PO Box 33 (Yliopistonkatu 4), FIN 00 014 University of Helsinki, Finland (tel +358 9 1912 2177; fax 9 1912 2176; www.helsinki.fi). This uses the Helsinki University Central Hospital, Stenbackinpratu 9, Helsinki.

University of Kuopio, PO Box 1627, FIN 70 211 Kuopio, Finland (tel 17 16 2042; fax 17 16 3496; www.uku.fi). This uses Kuopio University Hospital, Puijon Laaksontie 2, Kuopio 70 210 (tel +358 71 173 311; fax +358 71 172 611). This is one of the largest providers of healthcare in Finland having 1000 beds. It has specialist burns, heart, and hand surgery units.

University of Oulu, PO Box 191 (Kirkkokatu 11A), FIN 90 101 Oulu, Finland (tel +358 8 553 1011; fax 8 553 4040; www oulu.fi). This uses Oulu Hospital, 50 Kajaantie, Oulu 9220 (tel +358 81 315 2011; fax 81 3154499)

University of Tampere, PO Box 607, FIN 33 101 Tampere, Finland (tel +358 3 215 6549; fax 3 215 6503; www.uta.fi). This uses Tampere University Hospital, PI 2000, 35 Teiskon- tie, Tampere 335 (tel +358 31 247 5111; fax +358 31 2475314)

University of Turku, FIN 20 014 Turku, Finland (tel +358 2 333 6582; fax 2 333 6370; www.utu.fi). This uses Turku University Hospital, Kinamyllynkatu 4-6, Turku 20 520 (tel +358 21 261 1611; fax 21 2611164)