

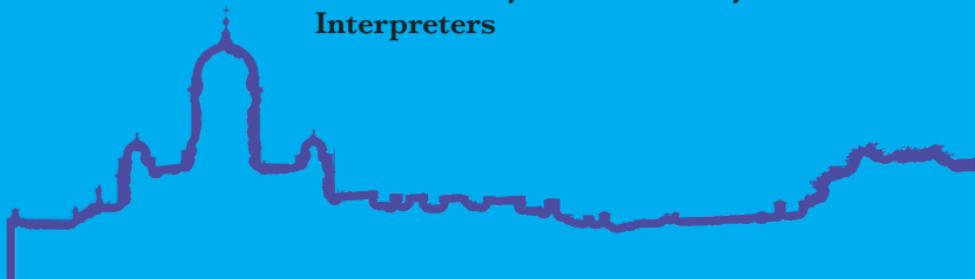
# MUSLIM SURVIVAL GUIDE

To The Helsinki Metropolitan Area

# Salam, welcome to Finland!

Islamic Centers  
Marriage  
Divorce  
Funeral Services  
Food  
Restaurants  
Youth Activity  
Interpreters

Fitness  
Swimming  
Work  
Childcare  
School And Nursery  
Police  
Military Service



Finnish people are generally honest, helpful, modest, but shy and quiet. It may be difficult to get to know them and make new friends, since Finns rarely talk to strangers. In Finland it is customary to greet by saying “hei” and shaking hands. This is done even with the opposite gender. Kissing the cheeks when greeting is not customary.

Finnish law guarantees freedom of religion. This means that everyone is free to believe in what they want, to practice their faith, and belong to any religious society they wish. In Finland it is the Muslim organizations and societies that look after Muslim interests and rights. If a Muslim is not the member of a religious society he will be registered as non-religious.

There are approximately 70,000 Muslims in Finland, a significant portion of which are living in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Finland has had a significant amount of Muslims for only a couple of decades. Despite this, the Helsinki metropolitan area has a lot of services for Muslims and we will be introducing you to some of these in this guide.

# ISLAMIC CENTERS

The only purpose built mosque in Finland was constructed by the Tatars in Järvenpää. However, the Helsinki metropolitan area has many Islamic centers where it is possible to pray both daily and Friday prayers. They also offer other religious programs, services and Islamic and Quranic education.

**Resalat, Kaunispääntie 5**, Helsinki, 09 671881,  
www.resalat.fi (in Farsi and Arabic languages)  
Suomen Islam-Seurakunta, Fredrikinkatu 33, Helsinki,  
09 643579 www.tatar.fi (in Tatar language)

**Rabita/Suomen islamilainen yhdyskunta**,  
Lönnrootinkatu 22, Helsinki, 046 5964 103 www.rabita.  
fi (in Arabic and Somali languages)

**Pak-Fin Centre**, Turunlinnantie 14 A, Helsinki, 050  
344 1786 (in Urdu language)

**Masjid al-Nuur**, Kirstinharju 1-3, Espoo, 045 6496  
900, www.masjidalnuur.com (in Arabic and Somali  
languages)

**Suomen Diyanet Yhdistys**, Kilpakuja 1, Vantaa,  
050 5535444, www.diy Janet.fi (in Turkish language)



# MARRIAGE

When you have found the right one, getting married at an Islamic center is a hitch. Many Islamic centers officiate marriages, however it is always a good idea to make prior inquiries about required documentation. For more information you can consult the above list of Islamic centers.

It is not possible to get married in Finland under the age of 18, unless in exceptional cases with specially granted permission.

# DIVORCE

In Finland, divorce can only be filed for in the municipal court. Islamic centers can perform only the Islamic divorce.

In divorce proceedings division of belongings and property must be arranged and custody of underaged children must be agreed with childcare services. The child is not automatically given to the care of the father.

Divorce may be filed for by either partner. It has a 6 month consideration period.



# FUNERAL SERVICES

There are really no graveyards meant for only Muslims. Graveyards are maintained by either the Church or the municipality. However, the metropolitan area has grave sites that are separated for Muslims and observe Islamic regulations. The graveyards mentioned below have sections that are separated for Muslims.

It is not possible to buy or reserve a grave in advance, rather they are filled in order of death. Unfortunately it is not possible to always be buried on the same day.

Islamic centers can offer assistance with washing the deceased, burial rites and funeral arrangements.

Finnish law dictates how the belongings and property of the deceased is divided and this is not in accordance with Islamic law. A person with inheritors can only decide about half his property in his will, so even a testament cannot guarantee that inheritance is divided according to Islamic law. However, as in Islam, one is free to divide their property and belongings as they see fit whilst still alive. The inheritors can also divide amongst each other as they wish afterwards.



For Helsinki residents:

**Honkanummi**

Vanha Porvoontie 225, Helsinki, (09) 2340 6000

[www.helsinginseurakunnat.fi/hautausmaat.html](http://www.helsinginseurakunnat.fi/hautausmaat.html)

For Espoo residents:

**Kellonummi,**

Kellonummentie 15, Espoo, (09) 8050 2200

[www.espoonseurakunnat.fi/web/seurakuntayhtyma](http://www.espoonseurakunnat.fi/web/seurakuntayhtyma)

For Vantaa residents:

**Ruskeasanta**

Ruskeasannantie 1, Vantaa, (09) 830 6220 [www.vantaanseurakunnat.fi/hautatoimisto](http://www.vantaanseurakunnat.fi/hautatoimisto)



# FOOD

Although there is some amount of halal meat produced locally in Finland, the majority of it is imported from abroad. Some big supermarkets also sell halal meat, which can be recognized by the halal stamp.

Halal meat and eastern foodstuffs can be bought in the following places:

## **Itäkeskuksen halal-liha**

Turunlinnantie 10, Helsinki, (09) 759 2229

## **Kontulan Halal-liha**

Kontulankaari 1 B, Helsinki, 040 243 5703

## **Alanya halal market**

Kastelholmantie 2, Helsinki, (09) 753 1022

## **Halal liha maailma**

Hämeentie 5, Helsinki, 040 555 4091

## **Medina Halal**

Asemakuja 1, Espoo, 0452326599

**Yasmin Food** Koivukylän Puistotie 1, Vantaa



**Note:** when Finnish foodstuffs contain gelatin it is usually animal-based. Examples of foods that contain gelatin are: sweets, candies, pastries, desserts, curds and puddings. Some sweets, chocolates, ice-creams and pastries might also include alcohol (for example liquor, arrack, cognac, wine etc.). Products sold in Europe also sometimes have what are known as E-codes, which signify the ingredients used in production, some of which may be haram. You can check the ingredients of the food product you have bought by looking at the side or rear of the package.



# RESTAURANTS

The Helsinki metropolitan area has a wide variety of restaurants. Also Finnish people have a lot of different dietary restrictions and choices, so vegetarian and fish options are almost always available. Halal restaurants have also increased in the last few years.

For example Itäkeskus and Kontula have a number of halal restaurants.

Examples of halal restaurants:

**Ravintola Habibi**, Mannerheimintie 20, Helsinki,  
(09) 693 1501

**Namaskaar Indian Express**, Kauppakeskus  
Columbus, Vuotie 45, Helsinki, 020 766 4487

**Ravintola NAAB**, Kauppakartanonkatu 7A, Helsinki,  
050 351 1118

**Ravintola Nuur**, Ostostie 4, Helsinki, 045 6046775

**Ravintola Kirkuk**, Kastelholmantie 2, Helsinki,  
044 222 2220

**Ravintola Vihreä**, Harakantie 20, Espoo,  
(09) 548 5100



# YOUTH ACTIVITY

If you still haven't clocked in too many years, Helsinki has youth organizations that offer activities for young people. These Muslim youth organizations arrange weekly activities at youth centers as well as a range of outing, sports or other events throughout the year. The programs are alcohol free and usually separate for girls and boys.

Youth clubs:

**Mahdin Nuoret**, Kaunispääntie 5, Helsinki  
(09) 671881 mahdinnuoret@gmail.com

**Nuoret Muslimit**, K.H. Wiikinkatu 4A, Helsinki,  
045 108 3020, www.numu.fi

**Kanava ry**, Kumpulantie 7, Helsinki (09) 723 17330  
www.kanavary.fi



# FITNESS

If you are looking to stay or get in shape, but wish to do so without wearing a scarf, not to worry! The Helsinki metropolitan area has a many gyms and fitness clubs that are exclusively for women or have women-only facilities or shifts. Gyms generally require you to sign up as a member and pay a monthly fee. Many gyms also offer childcare services for the duration of your workout.

There are no men-only gyms.

The following gyms are women-only:

**LadyLine Kannelmäki**, Klancettitie 6-8, Helsinki, (09) 4540115, [www.ladyline.fi](http://www.ladyline.fi)

**Finnbody Lady's Club**, Mäkelänkatu 2, Helsinki, 040 709 2277 [www.finnbody.com](http://www.finnbody.com)

**LadyFitness Espoo**, Kauppakeskus Entresse, Espoon keskus, 050 434 6222, [www.lady.fi](http://www.lady.fi)

**Ladies Gym**, Asolanväylä 50, Vantaa, 0104401101, [www.ladiesgym.fi](http://www.ladiesgym.fi)



# SWIMMING

When you feel yourself wanting to go for a swim, the metropolitan area has a lot of swimming pools and beaches. Swimming pools are unisex, however some pools have women-only shifts a few times a week. Most swimming pools in Helsinki and Espoo allow the use of burkini and may even rent them. You can make further inquiries in your own local swimming pool. It is good to keep in mind that usually people are fully nude in the swimming pool's shower and sauna facilities. If you wish to have more privacy in these facilities you can inquire about the possibility of this from the swimming pool. Unfortunately there are no men-only swimming shifts.

Women-only swimming shifts

**Jakomäen uimahalli**, Somerikkopolku 6, Helsinki,  
(09) 310 87454

**Korson uimahalli**, Kiasatie 29, Vantaa,  
(09) 8393 2229

In Espoo, swim club Cetus arranges women-only swimming lessons. ([www.cetus.fi](http://www.cetus.fi))

The Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation has a useful English language guide about swimming pool rules, regulations and services.

[http://www.suh.fi/files/764/Tule\\_uimahalliin\\_opas\\_-\\_englanti.pdf](http://www.suh.fi/files/764/Tule_uimahalliin_opas_-_englanti.pdf)



# WORK

Islamic law dictates that one should work for their living if able to do so and to pay one's taxes and dues in society. You should keep in mind though that an employee does not have all the same rights as for example a student. Regardless, due to increased multiculturalism more and more employees are better at taking into account the special needs of their employees. For example, in some jobs you are required to wear a specific uniform, though many employers are willing to accommodate for the hijab. Discussing prayer times and spaces with your employer is also advisable (including Friday prayer); when necessary days off for holidays such as Eid days should also be discussed.

One should also inform the employer of other religious restrictions – such as working with alcohol or pork – preferably when applying for the job.

Finland has many well established and organized worker's unions that offer great services to their members. As a part of their services they also work to monitor and safeguard the rights of their members. You can find your own union at [www.liitot.fi/en/](http://www.liitot.fi/en/).



# CHILDCARE

Finnish law has strict and clear rules regarding the rights of children and this might vary greatly with the laws of other countries. Physical punishment of children, in the form of spankings etc., is not allowed. If healthcare professionals detect signs of physical abuse in a child they are obligated to inform the police. In some cases this might even result in the child being taken into custody and placed into a foster home, meaning they are not allowed to live with their parents anymore.

Parents are responsible for looking after their children under the age of 18. It is a crime to put or leave a child helplessly in situation that might present a danger to their health or safety. In practice, this means that a young child should not be left alone for a long time. Depending on the child's age even a few hours might be too much.

When a child turns 18 Finnish law classifies them as an adult. After this the parents do not have a right to decide about the affairs of the child nor decide for them legally. This means for example that schools, healthcare centers, banks, police or KELA do not give away information regarding the 18 year old to the parents. Thus it is recommended to keep an open relationship with the child and to discuss issues with them.



# SCHOOL AND NURSERY

In Finland education is obligatory until the 9th grade. Girls are allowed to wear hijab in schools and teachers are not allowed to force her to take it off, even in gym or physical education class. It is common for students to go for swimming classes as part of their school curriculum. In these situations it is possible to arrange for rental of a burkini or allow the student to wear her own burkini. Optionally, Muslim students can replace these swimming classes with some other sports activity. It is also possible to arrange with the teacher for more private use of the showers.

If you do not want your child to attend music classes you can discuss with the school the possibility of your child attending some other classes instead.

If Finnish is not a student's mother-tongue he is eligible for lessons in his native tongue. One should keep in mind that native tongue language lessons (as well as Islam classes) are not necessarily held in the student's home school.

Religious education is obligatory in schools. If a school has at least three Muslim students – who are registered as members of an Islamic society – the school is obligated to offer them Islam classes, if requested to do



so by the parents. These classes offered by the school must cater to students of all schools of thought.

If a student does not attend religious education classes (e.g. Islam or Christianity) he is obligated to attend ethics classes, which teach ethical concepts in a general manner.

If a student is a registered member of an Islamic society they are eligible for replacing the religious education classes in school by classes provided by their Islamic society. The student is not awarded with a grade in their report card for performing their classes in this manner. Schools can be asked to provide a space or room for daily prayers, which the students can perform for example during recess or lunch break.

It is always a good idea to inform your child's school of the start of Ramadan. This way, the faculty can be aware that Muslim students will not be attending lunch. Students can also request a day off for the important Islamic holidays.

Schools offer students a free lunch. The meat used in these meals is not halal, however vegetarian or fish options are always available, which the student may choose. Schools may also sometimes serve a Finnish drink called Sima, which may contain small amounts of alcohol.



# POLICE

Police patrol city streets to upkeep safety. Finnish police employs both men and women. In routine security checks and body searches there is usually both female and male officers present and the search will most often be performed by the officer of the appropriate gender. However, searches which are only performed on the surface and do not require one to remove their clothes, might be performed by an officer of the opposite gender. More thorough searches, which may require one to remove their clothes, will always be performed by an officer of the same gender.

If a person is suspected of a crime the police will register it as a reported crime (rikosilmoitus). The register will keep any relevant information such as DNA-samples, fingerprints, full body and facial photos. In order to ensure recognizable photos, a Muslim woman is required to remove her veil when taking photographs for police records. In passport and VISA-application photos wearing the hijab is allowed.

If one is convicted of a crime they are still allowed to practice their faith in prison. As such, a Muslim prisoner



has the right to pray and is given access to running water for wudhu and use of a prayer mat. They are allowed to also inquire after the qibla. A prisoner's dietary restrictions, such as requesting vegetarian instead of meat is also to be respected. Likewise they are permitted to wear the hijab if it does not constitute a risk to themselves or the surrounding people. Prisoners also have a right to an legal aide and translator, and if they so wish may meet with an imam, a nurse, or a social worker.

In court Muslims swear by placing their hand on the Quran, not the Bible, and are furthermore given the opportunity to have an interpreter present, if they do not possess sufficient Finnish language skills.

For more information about police you can visit [www.poliisi.fi](http://www.poliisi.fi) or by calling the Helsinki police helpline 0295 470 011 (Mon-Fri 8:00-16:15).

**Remember that in emergencies you should always call 112.**



# MILITARY SERVICE

Military service is mandatory in Finland for any male Finnish citizen who has turned 18. Girls can sign up for armed service voluntarily, if they so wish. Just like in schools, the military also has freedom of religion, so servicemen are free to practice their faith, pray and observe their religious dietary restrictions. It is advisable to discuss prayer timings with one's superior officer.

Servicemen are not forced to attend religious ceremonies while in the field either. The shrapnel vest provided to all servicemen makes for a good prayer mat when out in the field.

If one so wishes, it is possible to swear the oath of allegiance by one's conscience.

If the fast of Ramadan coincides with the period of armed service it is viable to delay the armed service and serve the remaining period at a later time as per the mandate from one's superior officers.

It is compulsory for men to keep their hair short during the service period, but shaving one's beard is not a must. Showers are usually public ones, however it is possible to ask your superior officer for a more private facility. Performing tahara can be a challenge in the field, as such it is advisable to have some spare clothes and always keep water in your canteen.



# HEALTHCARE

Finland offers public healthcare and emergency medical services free of charge. Disregarding some exceptions, the Finnish healthcare code guarantees a right of self-determination, meaning no one should be forced to undertake a medical procedure or treatment without their willful consent. Neither the spouse nor the doctor should coerce one to do so.

The public healthcare system in Finland rarely allows for the patient to choose their doctor or to decide which gender the doctor caring for a person should be.

The public healthcare system does not carry out circumcision of boys for religious reasons, so it needs to be done by a private doctor. You can ask for the contact information of suitable doctors from the various Islamic centers. In some cultures female circumcision is performed, however in Finland that is considered abuse and willful harm.



# BARBER SHOPS & HAIR SALONS

Since barbershops and hair salons in Finland are generally mixed and have both female and male employees, finding an appropriate barbershop can sometimes give you gray hair. If you are looking to get a haircut or trim your beard you can visit the following which are examples of some barbershops with male employees:

## **Itis parturi**

Vanhanlinnantie 1, Helsinki, 045 841 8585

## **Frankies BarberShop**

Sokinsuontie 4, Espoo, 045 1640140

Women can get their hair done at the following women-only establishment:

## **Rotana for Beauty**

Ostostie 1B, Helsinki, 046 9406018



# INTERPRETERS

Sometimes the language barrier may seem insurmountable, don't worry, that's normal. When you are in urgent need of translation it's just a phone call away (the numbers can also be reached through online calling).

**[www.kovaline.fi](http://www.kovaline.fi) (Farsi and Arabic)**

**[www.tulka.com](http://www.tulka.com) (Farsi, Arabic, and Somali)**

# USEFUL LINKS

Information about Finland in 12 different languages, including about housing, education, healthcare, employment etc.

**[www.infopankki.fi](http://www.infopankki.fi)**

Helsinki metropolitan area public transport schedules and routes:

**[www.reittiopas.fi](http://www.reittiopas.fi)**

Booking of train tickets and schedules:

**[www.vr.fi](http://www.vr.fi)**

Flight arrivals and departures:

**[www.finavia.fi](http://www.finavia.fi)**

Booking and schedules for long distances buses:

**[www.onnibus.fi](http://www.onnibus.fi)**

Local prayer times (different schools):

**[www.praytime.info](http://www.praytime.info)**

**Publisher:**

KoVa projekti  
Resalat islamilainen yhdyskunta  
Suomen Ähl-e Beit  
Helsinki, 2016

**Funding:**

Ministry of Employment and Economy

**Print:**

Printel, Tallinna

