

# 13. Miscellaneous

## 13.1 Finnish Manners and Customs

### Greeting

When Finns introduce themselves to people they have not met before, they often shake hands. When Finns meet friends or people they know, they simply just say "Hello". Younger people sometimes greet each other with a hug.

### Punctuality

Most Finns are punctual both at work and in their social life. When you are off to meet somebody you might want to arrive five minutes early rather than five minutes late. A mobile phone comes in handy if you are delayed, and it's polite to let your contact know that you will arrive late.

### Queuing

Waiting for your turn when queuing is an unwritten rule in Finland. Finns can be strict about queuing and you should never try to cut the line. However, you should be aware that "queuing" does not solely refer to standing in line. It generally refers to almost any situation where there are people waiting for their turn to do something. Most importantly it means waiting for one's turn and showing respect for those who came before you. Queuing systems with numbered note-sized pieces of paper are quite common.

### Telephone Etiquette

There are no public telephones in Finland, but practically everyone has a mobile phone. It is considered impolite to use a mobile phone in situations where it could be disturbing to others, e.g. in lecture halls, meetings, concerts, theatres, church, or libraries. On the other hand, people often use their mobile phones in public transportation.

### Gender Equality

There is a high degree of equality between genders in Finland. Today most women work outside the home and many women hold

advanced positions in all the spheres of politics and working life. The Finnish society and legislation is based on equality and, for example, parental leave, social benefits and family structure highlight its importance.

### Religion

Finland has freedom of religion and about 77% belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. However, many Finns are quite secular and religious beliefs are considered to be a very private matter.

### Food

Nowadays, the Finnish cuisine is a mixture of European, Scandinavian and Russian influences. Traditional Finnish food is most commonly eaten on holidays, but there are still some dishes that are eaten throughout the year.

Finns usually eat a rather sturdy breakfast as well as a proper meal for lunch. Lunch is normally served from 11.00-14.00, and dinner around 17.00-19.00. Restaurants serve dinner until late in the evening, but the kitchen usually closes half an hour before the official closing time.

There are several student restaurants at both the Åbo and Vasa campuses, which serve lunch for an affordable price (2.60€ with a Finnish student card) on weekdays. For more information, please see chapter 9.4.

### Drinks

Finnish tap water is drinkable and has been proven to be purer than many brands of bottled water. It is quite common to drink milk with food as well, also among grown-ups.

The drinking culture differs slightly from other European countries when it comes to alcohol, although the consumption of alcohol per person per year is at a European average. Note that only beer and cider can be bought in regular food stores, whereas other alcoholic beverages are only sold at the off-licence store Alko.

As a fun fact it can be mentioned that some of the Finns are the biggest consumers of coffee in the world. We drink as much as five cups of coffee a day.