

Green Guide

–A sustainable exchange in Åbo



Åbo Akademi
University

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Introduction

Did you know that the tap water in Finland is one of the worlds purest? Or that Finns recycle yearly more than [2 billion bottles and cans](#), and that this is not only good for the environment but for your wallet too, as you will receive money back of your returned items.

In this Guide, you will find information on sustainable living possibilities for your exchange in Åbo. It provides you with information on sustainable travel possibilities and helps you to attain utilities, clothes, and food in a sustainable way. This guide also provides you with information on recycling. To make your stay easier, we have included a brief vocabulary with both Finnish and Swedish words. We encourage you to use this Guide to ensure a sustainable exchange experience in Åbo.

Enjoy your time here and do it in a sustainable way. Finland offers you with endless opportunities.

Welcome to Finland!

Travelling to Finland

Finland can easily be reached by ferries from Tallinn and Stockholm. [Viking Line](#) and [Tallink](#) operate the route to both Åbo and Helsinki. Another good option to choose is [Flixbus](#), which reaches several cities in Finland from for example, Berlin, Warsaw, and Riga.

If you arrive to Helsinki, you can choose to travel to Åbo by train or bus. The public transport in Finland is usually reliable, safe, and punctual. It is also an ecological and cheap way to travel to or inside any Finnish city.

Trains from Helsinki arrive hourly at [Kupittaa railway station](#). You can check the connection on the [website of VR](#). The state owned company, VR, operates all train connections in Finland. Bus companies that operate between Helsinki and Åbo are for example [Onnibus](#), [Matkahuolto](#) and [Vainon liikenne](#).

If you decide to arrive to Finland by plane, try to reduce your carbon emissions by booking a direct flight with the most energy efficient airline.



Bus – Linja-auto / Bussi
Bus

Train – Juna
Tåg

Bicycle – Polkupyörä / Pyörä
Cykel

Ticket – Lippu
Biljett

Bus stop – Bussipysäkki
Busshållplats

Transportation in Åbo

The bus company, Föli, provides [city bikes](#), which are mainly used for short-term use, but they also provide tickets from a day up to a year. The city bikes are a cheap way of getting around the city with a monthly fee just over five euros. The bikes are used with an app, [the Donkey Republic app](#), which you download to your phone. City bikes are available in many of the bigger cities in Finland for example in [Helsinki](#) and [Tampere](#).

There are also dockless electric scooter companies in Åbo, including [Voi](#), [Lime](#) and [Tier](#). Note that city bikes and dockless electric scooters are not available during the winter months, approximately between November-March.

Buses are a good option for travelling inside of Åbo as well. For more info, see the website of [Föli](#). Remember that as a student you are eligible for discounts on the bus cards.



Buying necessities

Second-hand shops are a sustainable and affordable option for buying your utilities and furniture for your new home in Åbo. Second-hand shops can easily be recognized through the Finnish word Kirpputori / Kirppis or the Swedish word Loppmarknad / Loppis.

Second-hand stores selling furniture, tableware, sports equipment etc are:

- [Ekotori](#)
- [Red Cross Kontti](#) (also clothes)

Online second-hand shops are:

- [Tori.fi](#)
- [Emmy store](#)
- [Facebook marketplace](#)
- [Sellpy](#)

You can also use online second-hand shops to sell your own things you do not need.

Examples of second-hand shops selling clothing are:

- [UFF](#)
- [Maanantaimarket](#)
- [Puutorin kirppis](#)
- [Dirty hippies second-hand & lifestyle](#)
- [Merkitys 2nd Hand Shop](#)

Bicycle shops sell second-hand bikes as well as new ones. You can also find used bikes at recycling centers, for example in Ekotori. You can also google second-hand shops close to you.

Libraries

The public libraries in Åbo do not only offer books in different languages but also desktop computers, printing, 3D printing, copying, and sewing machines. Familiarize yourself with what the libraries [offer](#).

Public libraries in the Åbo region use a [Vaski library card](#). You can obtain your library card at any Vaski library by presenting a valid ID.

The libraries at the campus also provide you with desktop computers, printing, copying, and scanning options. For more information on the libraries of Åbo Akademi University, please see the library [website](#). Students and staff can activate their [digital library card](#) in the Tuudo app.

Library – Kirjasto
Bibliotek

Loan – Lainata
Låna

Book – Kirja
Bok

Printer – Tulostin
Skrivare

Card – Kortti
Kort



Eating

Restaurants

The student restaurants usually serve vegetarian food every day. You can also find vegan options. The student restaurants offer affordable and delicious lunches every day. Check the menus at the website of [Kårkaféerna](#) and [Unica](#).

Restaurants in general in Finland offer a wide range of possibilities for vegetarians and vegans. You can also easily find gluten-free and lactose-free options in most restaurants and cafés.

In the [ResQ](#) app, you can find food at affordable prices with sometimes a 50% discount of the original price. Several restaurants and grocery stores use the app to avoid food waste.

Tap water

Note that the tap water in Finland is of excellent quality. Use a refillable water bottle and fill it up anywhere you travel in Finland!



Vegetarian – Kasvis
Vegetarisk

Vegan – Vegaaninen
Vegan

Gluten-free – Gluteeniton
Glutenfri

Lactose-free – Laktoositon
Laktosfri

Tap water – Hanavesi
Kranvatten

Grocery stores

When buying food and other products prioritize locally produced items. Products that have been produced in Finland can be recognized by a label with the Finnish flag. You can also choose to buy organic products, which have green labels on them.

Grocery stores sell discounted products that are near expiration date. These products are marked with red labels that say -30% or -60%. These products can easily be found in the evening or the morning. By buying discounted products, you are not only saving money, but also reducing food waste.

Remember to bring your own bag to the grocery store, to save money and to protect the environment. Plastic bags in grocery stores cost around 0.20 cents. In the fruit and vegetable section, you can choose to pack your items in biodegradable bags as well.

Expiration date – Viimeinen käyttöpäivä
Sista förbrukningsdag

Best before – Parasta ennen
Bäst före

Domestic – Kotimainen
Inhemsk

Organic – Luomu
Ekologisk

Sale – Ale
Rea



Pictures: Ruokatieto.fi

Recycling

Household waste

Recycling is very common in Finland. We highly encourage you to recycle, as it is one of the easiest ways to protect the environment. The residential buildings usually have their own recycling bins on the yard, typically for paper, glass, metal, cardboard, and bio-waste. Normal mixed waste should be sorted into burnable waste. If your residential building does not have recycling bins, you can usually find them next to bigger supermarkets.

The containers usually have instructions on what you can put where. Make sure that you do not put your garbage in a container where it does not belong. Please see the recycling [guide](#).

Note that hazardous waste should never be put in the burnable waste bins. Please recycle them correctly and take them to recycling or waste treatment centers. Your nearest recycling centers can be easily found at Kierratys.info. Small electronic devices can be brought to stores that sell electronic devices. Medicines can be brought to the pharmacies for disposal.

Bottles and cans

Note that bottles and cans shall be returned to the grocery stores. The recycling rate of bottles and cans is more than [90%](#) in Finland. Follow our lead and recycle your bottles and cans during your exchange. You will receive around 0.10 – 0.40 cents per bottle.

You can find the bottle recycling usually just outside the entrance of the store. In smaller stores, they are usually found inside the store.

The company that handles the bottle recycling is [Palpa](#).



Picture: Palpa.fi

Bottle recycling – Pullonpalautuskone
Returautomat

Glass bottle – Lasipullo
Glasflaska

Bottle – Pullo
Flaska

Can – Tölkki
Burk

Thank you for reading this Guide.

We hope you have wonderful and sustainable exchange in Finland.