

COLD NORTH

FINLAND 2020

Facts about the Cold Country

As most of you know, Finland is a smallish country in north Europe. To most Cyberpunks it's just some backward land in the middle of nowhere. The truth, as always, is not so simple, as you are about to find out...

The Statistics

- Population : 8 583 000 people
- Form of Government : Parliamentary democracy
- Current President : Antti Juhani Wallberg (elected 2017)
- Capital : Helsinki (pop. 1 710 000)
- Official Currency : Eurodollar
- Official Languages : Finnish and Swedish
- Religions :
 - Lutheran : 60%
 - Atheist : 18%
 - Roman Catholic : 13%
 - Greek Catholic : 4%
 - Other : 6%
- Other Important Cities : Tampere (pop. 650 000), Turku (pop. 723 000)
- Big Corporations : Arasaka, CINO, EBM, EuroBank, Microtech, Nokia, OTEC, Sternmeyer
- Principal Exports : Electronics, Heavy machinery, Automobile parts, Cyberware, Ships
- Principal Imports : Foodstuffs, Computers
- Industries : Paper mills, Cell phones, Shipyards, Neuralware, Automobile tires, Electronics, Biotechnology

The Nature

In the 20th century, Finland was known as the land of a thousand lakes and great forests. It is still mostly true. The local flora and fauna suffered deeply from the change in the weather. Many species unaccustomed to the new weather perished and new, more adaptable ones took their place. Most of the country's forests are still uncut, due to the extreme environmental laws that the current administration has passed. The old Finnish industry of forestry has suffered greatly as a direct result, and the country's paper production is dependant on Russia, which has vast forests all across Siberia, and is unafraid of harvesting them.

The Weather

The first major feature anybody from America notices when coming to Finland is the weather. Unlike many other parts of the world after the greenhouse effect, Finland is cold. Very cold. The reasons for this are as follows. Finland's climate in the 20th century was relatively warm compared to other

places in the same latitude. This was due to the Atlantic currents that warmed the winds sufficiently to make even agriculture possible. However, as the globe warmed up, so did the seas and the natural flow of the currents was disrupted. This resulted in a total alteration of the local climate. The yearly average temperature in the year 2019 varied between -15 degrees Celsius in Lapland to +10 degrees Celsius in the city of Helsinki.

Due to the extreme cold, most inhabitants prefer to be indoors for most of the time. A wide subway system has been built to the largest cities, and Helsinki is one of the few places on Earth where you can live for a year without having to see the sky.

In the north, the weather turns downright hostile. In Lapland, some lakes are covered by perpetual ice that melts only maybe once in a decade. Icy winds approaching speeds of 25 meters per second are a common phenomenon. Still, some Euros go there to enjoy the wilderness. Many more come here to hide from their foes, however.

The Culture

One of the first things not usually occurring to the everyday visitor is that Finland is an extremely civilized country. Many forms of culture almost extinct in America, such as classical music, are quite common. Concerts, ballets and plays are the preferred way to spend an evening for many local business and government figures.

Finnish Musicbiz

In Finland the Rocker movement came and went. It left very little wake to the average Joe of the street. There simply weren't enough wrongs to protest against. For this reason and because of the local language, Finnish music isn't quite the same as the American equivalent. Some sample styles and groups are given below.

Bivocal Rap

A strange style involving two different lyrics being sung simultaneously, often in different languages. Combos such as Finnish/English or Finnish/Swedish are the most common, but many others exist as well.

Classic Metal

The closest equivalent to chromatic rock. CM is heavy metal backed by violins, cellos and other instruments, sometimes even by a full symphony orchestra. Its roots lie in a band called Apocalyptica in the late 90s.

CyberBeat

The true cutting edge of music. The idea behind CyberBeat is that only enhanced people can hear all of it. Its beat often begins in the normal scope of hearing, only to switch to the super- or subsonic frequencies, which only cyberaudio systems can hear.

Digital Dance

Dance music with some influences of the computer music of the previous decade. Popular amongst rich kids as well as middle-agers trying to be hip.

GritRock

The true music of the Street, GritRock is less of a style and more of a state of mind. GritRockers are always poor dregs of society and their songs often deal with unemployment, gang violence and corporate oppression. GritRock bands are often short lived as the members die of overdose, violence or simply disappear mysteriously.

Nuevo-Jazz, NewJazz

A mix of old Jazz beat and new synthesizer backgrounds. The combination is rather disturbing to the untrained ear, but in high demand in Germany. Then again, so is Sauerkraut. :)

OldSchool Rock

The offspring of bands like Aerosmith, Guns N Roses, Kiss and Rolling Stones. The same old beats, the same old lyrics. Popular amongst the corporates.

TribalStyle

Based on the age-old rhythms of African drums complemented with other instruments, TribalStyle songs are the Ambient of the '20s. The music is centred on the beat and usually included no lyrics.

Dark Harmonix

The best-known Finnish group at the moment. The Harmonix play Classic Metal with feeling. Their current chip, *Six-String Symphonies* was a chart-topper in Germany and Hungary. The lyrics are bleak, the guitars fast and the melodies ageless.. Their last tour included gigs in Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, Moscow, Milan and Crystal Palace. The Harmonix was listed in Rockerboy Magazine as the "most promising foreign newcomer of 2020".

The band's current composition is:

- Johnny "Demon" Savo (lead vocals, guitar)
- Jaakko "Stalker" Lentonen (bass)
- Mikael "Big Mike" Arhström (cello)
- Paul "Nevermore" Kilroy (violin)
- Olli "Gorilla" Ylönen (drums)

Th3 3lit3 Cr3w

The leaders of the Dance charts of Scandinavia, Th3 3lite Cr3w have certainly made a stand. Their songs consist of long ambient-like soundscapes punctuated by fast and aggressive synth solos. Th3 3lit3 Cr3w is the work of three men, known to media only as sYnTHsoU1, M1x3r and WyZ4rD0.

Wäinämöinen

With their dark melodies and haunting vocals, Wäinämöinen has found its own niche amongst the Goth circles all over the world. The band's latest single, *The Hammer of Ilmarinen* has gotten

a big chunk of airplay on many GothRock stations on the west coast and is a club favorite across America.

The Law

Until 2017, Finland was known for its rather loose legislature. The punishments for many common crimes were considerably smaller than in, for example, America. After President Wallberg was elected to office, this all changed. In response to growing crime rates everywhere in the country, a new set of punishments was designed. Additionally, since Finland was one of the last surviving countries with some true nature left, the new laws included increased punishments for environmental crimes. Finland is one of the few places where an unlicensed kill of a bear can be a bigger crime than using an unlicensed assault rifle to do it with.

Some crimes and punishments your typical Punk will easily find himself guilty of:

Murder in the first degree

Life sentence with no appeal in a maximum security prison. In some cases, death by firing squad.

Murder in the second degree

35 years to life in a maximum security prison.

Assault

15-20 years in a medium security prison.

Rape

15 years to life in a maximum security prison, braindance conditioning included. In severe cases, castration (physical or chemical).

Theft

3-25 years in a medium security prison, depending on the worth of stolen object(s).

Possession of illegal firearms

9-28 months in a low security prison.

Possession of illegal automatic firearm

5-10 years in a medium security prison

Possession of illegal narcotics

36 months to 6 years in a low security prison, 8-18 years in medium if proven intent to sell.

Instigating a riot

8-36 months in a low security prison.

Resisting a police officer

2-14 weeks in a low security prison.

Killing a endangered animal without a proper license

1-9 years in a low security prison, depending on the species of killed animal(s).

One of the common follies of Americans who come to Finland is to think that the Finnish Police is just as ineffective and downright lazy as their donut-eating American counterparts.

Unfortunately for the foreign criminal, this isn't the case. The Finnish Police Department is ruthlessly effective and well-equipped. Every single officer is armed with a Sternmeyer CG-13 assault rifle, which they are instructed to keep with them in all circumstances. Additionally they have a Sternmeyer Type 35 pistol as a standard sidearm. The anti-riot and psycho squad have access to heavy weapons and military grade body armor with only a moment's notice.

The local weapons laws are a bit looser than the other laws. In the cities, it is legal to own a medium pistol or a light semiautomatic rifle. On the countryside, the rules are approximately the same, except that heavy and very heavy handguns as well as shotguns are added for use as hunting weapons.

The Underworld

The Fist of the North Star - Pohjantähden Nyrkki

The Fist is a mercenary terrorist organization, that has made name for itself with several strikes across the world. The group excels in guerilla warfare, especially in arctic climates. Most of their operations are for the highest bidder, but sometimes they make anti-biotech strikes without any obvious outside motivation. The members of the Fist are persistent in achieving their objectives, and to date none of them have been captured.

The Fist can be contacted by putting a message on a small Net bulletin board somewhere in Canada. After that they usually contact you by mail. They have to be paid in gold, which is to be delivered in person to one of the henchmen of their numerous Fixers. You never see any of them. Neither will the target.