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New postdocs / PhD students arrive in University of Turku

The simplest guide

Congratulations for making it all the way here! The university has many guides for staff moving to Finland. This is a simple guide written for a confused and overwhelmed you.

Before arriving:

1. Make an appointment online with the DVV even before arriving in Turku. Take the earliest appointment possible.

<https://dvv.fi/en/foreigner-registration>

*Tip: You will need your Finnish home address and Finnish phone number at the DVV appointment. If you don't have a home address yet, that's fine. You can submit it later through post.

Upon arrival:

1. Get a Finnish prepaid SIM card. You will need it for everything.

*Tip: You can survive with a prepaid number throughout your employment. You may only get a postpaid account after living here for two years. The only downside to a prepaid is that you get limited internet coverage in selected EU countries.

2. Make an appointment online with a bank. You need to have visited the DVV first. You will need your Finnish social number or ID number.
3. Make an appointment with the police station. You will need your Finnish social number. Also, you need to go to a photo studio to take a photo.

<https://poliisi.fi/en/identity-card>

*Tip: Just tell the studio that you are making an ID card, and they will give you a code. You need the code to make the appointment. This will take 5 minutes.

*Tip 2: Make the police appointment ASAP because the wait time can be long. The police ID will allow you to have strong identification and you no longer have to carry your passport around. It makes your life easier.



A huge daisy sculpture outside Forum Marinum (Navy museum), which is a very interesting museum to see in Turku. [This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Get tips from your supervisor

4. Make an appointment with the tax office. This is a very simple and fast process. It takes 30 minutes to get a tax card (which is actually an A4 paper) but do it before the end of the month and send it to HR.

*Tip: Vero (tax) office is near the campus, in Data City. This is where you can ask them about tax. Just remember to adjust your tax ceiling if your income changes. Ask them to explain this to you.

Housing in Turku

There are many guides out there, so read those. In general, houses are rented without furniture. Usually, the kitchen is furnished with basic items like fridge, stove and cupboards. Things to keep in mind:

1. There is no furniture, lights or electricity (usually). So, think carefully how you will live there on the first night.

*Tip: you can either call or do it online (may require Finnish ID) at Turun Energia to get them to turn the electricity on for you. They will send you a bill monthly.

2. Block of flats (apartments) tend to have central heating (you don't have to pay for it) but the temperature will be about 20°C. Depending on where you come from, you may find this a bit chilly at the start.

*Tip: avoid places where you have to heat the place yourself, at least at the start. Electric heating can get pricey.

Arriving in Turku from Helsinki

If you arrive by flight to Helsinki Airport, you will need to take the VR train to reach Turku. If you are arriving near the university, choose Kupittaa station. Turku train station is very much further away (not walking distance with luggage).

From the airport, follow the crowd and sign to reach the underground station. Then look for the green VR machine to buy your ticket to Kupittaa (Turku). Take any of the trains you see, they will both bring you to Pasila. Get down there and look for the platform for the train to Turku (Åbo). Ask for directions if you get confused. It is in the same station. Just find the right platform. Get on it and welcome to Turku!



Dressing for Turku

This is only for the more challenging seasons if you were arriving in winter or spring where there may be snow.

1. Water-resistant shoes are recommended upon arrival, especially if it is snowing or if snow is melting into a muddy slush. This means cloth shoes are likely going to get wet and on your first day, that will be unpleasant and very cold.
2. The airport and train are quite warm. Make sure you have a wind- and water-proof jacket. Gloves and a beanie will help very much too.
3. If you come from a warmer climate, and its winter, wear warm leggings under your jeans and wear layers. Layers means something like a shirt, a jacket, followed by a big coat.

Money matters

For your rent, you need to be able to transfer the money via bank or credit card. They will not accept cash.

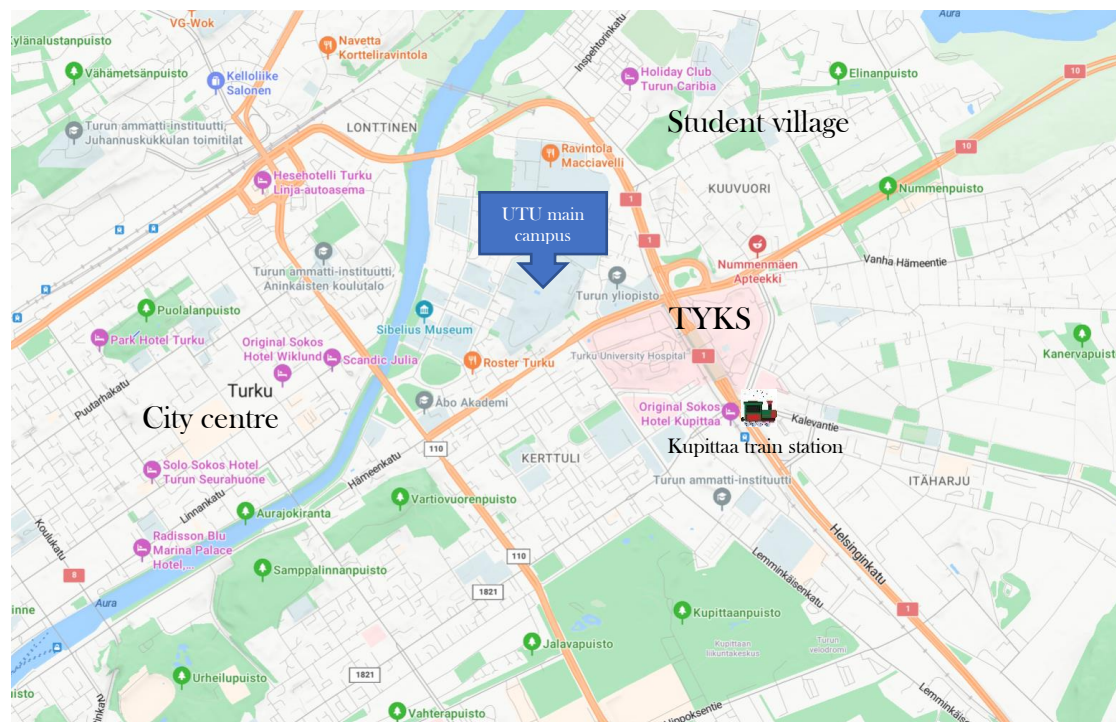
For shopping, most vendors will take cash, including restaurants, supermarkets and shops. The university cafeterias only accept card payment.

Your colleagues will almost expect you to have problems with your bank, so just ask nicely and they will be happy to pay on your behalf. But pay them back afterwards!

Some banks may have a problem with you depositing cash into your Finnish bank account. So, clarify with your banker at the start. They just need to know where your money is from so transaction receipts are handy. If not, it's okay to just let them know to expect a cash deposit into your account.



Snow in Turku comes overnight and melts in a few days, especially when it's a "warm" winter. Photo by author.



The main areas are showed on the maps. City centre is where the nearest shopping mall, Hansa Kortelli, is located. The Kupittaa train station is walking distance to the University hospital and main campus. The student village is roughly located around Holiday Club Turun Caribia (which is a hotel).

Tips for living in Turku

Common sense that is not common

1. Dry your clothes indoor. The air is so dry, your clothes will dry overnight and will not smell musty. You most likely do not need a dryer unless you really want one.
2. If your nose bleeds in cold weather, get a humidifier for your home. Also, there is a nasal oil spray you can get from the pharmacy.
3. To buy fruits or vegetables (and pastries) at the supermarket, check the number found on the name tag, then take your fruit to the weighing machine, enter the number found on the tag and you will get the sticker with the price printed on it.
4. Finland has the cleanest water in the world. You can drink from most taps (except if you are living in a cabin). Drink water from the cold end, NOT the hot water.
5. Finns use winter blankets, which have thicker down fillings. The cheaper ones you see on discount are most likely summer blankets.

Furniture and lights

Second-hand is the way to go

You may get furniture delivered from JYSK or IKEA. You can also get them from Facebook groups, or the recycling centre, Turun Ekotori. The recycling centre and other second-hand stores are a very good option. It is possible to arrange for delivery for a small fee but usually there is a few days wait, unless you get a Taxi.

Remember to take a look at your light socket. You may have to fix the lights yourself but it is a very simple job and youtube videos to check.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB4gLLNkHk4>

Cutleries, pots and pans, lights, appliances can all be found at either IKEA, Prisma and K-citymarkets. You will likely need an extra pair of hands to carry everything because these places are all a bit further away.

Places like UFF, Maanantai Market etc sell second-hand clothes, shoes and bags. They are usually in quite good condition.



Posankka, or what I like to call the pig-duck, welcomes you to Turku. Photo by author