

# Guidebook for new students



## Savonlinna

### Autumn 2025



# CONTENT

<b>BEFORE ARRIVAL.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Online Orientation .....	4
Make sure you have all the required documents to enter Finland .....	5
Accommodation in Savonlinna .....	7
Savonlinnan Vuokratalot .....	7
Private market.....	8
Short term accommodation.....	9
Examples of main providers of electricity and Internet.....	10
What to pack in the luggage? .....	11
Coming to Finland with child/children?.....	12
<b>WELCOME TO FINLAND AND SAVONLINNA.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Welcome to Finland! .....	13
Traveling to Savonlinna from Helsinki Airport .....	18
Basic Finnish .....	20
Learning Finnish before arrival .....	21
Getting a Finnish SIM card for your phone.....	22
Opening a bank account.....	22
Example living costs in Savonlinna .....	23
How to dress in Finland? .....	24
Driving in Finland.....	27
Coming to Xamk Savonlinna Campus .....	31
On-site Orientation .....	33
DVV registration .....	35
Bring your own computer and smartphone with you .....	35
Contact.....	36
<b>LIVING IN SAVONLINNA .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Services for immigrants in Savonlinna .....	37
Learning Finnish in Savonlinna.....	41
Getting to places in Savonlinna .....	42
Important addresses in Savonlinna.....	45
Free time activities in Savonlinna .....	46
Shopping in Savonlinna .....	47

# ***Welcome to study in Xamk!***

In this guidebook, you will find all the useful and necessary information to start your studies at Xamk.

The guidebook is divided into four sections:

- Before arrival
- Welcome to Finland and Savonlinna
- When starting the studies
- Living in Savonlinna

**Please, read this extensive guide carefully and save it to a safe space to check it again later if questions arise.**

# BEFORE ARRIVAL

In this section, you will familiarize yourself with the preparations you will need to make before entering Finland.

Before coming to Finland, you will need to make sure to:

- ✓ participate in the online orientation.
- ✓ save the orientation materials in a safe space for future consultations.
- ✓ have all the required documents to enter the country.
- ✓ have bought your flight ticket.
- ✓ have booked accommodation.
- ✓ have familiarized yourself with the trip to Savonlinna and the public transportation needed to reach your accommodation.
- ✓ have packed all the documents used to apply for the degree program.
- ✓ have packed your luggage according to the climate.
- ✓ have read and started all the necessary procedures described on the section *If you come to Finland with your children*

In the next pages, you will find extensive guidelines about the topic.

## Online Orientation

Before coming to Finland, an online orientation is organized to meet and see each other's faces. During the session, you will get to know your contact people in Finland and receive important information you need to know before coming to Finland. You will get the invitation to your online orientation via e-mail.

## **Make sure you have all the required documents to enter Finland**

Before moving to Finland, you need to make sure to have all the required documents to enter the country.

The student is responsible for finding out what type of documents are needed to move to Finland if a residence permit is needed and all the required steps for obtaining one.

Generally, non-EU students must obtain a residence permit to enter the country.

The residence permit process might require several months, and you will need to obtain the permit before flying to Finland and starting your studies. Therefore, submit your residence permit application as soon as possible after receiving the acceptance letter to the studies and the confirmation of payment of the tuition fee.

Make sure to meet all the requirements for your residence permit, such as valid passport, proof of finances, private health insurance, etc.

As part of the process, you will also be asked to personally visit a Finnish embassy or consulate for identification.

Most of the services in Finland are done **digitally and independently** through digital forms, phone calls, and email. Face-to-face is not a very common form of customer service in Finland.

When making an appointment in a public office, you will be offered the first available time in the calendar.

If the time offered doesn't fit your schedule, you can just say it, and you will be offered a new time for your appointment.

**Take care of your traveling and health insurance** before moving to Finland. All degree students (bachelor's and master's degrees) enrolled for attendance in higher education can use the health care services provided by FSHS. Students can use the health care services primarily in the town where the studies are located, but also remote services and consultations are available.

**If your family members are coming to Finland**, please make sure to arrange the necessary documentation for them as well. Notice that a family member of a student will be granted a residence permit on a different basis than studies, which means requirements and rights might be different. Read the Finnish Immigration Services website carefully to find out the process to follow for your family member.

Find more information about entering the country on the [Finnish Immigration Services website](#) and YouTube channel: [Applying for a residence permit in Finland - YouTube](#)

## **Accommodation in Savonlinna**

Accommodation arrangements are at student's responsibility. Therefore, students can freely choose what kind of accommodation suits their needs best.

Finding the right accommodation is a process that can take some time which is why you should start looking for accommodation as soon as you receive confirmation of payment of the study fee.

It is important to find accommodation and have it confirmed before arriving in Finland. Please note that housing companies have limited availabilities and existing waiting lists. Therefore, it's not possible to walk into the housing companies upon arrival, ask for accommodation, and expect to get one on the same day.

Savonlinna offers two different options when it comes to accommodation:

- Local housing company (Savonlinnan Vuokratalot)
- Private renters

### *Savonlinnan Vuokratalot*

The local housing company is "Savonlinnan Vuokratalot" = "Savut". The company offers different types of accommodation in various parts of the city, at affordable prices.

If you wish to apply for a Savonlinnan Vuokratalot apartment, we recommend doing so as soon as possible due to the limited number of apartments.

Contact the company as soon as possible for further assistance.

Please note when making travel plans: You can get the apartment keys only during the company's working hours that are announced at the company's web page: [Savonlinnan Asuntopalvelu - EN - Savonlinnan Asuntopalvelu](#)

Savonlinnan Vuokratalot won't give up keys without the residence permit document. You must have the document with you when picking up keys. Your passport and other official documents will also be checked.

Apartments provided by Savut are mainly unfurnished.

### *Private market*

You can also choose to rent from private markets. Please read the apartment description and rental terms carefully before signing the contract, as they vary depending on the apartment and the landlord.

It is very common that the private rental agreements are locked for 1 year.

It is not possible to suspend the contract during the agreement time written in the contract.

Most of the apartments provided by private landlords are unfurnished.

Options where to find an apartment from a private lessor:

- [Vuokraovi.com](#)
- [Oikotie.fi](#) (only in Finnish)
- [\(20+\) Vuokrataan/vuokralle tarjotaan savonlinnan seutu | Facebook](#) (A Facebook group for offering and looking for private rental apartments in Savonlinna)

Usually, you are responsible for having your own electricity and internet contracts.



Water might also not be charged separately on top of the basic rent.

Water is usually charged as a fixed monthly fee or by usage. Remember to ask the landlord about these extra costs while choosing your new accommodation.

In addition, many landlords require home insurance from you, ask for a deposit payment, and might want to do a credit check as well.

*Finland is an expensive country to live in*

Accommodation is one of the biggest expenses you will face every month. Living in Savonlinna is more affordable than in bigger cities such as Helsinki. Find more info about the topic in the section “Example living cost in Savonlinna”.

### Short term accommodation

If necessary, Airbnb and Booking.com can also be considered for short-term accommodation – i.e. temporary accommodation in the beginning of the studies, while looking for a long-term accommodation:

- [Airbnb](#)
- [booking.com](#)

## Examples of main providers of electricity and Internet

### Electricity

- Lumme Energia: [lumme-energia.fi/](http://lumme-energia.fi/)
- Fortum: [fortum.fi](http://fortum.fi)
- Helen: [Helen](http://Helen)
- Vattenfall: [Vattenfall](http://Vattenfall)
- Väre: [vare.fi](http://vare.fi)
- Oomi: [Oomi](http://Oomi)

### Internet

- Elisa: [elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en](http://elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en)
- Telia: [telia.fi/english](http://telia.fi/english)
- DNA: [dna.fi](http://dna.fi)

To create a contract with any of the service providers you will need to call their customer service.

## What to pack in the luggage?

Please remember to pack the following items in your luggage:

- ☑ All required documents to enter the country (passport, residence permit, etc.).
- ☑ All the documents used to apply to the degree program.
- ☑ Private insurance certificates.
- ☑ Vaccination certificates.
- ☑ PC with charger for your studies (studying in Xamk requires the use of a computer).
- ☑ Headset for possible online classes.
- ☑ Plug adapter for type F or C sockets (if needed).
- ☑ A smartphone with a list of emergency contacts saved on it.
- ☑ Basic medicines.
- ☑ Some cash and your debit/credit card (payments in Finland are done mostly cashless). Visa and Mastercard are the most accepted. Make sure to not have any block preventing you from using your card abroad.
- ☑ Proper clothes, shoes, and accessories.
- ☑ Basic hygiene products and other personal belongings.
- ☑ Basic house essentials - such as one set of bed sheets, pillow cover, duvet cover, and a towel. Most of the apartments are unfurnished so it is wise to ask someone to buy a mattress, blanket and a pillow for you already before moving to Savonlinna.

***Note! Remember to make sure **you and your family that moves to Finland with you have the required vaccinations up-to-date and that you have all the vaccination certificates with you for the whole family that moves with you!*****

## Coming to Finland with child/children?

**All children living in Finland and aged 6-18 years old must go to school.** In Finland, compulsory education is between the ages of 6 to 18 years old.

The Finnish education system consists of:

1. **Early childhood education and care** (daycare/kindergarten) provided for children before compulsory education begins (age: 9 months – 5 years old).
2. **Pre-primary education** which is provided for children in the year preceding the beginning of basic compulsory education (age: 6 years old).
3. **Nine years of primary and lower secondary education** - basic compulsory education/comprehensive school, (age: from 7 years old).
4. **Upper secondary education**, which is either general upper secondary education or vocational education and training. Compulsory education ends when the student turns 18 years old or completes upper secondary education.
5. **Higher education** is provided by universities and universities of applied sciences.

You need to **fill out an application** for all types of schools/daycares to receive a study place for your kid. Usually, you will be allocated to the **nearest school** depending on your home address and availability. **Handling the application might take some time, so it's important to start the application process immediately.**

Note! Remember to update your children's vaccinations. Take all the vaccination certificates with you as the healthcare authorities will check the vaccination coverage for all the children entering schools or early childhood education.

Read more from the section: *Schools and early childhood education in Savonlinna*

# WELCOME TO FINLAND AND SAVONLINNA

## Welcome to Finland!

Find general information about moving to Finland, studies, housing, education, health, family, leisure, etc., at the website: [Your guide for living in Finland \(infofinland.fi\)](https://infofinland.fi)

### Finland in short:

- “Land of a thousand lakes”: there are around 188,000 lakes. Finland is one of the countries with the **cleanest water** in the world. It is safe to swim almost everywhere, except in the warmest months if the blue-green algae start spreading. **Tap water is also clean and drinkable.**
- Around 75% of the Finnish territory is covered with forests. In Finland, people have a deep connection with nature and always show respect for it. Nature is always around the corner (even in the bigger cities) and it’s a right of everyone to have easy access to it. **When spending time in nature, do not be loud and leave the place the way it was when you found it, bring your trash back home or to the nearest trash bin.**
- Finland is a country based on honesty, equality, and respect of human rights. **All people have the same rights in Finland** regardless of age, sex, economical situation, or health. You are expected to be honest and respect the rules.
- Finns enjoy a **peaceful and calm lifestyle**. They can seem very quiet and introverted, but when you manage to break the ice with them, they are usually very relaxed, honest, direct, and polite people. Being punctual is always expected! Finnish people are also huge coffee lovers, making Finland one of the countries with the highest coffee consumption in the world.
- Sauna is a big part of Finnish culture. There are over 3 million saunas in the country - more than cars! [Quick guide to Finnish sauna etiquette](#) | [My Helsinki](#)

- **Learning the Finnish language** is essential if you want to live in the country for a long time. Knowing Finnish language and culture is a huge pro in job market. However, almost everyone understands and speaks English in Finland, even if they might be shy to use the language.

Some examples of Finnish courses you can take before arrival:

### Online courses

[Introductory Finnish](#), Aalto University's online course, free of charge, no Finnish ID needed

[Suomee! | Extreme Finnish](#) (free of charge online course focusing on spoken Finnish)

### Websites

[Yle Oppiminen](#) (lots of materials for learning Finnish)

[Yle Kielikoulu](#) (learn Finnish by watching Yle's programmes)

[Suomi Taskussa](#) (videos for Finnish learning)

[Learn Finnish | Kielibuusti](#) (lots of information, tips, and materials about possibilities to learn Finnish online)

### Apps

[Duolingo](#)

- For several years in a row, Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world, thanks to its values, such as safety, equality, social support, and low corruption. But at a price! Finland is also one of the most expensive countries to live in Europe.

*Please be prepared to pay for your living costs and tuition fees from your savings – do not expect to get a part-time job easily during the first years living in Finland as a student!*

- The **emergency number in Finland is 112**. Call this number if you find yourself in an emergency and you need help from police or firefighters, or if you need to call an ambulance.

## The 4 seasons in Finland

### **Summer - Kesä** (June to August).

The weather is warm (average 20°C), days and nights are bright. The summer solstice (Midsummer) signs the brightest day of the year.

After that, daylight starts getting a little shorter every day again.

Sleeping during the summer can be challenging as it's light during most of the nighttime. Finnish people use blinders or black curtains in their bedrooms, to help making the room darker during the night.

Finnish people usually use their work holidays during the summertime, generally from Midsummer until end of July. Students have quite a long summer break from school too!

Celebrations: Midsummer – *Juhannus, date varies.*

### **Autumn - Syksy** (September to November).

It gets a bit darker day by day, and the weather is often windy and rainy.

The leaves on the trees turn yellow, orange, and red, creating the typical beautiful and colorful landscapes of ruska.

The autumn in Finland can be very cold as well. The end of October – November might require you to already use your winter jacket. Watch out for the first ice of the season (roads can be slippery) and always wear reflectors in the dark!

Celebrations: All Saints' Day – *Pyhäinpäivä, date varies.*

## **Winter - Talvi** (December to February)

Winters in Finland are cold and dark. It is possible to see the majestic northern lights in Lapland (in the most northern part of Finland). It is also possible to see them in the south, but it's a rarer phenomenon.

In the winter, temperatures are often below 0°C, as low as -30°C. The sun rises late in the mornings and goes down very early. On a typical winter day, you will leave your house to go to school in the dark, see the sun coming up from the window, and come back home from your school day again in the dark. Because of the lack of light, our bodies can't get enough vitamin D from the sun during the winter. Vitamin D deficiency can cause osteoporosis, immunodeficiency, and elevated risk for autoimmune diseases. It is necessary to take vitamin D supplements during the winter.

Darkness can also affect mental health for some people. Use lots of small indoor light sources in the house (like candles or string lights) and **try to keep yourself busy**: start new hobbies, spend time with your friends, participate in events, explore new places, meet new people, and try out winter sports. Winter in Finland can be harsh, but it's possible to live your normal life during these months too. The first winter in Finland can be shocking for foreigners, but you will get used to the weather with time.

Celebrations: Independence Day - *Itsenäisyyspäivä*, 6.12., Christmas – *Joulu* 24.12., New Year's Eve – *Uudenvuodenaatto*, 31.12., Epiphany – *Loppiainen*, date varies.



## **Spring - Kevät** (March to May).

The weather is still fresh, and days are getting a bit brighter every day. The days are getting slowly warmer, and the ice starts melting.

**Watch out for thin ice!** It is dangerous to walk on frozen waters if the ice is too thin, as it might break under your feet, and you could fall into the ice-cold water.

Around March-April time, the snow starts melting, nature starts becoming greener and flowers start blossoming.

Celebrations: Easter – *Pääsiäinen, the date varies*,  
May Day (1<sup>st</sup> of May) – *Vappu, 1.5.*

## Traveling to Savonlinna from Helsinki Airport

You can travel from Helsinki Airport to Savonlinna **by train, bus, or plane**.

There are both train and bus terminals located in Helsinki airport so you can easily continue your journey from there.

If your flight arrives in Helsinki during the evening time, we recommend spending the night in Helsinki and traveling to Savonlinna the next day.

The flight to Savonlinna takes about 55 minutes, and by train and bus, it takes 4-6 hours, depending on the route.

Please, be aware that Xamk will not provide a pick-up service from the airport/train station.

### Train:

Traveling from Helsinki Airport to Savonlinna by train takes approximately 4 hours.

To make your travel smooth, we recommend **downloading the VR app** on your phone.

It is possible to travel without downloading the VR app on the phone, but if you do have it, you can check the track from where the train leaves, all the train stops during your journey, and live information about possible delays and cancellations.

Find the timetables and purchase your train ticket from this link: [www.vr.fi/en](http://www.vr.fi/en) or by using the **VR app**. Train tickets need to be purchased before getting on the train.

Please note that the earlier you book the train ticket, the cheaper it is.

Vending machines are also available at the airport train station, where you can purchase your train ticket with a card payment.

**Note:**

*On long-distance trains, passengers always travel on allocated seats. After getting on the train, look for your seat number (you can find it on the train ticket) and always sit in the allocated seat.*

*We recommend buying the ticket as early as possible, as trains can get fully booked and the prices of train tickets increase the closer it gets to the train's departure time.*

*Usually, long-distance train ticket prices are not fixed, the prices change depending on how early you buy it.*

**Bus:**

You can also use the bus to travel to Savonlinna. Please purchase the bus ticket from the webshop. Check the routes and prices and buy the tickets online: [Matkahuolto](#)

*Note: On long-distance buses, passengers always travel on allocated seats. After getting on the bus, look for your seat number (you can find it on the bus ticket) and always sit in the allocated seat. We recommend buying the ticket as early as possible, as buses can get fully booked.*

**Plane:**

There is a plane connection to Savonlinna that operates during weekdays (Mon-Fri). You can see the timetable and purchase your flight here: <https://norppa.aero/index-en>.

*Please note that Savonlinna Airport is a very small airport located about 20 min from the city center. You need to take a taxi to reach the city center, as there is no public transportation from/to the airport.*

## Basic Finnish

English	Finnish
Hello	Moi
Goodbye/See you	Näkemiin
Bye	Moi moi
Sorry/Excuse me	Anteeksi
Yes	Kyllä
No	Ei
Thank you	Kiitos
You're welcome	Ole hyvä
How are you?	Mitä kuuluu?
Good	Hyvää
Welcome	Tervetuloa
Exit	Ulos
I don't understand	En ymmärrä
I don't speak Finnish	En puhu suomea
Do you speak English?	Puhutko englantia?
I'm going to Savonlinna	Minä menen Savonlinnaan
Where is the train station?	Missä rautatieasema on?
Train	Juna
Bus	Bussi
Ticket	Lippu
I am a student	Minä olen opiskelija

## Learning Finnish before arrival

Some examples of Finnish courses you can take before arrival:

### Online courses

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[Suomee! | Extreme Finnish](#) (free of charge online course focusing on spoken Finnish)

### Websites

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[Suomi Taskussa](#) (videos for Finnish learning)

[Learn Finnish | Kielibuusti](#) (lots of information, tips, and materials about possibilities to learn Finnish online)

### Apps

[Duolingo](#)

## Getting a Finnish SIM card for your phone

Because you will be staying in Finland for a long period of time, it's wise to get a Finnish phone number to be able to use the internet and make calls in the country. You can buy a **prepaid** SIM card at **R-Kioski**. Depending on the type of offer, the average price for a prepaid can be 5-35€. With a prepaid subscription, you can charge money to the sim card and use it according to the chosen offer, until the credit runs out and so on. More info: [Prepaid-liittymät / R-kioski](#).

**Monthly subscriptions** are also offered, however (as you are creating a phone contract) you might need to fulfill certain requirements and be asked for a reliable financial statement, valid ID, and other documents. Here is a list of phone operators in Finland:

1. Elisa: [elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en](https://elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en)
2. Telia: [telia.fi/english](https://telia.fi/english)
3. DNA: [dna.fi](https://dna.fi)

## Opening a bank account

Opening a bank account in Finland might be trickier than in other countries. If you or a family member need to open a bank account in Finland, note that you will need to fulfill certain requirements and you will be asked for several documents including a residence permit and Finnish Social Security Number.

Examples of the most common banks that operate in Finland are Osuuspankki, Nordea, S-pankki, Danske Bank, and Säästöpankki.

## Example living costs in Savonlinna

Below there are **some examples of monthly expenses** in Savonlinna. Please note that **the expenses are just an estimate** and have been calculated for one person living in a small apartment.

- Rent: 350-600€
- Bus card: 40€
- Grocery: 200€
- Phone internet connection: 20-30€
- Home internet connection (if not included in the rent): 20-40€
- Electricity (if not included in the rent, depends on usage): 30€
- Water (if not included in the rent, depends on usage): 20-30€
- Basic home insurance (if not included in the rent): ~20€
- Extras (clothing, free time activities, traveling, etc.): 100-200€
- (Unexpected expenses: 50€)

Finnish immigration office expects you to have at least 800 euros / month for the first year of staying in Finland.

An average student in Savonlinna usually spends around ~1000€ per month per student. In Helsinki or other bigger cities, the money you need / month is more.

**You should have enough money in your account to cover your living costs – do not assume that you can get a part-time job easily or fast in Finland.**

# How to dress in Finland?

## Summer

In the summer, temperatures stay around 20°C and the warmest month is usually July.

When the sun shines it can get very warm in Finland too!

You can finally wear summer dresses, T-shirts, and shorts, but always remember to have a light sweater or light jacket for the evenings or rainy days.

## Spring

The spring starts in rather winterish conditions and as the sun shines more and more, the temperatures increase little by little.

At the end of spring, it's time to put your winter jacket back in the closet and say goodbye until the end of autumn.

From March to April, the streets are usually covered in wet melting snow or water. A good pair of waterproof shoes are essential when walking outdoors.

*Note: Temperatures in the nighttime can still go below zero and will freeze the snow that melted during the day. This becomes very slippery to walk on, be careful!*



## Winter

When coming to Finland for the first time, many people might have never experienced snow and cold temperatures. For this reason, they might not be aware of how to dress properly for the cold winters in this country.

When dressing up in the winter, there are two main rules: **wear warm clothes** and **dress in layers** to protect yourself from the cold.

On the coldest days, it's important to wear all the layers:

- Layer 1: Base layer of long/thermal underwear for upper and lower body, socks.
- Layer 2: Wool sweaters or fleece hoodies, pants, wool socks.
- Layer 3: Warm waterproof winter jacket, outdoor waterproof pants, warm gloves, warm beanie, warm waterproof shoes, and reflector.

Watch these two videos to learn more:

[How to dress for winter - YouTube](#) and [Yle Oulu | Facebook](#).

The amount of clothes also depends on how long you will need to be outdoors and how active you will be. When temperatures are close to 0°C, it's usually ok to skip "Layer 1" (see above) if your body feels comfortable.

*Note: Walking on fresh snow is very safe **but be careful when walking on the ice as it can be very slippery!** You can buy ice grippers to attach under your shoes during these days. **Always remember to remove the ice grippers when entering indoors!***

*As they are designed for outdoor use, they ruin indoor floors.*

## Autumn

Autumn can be a very muddy and wet season. It's good to wear rubber boots and a raincoat during these months. As temperatures start going down again, it's time to bring the sweaters out of the closet, especially for the mornings and evenings.

**The weather can change very quickly in Finland**, and on some days, you will be able to experience all four seasons on the same day!

It's important for you and all your family members in Finland (including the little ones!) to always be prepared for the change of weather when spending time outdoors.

When kids are in school in Finland, they spend a lot of time outdoors during all 4 seasons. Find some tips for how to dress children in Finland here: [How do you weather proof children in Finland? Yle Uutiset](#)

*Note: In Finland, like in many other Nordic countries, there is a saying: "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing".*

## Driving in Finland

### Bikes

People are moving around the city by bike throughout the whole year, winter included!

Winter cycling can be safe with the right arrangements, like wearing warm outdoor clothes, helmets, reflectors and using grippier tires on your bike to prevent sliding on the slippery ice.

*Note: Wearing a **helmet**, having a **functioning white/light yellow headlight** and a **red rear light, functioning breaks and bell**, are required by law when biking.*

*Lights must be on in the dark.*

*To make you even more visible, it's recommended to wear a safety reflective vest.*

*If you do not follow the regulations, you can get a ticket from the police.*

**If you wish to transport a child by bike**, you must take extra precautions on top of the ones mentioned above. The bike must be fitted with two separate braking devices and the child must sit in a special child seat in the back of your bike or in a special trailer designed for bikes. The child must be under 135 cm and always use a seat belt.

More info here: [on foot and by bike \(liikenneturva.fi\)](https://liikenneturva.fi/en/traffic-safety/road-traffic-safety/cycling) and [Safe cycling - Liikenneturva](https://liikenneturva.fi/en/traffic-safety/road-traffic-safety/cycling).

## Cars

Check from this link if you are allowed to drive in Finland with your current driving license: [Validity of foreign driving licences in Finland | Ajokortti-info](#)

*Note: Cars in Finland are very expensive. On top of the price of the vehicle and gasoline, you have other compulsory yearly costs, such as **insurance**, car **inspection** and **taxes**. Make sure to have all these extra costs paid!*

*Driving without these is illegal and punishable.*

*Finland has right-hand traffic.*

Roads are usually wide and quite straight in Finland, which can make driving comfortable but also “boring” in longer travels. If you are driving a long distance, always remember to take breaks at times.

Also, always remember to use seatbelts, drive under the speed limit, and keep a safe distance from other cars.

The use of headlights at all times of the day is compulsory in Finland.

It's illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and you can be subject to arrest if you do so.

Everyone inside a car must fasten their seatbelts for the whole driving time.

When driving in the winter conditions you must be extra careful, as it can be very dangerous when the roads are icy and slippery.

Notice that during the wintertime, it is mandatory to use winter tires.

Speed limits are different during the winter compared to summer.

When driving on ice or snow, it's necessary to start using the brakes early enough: as the roads are slippery, the car slides on the ice when hitting the brakes. Do not make fast last-minute stops with the car!

Always keep a good distance with the car in the front.

*Note:*

*It is mandatory to use winter tyres from 1.11.-31.3. or if the driving conditions are wintry. You must own two sets of tyres: summer and winter tyres.*

*Use an engine block heater to warm up your car's engine before starting it. This is crucial when temperatures drop below zero. Plug the heater into a power outlet for about 10 minutes at 0°C, and up to a couple of hours at -20°C*

If you are driving with a child, the child must stay in a proper child seat. There are different types of child seats according to the age and height of the child. Not following this rule is punishable.

*When you drive in the night or dark, incidents of moose or reindeer crossing the road and being struck by vehicles can happen. These accidents cause big damage to the vehicle and injuries to the people inside the car. Accidents can even be fatal!*

*If you end up in a car crash or see someone else in this situation, please always stop to help and call emergency number 112. Authorities will not only provide help to the people involved in the accident but also take care of the injured animals.*

*This applies to any other type of car accident: if you see someone alone in difficulty, stop to give assistance and call 112.*

Traffic rules:

[Do you know the rules of the road? - Finnish Road Safety Council \(liikenneturva.fi\)](#)

Useful links

- Road signs: [Road Signs - Finnish Transport Infrastructure](#)
- Basic Road rules: [In traffic - Liikenneturva](#)
- Finnish Transport and Communication Agency: [Etusivu Traficom](#)

# STARTING THE STUDIES

After you arrive in Savonlinna, there might be some days between your arrival in the city and the beginning of the classes. Use this time to get familiar with the place and explore the city.

During this time, you should:

- ✓ visit the city.
- ✓ get familiar with public transportation or buy a bike.
- ✓ practice how to find the bus schedules.
- ✓ get a Finnish sim card for your phone.
- ✓ learn how to get to Xamk Savonlinna Campus.
- ✓ participate in the on-site orientation.
- ✓ save the orientation materials and contact details for future use.

Find the information related to buses and Savonlinna in the section “Living in Savonlinna” at the end of this guidebook.

## Coming to Xamk Savonlinna Campus

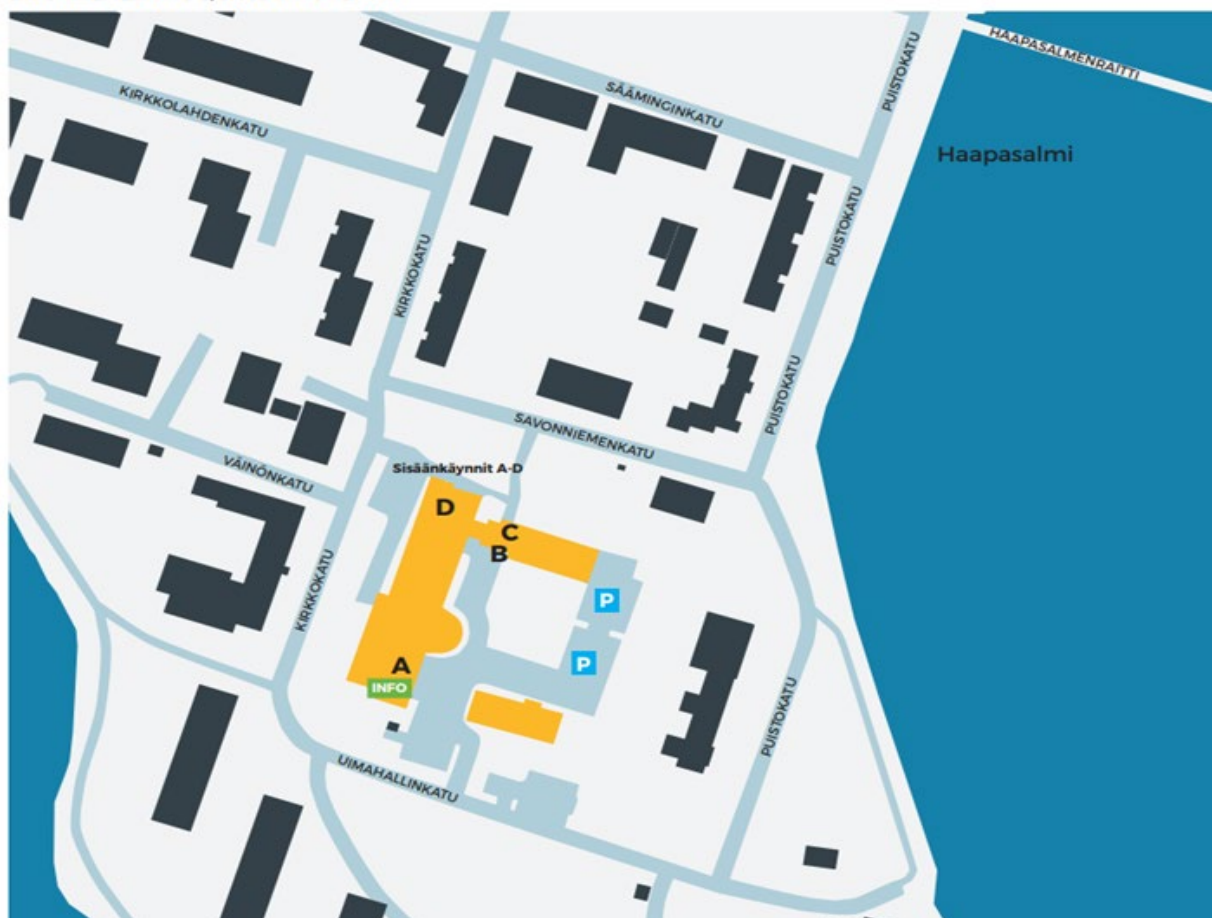
Xamk Savonlinna campus is located in the city center.

Savonlinna campus address: *Savonniemenkatu 6, 57100 Savonlinna.*

Xamk Savonlinna Campus map is on the next page.

## Savonlinnan kampus – Savonlinna Campus

SAVONNIEMENKATU 6, 57100 SAVONLINNA



Kampuksen info palvelee A-sisääkäynnin luona.  
*The Campus information desk is next to the entrance A.*

### AUDITORIO JA KOKOUSTILAT CONFERENCE FACILITIES

Auditorio, 1.krs  
*Auditorium 1st floor*  
Savonniemisali 2.krs  
*Savonniemi hall 2nd floor*

### HALLINTO ADMINISTRATION

Hallintopalvelut 2.krs  
*Administration Services 2nd floor*

### OPISKELIJAN PALVELUT STUDENT SERVICES

Opintotoimisto 2.krs  
*Student Affairs Office 2nd floor*  
Kampuskirjasto 1.krs  
*Campus Library 1st floor*  
Itseopiskelutilat 1.krs & 2.krs  
*Self-Study Facilities 1st floor & 2nd floor*

Opiskelijakunta Kaakko 2.krs  
*Student Union Kaakko 2nd floor*  
Opiskeluterveydenhuolto 0.krs  
*Student Health Care 0 floor*  
Opiskelijoiden taukotila 2.krs  
*Students Breakroom 2nd floor*

### RAVINTOLA JA KAHVILA RESTAURANT & CAFÉ

Ravintola Kaari 1.krs  
*Restaurant Kaari 1st floor*

### HARRASTUSTILAT FREE TIME FACILITIES

Kuntosali 1.krs  
*Gym 1st floor*  
Liikuntasali 0.krs  
*Fitness Gym 0 floor*  
Pelitila 0.krs  
*Game Room 0 floor*  
Biljardihuone 0.krs  
*Billiard Room 0 floor*

### OPPIMISYMPÄRISTÖT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Hyvinvoinnin oppimiskeskus  
*Elixiri 0.krs*  
*Wellness Learning Center 0 floor*  
Kotisimulaatiotila 0.krs  
*Home Simulation Environment 0 floor*  
Debriefing huone 0.krs  
*Debriefing Room 0 floor*  
Ensiapuluokka 3.krs  
*First Aid Class 3rd floor*



## On-site Orientation

The studies at the campus will start with the orientation. Please note that the orientation will be delivered in person on campus and attendance is compulsory.

The orientation introduces you to our campus services, studying environments, and living in Savonlinna. The exact timetable of the on-site orientation will be announced by email later.

**Take your Passport with you on the first day of your studies as the ID check is the first thing you're facing at the campus! You are not able to access the digital environment that's being used during your studies without the ID check.**

*Note: **Punctuality is always expected in Finland.** If you are requested to be in a place at an exact time, you must be punctual, or you might miss your appointment.*

*This also applies to orientation, classes, or in-office appointments.*

*If you are late, you will miss the info at the beginning of the session,*

*and it will not be repeated.*

**When feeling ill, do not come to campus.** If you have a class or an office appointment you need to participate in person, **please contact the teacher/staff member immediately to inform them about the situation.**

After the on-site orientation, you should:

- ✓ know how to move around Xamk Savonlinna Campus and find different classrooms and offices.
- ✓ be familiar with the services available for students on campus.
- ✓ know how to activate your Xamk account.
- ✓ know how to login to Xamk Digital Platforms (Lux, Peppi, Learn).
- ✓ know how to read the classes timetables and grades.
- ✓ be familiar with the structure of your studies (holidays, breaks, etc.).
- ✓ know Xamk rules and regulations.
- ✓ know how to download your study certificate from the Peppi system.
- ✓ know how to get a student card from the student union Kaakko.

During the orientation weeks, a compulsory document check is organized at the campus to check the originals of the documents you have used for applying to the degree / master program of yours. Bring a valid Passport, residence permit, and originals of your degree certificate and work certificates for this document check.

**With your participation in the on-site orientation, you should now know everything needed for a comfortable beginning to your studies in Savonlinna!**

## DVV registration

After moving to Finland, it's necessary to register at the **DVV office**.

You will need to:

- 1) Fill the online form available on DVV website:  
[Registration of a foreign student | Digital and population data services agency \(dvv.fi\)](#)
- 2) Visit the DVV office in Savonlinna, address: Olavinkatu 24, 57100 Savonlinna. The DVV office is open without an appointment on Thursdays 9:00 - 12:00 a.m.

When visiting the office, remember to have with you a valid passport, residence permit and a study certificate with you (previously downloaded from Peppi system).

More info: [Savonlinna | Digital and population data services agency \(dvv.fi\)](#).

## Bring your own computer and smartphone with you

Xamk has a BYOD policy: owning a computer is required to follow the studies in Xamk.

Read more about the requirements here: [BYOD - Bring Your Own Device - Xamk](#).

Xamk uses *multi-factor authentication*: remember to make sure your smartphone supports *Microsoft Authenticator* or *Google Authenticator*.

## Contact

Your contact person about practicalities for starting your experience in Savonlinna and everyday life at campus is:

Karoliina Helander: [karoliina.helander@xamk.fi](mailto:karoliina.helander@xamk.fi)

Her office at the campus is located in the second floor, room 237 (International office).

If you want to meet Karoliina on Campus before your studies start in August, **please book for appointment in advance via e-mail.**

After activating your Xamk account, **all communication by email must be conducted with your Xamk email account.**

Please note that staff at Savonlinna Campus work partially remotely or from other campuses at times.

If you walk into the office and don't find anyone there, please contact them by email.

If you wish to have a longer type of meeting in person or a meeting on a specific day, **please contact the staff by email in advance to book a time.**

If you have any doubts **regarding the studies** (i.e. classes, participation in classes, exams, grades, etc.) please **be in touch directly with the teacher or your designated contact person about the studies.**

# LIVING IN SAVONLINNA

## Services for immigrants in Savonlinna

Link to the services: [Immigration services - Savonlinna](#)

### Immigrant guidance and counseling Navigaattori

Navigaattori offers guidance and counselling for Immigrants for everyday problems and directs to the right authority if more in-depth counseling is needed. The services are free of charge.

At Navigaattori, you can receive guidance on, for example, residence permits, citizenship, social and health care, municipal services, education, working life, housing, leisure time, guidance on filling in forms, guidance on digitization.

Opening hours: Mon – Fri, only with appointment

### Visit Neuvola with your child

If you move to Finland with your child/children under the age of 7, it is strongly recommended to be in contact with the local **Neuvola** for guidance on children healthcare.

Neuvola is a Child Health Center for maternity, family, and children health services, where you can receive advice about children's healthcare in Finland.

The nurses in neuvola are monitoring and promoting the physical, mental, and social condition of children under school age, giving vaccinations, and supporting parents in providing secure, child- focused rearing, care and in attending to relationships.

Neuvola promotes healthy growing environments for children and healthy family lifestyles.  
If special support is needed, the family will be referred to a specialist.

All services provided are free of charge.

Find more information about Neuvola at this link: [Maternity and child health clinics - Ministry of Social Affairs and Health \(stm.fi\)](#)

To find your local Neuvola call the Lasten ja Nuorten Palveluluukku: **+358 15 744 7744 (Mon-Fri from 8am to 3 pm)** or join the free chat here: [Eloisa - Wellbeing services county of South Savo \(etelasavonha.fi\)](#) -> chat and digital services -> chat with us.

## Schools and early childhood education in Savonlinna

General information about daycare and schools in Savonlinna:

[Childcare and early learning - Savonlinna](#)

- **Early childhood education:** A child has the right to early childhood education from the age of 9 months until the start of school.

**A place in early childhood education must be applied for four months before the need for the service begins or at the earliest possible stage.**

Early childhood education is organized in Savonlinna in the city's kindergartens and family daycare, as well as in private kindergartens. Learn more about childcare and early learning in here: [Childcare and early learning - Savonlinna](#)

- **Basic compulsory education (7-17 years old children), please find out more here:** [Education - Savonlinna](#)

Compulsory education in Finland is free of charge.

*Please notify the daycare center or school if you move out of Savonlinna.*

*Note: If you have any doubts about your children's education in Savonlinna, you can **find the right contact person by opening the links shared above.***

When your child goes to school, you might be required to show proof of vaccinations. Bring all the necessary documents with you when moving to Finland.

Please, apply and wait for a decision of a school or kindergarten placing before dropping your children to school or kindergarten.

## Learning Finnish (language and culture)

Already prior your arrival to Savonlinna you can use, for example, different language-learning apps and online materials to learn Finnish. Below you can find some examples.

### Online courses

[Introductory Finnish](#), Aalto University's online course, free of charge, no Finnish ID needed

[Suomee! | Extreme Finnish](#) (free of charge online course focusing on spoken Finnish, no Finnish ID needed)

[Beginners' Finnish 1 \(nonstop start\), 2 ECTS cr - Xamk](#) (free of charge online course, Finnish ID needed)

[Beginners' Finnish 2 \(nonstop start\), 3 ECTS cr - Xamk](#) (free of charge online course, Finnish ID needed)

### Websites

[Yle Oppiminen](#) (lots of materials for learning Finnish)

[Yle Kielikoulu](#) (learn Finnish by watching Yle's programmes)

[Suomi Taskussa](#) (videos for Finnish learning)

[Learn Finnish | Kielibuusti](#) (lots of information, tips, and materials about possibilities to learn Finnish online)

### Apps

[Duolingo](#)



## Learning Finnish in Savonlinna

- Savonlinnan kansanopisto – <https://www.sko.fi/eng/index.html>
  - Please contact Savonlinnan kansanopisto ([kira.boesen@sko.fi](mailto:kira.boesen@sko.fi)) directly as soon as possible if you are interested in the courses
- Linnalan opisto (website only in Finnish)- [Linnalan Setlementti ry – Setlementti | Opisto](#)
- Savonlinna aikuislukio (website only in Finnish): [Savonlinnan aikuislukio » Suomi toisena kielenä \(onedu.fi\)](#)

*Note: Some of the courses are organized in person daytime, which is not convenient as they might overlap with your classes at Xamk. **Participation in the classes at Xamk should be your priority.** Please check this carefully when choosing a language course. However, if you have moved to Finland with your spouse, these courses are a great chance for them to learn the Finnish language.*

**The degree studies in Xamk will also include some Finnish language studies, but your own activity to study more than is mandatory will be the key to learn Finnish!**

## Getting to places in Savonlinna

If you live near the center, it is possible to move around the city by **walking**. All the important places are reachable within walking distance.

During the wintertime and in the dark, make yourself visible by wearing reflectors. Wear anti-slip accessories when the roads are icy. Always walk in the pedestrians' designated paths and cross the road on the zebras. More tips here: [Pedestrians in traffic - Liikenneturva](#)

You can easily move around the city by using **local buses**. Please, download the **Matkahuolto Liput ja Reitit** app to search for the bus routes and buy tickets.

You can buy a ticket directly on the bus or with a digital payment on the **Matkahuolto Liput ja Reitit app**. We recommend downloading the **Matkahuolto Liput ja Reitit** app to your phone and buying your bus tickets there to have the most convenient access to the local buses.

*Note: When waiting for the bus at the bus stop, **wave** at the bus when you see it coming, to indicate to the bus driver to stop and pick you up. Waiving is enough to sign the bus driver to stop. When you have arrived near your destination, ring the **stop bell** next to your seat to indicate to the bus driver to stop at the next bus stop. Very often, buses don't stop at every single bus stop if not necessary or requested.*

**Bikes** are a very common mode of transportation in Finland. People in Finland love to use bikes to move around the city because it's easy, fast, and environmentally friendly. You can buy a new bike from shops or you can get a cheaper one from physical or online secondhand shops. More info about the topic is on the next pages, in the section: "Driving in Finland".

If you would like to use a **taxi**, call the number 0200 01510 (the service charges a small fee) or use the app "**Book a Taxi**" free of charge.

## Looking for a job in Savonlinna?

Looking for a job in Savonlinna or in Finland in general can be a **lengthy process**, not only for foreigners but for Finnish people as well.

It's important to keep in mind that finding a job in Savonlinna takes time.

Please do not expect to find a job right after your arrival in the country.

We recommend that you concentrate on your studies and use your savings to cover your monthly costs and tuition fees. If you want to take a look at the job market, there are a couple of links to check out:

- [Work in Finland](#) is a website where you get lots of information and also find open jobs
- With [JobMarket Finland](#)'s tips you can get familiar with the job seeking process in Finland.
- [infoFinland](#) website provides information related to different topics of working life in Finland, such as CV and job application, employee's rights and responsibilities, and taxation.
- [Résumé or CV | Eilakaisla](#) – tips for making a good CV.
- [Canva](#) has a broad selection of CV templates, also in the free-of-cost version.

Speaking Finnish is a crucial point when looking for a job in Finland.

Learning and practicing the Finnish language in your free time is highly recommended.

Also note that if you want to do certain jobs in Finland that require food handling and work on food premises (such as restaurant waiter, kitchen worker, cook, barista, etc.), you must obtain a Hygiene Passport beforehand.

To obtain a Hygiene Passport you must pass a national test.

The average price for the test is around 50€.

If serving alcohol is included in your job, an Alcohol Passport is also required. More info here: [Hygiene Passport - Finnish Food Authority \(ruokavirasto.fi\)](https://ruokavirasto.fi/en/hygiene-passport).

*Note: As a student, you are expected to **focus mainly on your studies**.*

*However, if you move to Finland with a spouse, your spouse might be allowed to work in Finland (depending on the type of residence permit obtained).*

## Important addresses in Savonlinna

- Hospital (emergency): Keskussairaalantie 6, 57120 Savonlinna
- Private Health Centers:
  - Terveystalo – Kirkkokatu 7 B, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 57100 Savonlinna: [Terveystalo | Terveystalo](#)
  - Pihlajalinna – Kauppatori 6, 2nd floor, 57130 Savonlinna: [Pihlajalinna Savonlinna | Locations | Pihlajalinna](#)
- Digital and Population Data Services Agency DVV: Olavinkatu 24, 57100 Savonlinna: [Savonlinna | Digital and population data services agency \(dvv.fi\)](#)
- Police Station: Tottinkatu 9, 57130 Savonlinna
- Immigrant guidance and counseling Navigaattori: Olavinkatu 46A, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 57130 Savonlinna
- Savonlinna City Hall: Olavinkatu 27, 57130 Savonlinna (B-door is the main entrance)
- Savonlinnan Vuokratalot: Puistokatu 13, 57100 Savonlinna

## Free time activities in Savonlinna

### Things to do in Savonlinna:

- Indoor sports (gyms, yoga, swimming halls, ice skating, ice hockey, bowling, badminton, etc.)
- Restaurants, bars, cafeterias
- Museums, theater, movie theater, library
- Public parks and beaches
- Public playgrounds for kids
- Outdoor sports (i.e. frisbee golf, football, skiing, etc.)

### More info at:

- Travellers' Savonlinna: [Visit Savonlinna - Visit Savonlinna](#)
- City of Savonlinna: [Welcome to Savonlinna - Savonlinna](#)

## Shopping in Savonlinna

Below, you will find a list of options grouped by category. If you open the links, you can start familiarizing yourself with the online shops of the different brands, please check the different availabilities and prices of the products in Finland.

We recommend you to use Google Maps to look for different types of shops and locations.

### Grocery shopping:

- K-Citymarket, K-Supermarket, K-Market
- Prisma, S-market, Sale
- Lidl (discount retailer)

*Note: In bigger-sized hypermarkets (Citymarket, Prisma) you'll find, not only food but also clothes, electronics, household items, sports equipment, and much more.*

### Secondhand shops “kirpputori or kirppis” in Finnish (some examples near the city center)

- Olivia
- Pelastakaa Lapset
- Kierrätysmyymälä Savonlinnan Toimintakeskus (two locations, one at the bus station and another a couple of kilometers away from the city center)
- Via Dia kirppis
- A-kirppis

*Note: Secondhand shopping culture is very popular in Finland as well as on Europe.*

*You can buy from both physical flea markets (kirpputori) or online markets like “Tori” ([Tori.fi](https://tori.fi)) or “Facebook market”.*

## **Winter gear/outdoor clothes**

- Second-hand shops
- Intersport Savonlinna
- Sport Gear Service
- Carlson

## **Furniture, small house supplies, and house decorations**

- Second-hand shops
- Jysk
- Rusta
- Puuilo
- Motonet

## **Electronics**

- Citymarket
- Prisma
- Veikon Kone
- Carlson

## **Pharmacies (near the city center)**

- Yliopiston apteekki
- Savonlinnan Uusi Apteekki

*Note: in Finland, you can buy basic medicines like vitamins, painkillers, and flu treatments from the pharmacy without a prescription.*

*For other types of stronger medicines, you will need to visit a doctor and get a prescription.*

*The pharmacist will need to check your prescription to give you the right medicine.*



## Other

- Tokmanni: variety discount retailer (food, clothes, hobbies, small furniture, hygiene products, etc.)
- R-kioski: convenience store for smaller purchases (take away coffee, snacks, cigarettes, etc.)



**All for the future.**