



The Happiest Nation Invites the World to Dinner: Finland Launches First-Ever National Tastings

Visit Finland showcases the country's food culture through immersive tastings shaped by local chefs and regional traditions

HELSINKI, FINLAND (MAY 18, 2026) – For the first time in history, a nation is officially opening its tasting table to the world, and anyone can RSVP for a seat. Finland, recently named the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year in the UN [World Happiness Report](#), announces **Finland's Official Tasting Table**. The curated, four-day culinary experience will take place at some of the country's most stunning locations, hosted by the Finns behind the food and designed to introduce Finnish cuisine to the world.

While Finland has long been celebrated for its happiness, its food culture has remained one of its best-kept secrets – until now. Through Finland's Official Tasting Table, that culinary culture is being opened to the world for the first time. Anyone can apply at **HaveSomeFinnish.com** for the chance to be selected as one of 16 guests across two exclusive tastings, taking place in the Coast & Archipelago region and Lapland in September 2026, completely free of charge.

Each tasting menu is envisioned by a local top chef and reflects the authentic food culture of its region, offering a glimpse into experiences travelers can explore throughout Finland.

Finland's Official Tasting Table: Key Details

- *Have Some Finnish* tastings will take place in Finland in September 2026
- One tasting will be held in the Coast and Archipelago region and the other in Lapland
- The application period begins on May 18 and ends June 9, 2026, at 4:59 AM EST (11:59 AM Finnish time (EEST)).
- 8 participants selected per tasting
- Selected participants announced: June 29, 2026
- Apply alone or together with one additional person
- Apply by completing the social media challenge on Instagram or TikTok and sign-up form on the campaign site.

To complete the challenge, post a video introducing yourself and answer the question: **Why do you want to Have Some Finnish?** Use the hashtag #HaveSomeFinnish and tag Visit Finland (@ourfinland on Instagram or @visitfinland.com on TikTok).

Regional Flavors, Reimagined by Finland's Top Chefs

To find the roots of Finland's culinary story, Visit Finland asked everyday Finns – from locals to fishermen, farmers and cooks – to share what their region truly tastes like. Thousands of answers were received, and the country's top chefs then transformed them into Finland's official tasting menus.

"Finland is your chance to discover the final great secret of the world's culinary cultures. Italian, Chinese, even the other Nordic food cultures are already part of the global conversation, while Finnish cuisine remains unknown," said **Heli Jimenez**, Senior Director, International Marketing at Business Finland. "In an era where foodies are constantly searching for the next big thing, Finland is exactly that: pure ingredients from local nature, like wild game and fresh fish, and unpretentious, simple recipes."

A Dinner at the Edge of the World

Finland's invitation goes further than food: it's a chance to experience where Finnish happiness comes from. Set at the most beautiful locations that Finland has to offer, each dinner connects the culinary experience to nature, the four Nordic seasons, and the people who grow and catch what ends up on the table. Finland's Official Tastings are a curated, multisensory journey: flavors, sights, sounds, atmosphere.

In Finland, cuisine is an experience where the location isn't just the setting, it's part of every bite. Each tasting turns the landscape into part of the menu where authentic dishes, place, and regional stories blend into an experience to be shared and remembered.

"Finnish food is a direct expression of the world's happiest lifestyle: rooted in nature, simplicity, and a deep connection to where ingredients come from. From sauna food rituals to foraging, Finnish cuisine tells a story that exists nowhere else – and we want visitors to experience that story in full," Jimenez explains.

Meet the Chefs Shaping the Tasting Experience:

Erik Mansikka – The Chef behind the Coast & Archipelago menu

With extensive experience in culinary competitions, Erik was awarded the Finnish Chef of the Year title in 2013. He is a respected and forward-thinking developer of Finnish gastronomy, with a career rooted in local ingredients, long-term craftsmanship, and a Nordic fine dining philosophy that is deeply connected to place. His approach reflects a consistent focus on seasonality, precision, and a deep respect for the ingredients he works with. Erik is the founder of the acclaimed Restaurant Kaskis in Turku, named one of the best restaurants in Finland.

Kaskis was awarded a Michelin star in 2022. The award was especially notable, as it marked the first Michelin star in Finland awarded outside the capital, Helsinki. In 2025, Kaskis was also recognized for its sustainability efforts when it received a Michelin Green Star.

Joel Manninen – The Chef behind the Lapland menu

Chef Joel Manninen represents a new generation of leading Finnish culinary talent. He gained national recognition after winning the Finnish Young Chefs Championship in 2025, and further established his international standing with a silver medal at the Young Chefs World Championship in 2026, organized by the prestigious gastronomic association Chaîne des Rôtisseurs.

His cuisine focuses on northern ingredients and a modern Arctic approach, where refined technical skill meets creativity and a distinct personal vision. Known for his contemporary interpretation of the North, he works at the intersection of flavor, technique, and the Arctic environment that shapes his cooking.

Joel is Head Chef at Sky Kitchen & View, a scenic restaurant set atop Ounasvaara fell in Rovaniemi, within Lapland Hotels Sky Ounasvaara. The restaurant is widely regarded as one of the top dining establishments in Finland.

PHOTOS

High-resolution images are available [here](#).

Please note the photo credits and use them appropriately.

ABOUT VISIT FINLAND:

*Visit Finland, a unit of Business Finland, is a national authority on tourism and an active force in promoting international travel to Finland. Its main goal is to develop Finland's international image as a destination. Visit Finland supports the travel industry through research and helps businesses and groups develop products and services for the international market. For more information, please visit www.visitfinland.com. **This material is distributed by Business Finland USA, Inc. on behalf of Business Finland Oy.***

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