

# Helsinki: The Old Town Bay Area

**Arabianranta** and **Vanhankaupunginlahti** ("Old Town Bay") are the places where Helsinki was originally founded in 1550 when King Gustavus Vasa of Sweden wanted to compete with the Hanseatic trading city of Tallinn. At that time the King ordered the burghers of Rauma, Ulvila, Porvoo and Tammisaari to move to Helsinki. In spite of it the growth of population and medieval trading traditions were slow to change. In 1640 the settlement moved to the district of Kruununhaka.



The name Arabia is found in 18th century documents whereas the Arabia factory was built in 1871. Arabianranta is a district where old and new, nature and urban city, industry and residence, studying and peace, art and technology meet. Innovation, courage and communal spirit are the key words to describe the area.

Arabianranta is also famous for its culture, creative industries, nature and higher education campuses. The Arabia factory, once the biggest ceramics factory in all of Europe, is a great example of Finnish industrial and design history and worth a visit. The Arabia products are characterized by a timeless beauty as well as high quality and functionality. The offerings are also highly appreciated, collectible and valued in Finland.

The Northern parts of Arabia shore are recently built to a new housing district with 220 acre beachfront residential resort and marina. The coastal zone is made into a park. The new development plan of the area aims to increase tourism and travel services in the coming years.



Helsinki will become the World Design Capital in 2012 and Arabianranta will be one of the main attractions. The future objective is also to attract as much businesses as possible in the field of creative industries to join the Arabianranta community, to operate and develop together with the local educational institutes.

Arabianranta has been determinedly developed towards "Art and Design City" more than ten years. The arts and culture are actively introduced to people of Arabianranta by educational institutes. The Arabianranta area is the most significant design cluster in Finland. Design enterprises and institutes of

art-related education are operating in the old factory facilities. The unique design atmosphere of the area is complete with the modern maritime housing area in its neighbourhood.

The Old Town Bay nearby the Arabia factory is a popular and beautiful recreational area with picturesque rapids. It has also international significance as a sanctuary for migratory birds. A practised bird-watcher may spot a hundred of species on a good day. A shallow sea bay surrounding the estuary of the river Vantaa, comprises extensive reed beds, shore meadows, sturdy forests and open waters. There are also the old fields, pastures and a rocky, wooded ridge in the north.

The Old Town Bay is a perfect place for fishing and one of the Helsinki's most popular fishing sites. Sea-trout, seasalmon and whitewish are planted in the river and estuary. A number of these trout and salmon species return after a few years of roaming the seas to spawn in the river. The salmon and trout can weight up to 10–20 kilos. Pike, pike-pearch and pearch are the best species to catch. In the winter time you may catch a glimpse of a mink or a white-throated dipper fishing by the water.



The Old Town Bay is also a part of an ecological network of protected areas in the territory of the European Union called Natura 2000. Visitors have to be considerate to the environment. People have to stay on paths and dock boards. It is also forbidden to pick plants or damage them, and to disturb the wildlife in any way.

An easy way to familiarize yourself to the area in summer season is the new Helsinki City Tour that includes design and architectural highlights in Helsinki. The bus stops at the Tempeliahaukio Church, the Senate Square and Arabia District. Helsinki Expert Oy offers in co-operation with Art and Design City Helsinki also guided tours for groups in the Arabia District. Groups can discover the Arabianranta area on a guided walk Arabia District Art & Design or on a guided city tour focusing on design and architecture in Helsinki, including the Design District Helsinki and Arabianranta (HelsinkiExpert.com).

Design with All Senses project's Food Design –tours will be offered in summer 2011. The product is applied as part of the World Design Capital 2012 Design Program. During the route you will see urban gardening, day-to-day design and enjoy Design menu prepared from local ingredients.

(FoodSighthSeeing.fi)

[www.visithelsinki.fi](http://www.visithelsinki.fi)

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