SIK International Student Guide 2017

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University of Oulu has published its own official guide for new international student guide in: http://www.oulu.fi/external/international/newstudentsguide.pdf
Use it as your primary guide for all kinds of issues here, for example medical services, housing etc., as it's really comprehensive. This international guide of our guild you are now reading was meant to be an addition to it, to include the information which you won't find from the official one :)

Student culture in Finland

Finnish student culture is quite special compared to rest of the world. Over a hundred years Finnish students have had tendency to come together for various more or less ambitious activities or just for to have fun, so there indeed are quite a many organizations founded and run by the students. Finnish law requires all of the university students to be a member of the student union of the university, for example, here it’s the OYY, Oulun Yliopiston Ylioppilaskunta, The Student Union of the University of Oulu. For more info on student union and what it does, check out the student calendar of OYY (you can get one from their office) and webpage: http://www.oyy.fi/en/

Technology students in Oulu have their own “roof guild” called Oulun Teekkariyhistys, OTY, which i.a. arranges the largest May Day (= Vappu, or Wappu as it is called) celebrations in our university and sells the tasseled technology student caps (=teekkarilakki) for freshmen, who get them after the first year. http://www.oty.fi/cms/index.php/en/

Then there are the subject organizations, or guilds as they are often called. Our organization is Sähköinsinöörikilta, The Guild of Electrical Engineering. It gathers the students of electrical engineering together, organises various activities, maintains the guild room, represents and defends the electrical engineering students in various levels of university bureaucracy, just to name a few.

Beside these, there are societies for hobbies, such as roleplaying, music, sports and others.

Guildroom and its rules and services

Our guild has its own guild room in the air raid shelter at the bottom of J2 staircase, neighboring Sigma, the guild of mathematics and physics. This is a place to hang out, study, meet other students, watch TV and Youtube, buy snacks and soft drinks and drink too much cheap coffee and tea during the day. We also have a pinball machine! Just remember to
clean up your own mess, no alcohol permitted and be friendly to people. The guildroom was renovated in autumn 2016.

**Student overalls**

Overalls are the most visible part of student culture. They are an excellent piece of clothing for partying, since you don’t have to worry about them getting dirty. Electrical engineering guild sells blue overalls to exchange students.

Badges for overalls can be bought from guilds, every guild has their own set of badges. One badge typically costs 2-5 euros. Overalls are used basically everywhere in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences, so there are probably many thousands of different badges produced. It’s a popular activity to exchange badges with other students, especially if they are from totally different university! You can also design and produce your own badges. Best way to make them stay is to sew them.

**Navigation**

OpenStreetMap offers a brilliant, detailed map of Oulu and its surroundings. Go to openstreetmap.org or search your smart device’s app store for any OSM-compatible navigation software. Google Maps is fine too and finds exact addresses better, but it’s much less detailed. City of Oulu maintains its own e-map, also in english: [http://kartta.ouka.fi](http://kartta.ouka.fi)

**Owning a bike in Oulu**

It is warmly recommended that you get yourself a bicycle as soon as you arrive. Oulu is well-known for its excellent network of cycle routes, and on many occasions cycling is a faster (and of course cheaper) way to travel than taking a bus. By the way, Oulu is regarded one of the best winter cycling cities in the world: [http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/never-mind-the-plows-five-things-i-learned-from-the-worlds-most-bike-friendly-winter-city](http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/never-mind-the-plows-five-things-i-learned-from-the-worlds-most-bike-friendly-winter-city). Bike thievery is of course a problem, so get a good lock as well (2 locks is not too much)! You also need a lamp on your bike in dark hours (during winter it’s dark all the time).

Cheap bikes can be bought for example from the marketplace groups of Facebook, Tori.fi and occasional auctions organized by the police.

**Public transportation**

Information on public transport in university exchange student guide is slightly outdated. For latest timetables, check out this site: [http://www.oulunjoukkoliikenne.fi/routes-and-timetables](http://www.oulunjoukkoliikenne.fi/routes-and-timetables) and also your OYY calendar, which has a list of timetables between Linnanmaa and center. Currently, these routes go back and forth university and center: 1, 2, 3, 8, 22. There is also night route 2N. Last bus from center to university during weekly nights is number 8 and it departs from the bus stop behind the city hall (Kaupungintalo, busstop number 2016) at 1.30.
For taxies, check out Taxify-app: [http://taxify.eu/]

**Partyplaces favoured by students**

Work hard, party hard they say? Parties are of course arranged in nightclubs and bars but sometimes, these are just too restraining and controlled locations. That is why there are studenthouses (these are not fraternity houses) and clubrooms in different parts of the city, where people can have fun more freely (after paying the booking fee if there is one). Here is a few popular:

*Teekkaritalo*: The technology student house at Kalervontie 7 in Kajionharju near the campus. This might be the most popular one and very legendary indeed. *currently under renovations*

*Walhalla*: The house owned by the Guild of Medicine, situated at Jaalakuja 1 in the island of Hietasaari.

*Arkkaritalo*: This is owned by the Guild of Architecture. Being almost 200 years old, it’s at Pursitie 8 in the island of Pikisaari near the city centre.

*Apinatalo*: Penthouse-style clubroom in the PSOAS student apartment house of Tellervontie 2. Spectacular view and also sauna! Name translates as “Monkey house” and it obviously comes from the animal statue nearby.

*YOK40*: Small clubroom at Yliopistokatu 40, includes sauna.

**OPM and OPMx2, what do they mean?**

Concerning parties, OPM (Oma Pullo Mukaan = bring your own bottle) means that you have to supply your own drinks. Whether they include alcohol or not, it’s up to you. OPMx2 (Oma Pullo ja Pyyhe Mukaan = bring your own bottle and towel) means that there is a hot sauna in the party, so bring your towel too. OPM can also have some humorous meanings, like Oma Pizza Mukaan (= take your own pizza with you).

**Alcohol politics in Finland**

Alcoholic beverages (≤4.7%), such as beer, cider and long drinks, can be bought from every grocery store. To buy those, you must be at least 18 years old. Note that grocery stores are only allowed to sell alcohol between hours 9 and 21. However, if you grab alcohol from the shelves before the clock hits 21, they are allowed to sell it to you even after 21.00, as you got it to your hands before 21! Mild alcoholic beverages (≤2.8%) are sold when shop is open. Take a note that here “long drink” or “lonkero” in Finnish (literally: lonkero = tentacle) doesn’t refer to a cocktail, but a mixture of grapefruit juice and gin, very popular in Finland. Try not to be shocked by the expensive prizes of alcoholic products in grocery stores and pubs :)
Stronger alcoholic beverages, such as wines and liquors, are sold in government owned Alko stores. To buy alcohol stronger than 22% you must be at least 20 years old. This doesn't apply to bars and nightclubs, there 18 years old can buy also stronger stuff. Nearest Alko to university is within Prisma department store of Linnanmaa.

Nightlife

Most of the bars and nightclubs in Oulu are located in the city centre, which is about 5 kilometres south of the campus. When you plan on going to the city centre to party, sometimes the easiest way to get there and back is to gather a group of people and call a taxi, which costs about 20-25€ between Linnanmaa and center depending on start and stop locations. Don’t trust your drunken cycling skills too much, especially in winter. Also, some of the street lights by the bicycle roads are switched off during weekday nights, so you need a lamp on your bike.

In Finnish nightclubs, there is almost always mandatory cloakroom fee, which can range between 2-3.5€. This isn't usually included in the admission fee, if there is any. Admission fees are on normal nights 3-6€ and if there is an artist or something special, it can be higher. When at the counter, don’t try to order double whisky or such, as bars aren’t allowed to sell double portions (okay, you may sometimes succeed). Remember that some nightclubs and bars have student discounts, which you get when showing your student card. Nightclubs and bars can of course decide the age limit, so not every place accepts 18-year olds. Bars also aren’t allowed to sell beverages to take away, so they must be consumed within serving area (= anniskelulaue in Finnish), which usually means the bar.

Finnish law only allows nightclubs to be open until 4.00, normal bars close earlier. There is always an event called pilkku (=dot) or valomerkki (=light sign) half an hour before closing, which announces that it’s the time to buy last drinks. So if nightclub closes at 4.00, last drinks can be bought just before 3.30. Remember, smoking is prohibited inside every bar, nightclub and cafe, and is only allowed in specified smoking areas and outside.

Fast- and other food

Pizza, kebab and other fastfood restaurants are plentiful in Oulu and on Finnish standards, they aren’t too expensive. There are many to choose from, so it’s up to you to decide which is best. Be wary, that during weekend nights when nightclubs and bars close, queueing lines can be long! McDonalds and Burger King have of course their own restaurants here, but you can also test Hesburger, a Finnish fastfood chain.

Near the university at the centre of Kajonharju there are two pubs. Caio is a more student oriented campus bar, serving also food. You can also play pool and snooker there and it has sauna, which can be booked. Pub Kuutio (= Pub Cube) is more favoured by the people of all ages living in the nearby area, as well as Teron Pub (= Tero’s Pub) on the other side of Kuivasjärvi lake.
Finnish habits

You might have heard this and that about sociality in Finland. As always, there are many truths and you have to discover which of them is real. It is true that we aren't the most active smalltalkers and may seem shy, you kinda have to get to know people or share something common with them to engage more discussion.

There is no gratuity (tip culture) in Finland. Nobody expects you to tip anywhere and it's definitely not a habit, but you can do it if you want, just don’t think you deserve special treatment after it.

You have surely heard something about this mysterious room sauna. What exactly happens in sauna? Sauna is one of those rare Finnish words which has made its way into other languages. Visiting in sauna with your friends or alone is favoured by Finnish people and almost all residential buildings have at least one common sauna for the people to use.

Yes, we go naked in the sauna. It might be a shock for some, but for us finns it’s the most natural thing in the world. However, sauna has nothing to do with sex. It’s a place for relaxing with friends and strangers, so stupid behaviour and harassment is not allowed.

At parties, there might be separate saunas for men and women, but as the time passes, they usually get mixed up.

Note that the front doors of Finnish houses and apartments open outward. When entering a Finnish house, always remember to take your shoes off.

Oulu-Finnish-English

Oulu of course has its own dialect, and some words and expressions of informal Finnish cannot be found from conventional dictionary. Here are some more or less popular colloquial stuff you might encounter.

Pikaruoka = Fast food
Katuruoka = Street food
Burgeri = Hampurilainen = Hamburger
Majo = Majoneesi = Mayonnaise. In Oulu, pizzas can include mayonnaise, which sometimes confuses people from the southern Finland.
Ranut = Ranskalaiset perunat = French fries
Mätöt = informal plural word regarding generally some indefinable pile of (fast)food
Rieska = Type of bread favoured at Oulu region
Känkky = Pizza
Känkkylä = Pizzeria = Pizza & kebab restaurant
Kebu = Kebab
Rullakebu = Rolled kebab
Vege/kasvis = Vegetarian food
Bisse/kalja (kalia in spoken Oulu dialect)/olut = Beer
Sidukka = Siideri = Cider
Lonku = Lonkero (long drink, as described earlier)
Karpalolonku = Cranberry-flavoured lonkero
Vinkku = Viini = Wine
Punkku = Punaviini = Red wine
Valkkari = Valkoviini = White wine
Kyykkviini = Crouching wine, cheap wine from Alko, situated in lower shelves so you have to crouch to get it
Kotiviini = Homemade wine
Skumppa/kuohari = Shampanja/kuohviini = Champagne/sparkling wine
Jallu = Jaloviina(*) = A type of a cut brandy, rather popular at least among academic people
Salmiakki = Salty liquorice, a tasty candy that is popular in Finland
Salmari = Salty liquorice flavoured liqueur
Kilju = Finnish homemade alcoholic beverage. Requires skill to get it taste good.
Rööki = Tupakka = Cigarette
Bileet = Juhlat = Party
Etkot = Beforeparty
Jatkat = Afterparty
JaJatkat = AfterAfterparty
Dokata/ryypätä = To drink (for to be drunk)
Selvinpäin = To be sober, not to drink alcohol (literal translation = clear minded)
Kännissä, päässään = Humalassa = Intoxicated, drunken
Sammua = To pass out
Onnikka = Bussi = Bus
Läppäri = Laptop computer (not to be confused with Lappari)
Lappari = nickname for Lapin Kulta -beer
Koodaus, ohjelmointi = Coding, programming
Kolvi = Soldering iron
Kolvaus = Soldering
Leiska = Layout
Skema = Schematic
Skoooppi = Oskilloskooopi = Oscilloscope
Dyykkaus = Dumpster diving in order to find something useful (such as electronics…)
Sääätösen/tuunaus/modaus = Words meaning tuning and modification of something
Säätämö = Nickname for our former electronics lab TS102
Vihreät naulakot = The Green coat racks = a landmark at the campus, a good place to meet. Tickets to parties are usually sold here.
Oranssit naulakot = The Orange coat racks = another landmark at the campus

Swedish is the second official language of Finland, so some signs and announcements are also written in Swedish. Oulu isn’t really a bilingual city, but at the coast, some towns and villages are almost completely Swedish-speaking and generally Swedish is more spoken at the south.
Events and spending free time in Oulu

The University grand opening party Vulcanalia is worth attending. The event takes place at Ouluhalli, (address Ylioppilaantie 4), in 7th of September. Tickets can be bought either from University in advance, or from the entrance of the event. Live music is played and alcoholic beverages are sold.

Do you consider yourself a champion in drinking? In Finland, you can accomplish a degree in drinking alcohol. Mallasappro is held in the fall of each year by the Guild of Process Engineering and it really gathers quite a lot of university students together. It’s an event where one challenges oneself in drinking a certain amount of alcohol in a set time limit, so it’s a kind of a pub crawl organized in the center of Oulu. If you are planning to attend, it’s highly recommended to take a sober friend with you, so you don’t get lost or hit by a car. Similar “appros” are arranged also in other university cities.

Student parties are held in various nightclubs as written before. These are advertised in Facebook and by posters at university.

For gigs and other musical events, check them out from Facebook-page “Oulu Gig Guide”. One of the most important rock venues is 45 Special. In the district of Välivainio, there is a place called Tukikohka where occasionally some gigs are held. It is a former bus service depot and more alternative/punk-oriented. Heavy metal fans should check out Hevimesta near the train station. Near that is Yöhuikka, an underground club favoured by open-minded and rainbow-people. Rummers’ Club is a rum&pirate-themed bar where gigs and parties are arranged sometimes.

Many stylish cafés can be found in the city centre. Cafés serve various caffeinated beverages, all kinds of pastries, soft drinks and some even alcohol. Some cafés and bars also have a selection of board games.

If you are looking for a place to read or study, the new TellUs studying centre at the university is made for that. The university main library Pegasus main library is good for quiet studying, as also is the Oulu main library in city centre near market square. In main library, there is also a space for listening to music and a café. The main lobby often serves as a place for art exhibitions, and there are some foreign newspapers to read.

LASERTAAAG! What is lasertag? It’s a sporty battle game involving a dark smoky labyrinth, energetic music and laser weapons. Great fun and good exercise. Laser tag can be played at Megazone Arena Oulu in the city centre.

There are 2 bowling halls in Oulu, one in Heinäpää and one in Alppila. They also offer “shining bowling” which is normal bowling but with ultraviolet lights.

Indoor climbing can be done in Oulu Climbing Centre in former factory:
http://www.oulunkiipeilykeskus.com/
Traveling in Finland

If you are to travel to another city or town in Finland, probably the easiest way is to take a train. Train tickets can be bought online from www.vr.fi, the State Railways. Students get a ~50% discount from the original prizes, but this requires presenting a valid student card. This discount can be used by international students as well: https://www.vr.fi/cs/vr/en/students_new

If you are going to Helsinki, you should also check if there are cheap flights available, Norwegian and Finnair have good offers every now and then, especially if you book the flight early. A flight to Helsinki only takes about 50 minutes. These cheap flights can be bought from for example www.ebookers.fi.

One of the cheapest, but also slowest, ways to travel is the Onnibus bus system: http://www.onnibus.com/en/index.htm. When booking in advance early, ticket from Oulu to Helsinki can be as cheap as 15€! Currently they don’t use seat tickets so an early bird at the busstop catches the best seats.