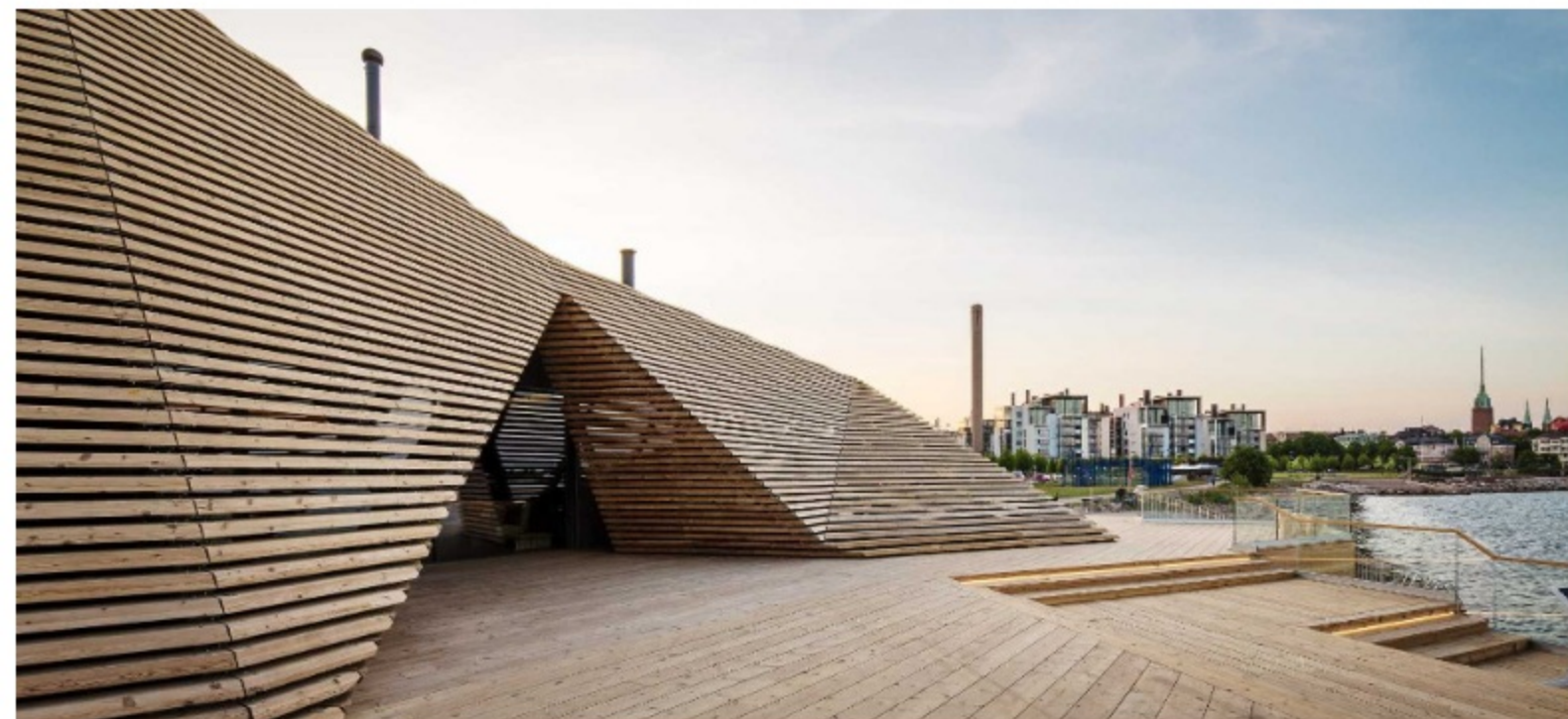


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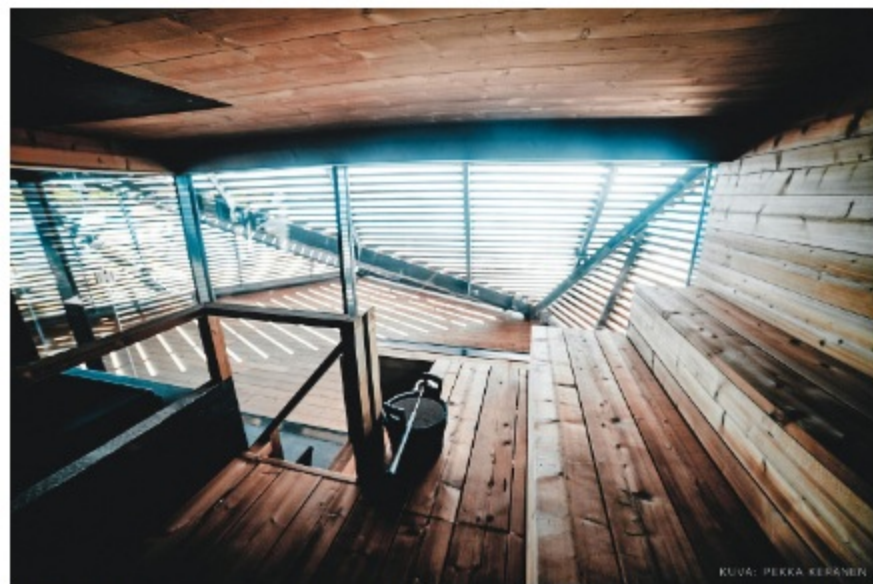
Head for the sauna in Helsinki's Loyly

By [Aruna Rathod](#) on 30th December 2017

What's the best thing to do on a cold autumn evening in Helsinki? Head for the sauna! Aruna Rathod comes back refreshed after a sauna session at Loyly in Helsinki.

After walking around the chic Design District of Helsinki, it was time to relax in a sauna like all Finns do. What better than Loyly that located in the Hernesaari district. Not only is the building beautiful, the entire experience was refreshing for me. Located on the waterfront, Loyly was designed by Avanto Architects. Loyly – means the steam that comes when you throw water on hot stones in a sauna. It is great during summer too as visitors can enjoy the fabulous terraces then besides the saunas.

It houses a cafe, restaurant and terraces besides the saunas. The interior design of the restaurant, the terrace and the sauna bar and the fireplace room has been done by Joanna Laajisto's Creative Studio handwriting. Laajisto decided to split the space into the bar section on the mezzanine and the long sofas lined up in the hall. Everything from the room offers unobstructed views of the sea.



KUVA: PEKKA KERÄNEN

Löyly, an urban oasis occupying a stretch of beautiful Helsinki waterfront, offers a warm welcome and many delights for locals and visitors alike. Image credit: Pekka Keränen / Visit Helsinki

About Finland and saunas

While saunas are present in other cultures, in Finland it is a part of the culture. There are two million saunas in Finland, for a population of 5.3 million. Each apartment has its own sauna and if not, there is a common sauna in every building. Big companies and state institutions have their own saunas. The president has an official sauna, as does the prime minister.

Refreshing & Rejuvenating

After keeping my shoes, bag, socks and jacket, I proceeded to the reception where an attendant handed over a towel, a napkin and keys to the locker. I changed into a swimsuit, put my clothes into a locker, had a shower and went to the sauna. There were men and women chatting inside. Saunas are a place to basically relax, keeping your worries outside.



Löyly offers both stunning views and exceptional architecture. Image credit: Harri Tarvainen

Initially after I was seated on the napkin, it seemed fine and slowly by body began experiencing the heat. Löyly has three saunas that wood-heated: a continuous-heated sauna, a one-way sauna and the only open smoke sauna in Helsinki. With one visit you can experience all the traditional types of steam.

So once you are hot, step out into the spa area and a lounge with fireplace where you can rest. Sip on a cold drink or beer and if you are up to it, you could go for a swim in the chilly waters! Once you are cold, you can go back into the sauna and get warm. Three rounds are good enough to refresh. I did just two since I felt comfortable. After taking a shower, I realised that I was feeling extremely refreshed.



Stunning views and plenty of space! Löyly boasts more than 1,600m² of outdoor seating area, split over three levels.

Image credit: Julia Kivela / Visit Finland

The temperature in the hot room is a matter of preference but the Finnish Sauna Society recommends from 80 to 100 degrees Celsius. Some people, however, are quite happy in 70-degree heat.

I got to know that traditional saunas are heated by wood, burned either in a stove with a chimney, or by a stove with no chimney. The latter – a smoke-sauna – is the original sauna and believed by most Finns to be the best. The door is closed after the wood has burned down (and most of the smoke has escaped), leaving the embers to heat the sauna to the proper temperature, but giving a soft heat and the aroma of woodsmoke.

All saunas have a basket of rocks heated by the stove on which to throw water to increase the humidity. Called “löyly” in Finnish, the steam increases the feeling of heat and makes you sweat.

Traditional saunas meant that one had to jump into a lake, or roll in the snow. But since not everyone is familiar, it's simple to just shower. For those who would like a roll in the snow, make sure it is fresh and powdery: old, icy snow can have an effect on your skin like sandpaper.



Enjoy mouthwatering food at Löyly's delightful restaurant. Image credit: Julia Kivela / Visit Finland

In summertime, the practice is to hand over a “vihta” – a bunch of birch branches which you dip in water and with which you then gently flagellate yourself – to stimulate circulation and exude aroma.

Done with sweating, cooling and refreshing myself, I headed to my hotel. Ahmed, my taxi driver made it a point to tell me to have plenty of water in the night as the sweat dehydrates the system.



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