

Summer sun in Finland? Åland isles try to attract tourists to cooler climate

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. What is your ideal place for a holiday? Draw and share with a partner.



2 Key words

a. Match these key words from the article to their definitions.

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--|
| 1. archipelago | _____ | a. a group of islands |
| 2. autonomous | _____ | b. farther away, especially from home or the usual place |
| 3. campaign | _____ | c. small, rocky islands or reefs that are too small to be inhabited |
| 4. craftsmanship | _____ | d. independent; having the freedom to control itself |
| 5. escalating | _____ | e. increasing or becoming more intense |
| 6. farther afield | _____ | f. different from |
| 7. seeking | _____ | g. looking for; trying to find |
| 8. skerries | _____ | h. coordinated actions or efforts aimed at achieving a specific goal, typically in areas such as politics, marketing or social movements |
| 9. unlike | _____ | i. covering a broad area or being recognised by a large number of people |
| 10. widely | _____ | j. the skill and artistry demonstrated in the creation of high-quality, finely made objects, reflecting the mastery and attention to detail of the artisan |

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b. Use the words from task a to complete the following sentences.

1. The country is now _____ and can make its own decisions.
2. Some of my friends want to study _____ in order to learn new languages.
3. Mary is always _____ new professional challenges and opportunities.
4. The situation is _____ and may become a real problem in the future.
5. _____ her twin brother, she really enjoys her drama lessons.
6. They are running a _____ to protect the environment.
7. Sam's work is _____ recognised for being innovative in his field.

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Miranda Bryant

2 August, 2024

- Jenny Björklund was out on an island in Finland's Åland archipelago with a friend when they saw a boat approaching across the Baltic Sea. She assured her friend, who was visiting from Gothenburg in Sweden, that they would be left alone.
- "Don't worry, they won't come here because we are here. This is our island," Björklund, a co-owner of a restaurant on the archipelago, told her friend. And she was right.
- In this autonomous region of Finland, there is plenty of space. With 6,757 islands of at least 2,500 sq metres – plus a further 20,000 smaller islands and skerries – and a population of little more than 30,500, there is almost an island per person.
- With direct ferry routes from several Swedish and Finnish ports, Åland has long been an established destination among Swedish and Finnish tourists. But tourists from farther afield are also starting to visit.
- At Smakbyn, the restaurant Björklund runs with her husband, near the medieval Kastelholm Castle up the road, she says she has noticed an increase in visitors from other parts of Europe.
- "We are getting more and more people from middle Europe and a lot more from southern Europe. Before, almost all of them were from Finland and Sweden, about 95%," she said, but that number is going down. "We're getting more from Germany, England."
- Rising temperatures in more traditional destinations such as Spain, she added, presented "an opportunity here in the north".
- As southern Europe swelters, with temperatures as high as 44C in Spain and forest fires in Greece and Croatia, this Nordic riviera is among the destinations across northern Europe seeking to attract more tourists as the rapidly escalating climate crisis changes tourism habits.
- Visit Åland, the regional tourism authority, said in May there was a 10% increase in hotel stays, with about 1.3 million people now coming to the islands annually. While Swedish tourists have decreased, Finnish tourists have increased, with many also coming from Germany, Latvia and Estonia.
- Kristiina Hietasaari, a senior director at Visit Finland, said it is trying to promote Finland as a summertime destination, as well as a winter one. "Finland has so much to offer in summertime – we want to fight for our share," she said. "Today it's maybe easier than ever before due to high temperatures in Europe."
- Finland has experienced warm weather lately, but it is nothing compared with southern Europe. "The highest we can have is 30C and that's only a couple of days a year," Hietasaari said. As tourist numbers are still quite low, unlike many of the most popular southern European destinations, Finnish people are generally pro-visitors, she said.
- Despite an increase in visitors, it remains difficult for some local businesses that depend on tourists during the short summer season. An ice-cream shop owner has seen an increase in visitors. "They have been doing a lot of campaigns in Finland, lifting up Åland, and it's shown," she said. But she would like to see it promoted more widely. "We can handle the tourists."
- With its cooler climate and nature, Åland has huge potential, but Finland is not promoted as effectively as the rest of the Nordics. "We don't know how to market ourselves," said Jussi, 38, adding, "Åland is beautiful. Calm, quiet landscapes with the archipelago, great local products and a lot of craftsmanship and good food."

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3 Comprehension check

a. Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

1. Most tourists visiting Åland used to be Swedish and Finnish but lately there are more visitors **from farther afield / coming for the day / using the direct ferry routes**.
2. Nordic countries are trying to take advantage of changes in **hotel prices / tourism habits / traditional destinations** caused by the climate crisis.
3. In comparison with the rest of Europe, tourism in the area is **growing rapidly / surprisingly stable / still quite low**.
4. There have been **campaigns / local initiatives / advertisements** to promote the country as a tourist destination.
5. Some locals believe the area should be advertised **across the country / in certain European countries / more widely** to continue to increase the number of visitors.
6. For some, the main challenge is learning how to **market themselves / handle the tourists / make the most of the summer season**.

4 Key language

a. Complete the sentences from the article with the present continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

"We 1 _____ (**get**) more and more people from middle Europe and a lot more from southern Europe. Before, almost all of them were from Finland and Sweden, about 95%," but that number 2 _____ (**go**) down.

b. Look at the complete sentences in task A and choose the correct options below.

We use the present continuous to describe **trends or changes / permanent situations that happened in the past / are happening now** and are **likely / not likely** to continue in the near future.

c. Write three sentences using present continuous to talk about current events or tendencies.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- 'Rising temperatures in more traditional destinations such as Spain present an opportunity here in the north.'
- 'Finland has so much to offer in summertime – we want to fight for our share. Today it's maybe easier than ever before due to high temperatures in Europe.'
- 'Despite an increase in visitors, it remains difficult for some local businesses that depend on tourists during the short summer season.'

6 In your own words

- a. In pairs or small groups, do some online research to find a holiday destination that is not very popular with tourists.**
- b. Prepare a presentation to share your findings with the group, explaining why you would like to visit this place.**
- c. Listen to your classmates' ideas and decide which place you would choose to visit on your next holidays.**