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THE MAGAZINE FOR STYLISH MUMS



Crawling through the forest, my daughter ran on ahead and found Moomin Papa relaxing in a hammock, surrounded by small children listening to story time by a character in a pointy hat. We wandered on through the beautiful, sun-dappled woodland, past waterfalls and an oversized pumpkin house, until we reached the peak of the island and looked down at the sea... where a ginormous dragon creature was happily swimming across the surface! This may sound like some sort of surreal dream... but we were in fact in Moomin World - quite possibly the most enchanting theme park in the world!

We had decided to do a Moomin tour of Finland after our seven-year-old daughter had fallen in love with the whimsical stories by the Finnish author Tove Jansson. Having recently visited numerous traditional theme parks, I had also been yearning for more tranquil, nature-based attractions that our young toddler could participate in. Moomin World seemed to offer the perfect solution - a whole island of activities dedicated to fairy tales and imaginative play, without a rollercoaster in sight - while also being easy to get to from the UK for a long weekend family break.

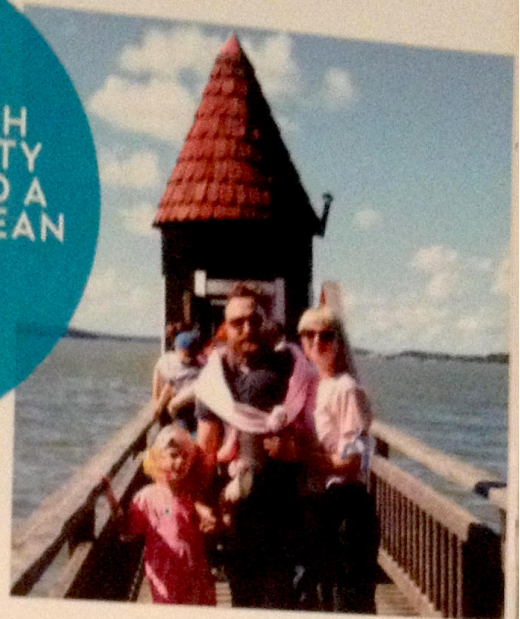
We decided to take the scenic route to Moomin World, by starting our adventure in Helsinki with a visit to one of the popular Moomin cafes. There are now five in the city, serving up locally produced dishes

Moomin LANDING

Fan of the magical Moomins?
Head to Finland to discover
Tove Jansson's timeless creations....

Words **ZOEY GOTO**

"TURKU IS BOTH THE OLDEST CITY IN FINLAND AND A FORMER EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE"



in Nordic-chic surroundings. If your kids like Moomins, they will adore these quirky, Moomin-tastic cafes. There are Moomin characters sprinkled onto drinks, food is served on Moomin plates, the biscuits are Moomin shaped, you can have a Moomin tea party with the various toys dotted around the cafe, or relax in the reading corner with a book - by Tove Jansson, naturally!

We filled up on the national dish of Finland - Karelian rice pasties - then headed off to make the two and a half hour train journey to Turku, situated on the south-west coast. We based ourselves in the centre of Turku, a 30 minute bus journey from Moomin World, but if you wanted to stay nearer to park then the town of Naantali offers many Airbnb options and the Naantali Spa hotel has a great Moomin themed family room that sleeps four.

Turku is both the oldest city in Finland and a former European capital of culture, and offers plenty to see and do, including art galleries, a medieval castle, where my husband loved meeting the guides dressed in period costume, and the pretty river Aura, with its floating bars and restaurants. We decided to sample a few of the local eateries by using the Turku Food Walk card, where you restaurant-hop across the city trying out different courses.

But as our main focus of the weekend was Moomin World, we headed over there next day. The island can be reached by boat via a wooden bridge, and as soon as we arrived we were greeted by Moomin characters, who were like a hug-magnet for the children.



We eased ourselves into the Moomin World experience by having a delicious Swedish meatball and gravy lunch in Moomin Mama's café, sat on a scenic deck overlooking the sea. We then headed to the five-story Moomin house in the centre of the park, where the children play-cooked in Moomin Mama's famous kitchen and joined in with a Moomin character sing-along on the porch. There are also theatre shows throughout the day, at one of two Moomin World theatres on the island.

Our toddler kicked off her shoe and explored the barefoot nature trail, while our eldest slid down the sweeping slide on Moomin Papa's boat and made friends with bracelets with the Too-ticky characters. We squeezed in a quick visit to the post office to send Moomin-stamped postcards home, and then headed to Snufkin's camp in the forest for story time.

Rounding off the day, we ambled down to the peaceful children's beach for some shallow paddling, before indulging in waffles, jam and cream from Fillyjonk's café. Although Moomin World offers many places to eat and buy Moomin gifts, the overall feel is refreshingly non-commercial. Having said that, we did manage to leave with bags full of Little My socks and some irresistible Moomin toys!

Leaving Moomin World and heading back into Turku, I was surprised that after a full day of activities we were not collapsing into an exhausted heap. Perhaps it was the Finnish fresh air, or Moomin World's relaxed atmosphere, but we all left feeling invigorated and as if we'd collectively experienced something truly magical. ☺



THE MOOMIN TRAIL LOWDOWN

You can fly to either Helsinki or Turku with Air Baltic: airbaltic.com

Our weekend getaway season runs from the beginning of June until late August: www.moominworld.fi

For Moomin World souvenirs: [moominworld.com](http://www.moominworld.com)

Further information on Finland and Turku: [visitfinland.com](http://www.visitfinland.com) [visitturku.fi](http://www.visitturku.fi)