

Helsinki

## Turning 25: The Helsinki Book Fair Has Become the Largest Literary Event in the Nordics



Helsinki Book Fair has grown into the largest literary event in the Nordics. Photo: Emmi Kähkönen, Helsinki Book Fair

**The Helsinki Book Fair opens today, celebrating its 25th edition at the Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre, 23–26 October 2025. Over the years, the fair has grown into the largest literary event in the Nordics, bringing together readers, writers, publishers, and cultural influencers from around the world. This year’s program highlights the international nature of the event, with around 40 guest authors from across Europe and beyond.**

Reading and literature are deeply rooted in the Helsinki’s identity – from the internationally acclaimed Finnish authors and translators to the city’s extensive network of libraries, which are among the most visited in the world. The popularity of Helsinki’s libraries, including the iconic Oodi

Library, reflects how literature continues to connect people, inspire creativity, and strengthen a shared cultural life.

This year, the Helsinki Book Fair celebrates its 25th anniversary. During the years it has grown to be the largest literary event in the Nordics in terms of attendance. Last year 97,725 people attended the fair over four days, and additionally, the event's programs were streamed more than 20,000 times with online tickets. The previous attendance record for the Helsinki Book Fair was from 2019, when the fair had 91,952 visitors. In 2023, the Helsinki Book Fair had 88,071 visitors. At the same time, the Wine & Food Fair is arranged.

"Both visitor and book sales records year after year speak not only to the appeal of the event, but also to Finland's strong reading tradition and the vitality of Finnish literary culture," says Ville Blåfield, Program Director of the Helsinki Book Fair. "The atmosphere is unique. The event has become a highlight of the year for readers, authors, and publishers. This year we welcome around 40 international guest authors at the fair. Finland is a bilingual country, and we want to offer content to both Finnish and Swedish speakers. Three of our 17 program stages are dedicated to Swedish-language literature," continues Blåfield.

"It's inspiring to see how readers of all ages come together here – not only to celebrate books, but to engage with the questions shaping our societies. Literature and culture remain vital spaces for reflection, dialogue and imagination. Keeping them open, dynamic and connected across borders is essential if future generations are to find their own voices in them," says John Steinmark, Programme Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair, joining the Helsinki Book Fair for the first time as a special guest.

## **A nationally significant cultural arena and literary event**

The Helsinki Book Fair promotes reading interest, appreciation for literature, and book sales in Finland. The event is a nationally significant cultural arena; a current pioneer, a challenging conversation partner, as well as a storyteller and a nurturer of the heart. The main values of the book fair are freedom of speech, equality, and respect for human dignity.

The events not only create experiences but also generate jobs and support the economy. The venue generated an income stream of €245 million for the Helsinki region, and the employment impact of exhibition activities amounted to 3,335 person-years.

Next time, the Helsinki Book Fair and the Wine & Food event will take place on 22–25 October 2026, at the Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre.

### **More information:**

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## **Helsinki Book Fair**

Helsinki Book Fair is arranged every October in Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre. The event is arranged by Helsinki Expo and Convention Centre in collaboration with the Finnish Publishers' Association and the Booksellers' Association of Finland. The Helsinki Book Fair 2025 features 17 program stages with over 900 author interviews and discussions. Well over 1,000 authors, artists, academics, and political decision-makers will participate in the discussions.