



# **OULU EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2026**





**Oulu**

**European Capital of  
Culture 2026**



**OULU**



# CITY OF OULU, FINLAND

INTELLIGENT, COMPASSIONATE, CREATIVE

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209 000 INHABITANTS

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AVERAGE AGE 39

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EASILY ACCESSIBLE, LIGHT OF THE NORTH

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**Extreme,  
wonderous  
winter**







**Bright, lively  
summer**







**Dark,  
luminous  
autumn**





The background image shows a large, diverse crowd of people gathered outdoors, likely for a cultural event. In the foreground, the backs of two young children with short brown hair and large red bows are visible as they look towards the crowd. The scene is partially obscured by a dark, geometric metal structure on the left and a glass barrier in the center.

# **European Capital of Culture 2026**

**Main theme:  
CULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

## **Co-creation**

Thousands of people  
participated in the preparation  
of the programme

## **Budget**

2021-2027 in total 50 M€



# What is European Capital of Culture exactly?

**Since 1985 (Finland: Helsinki 2000, Turku 2011)**

- One of the most visible actions of the European Union
- Highlights the importance of cities as centres of cultural life
- International cooperation opens doors for art and culture professionals – and brings new cultural life to Finland





# THE GOALS OF OULU2026

## FROM A COLD TECH CITY TO A **VIBRANT, GRIPPING CITY**

- Oulu's reputation as a city of culture strengthens in Finland by 25% and Oulu's international visibility grows by 25% by 2027
- 50% of the events of the cultural programme's projects take place outside of established cultural facilities
- Net migration is positive among young adults (25–34 years) in 2027





# THE GOALS OF OULU2026

## FROM AN UNBALANCED COMMUNITY TOWARDS **EQUAL CULTURAL RIGHTS**

- 40% of Oulu2026 projects are implemented outside of Oulu city centre
- 10% of residents participate as volunteers and 80% as an audience in Oulu2026 activities in the project area
- 80% of Oulu's residents feel that, by 2026, it is good for everyone to be in Oulu

## FROM A PERIPHERIC AREA TO A **CREATIVE AREA** WITH NEW JOBS

- 80% of Oulu2026 projects are implemented via international cooperation
- 70% of Oulu2026 projects combine art and technology
- The creative economy in the Oulu region has grown by 20% and the number of jobs in the creative sector has grown by 30% by 2027





Brave Hinterland



Cool Contrasts



Wild City



CULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE



# Brave Hinterland

Far away from everything, on the periphery of Europe we face an uncompromising nature, extreme climate (change), enormous distances and wild vastness, excessive light and excessive darkness. Only a few in Europe are willing to live with extreme hardship and extreme beauty.

Actual Climate Change impacts us more visibly here than almost anywhere else in Europe with biodiversity already significantly diminished. The global response to climate change has so far been too timid. We explore this topic in our theme Brave Hinterland.





# Cool Contrasts

Oulu is the kingdom of great contrasts – positive, but also challenging. Contrasts such as the nightless nights of the midnight sun and sunless days in the heart of winter. Contrasts have the power both to connect and disconnect, but also to create something new.

Cool Contrasts is about rebalancing our communities. There is already a recognised European need to use culture as a means to help reduce health inequalities. Oulu2026 will work with our citizens and with European partners to develop cultural practices that promote positive engagement to rebalance these inequalities.





# Wild City

Oulu is on the cusp. We could settle for being a tame municipal city on the fringe. Or we could go Wild. We choose Wild.

With Wild City we bring wildness into the city by celebrating the wilderness around it. Creating a new cultural approach with our unique northern vibe. Oulu as a cultural laboratory, going wild for Europe.

What exactly is a creative city in the middle of the wild nature? What is a lively, creative village? How do art, subcultures and creative spaces fill emptiness, silence and darkness?





# OULU2026 REGION

Oulu2026 region covers 36 municipalities from the North

- the ECoC title belongs to the entire region
- Region will have an active role in the culture programme.
- Regional programme:  
Art & Nature Trails  
Arctic Food Lab  
In Europe's Spotlight





# THE CULTURAL PROGRAM IS STARTING TO SHOW!

**Peace Machine** – a flagship project that unites people in Europe

**Arctic Food Lab** celebrates arctic gastronomy in everyday life

**The Cultural Program is expanding with Open Calls**





# Let's meet in social media!



[www oulu2026.eu](http://www oulu2026.eu)



**Facebook:**  
Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture



**Twitter:**  
Oulu2026 Official



**Instagram:**  
oulu2026official



**Email**  
Oulu2026@ouka.fi

