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-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

Experience Finnish Sauna at ASHM! *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland* October 18, 2024 – March 9, 2025



Philadelphia, PA- As the weather grows cooler, step into the steam-filled world of Finnish Sauna when *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland* opens at the American Swedish Historical Museum in FDR Park.

From the start of one's life to one's final days, the act of taking a sauna is an inherent part of the Finnish culture. The tradition stretches back almost 10,000 years – the earliest examples of sauna culture are from 7,000 BC. Taking a sauna involves both a physical and mental cleansing which creates a sense of inner peace. The sauna is a sacred space that brings families, friends, and even diplomats together. Finns bring sauna wherever they go, including the United States, and the tradition still thrives in certain regions of America where many Finnish people have settled.

Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland explores the Finnish sauna tradition with a model sauna and sauna objects as well as stories, photos, and videos shared with us from home and abroad. In addition to Finnish sauna, the exhibition presents related sweating practices from cultural groups around the world, including the Japanese and the Lakota in the United States, highlighting their similarities and differences to Finnish sauna.

Visit *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland* to experience this special cultural practice and create your own sauna memories.

Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland will be on view at ASHM from October 18, 2024 to March 9, 2025. Admission is included with ASHM general tickets. ASHM is open Tuesday through Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm and weekends 12:00 - 4:00 pm.

Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland was organized by Nordic Northwest, Portland Oregon and made possible by the generous support of Finlandia Foundation National.

We are grateful for support from the ASHM Auxiliary, Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Midsommarklubben, Red Moose Charitable Trust, and an anonymous foundation. Funding for the American Swedish Historical Museum is supported by grants from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum

Commission, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

Exhibition Events:

Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland Preview Night

Thursday, October 18th

5:00 – 8:00 pm

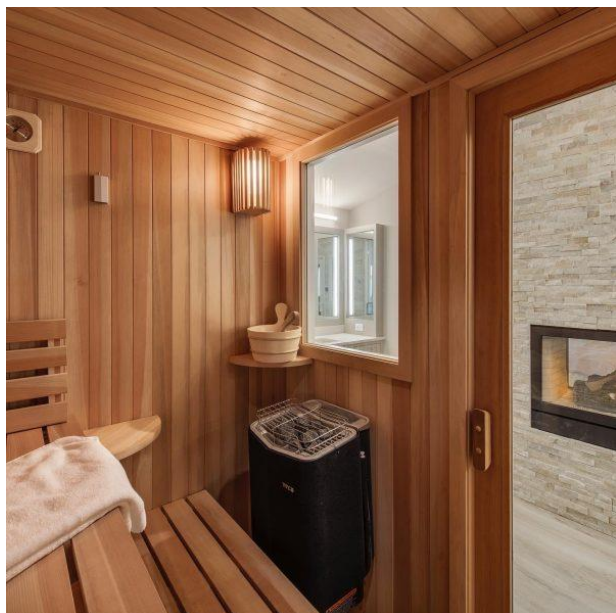
Celebrate Finnish culture at this sneak preview of *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland*! To celebrate the exhibit, ASHM will host the Finlandia Foundation National's performer of the year, Miska Kajanus! Miska is a Finnish-American actor, comedian, musician, and filmmaker living in Los Angeles. He will present his solo show, *My Immigrant Story*, a comedic monologue in which he shares his funny, lifelong journey from Finland to America. The event will also feature treats from the Finnish Arctic Swan Bakery.

This event is free to the public with light refreshments served. Please RSVP to help us plan: <https://www.americanswedish.org/events/exhibition-preview-night-sauna-life-sauna-culture-finland>

Look out for information about our outdoor sauna experience coming this winter and for more programming during National Sauna Week: February 16-22, 2025.

Finlandia Foundation National has declared the last full week in February National Sauna Week to build awareness and appreciation of sauna in Finnish and Finnish-American culture. The first annual celebration of the Sauna was in 2022.

Images:



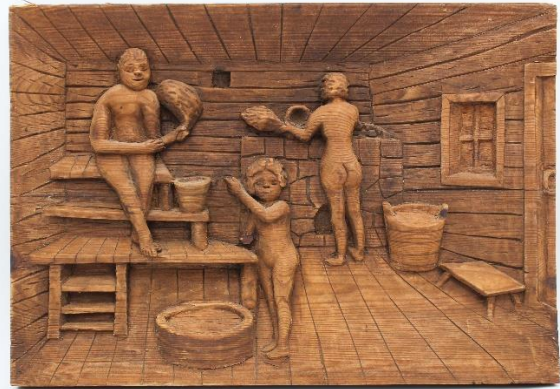
Interior of a modern sauna from Baltic Leisure, Oxford, PA.



Floating sauna from GO'C Architecture and Design Studio, Seattle, WA. Photo by Kevin Scott.



Interior of Sauna Hermanni, Helsinki, Finland.



Wood carving of a sauna scene from the family of Laura Salminen.

About ASHM:

Visit the American Swedish Historical Museum to learn the forgotten history of Swedes in Philadelphia. Built in 1926 during the Sesquicentennial, the Museum has a unique interior divided into a dozen galleries designed to highlight Scandinavian influences in America. The galleries explore a range of topics including the New Sweden Colony, women's history, scientific innovations, and Swedish craft arts. ASHM hosts a variety of programs from Swedish holiday celebrations to history lectures to family programs.

The mission of the ASHM is to welcome all people to explore cultural identity through the story of Scandinavians. The Museum offers a vibrant community dedicated to preserving and interpreting culture through celebrations and exhibitions, while providing opportunities to learn, experience, and grow. No matter your age or interests, ASHM has something for you! Visit our website www.americanswedish.org to learn more.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in scenic FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia near the Sports Complex. Plenty of free parking is available. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street Subway's NRG/Pattison Avenue stop is within walking distance or SEPTA's Bus Route 17 (to Pattison) can bring you right to the Museum.