



Bonfires

Midsummer bonfire in Seurasaari. Bonfires are very common in Finland, where many people spend their midsummer in the countryside outside towns.

Before 1316, the summer solstice was called *Ukon juhla*, after the Finnish god Ukko. In Karelian tradition, many bonfires were burned side by side, the biggest of which was called *Ukko-kokko* (the "bonfire of Ukko"). After the celebrations were Christianized, the holiday became known as *juhannus* after John the Baptist (Finnish: *Johannes Kastaja*).

Since 1955, the holiday has always been on a Saturday (between June 20 and June 26). Earlier it was always on June 24. Many of the celebrations of midsummer take place on midsummer eve, when many workplaces are closed and shops must close their doors at noon.

In the Finnish midsummer celebration, bonfires (Finnish *kokko*) are very common and are burnt at lakesides and by the sea.^{[2][8]} Often two young birch trees (*koivu*) are placed on either side of the front door to welcome visitors.^[9] Swedish-speaking Finns often celebrate by erecting a midsummer or maypole (Swedish *midsommarstång*, *majstång*).**

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8b/Seurasaari-2005-johannus2.jpg>

**<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midsummer#Finland>

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Midsummer bonfire in Mäntsälä, Finland**

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Midsummer_bonfire.jpg

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Notable among these is [Juhannus](#), the Finnish [Midsummer](#). A majority of Finns retreat to summer cottages (*mökki*) on any one of Finland's numerous lakes. Depending on the region, a bonfire at midnight celebrates the summer [solstice](#), and in Åland, the Swedish-originated tradition of dancing around the [Maypole](#) is observed. The midsummer traditions also include different versions of pairing magic and folklore in the festivities.**

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8a/Midsummer_bonfire_closeup.jpg

** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Finland#Festivities_and_Traditions

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