

## Hub Sweet Hub: Helsinki Airport and Finnair

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Image: PES ARK

**APEX Insight: With route-to-route competition tighter than ever in some markets, the allure of airports can not be taken for granted. This multipart feature looks at airlines that are elevating the ground experience for their passengers by making architectural wonders and tourism attractions out of their airport terminals.**

### Helsinki Airport and Finnair

Code: HEL

Managing company: Finavia

Project duration: 2014–2020

Project cost: \$980 million

Passengers per year: 20 million

With its fleet of Airbus A350 XWBs flying to Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai and Singapore, Finnair has positioned its hub, Helsinki Airport, as the shortest and fastest route between Europe and Asia.

“For customers, there is only one experience. It includes the experience on the ground and in flight,” says Juha Järvinen, Finnair’s chief commercial officer. “Airports and airlines need to be able to find ways to maximize the total experience, both in terms of seamless travel and transit, but also through delivering an experience that makes the customer choose the same airline and airport combination again.”

Expansion of the airport is underway to accommodate the influx of passengers flowing through its doors, but the airport will maintain its one-roof concept, speeding up transit times; prioritizing short, walkable distances; and eliminating the need for airport shuttles. “Studies show that one-third of passengers choose their flight route based on the transfer airport,” says Kari Savolainen, Finavia’s CEO. “Compared to other European hubs, the transfer process is a real priority for us.”

## “Airports and airlines need to be able to find ways to maximize the total experience.” — Juha Järvinen, Finnair

In addition to the added space, passengers can expect digital interactions such as real-time flight notifications pushed to their mobile devices, a prompt to make a coffee order and directions to their boarding gate – where their macchiato will be waiting – to enhance the airport experience. Social activities such as yoga and concerts in the terminals will also help travelers in transit to pass the time.

Much of the airport makeover is intended to attract passenger traffic outside of Finland (Finns only make up a quarter of passenger traffic at HEL). By marketing Helsinki as an attractive layover and an opportunity to experience Nordic culture, the airline and airport have successfully brought in passengers from Scandinavian and Baltic states who are looking for a quick connection to Asia or a jumping-off point to Europe.

*This article is an excerpt from the multipart feature “Hub Sweet Hub,” originally published in the 6.5 December/January issue of APEX Experience magazine.*



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