

A sauna of One'Own, the cas of the Finnish Sauna

by [Sari Kouvo](#)

I have always been convinced that people need to be naked – that we become better persons if we have the opportunity to run around naked once in a while.

However, while our culture is filled with images of seductive nakedness, our culture provides us with surprisingly few possibilities to be naked in a natural, sensuous, but not necessarily sexual way. I dare to claim that the Finnish sauna is one of the only places in contemporary Europe where nakedness is natural, sensuous, but geared towards well-being rather than towards “being sexy”. The sauna has always been part of the Finnish culture. In the old days it was the place where stories were told, problems were solved, where women gave birth and where the bodies of the dead were washed. The sauna has contributed to nakedness being a natural thing for Finnish people. I would even go as far as to claim that the fact that almost every Finn, irrespective of her or his sex, has access to a sauna – has a sauna of her own – has contributed to Finland being a fairly equal society !