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My brother Kadin just left for home after a two week visit. He arrived just one week after Josh and Karen left. We've been busy with visitors.



Kadin taking Ellie for a ride on her bike.

The visit was great. I took Kadin around Helsinki. We hit coffee shops and beer pubs, a couple of museums, hung out around the house, and took a four day trip to Stockholm, Sweden.



The trip to Stockholm was excellent. The highlights were the gorgeous weather, the outstanding Moderne Musee (Stockholm's modern art museum), and several long treks through the beautiful, energetic, sometimes funky, sometimes refined, sometimes old and sometimes new city of Stockholm. This is a great city!



Modern Art: you've gotta feel it.



A Swedish flag in the funky Södermalm neighborhood.



Stockholm and the harbor.



Stockholmers enjoying a gorgeous sunny day and a view of the old town, Gamla Stan.

One of our focuses in Stockholm was sampling coffee, beer, and restaurant terraces with excellent views of the harbor or city. Interestingly, top-notch beer is hard to come by in Scandinavia. On our last day, we found a pub with several good brews to choose from, hence Kadin's smile below.



Kadin grins after a good bitter beer.



Our coffee stop on the last day.

We ended the trip with an overnight cruise from Stockholm to Helsinki. Anyone that's up in these parts and has a couple of days to kill should give this cruise a shot. It's cheap transportation between the two cities – Kadin and I were 60 euro total – and the Swedish archipelago is spectacular.



On the cruise ship from Stockholm to Helsinki.



Some lucky souls sailing the Swedish archipelago.

Now that the last of our visitors are gone, the end of our year in Finland feels very close. We look forward, in our final weeks, to many visits to the sea (we've been swimming there already), relaxation, rejuvenation, and quite. I had a premonition while in savusauna (smoke sauna) two days ago that the rest of our stay would be outstanding. This is my affirmation for these last six weeks.