

Airplanes changed long-distance travel

When Helsinki Airport opened in 1952, the Volkswagen minibuses of the long-distance travel agency Olympia Auto Oy took a trip to Jordan and back. The route went through Sweden, Denmark, Central Europe and Greece. While some of the passengers were transported by bus, some of the party travelled by several stopovers to the destination by plane. The travel agency Olympia became a pioneer of Finnish long-distance travel. Trips were even made to places considered impossible. The company's organised tours took Finns all the way to India and Africa.

Thomas Cook organised the first actual package tours in Britain in 1841. However, airplanes revolutionised package tours and made large-scale international tourism possible. Leisure time and sightseeing at the actual destination of the trip became more important than before.

In 1962, readers of *Apu* magazine flew across the Atlantic to New York with charter company Finlantic. In the 1960s, trips were also made to India, the Tokyo Olympics and the Rio Carnival in Brazil. Regular scheduled flights to long-distance destinations were not yet operated. At the beginning of the 1960s, the travel agency industry grew strongly, and as an example, Area, Suomen Matkatoimisto Oy, Matkatoimisto Kaleva and 13 smaller travel agencies founded Aurinkomatkat – Suntours Ltd Oy in 1963.

In the summer of 1964, the travel agency Olympia became the first Finnish tour operator to organise a trip around the world.

Nowadays, Helsinki Airport offers a large selection of direct flight connections around the world. The geographical location of Helsinki Airport enables a fast and short connection between Asia and Europe.

Finavia in collaboration with Finnish Aviation Museum.
Photo: Kar-Air Oy / Finnish Aviation Museum.

