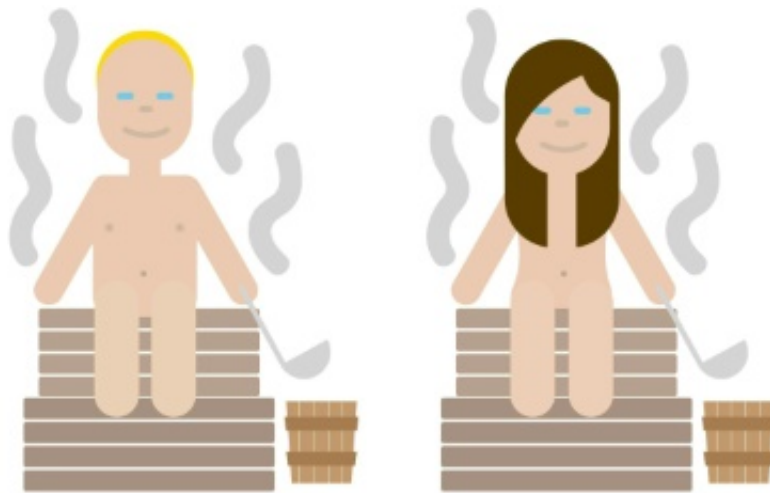


Steamy saunas, headbangers: Finland launches 'national' emoji

November 4 2015



Finland has launched a set of emojis featuring naked sauna-goers, heavy-metal lovers and even an old Nokia handset—all symbols of Finnish culture, the foreign ministry said on November 5, 2015

Are you receiving emoji figures relaxing in a sauna or a headbanging "heavy metal dude"? Smile, you must be in Finland.

This year, the Nordic country has launched a special online Christmas calendar set of emojis, featuring naked sauna-goers, heavy-metal lovers

and even an old Nokia handset—all symbols of Finnish culture, the foreign ministry said Thursday.

"On December 1, we are to publish a set of emojis that can be downloaded and after that, each day a new emoji will be released," Petra Theman, the ministry's director for public affairs, told AFP.

Theman said Finland, where Christmas calendars are a tradition, went for the emojis package because it is different, and because it is easy to share.

The emojis, which are used in text and online messages, can be downloaded for free from various app stores.

"We have looked through different moments and emotional states that nearly every Finn recognises and which Finns might need as emojis when they communicate," Theman said.

Typically Finnish ideograms, such as the sauna or the heavy metal aficionado, have been missing from commonly-available international emoji packs, she said.

The Finnish foreign ministry believes these are the world's first national emojis.

Finland is home to some two million saunas—nearly one for every two people in a country of 5.4 million.



Heavy-metal headbangers, at least as ideograms, have been missing from the digital conversation, said Finland's foreign ministry as it released a set of specifically Finnish emoji on November 5, 2015

But the sauna emoji need not be restricted to conversations about the traditional Finnish bath, she said.

The "sauna (emoji) can be used to signal anything 'hot', like that girl you went on a date with yesterday," she said.

Emojis first came from Japan, and have become massively popular in the age of smart phones.

The Finnish emojis were designed for the ministry by Brazilian Bruno Leo Ribeiro.

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