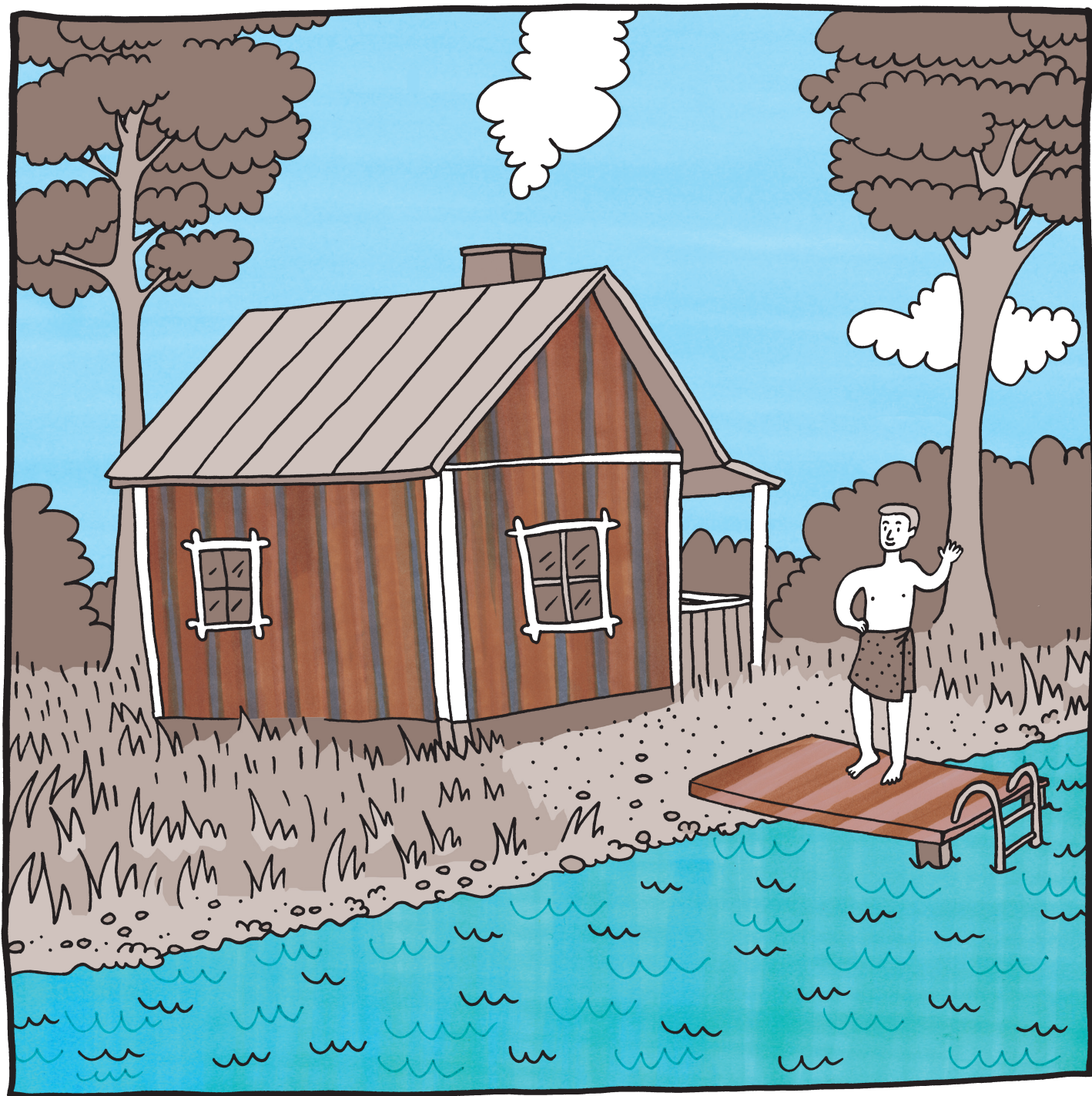
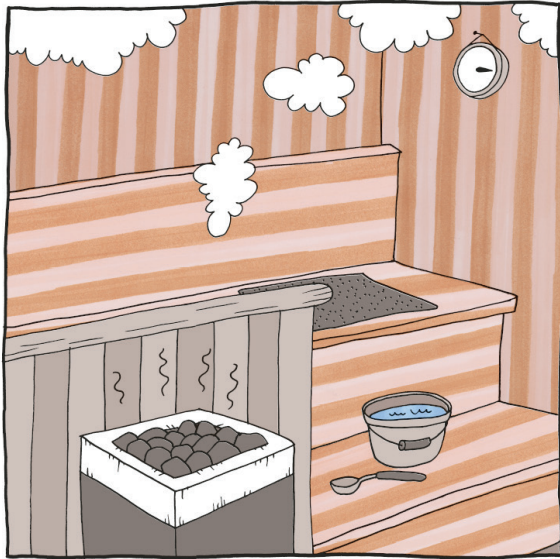


Sauna



Welcome to a Finnish sauna!



A sauna is a hot room. The air temperature can reach 100 degrees Celsius.

The sauna is heated by the *kivas*, a kind of oven filled with stones. The stones and oven are burning hot.



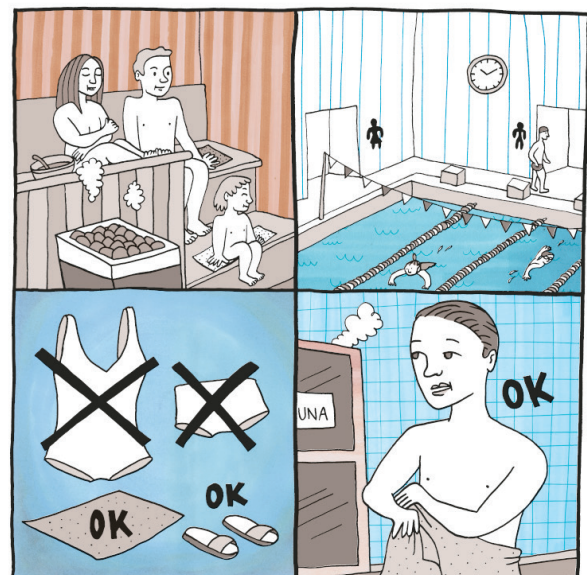
As an institution, the sauna is more than a thousand years old and a big part of Finnish culture. People wash themselves and relax in the sauna.

In the old days, the sauna was where you gave birth and washed the dead (this was still common 90 years ago), since it was the cleanest place in the home. This is why the sauna has such a deeply ingrained meaning for the Finns.



There are more saunas than cars in Finland. Nearly everyone has a sauna in their home. There are also public saunas in Finland: in public swimming pools, sports halls and as independent establishments.

People go to the sauna once a week, sometimes more often.

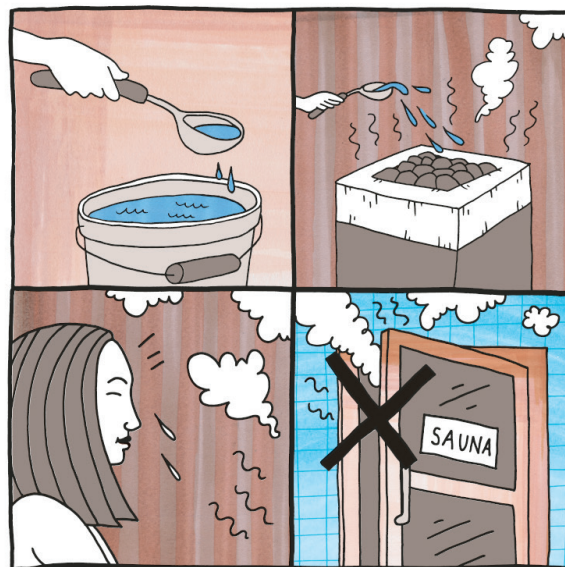


Finnish families go to the sauna together. Men and women, everybody naked. With other people and in public saunas, men and women go to the sauna separately.

People are naked in public saunas too. If you feel uncomfortable with being naked, you can wrap yourself in a towel.



Normal saunas do not have anything to do with sex.



In the sauna, you sit and throw water (*löyly*) from a bucket onto the hot stones with a ladle. The water turns into hot vapour, so be careful. Only throw water onto the stones if everyone wants to.

The door of the sauna is kept closed.



It is good to cool off between sessions, for example by taking a shower, sitting outside or swimming in the lake or sea. Everything that cools the body is good for you.

Also remember to drink plenty of water.



Enjoy the *löyly* and respect others in the sauna.

Welcome to the sauna!