

VIKING LINE

Finns go to restaurants to pamper themselves a bit – and people want to be served in their mother tongue

The most important reason why Finns go to restaurants is to pamper themselves a bit and to meet friends and family. However, their visits to restaurants are limited because of the weak economy: over the past two years, one in ten Finns have cut back on going to restaurants. On cruises, one in three Finns do not give that much thought to how much they spend, according to a wide-ranging survey carried out by Viking Line.

Nearly half of Finns indicate that the most important thing about going to restaurants is pampering themselves (49%) and spending time with friends and family (44%) – enjoying good food comes third (42%). For one fifth of Finns, the most important reason is to try out new places, and for five per cent going out to a restaurant is a lifestyle. A full 12 per cent of Finns say that supporting restaurant businesses is an important reason for going out to eat. People usually go out to a restaurant with their partner (36%), friends (28%), their children or other family members (19%).

These findings are based on a survey commissioned by Viking Line, which analyzes the views of Finns on eating in restaurants. In the survey, which was conducted by Kuulas Helsinki early this summer, a total of 2,000 Finns were interviewed, with the sample of respondents, ages 18–74, representing the entire Finnish population*.

The survey is focused on dining in restaurants. A total of 86 per cent of respondents have dined in a restaurant in the past twelve months, and 34 per cent of them usually spend EUR 20–39 on dinner including drinks. Only one per cent of respondents spend more than EUR 150 on dinner.

Nearly 40% of Finns can't afford to go to a restaurant

People's greatest restrictions on dining out are economic: 54 per cent of Finns think that the food in restaurants is too expensive, while 38 per cent can't afford to eat in a restaurant. Over the past two years, 11 per cent of Finns have cut back on their restaurant visits and eight per cent note that they do not order food for takeaway as often as they previously did. However, only 14 per cent think that going out to eat in restaurants does not give value for money.

“Finns are clearly looking for experiences and pleasure when they dine out, which is not limited just to good food. For many people, eating in a restaurant is a shared experience that makes everyday life a little more enjoyable. For our own customers too, it's very common for them to plan their meals in advance, and they increasingly make restaurant reservations already when they book their journey. Moreover, the different seasons and everything that's a bit special, like the traditional Nordic crayfish season, the Christmas buffet or special menus in the à la carte restaurants, generate great curiosity and are one reason why many people book a sea journey,” says **Minna Tuorila**, Commercial Director at Viking Line.

Finns want to be served in their mother tongue

The possibility of being served in their mother tongue affects the restaurant experience of Finns to a great extent: 67 per cent want service in Finnish or Swedish when they go to a restaurant. Some 35 per cent are dissatisfied if they are served in English.

“We have seen how important language is for the customer experience and customer satisfaction in practice, especially when we re-registered Viking XPRS and Viking Cinderella under a Finnish flag. We always strive to have staff on board that can speak Finnish, Swedish and English. Language skills are an important criterion when we hire staff for our restaurants and other services,” notes Commercial Director Minna Tuorila.

Many people now focus on breakfast

On Baltic Sea cruises, 59 per cent of Finns think that meals are an important part of the travel experience. On board, 46 per cent of respondents spend EUR 21–50 on food and drink, and one third spend EUR 51–100 a day. One third of people taking part in the survey say they do not think that much about how much money they spend when they are on a cruise. However, reasonable prices are still the most important criterion for restaurant choices at sea as well.

“Many people have traditions they associate with sea journeys since they were children, and one of the most enduring ones is the buffet. Based on the survey findings too, the buffet is attractive because it is varied, convenient and gives good value for money. People don’t need to worry about how much it will end up costing or how much they can afford to eat because everything is included – starters, main courses, desserts and even drinks,” says Viking Line’s Restaurant Manager, **Janne Lindholm**.

Breakfast is also an important part of the cruise for Finns, and one growing trend is the special breakfast in the à la carte restaurants on board – four in ten people surveyed like to choose the better alternative instead of the regular breakfast.

“Taking a look at business cycles, we see that food as part of the cruise experience continues to grow in importance. The number of restaurant guests and the amount they spend on food are at totally different levels today than they were ten years ago. At the same time, alcohol consumption is steadily declining, even at sea.”

**The survey was conducted as an online interview in late May–early June 2025. The market research company Bilendi’s consumer panel served as the source of responses, and the target group was Finns ages 18–74.*

For further information:

Janne Lindholm, Restaurant Manager
janne.lindholm@vikingline.com, tel. +358 400 744 806

Minna Tuorila, Commercial Director
minna.tuorila@vikingline.com, tel. +358 50 301 4133

Johanna Boijer-Svahnström, Communications Director
johanna.boijer@vikingline.com, tel. +358 18 270 00

Christa Grönlund, Communications Manager
christa.gronlund@vikingline.com, tel. +358 9 123 51