



**VEGAN MENU AS A DECISIVE
FACTOR WHEN BOOKING A
CRUISE THROUGH THE BALTIC
SEA**

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ABSTRACT

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Vegan Menu as a Decisive Factor when Booking a Cruise through the Baltic Sea

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Food is an elemental part of life. People need food in order to obtain energy and to be able to perform on a daily basis. However, food has become more than the source of energy nowadays. The selection of food consumed by people is in some cases very restricted, especially for vegans. Vegans limit their diets, excluding animal products from their meals, which in some cases leads to a very small selection and options, or in some cases to the inclusion of animal product in meals. There are many and various reasons why a person decides to become a vegan. Some people are concerned about animal rights, other have religious or ethical reasons, or even health reasons.

The Baltic Sea is one of the favourite destinations for quick trips inside the Baltic countries area. It is accessible and affordable. It is possible to travel to other countries in less than 24 hours, at an economic price. In all cases there is a food catering service available on board. Nevertheless, the range of options for vegans is almost absent. In the best case scenario, vegetarian meals can be found on the menu. However, this limited offer puts the traveller in a non-comfortable situation: Should the traveller change his/her lifestyle and ethics, or other motivations to eat vegan food because the food offer does not count with vegan tourists.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to provide an answer to several questions within the food tourism or culinary tourism area: Is the availability of a vegan menu a decisive factor when booking a cruise? Would cruising companies obtain higher benefits if their menus included vegan options? Would the service improve by adding more vegan products in their shops and restaurants? It is important to find the value and effect of veganism in tourism and the travellers' experience in order to provide service and products for all segments in the market.

These questions were answered based on the results obtained in the form of a survey. The survey results were analysed in order to provide a clear view of the current situation in this field, and to obtain plausible answers to the previously mentioned questions.

Key words: veganism, vegan, vegetarian, tourism, food tourism

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1 INTRODUCTION

Being vegan is more than a following a certain type of a diet. It is a lifestyle, as it defines the life of the individual. Vegans eliminate products from Animalia origin from their diets and substitute them with other products, mainly vegetal origin. These restrictions in the diet create a challenge for the traveller whenever he or she shall find food and other products to provide energy to the body. In certain occasions it is difficult to the average travellers finding products and meals that would be appealing and suitable to their taste, while having no restrictions on their diets. For instance, a person who prefers eating a hamburger with French fries can find different kind of hamburgers in the same area: different types of meat (name pork, lamb, cow...) with different sauces (mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard...) and different extras (such as bacon, fried eggs, omelette, onion, lettuce, tomato...) All these options provide quite a wide range of options to the traveller in the destination. And quite certainly, the meal will be available in the area at different prices in different restaurants. However, the vegan travellers have some issues if the hamburger is their favourite meal. It is difficult to find restaurants with vegan dishes in their menus, though there are many options: quinoa, carrot, chickpeas, zucchini hamburgers just to mention some and with sauces such as egg-free-mayonnaise, ketchup. And all kind of extras: grilled aubergine or sundried tomatoes. These options are rarely offered in restaurants' menus, and if they are included in the menu, these are usually more expensive than the "normal" hamburgers.

In other words, it is extremely difficult for vegans to find food out of their residence area. As a matter of fact, vegan products are more expensive than products of animal origin, which affects the vegan lifestyle and culture. The availability of vegan products is more restricted and limited than the amount of animal origin ones. This said, it should be easy to imagine how difficult it is for the vegan travellers to find products and meals, which could fulfil their expectations and requirements. The range of options is reduced once the vegan travellers leave the comfortable area of their home.

Nowadays, it is easier to find vegan products in countries within the European Union, as well as the United States or Asia, one of the regions of the main vegetarian and vegan consumers (<http://v-label.eu/about-v-label>). In some cases, vegan and vegetarian associations help their members and supporters to find a way of communicating their necessi-

ties in case the destination area speaks in a different language than the one spoken by the travellers. For instance, several vegan and vegetarian friendly websites and associations provide a “vegan-passport” which contains a simple sentence in several languages: “I am vegan, which means that I ingest only vegetal origin food. I don’t consume products of animal origin” This passport would assure that vegans and vegetarians can communicate their needs to locals in areas where they cannot speak the local language. (<http://animalia.fi/valinta/matkailu/kasvissyöinti-ulkomailla>)

It is a fact that each region has its own gastronomy and food habits. In certain areas there is some specialization in health food. For example, Barcelona has been recently declared “veg-friendly” city, a friendly city for vegans and vegetarians.

(http://cat.elpais.com/cat/2016/03/23/catalunya/1458721814_397176.html) This specialization is related usually to big cities such as Barcelona, London or Paris. This matter is related to the travel and tourism in Europe. These big cities are touristic centres and they attract millions of tourists every year. In the year 2015, the total amount of international tourists grew about 5% according to the UNTWO World Tourism Barometer (<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2016-01-18/international-tourist-arrivals-4-reach-record-12-billion-2015>). The number of arrivals to Europe reached 609 million people, 29 million more people than in the year 2014. The growth in Northern Europe especially improved compared to the previous years, according to the latest data, 6% more tourists visited the northern part of Europe. As the amount of travellers grow, it is logical also to think that the amount of vegan and vegetarian travellers grow.

Gastronomy is an essential part of tourism. Local culture is becoming a priceless valuable source of tourism products and activities. Due to this, gastronomy becomes a source of identity in societies. In this era, the technology era, we have access to all kind of information about gastronomy and all kinds of information. We have access to food programs on internet, television and radio, there are several programs on how to cook certain dishes, local and international. (Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis & Cambourne 2003, 2.) However, the tourist experience with local food is not as if the food is made at home or locally. Often tourists relate food to experiences and moments, which makes the gastronomy a special part in the tourism experience. This includes vegan food, too. A vegan diet has many restrictions, but it varies still depending on the local area and the local products used. This induces us to think that any traveller, free from any food con-

ditions and restrictions, would enjoy the experience of eating local food in the area visited.

2 VEGANISM

2.1 Definition of veganism

Most vegans have trouble outside the vegan community when they try to explain what is their diet based on. It is difficult for some people to understand and believe that good and nutritive food can be made without animal products being included in the meal. In order to understand fully the topic and the idea of this paper, it is necessary to know the meaning of several terms. It is essential to know the differences between vegan and vegetarian as a basis, to be able to understand this issue fully, and to be able to define the vegan traveller, and not confuse it with the vegetarian traveller.

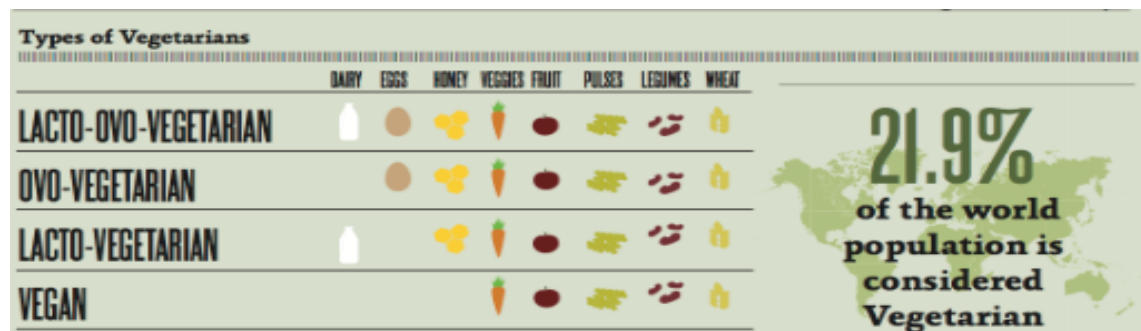
Vegaaniliitto Ry, in English the Vegan Society of Finland, is a society which promotes veganism and vegetarianism in Finland. This society educates people about vegan lifestyle through campaigns. Vegaaniliitto also has its own online magazine, called Vegaia, where information about vegan lifestyle and products can be found. According to this society a vegan is a person who for ideological reasons does not eat anything that originates from Animalia. The reasons for the diet are ethical, ecological and or sanitary. (Vegaaniliitto.fi.) By this definition, it is clear that a vegan does not intake any product from animal origin. This includes food, cosmetics and even pieces of furniture and/or clothing. Other vegans restrict this to diet only. As Peltokoski states in Puuronen in the year 2008 a vegan is a person who refuses products which come from animal origin. This kind of a person also avoids clothes made in harmful ways from animals, as well as other products tested by animals. (Peltokoski in Puuronen 2008, 200.)

Vegaaniliitto does not provide a clear definition of “vegetarian”. However, Davis and Vesanto can provide a good definition for this type of a diet or a person: “someone who does not eat meat, poultry, or fish.” With this definition, we can clearly identify the two tendencies: Vegans do not include any product coming from animals, and vegetarians do not eat meat, poultry or fish, but these last ones do use eggs and dairy products (lacto-products). It is possible finding lacto-vegetarians, people who use dairy products but not eggs at all; and ovo-vegetarians, people who use eggs, but not dairy products at all. (Davis & Vesanto 2003, 2.)

According to the data obtained from the documentaries “Get Vegucated” (<http://www.getvegucated.com>) about 21,9% of the total population of the world is vegetarian in some way (vegetarian, lacto-ovo vegetarian, lacto-vegetarian, ovo-vegetarian or vegan). Nevertheless, the highest amount of vegetarians in the world is located in India with about a 40% of the population, according to a Hindu survey in the year 2006 (<http://ezinearticles.com/?World-Wide-Populations-of-Vegetarians&id=3515891>). The high number of vegetarians in India have some relation to the religion in the country. Hinduism and Buddhism are the most important religions in the country. In these religions animals have a sacred role, as they have soul and their existence has a meaning in the circle of life. It also related to the fact that being vegetarian in India is a way of stating one’s superiority in the social chain (White in Chan Ing 2011, 88.)

In any case it is very difficult to provide an exact amount of vegans and vegetarians worldwide or by regions. There are no official reports or surveys about the amount of vegetarians, not even in official sites such as the European Vegetarian Union, in which the website states that: “The EVU calls on the EU Commission to carry out surveys via Eurostat or other adequate authorities in order to obtain reliable figures on people and their lifestyle choices as well as on the market for vegetarian products.” (<http://www.euroveg.eu/public-affairs/statistics-on-vegetarian-lifestyles-and-products/>) As an estimation, it has been estimated that 5-10 per cent of the vegetarian population are vegan, and 90-95 per cent of the total amount of vegetarians are lacto-ovo vegetarians (Davis & Vesanto 2003, 2). Nevertheless this data is not completely reliable as there is no institution which could provide a reliable number of vegetarians yet.

In conclusion, vegetarianism is a wide term which includes several types of diets, habits and lifestyles. The most important are: lacto-ovo vegetarianism, lacto-vegetarianism, ovo-vegetarianism, and the aim for this paper, veganism.



PICTURE 1. Different kinds of vegetarians, a rough estimation of vegetarians (<https://fourthdimensiondesign.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/getvegucatedv12.png>)

Brief history of vegetarianism

Though terms such as “vegetarianism”, “vegan”, “vegetarian” are quite recent; vegetarianism has been present in ancient times in several cultures. A good example appears in the Genesis: “And God said, behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat” (Genesis 1:29).

According to The Vegetarian Society, some humans chose a vegetarian diet already in Egypt 3000 years Before the Common Era. According to old manuscripts and documents, vegetarianism was related to religious beliefs, as it is nowadays in India (Walters and Portmess 1999, 11). It was in Ancient Greece where one of the first philosophers declared himself a vegetarian due to ethical reasons. It was Pythagoras. In fact, it is Pythagoras who is considered the father of vegetarianism (Davis and Vesanto 2003, 10.) He was not the only intellectual in the world who refused and avoided animal products. Other are Leonardo da Vinci, Franz Kafka, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Leo Tolstoy, Benjamin Franklin, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Albert Einstein and many more. In fact, Leonardo da Vinci stated: “I have from an early age abjured the use of meat, and the time will come when men such as I will look on the murder of animals as they now look on the murder of men”.

Later on, during the rise of Christianity as a religion the idea of vegetarianism lost its strength. Christianity states that all creatures in this world were created for humans to utilise them. This idea was an obstacle for the development of vegetarianism.

Before the nineteenth century people who would follow a diet free from animal meat would be referred to as “Pythagoreans”. The term “vegetarian” started to be used from the nineteenth century onwards. This term was used after the foundation of the world’s first vegetarian society in 1847 in England. It started with 150 members, and it continues its history as for today. This vegetarian society has its roots in the time of reform and temperance movement, where the rise of philanthropy took the educated circles of England. It was the time of the Industrial Revolution. But the idea of avoiding and refusing meat was usually amongst educated people, mainly due to social and religious issues. (<https://www.vegsoc.org/history>) Even though the foundation of the Vegetarian

Society took place in 1847, it was not until 1944 when it got its official state. (Davis and Vesanto 2003, 1).

It is also difficult to establish a clear timeline for the development and diffusion of the vegetarian or vegan lifestyle through the years, as the numbers and information about this matter are very limited.

2.2 Veganism in Finland

In order to understand the gastronomy of Finland, it is necessary to know something about the country itself. Finland is located between Sweden and Russia. In fact, it has been part of both countries. The weather is cold, and winter is long, from November to March approximately. This influences Finnish gastronomy at a great level. Finnish food tend to be warm and rich in fat. Finnish food often contains eggs, milk, cream or butter, which makes difficult for a vegan to consume any item. Potatoes are another basic element in Finnish dishes. These are vegan friendly, and quite versatile, as they can be prepared in different ways.

We can assume that meat is consumed daily in Finland, in fact, it is part of most of the traditional dishes of the country. In the nineteenth century this diet was the basic diet, also because of the influence of religion and the industrial revolution. People used to work and move constantly. Nevertheless, nowadays Finnish lifestyle is very different from what it used to be in the nineteenth century. People tend to spend more hours sitting down due to a sedentary lifestyle. Therefore, there is no need of consuming such heavy and highly energetic dishes. In any case, the traditional food is still very present in normal day diet. The availability of different vegetables and fruits is higher these days, but their consumption is not as it should in order to be considered healthy. (Heinänen 2003, 40-41.) Fortunately, this is starting to change due to the diffusion of the vegetarian and vegan lifestyles in the country. Social media, online information and associations such as Vegaaniliitto are playing a fundamental role in this change.

The first reference of Finland as part of the International Vegetarian Union was at the IVU Congress in Manchester, England (<http://www.ivu.org/history/societies/finland.html>). Before that, there was not reliable data on the matter. It seems that one of the most important influences on the vegetarian-

ism in Finland, and a figure on the dietary sight of Finland was Are Waerland. There is very little information about Are Waerland's life, but his ideas are broadly known. Are Waerland was the founder of the modern Swedish vegetarian health movement. He was born on April 13, 1876 in Ekenäs, Finland. He was a Swedish speaking Finn. Waerland enrolled in the year 1896 at the University of Helsinki, on the Philosophical faculty, with history and philosophy as his major subjects. He published several papers against the Russian regime, most of the papers were published in Sweden. Due to the problems he had, he moved to continue his studies in London, England. Nevertheless, he got ill, and then decided to move back to Finland. Back in Finland he got familiar and interested in health and medicine. Ever since he got interested in vegetarianism, and wrote a book entitled "The Road to Bodily and Spiritual Health". More books followed in the following years. A murder in Upplands Väsby got Are Waerland in prison for defamation and he was sentenced to three months. After he spent his time in prison Waerland moved to Alassio in Italy and after a few years he moved to London. In 1934 he wrote his major work "In the cauldron of disease". In 1936 Waerland moved to Sweden and began an intensive vegetarian lifestyle program in speech or in his writings. After the Second World War, Are Waerland business spread over the Nordic region and also over to the United States. (<http://paranormal.se/mirror/sokaren/www.sokaren.se/INDEX138.HTML>)

During the 1930's vegetarianism was spread over Finland, mainly due to health reasons. Later on, especially during the 60-70's these reasons became dominantly ethical. In fact, the first vegetarian restaurant in Finland opened during this time, Kasvi. One of the founder was Heidi Hautala, a Finnish politician and a former member of the European Parliament. (Streng 1994.) More and more vegetarian and vegan restaurants and coffee houses have opened their doors all over Finland.

In the year 1993 Vegaaniliitto was founded, and it represents the International Vegetarian Union in Finland (<http://www.ivu.org/history/societies/finland.html>). This association educates people about vegetarian and vegan lifestyle organizing several campaigns, and also publishing its own magazine on the matter.

3 FOOD TOURISM OR CULINARY TOURISM

3.1 Food and tourism

Food has always been an essential part of human lifestyle. In fact, the word food means: material consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, and fat used in the body of an organism to sustain growth, repair, and vital processes and to furnish energy. The description states the importance of food in our lives. Food has been part of our lives since the beginning of times. However, food has not been an object of study until recent times. Studies about food are usually limited to other academic disciplines, such as genetics, sociology, medicine... This situation has been changing since recent years. We live in the era of technology, where we have easy access to all kinds of information and knowledge about several disciplines and topics. Food is not an exception: there are TV programs which teach us how to cook, radio programs, magazines, even social media contain information about food. Even media is now aware of the importance of food. (Hall et al. 2003, 2.)

Food is also an important part of humans' life while we travel and visit other places. Therefore, it is also rightful to say that food is an important part of tourism. So is this, that there are also programs on food in travelling destinations, such as the North American Food Channel, a program dedicated to the food and its origins, which connects food and tourism (Hall et al. 2003, 2.)

As food and tourism are related, interdependent, it is possible to talk about "Food Tourism", which is often referred to as Culinary or Gastronomy Tourism. Kivela and Crofts (2006, 354) have provided a definition for gastronomy: "... a study of the relationship between culture and food" (Kivela and Crofts 2006, 354). This definition links already two fields together: cultural and social field. Using these two fields and adding the food into it, we can agree that food can act as the image of a culture, and a real magnet to tourists who want to experience the flavours and sensations of the local area. In some cases, the food of a region could be a decisive and influential factor when booking a trip to a destination. For example, wine in Toscana is an important and attractive reason for tourists from all over the world to visit the area.

This phenomenon affects the economy of the local area, as well as the national, but also, it provides information about the culture of the region, about the people who visit the region and the reasons why that region is visited. The influence of food tourism in the economy has had a great impact, which has raised some awareness of food tourism in other fields (Hall et al. 2003, 26.)

In the past years, food has also become a determining aspect in tourism marketing (Hashimoto and Telfer 1999), as well as a relevant and integral part of tourism studies (Wood 2000). In fact, food tourism or culinary tourism was introduced by Long in 1998. He refers to this phenomenon as the activity developed when people seek the experience of foreign cultures through their food and wine (Long, Kivela and Crofts 2006, 355).

At this point we should differentiate between two kinds of tourists involved with food:

- a) Tourists who consume food as part of their travel experience
 - b) Tourists whose actions and purposes are focused and influenced mainly by food
- (Hall et al. 2003, 27)

Moreover, there are other factors within tourism related to food. Some travels are related to food producers, or food festivals (Ravintolapäivä in Finland, for example) or visits to specific areas for food tasting or other attributes (Hall and Mitchell 2001, 308).

Looking at the definitions and areas of influence of food within the tourism field, it is necessary to state that not everything involving food can be considered food tourism. For example, a walk to a restaurant cannot be considered as food tourism. Only travels with the aim of experiencing certain food in a certain context, in a specific region can be included in food tourism field.

Food is indeed within the tourists' experience one of the deepest experiences, which needs several senses in order to allow the tourist to enjoy and live the experience fully (Long 2010, 2). People tend to learn new things through their senses. The traveller is often even more curious about new knowledge, new sightseeing, new tastes than normal people in their normal area. This seek of the new in food in new contexts and regions is an event and an opportunity for small scale businesses. These can market themselves through a cellar door, a farm gate or farmers, and produce markets by themselves to

gain a rich source of cash flow during the first stages of the business development (Hall et al. 2003, 315.)

Food or Culinary Tourism is a reality within the tourism field. Not all the visits to restaurants can be included as food tourism visits, and it is important to identify the aim of the visit. For the case of this thesis, food is related to the traveller, as food is an important part of the service offered on board of cruise ships and other ships. Providing a satisfactory catering service would provide the traveller with a positive view and experience of the trip, and this traveller might decide to come back. If the experience of the traveller is negative, the traveller might not be willing to come back and experience the service again. (Hall et al. 2013, 2.)

3.2 Cruises and food

As seen in the previous section of this thesis, food on board of cruises is a great opportunity to attract tourists and new travellers to use the services provided.

The Baltic Sea is a vast area for tourists to enjoy an exotic cruise. Many companies offer cruises through the Baltic Sea. Some of them are:

- Viking Line - <https://www.vikingline.fi>
- Tallink & Silja Line - <http://www.tallinksilja.fi>
- Costa Cruises - <http://www.costacruise.com>
- Princess Cruises – www.princess.com
- Swan Hellenic – www.swanhellenic.com
- Royal Caribbean – www.royalcaribbean.co.uk
- Celebrity Cruises – www.celebritycruises.co.uk
- Silversea – www.silversea.com
- Norwegian Cruise Line – www.ncl.com
- Voyages of Discovery – www.voyagesofdiscovery.com
- MSC Cruises – www.msccruises.com
- Transocean Tours – www.transoceancruises.com
- Saga cruises – <http://travel.saga.co.uk/ocean-cruises.aspx>
- Cunard cruises – www.cunard.co.uk
- P&O Cruises – www.pocruises.com
- Holland America Line – www.hollandamerica.com

- Thomson Cruises – www.thomson.co.uk/cruise
- Oceania cruises – www.oceaniacruises.com

These are some of the companies which offer cruises through the Baltic Sea. For this thesis, the writer focused on Viking Line, Tallink Silja and Costa Cruises menus, in order to get a general idea of the menu offered by these companies.

3.2.1 Viking Line

Viking Line was established in 1959 by Gunnar Eklund. In the initial times it was composed by three shipping companies: Vikinglinjen Ab, Rederi Ab Slite and Ålandsfärjan Ab, which would be later called SF Line Ab. All the three companies started to work on a joint marketing campaign, which received the name Oy Viking Line Ab. Today it operates under the trading name Viking Line Abp. It is the market-leading cruising and ferry line in the Baltic. The size, service concepts and range of activities and attractions have changed drastically depending on the demand at the time.

On Viking Line website there is a special section for food and drinks (<http://www.sales.vikingline.com/en/aboard/food-drinks/>). Nevertheless, there is no other information about special diets or allergies, only Vegetarian alternatives are mentioned in the buffet menu. The buffet menu is included in the appendices. The information on the website is rather vague, as the traveller looking for some specific information cannot find it on the website. It is possible to order a special menu on board and provide information about the diet restrictions. However, this service is not always successful, as it will be mentioned in the questionnaire analysis later on.

There are different menus on board, depending on the cruise selected, the destination and the length of the cruise. Nevertheless, it is not possible to select or identify “special diet” at any level while proceeding with the booking of the cruise. It is necessary to contact the company by email to: international.sales@vikingline.com. In order to obtain information, the company was contacted, and requested information about vegan diet. The answer from the company is not as a vegan would expect:

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your e-mail.

Please find in attachment Bistro buffet menu on Viking XPRS.

There are options for vegetarians as well.

Should you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With best regards

Viking Line International Sales----

Vegetarian and vegan have different food restrictions. Further assistance would be needed in this case. This issue would make the booking more complicated.

3.2.2 Tallink Silja

Tallink Silja was established upon its predecessor, the Finnish Steamship Enterprise. This company was established in 1883. From that time onwards, the main routes were launched: Turku-Stockholm, Helsinki–Stockholm. It was not until 1957 when the company Oy Siljavarustamo – AB Siljarederiet was established. After the establishment, other route was launched: Tallinn – Helsinki. In 1970 the company Silja Line was established, and later in 1989 Tallink. Ships were added to the Tallink fleet, as long as more services on board and different products. In 1991, the Estonian flag raised on Tallink's ships. From that moment, more ships and cruises were added to the current fleet and services, including the establishment of the travel agency Tallink Travel Club and Tallink City Hotel in Tallinn. In the year 2005, As Tallink Grupp was listed on Tallinn stock exchange. And it was in the year 2006 when Tallink acquired its major competitor Silja Line. More services and ships were added, until in the year 2008 Tallink gained the prizes of most competitive tourism company and most competitive Estonian Company by the Estonian Chamber of Commerce.

The information about Food and Drink in the website is presented depending on the ship: Silja Serenade, Silja Symphony, Galaxy, Baltic Princess, Baltic Queen, Victoria, Isabelle, Romantika, Star, and Superstar. In all instances, the information is presented

by restaurants and buffets on board, and it is complicated to locate the specifications about special diets. It is also needed to contact the company in order to obtain more information about the menu on board. The company was contacted via an email requesting for more information about the availability of vegan food on board. The answer obtained by the company was similar to the previous answer from Viking Line:

Dear Manuela,

Thank you for contacting us.

We have vegetarian options in all the restaurants on board.

The menus of the restaurants are available on the homepage in the section Our Fleet -> Choose the route -> Choose the ship -> Eat and Drink.

Kind regards,

Manager Assistant,

Tallink Silja Line

Once more, the possible client would be answered with "we have vegetarian options" even though in the email sent, it is stated clearly that the client is vegan, and not vegetarian. Moreover, as mentioned before, the structure in which the food section is shown appears by restaurant. The structure is not user-friendly, especially if the user is looking for special diet needs or further information.

3.2.3 Costa Cruises

This Italian company has working within the cruising market for sixty years. It is in fact one of the largest companies within tourism in Italy, and one of the largest cruise companies in Europe. In the year 1854 Giacomo Costa founded "Giacomo Costa fu Andrea" a small enterprise whose aim was the trade of olive oil and fabrics. It was not until 1947 when the company expanded its services to passenger transport. In 1948 the company launched the first transatlantic line, and it changed the company name from "Giacomo Costo fu Andrea" to "Linea C". During the fifties and sixties, the company kept growing, and offering services in Europe, Caribbean and South America. In 1986 the company decided to focus on the cruise sector. It was then when "Costa Crociere" as such was

founded. From that moment, the company kept growing in the market. In the year 2004 Costa Crociere acquired AIDA Cruises, the cruising company leader in Germany.

The information about food services in this company's website seems more transparent and logically organized than in the previous websites. The subtitle of the food section states:

*"Cruises for celiacs, your holiday enjoyment is served
do you have a food allergy? are you vegetarian or vegan?
our costa chefs' creativity knows no bounds"*

The website mentions that the chefs will adapt to the client's necessities, either the client is gluten intolerant, diabetic or any other diet. It is also possible to bring food from home. It is also stated that:

"Vegetarian options are available for the whole of the cruise, with no need to state your preference in advance. Other special dietary requirements should be mentioned when booking."

In this case, the access to the information is more accessible to the possible client, and the vegan can inform directly the service as it is stipulated in the previous paragraph.

3.3 Catering on board

In certain occasions finding vegan food becomes a challenge. As it has been pointed in the previous section, finding information about special diet needs might also be challenging. And for vegans, even more. When the companies were asked if there are vegan options available, two out of three companies replied that "there are vegetarian dishes available in the menu" However, "vegetarian" and "vegan" do not have similar meaning, each one of them is based upon different restrictions on diets.

The amount of people with special restricted diets is rising due to food intolerance, allergies and other reasons (ethical, political or cultural reasons). More and more customers request special meals during their travels. This issue is not limited to cruises. It happens in other transportations, such as planes.

In the last years a new phenomenon has been introduced in the transportation catering services, especially in airline services. This phenomenon is based upon the idea of using celebrity chefs, such as Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver and others, and linking their names to a certain company. For example, Jamie Oliver and Royal Caribbean cruising company worked together in designing a menu (<http://www.royalcaribbean.com/anthemoftheseas/dining/celebrity-chefs/>). This case is not isolated, Gordon Ramsay worked with Singapore Airlines, and other chefs did the same with other airline companies (<http://www.foodrepublic.com/2013/01/10/10-airlines-with-celebrity-chefs-onboard/>). Other companies, like Swiss Airlines, provide information about their menus on board, which include a section for vegans and vegetarians. The fact that they differentiate between vegans and vegetarians helps vegan travellers, as it is often challenging finding information or availability of this kind of food on board.

Nevertheless, this matter seems to be changing. Food is becoming more and more important within tourism and hospitality services. The tourist nowadays is more educated than the tourist 20 or 30 years ago. Nowadays, the tourist has a clear aim or goal for the holiday period. The tourist is in search of authenticity and high quality experience. (Ian Yeoman, <http://www.hospitalitynet.org/news/4037197.html>). The tourist also follows some trends that affect the market, especially in tourism. According to Ian Yeoman, some of the trends in food tourism are:

1. Disposable income and spending patterns: Income and spending patterns have changed through the years.
2. Demographics and household change: The population in developed countries is getting old, comparing to the demographics of previous decades. This has also an effect on the way people eat. People nowadays tend to eat outside the household more often than they did before. Especially during holidays.
3. Individualism: Tourists nowadays are in search of uniqueness, local, fresh and good quality.
4. The multi-cultured consumer: the tourist has nowadays a wide knowledge of the world, and at some extent is aware of it, his or her interests and ideas are wider; the Internet provides more info about globalisation and further knowledge to curious tourists.
5. The role of the celebrity chef and media: As mentioned above, chefs are collaborating with airlines and cruising companies. Moreover, celebrity chefs own these

days their own TV shows where they can expand their marketing campaigns and publicity.

6. Well-being and food: a recent trend is the healthy trend. People are more aware of diseases and their relationship with food. Many people started to restrict their diets in different ways in order to obtain more benefits to their health. Special diets are available in most restaurants and travelling services, which improves the quality of travelling for many tourists.
7. Food as an oasis: The tourist on holidays, sees food as a social occasion, time to enjoy and relax.
8. Internet usage: Internet keeps us informed continuously about most issues on earth, included latest trends on food and restaurants. It is easy to find reviews of restaurants is sites such as TripAdvisor.
9. Desire for new experiences and cultural capital: Travelling provides the traveller with new experiences and knowledge. This is called “cultural capital” the knowledge acquired while travelling and experiencing new places, cities or countries.
10. The science of food: we follow trends also in food even if we do not intend to. Markets and some destinations might produce more quantity of certain products than others. The tourists will purchase those products and ingest them. It is part of the economy of food.
11. The consumer is a hypochondriac: Trends come and go, and it has an effect on food as well. When people in a nation are catalogued as obese, the amount of vegetables purchases will increase. It can be assumed that the consumer will try to lose weight by eating more vegetables. Lately it has been the trend of super-foods. Products like avocados and goji berries are found in Finnish supermarkets, even though these products are not local, nor easy to purchase. Due to this trend, these products are now available in many markets, as they are supposed to have incredible features and benefits for the human who consumes them.

Food is a relevant part of tourism and hospitality. The tourist will be in direct contact with food, and will be affected by food trends. Some trends might involve some restrictions in the diets of the tourists, which will have an impact on the demand of food during the travel.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research method

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether a vegan menu on cruises through the Baltic Sea would be an appealing and attracting product for vegan travellers, who usually face difficulties when travelling and leaving their comfort zones. A vegan diet is based upon the restriction of products of animal origin on the diet. Many dishes contain these Animalia products, which hinder vegans from purchase meals during their trips. The findings for this issue would be useful for cruising companies, as they would be able to determine if providing vegan options would increase the amount of clients in the future.

In order to fulfil the aim of this paper, the research method selected for this thesis was a quantitative research. Quantitative research should be able to determine how a phenomenon affects the population, by quantifying the relationship between the phenomena under study (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008, 75). In order to quantify the phenomena under study, statistical methods are used. Altinay and Paraskevas introduces two different approaches: descriptive and experimental. As its own categorical name suggest, the descriptive approach provides a description of a phenomenon over the population without affecting the phenomenon itself. The experimental approach however aims to test hypotheses with certain conditions and an environment that the researcher adjusts during the sample.

In this case, the quantitative method was chosen. Providing a measurable information would help understanding how influential a vegan menu on board would be. It is the opinion of several individuals which would provide further information about the matter. The qualitative method in this case is not as useful, as it would not provide the information that we would be interested on. Objectivity without any doubt should be provided with the results. One of the disadvantages of the qualitative method is the issue about objectivity. Moreover, we should be able to generalize once we obtain the results, in order to be able to create a clear segmentation in the market, which cruising companies would be able to identify easily and launch reliable and tailored products for this segment of people. Observing the results as numbers would be also more recommenda-

ble in this case, as it would be more descriptive and the analysis would be easily interpreted. It would provide a clearer picture of the issue.

The survey is the type of research that was used. It is a popular strategy among hospitality and tourism researchers. In order to use the survey, there was a need to select a group of people from the population and provide a questionnaire to these individuals. This type of research is often used when the aim of the research is to explain attitudes or behaviours, as it was the case in this paper. There are two types of surveys: descriptive and analytic. The descriptive survey deals with a very specific issue within a segment of the population. It is often used in order to obtain information about what people think and do. In other words, the descriptive survey selects a very specific segment of people in order to know the opinion of the group about a certain issue or matter. The analytic surveys are used to answer questions within a logical manner. It is useful when there are several variables to be studied.

In this case, a descriptive survey was the most suitable option, as the answer to this research was based upon a very specific issue within a close and reduced segment of the population. The research question was trying to provide an answer about what vegans think of the current culinary offer on board of several cruises through the Baltic and if their behaviour would change if the service would provide a vegan menu.

In conclusion, the method used was a quantitative descriptive method due to the nature of this paper. More specifically, the method to be used was a descriptive survey, as the desired results matched the results usually obtained when using this type of research.

4.2 Data collection

The data collection was carried out by using a questionnaire as the data collection method. A set of questions was prepared depending on the topic under study. This set of questions was given to a very narrowed group of people within a population, who would provide answers to the questions. Those answers were then collected and analysed in order to provide the information needed. This method is in fact effective when collecting information from a large number of people at low cost. The information that this

kind of method collects can be: opinions, behaviours and attitude, or attributes (Saunders 2007, 121.)

This method is very structured, and as such, it needs of clear and previous planning. Otherwise the answers that the research might obtain would not be the desired ones. According to Altinay and Paraskevas, there are eight stages when designing a questionnaire:

1. Decide on the information required: the basic step is deciding the information that we need to obtain with the questions. It is necessary to look into the topic under study and the aim.
2. Define the target informants: for each study a group of people would be targeted as the main segment from which the questionnaire would obtain the best answers. It is necessary to narrow the characteristics of the person from which the answers would be more interesting from, so that the questionnaire can be delivered to this specific group of people. This stage is also known as sampling.
3. Choose the method of reaching the target respondents: There are several ways of accomplishing a questionnaire: it can be face-to-face, by postal or email contact; it can also be self-administered, where the informant directs its own questionnaire; or administered by the researcher via phone or structured interviews. In this case, it was a self-administered questionnaire.
4. Decide the content of the questions: each question identified during the first stage of the questionnaire design should be translated into questions. It is very important to identify all variables about which data should be collected in order to answer each researching question.
5. Develop the wording and format of the questions: the words used and the format of the questionnaire helps the informants to understand the questionnaire, and therefore provide high quality answers to the questions. It is recommendable to keep it simple. There are different kind of question formats in questionnaires: closed, open-ended, open response, rating or scale. Each type of questions answers to a specific type of information. Depending on the nature of the answer the researcher is looking for, the type of question would be one or another.
6. Check the length: the length of the questionnaire would affect the number of people answering to the questions. The longer the questionnaire is, the less people are willing to spend time and participate in the questionnaire. For this reason, it would be recommendable to keep the questionnaire as short as possible.

7. Pilot the questionnaire: There should be a testing round, in order to prove that all the questions would obtain the correct answer, and verify that the work done previously while designing the questionnaire is adequate to obtain the desired answers.
8. Finalize the questionnaire form: if any errors or improvements are spotted while the pilot test of the questionnaire, these should be fixed and applied to the questionnaire before providing the questionnaire to the informants.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the questionnaire, and obtain the right answers for the topic under study, all these levels have been followed. In the following chapter more information about the design process is provided, so that the reader can obtain a clear view of the process and a better understanding of the results obtained.

5 RESULTS

The aim of the questionnaire was providing an answer to the research question: Would a vegan menu be an influential factor when booking a cruise through the Baltic Sea? The questionnaire was designed in order to obtain a clear answer for this matter. In the following chapters an analysis of the questionnaire and reasons why certain questions were present in the questionnaire will be explained.

5.1 Questionnaire preparation

The main starting point to select the questions to be asked in the questionnaire was the research question:” Would a vegan menu be an influential factor when booking a cruise through the Baltic Sea?” It was necessary to identify the information that would be needed in order to obtain a desirable answer. In order to obtain that information a set of questions was needed. However, before the questions would be asked, it was necessary to narrow the segment of the population from which we would need the answers. In this case, the interest was focused on vegan people. Other demographic data was not needed for this purpose. Nevertheless, a basic demographic image of the respondents is useful for cruising companies, in order to launch adequate marketing campaigns for the selected segment. For this reason, the first questions were:

1. How old are you?
2. Gender
3. Employment status

The first question was intended to find out the age of the respondent. As Moschis, Lee and Mathur state the market segmentation is a widely used marketing strategy. It consists of the subdivision of the market into smaller groups. These groups have some common characteristics which help grouping them. This strategy will also allow to provide an adequate and personalized product and service tailored for the selected group of people, as the way they perceive and respond to the marketing offering. The aim of this strategy is to reach a certain segment of people at higher speed and with better understanding of their needs. The result would be a more successful marketing campaign. (Moschis, Lee and Mathur, Targeting the mature market: opportunities and challenges; Journal of Consumer Marketing, v.14, issue 4, page 284; 1997) Therefore, including

age, gender and employment questions would help to identify better the segment of the population that would be more receptive to any possible marketing offer.

After the demographic questions, more information about the respondents' background would be needed. As a general rule, a vegan menu would be appealing to vegans. Vegan diets are becoming mainstream, as trend data suggest (<http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Markets/Vegan-is-going-mainstream-trend-data-suggests>). Due to this matter, it would be interesting to know if the vegan respondent has been following a vegan diet. Therefore, the next question to be asked dealt with this issue:

4. How long have you been vegan?

The next important piece of information useful for this research was the travelling nature of the respondents. Obtaining answers from people who do not travel would be as valuable as obtaining information about veganism from a non-vegan individual. Consequently, the next question would refer to the travelling life of the respondents:

5. How many times have you travelled abroad in the past 12 months?
6. How long was the average stay?

Questions 5 and 6 referred to travelling at a general level. Travels abroad were the main focus of these questions. These would provide a general view on the average amount of travels a Nordic vegan does within a period of 12 months. As mentioned previously, a vegan diet is based upon the restriction of animal products from the diet; while travelling this restriction becomes a challenge for most vegans, as a previous research is needed of the restaurant options during the travel and in the destination. Luckily there are websites available to help the vegan traveller finding suitable places where to eat, such as www.veg dining.com (Vesanto and Davis 2000, 103). Once the questions about travelling abroad had been answered, it was time to find out how many times and for how long the vegan traveller has travelled through the Baltic Sea in one of the many cruising companies available. This would provide some information about the amount the cruising service was used, and the amount of time the travellers decided to eat on board. The results for question number 9 could be interesting depending whether the open-response options were used and some text introduced. The information obtained from this kind of questions can be very valuable, as the respondent would provide as much information as desired within the space given for the answer field. Nevertheless, analysing and coding open-response answers is far more complicated and exhausting for the researcher (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008, 125.)

7. How many times have you travelled in a Baltic cruise in the past 12 months?
8. How long was the average stay in the Baltic cruise?
9. Did you eat on board of the cruise?

The 10th and last question of the questionnaire would approach the main object and goal of this survey. It should gather information about the influence of the vegan menu when booking a trip on a cruise through the Baltic Sea.

10. How important is a vegan menu on board? Would it influence you when booking a cruise on the Baltic?

This question was the ultimate and most important part of the questionnaire, therefore, it was left to the end of the questionnaire. Two variables were analysed under this question: the availability of vegan dishes on the buffet menu, and the availability of vegan products in the cruise shops. The answers would be given depending on how important the availability of vegan products is for them, as individual. The answers would capture respondents' opinions on the matter.

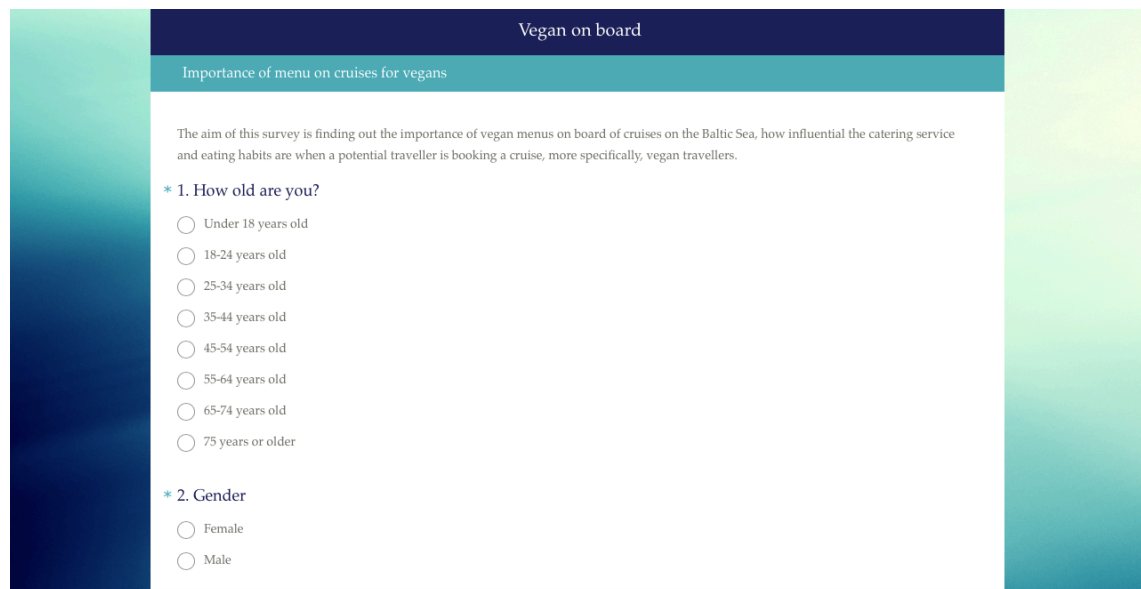
Once the questions were decided and planned, a pilot testing was done. The pilot test questionnaire was sent to several individuals, in order to obtain valuable feedback about the questionnaire. Some of the feedback was:

“Kohdan 5 vaihtoehdot tosin oli vähän epäselvästi merkitty, kun joka numero kahdesta seiskaan toistui toiseen kertaan eri vaihtoehdossa. Ei ollut siis yksiselitteistä, mitä pitäisi valita, jos on käynyt 2-7 kertaa ulkomailla. Lisäksi ei ollut mainintaa, kuuluuko tuohon kohdan 5 lukuun sisällyttää myös ne risteilyt, vai ei.”

Translation: The response options in question number five were a bit ambiguous though, when the numbers from two to seven came up again with another alternative (2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7). It was not unambiguous what I was supposed to choose, if I had been abroad two to seven times. Also, there was no mentioning whether cruises should be included in question number five.

The issue mentioned by the pilot tester was fixed. Some other small changes were applied to the questionnaire: font and visual design. The design was selected so that it would be pleasant for the respondents to see and easy to understand the structure and aim of the questionnaire. Colours for the questionnaire were picked based on the fact that the topic dealt with the Baltic Sea, therefore, cold colours were selected for this topic. It is not an important fact, but the details make a good product. As the American

architect and film director, Charles Eames said: “The details are details. They make the product. The connections, the connections, the connections. It will in the end be these details that give the product its life.” After that, the questionnaire got published, as the questionnaire was prepared to be published on social media.



Vegan on board

Importance of menu on cruises for vegans

The aim of this survey is finding out the importance of vegan menus on board of cruises on the Baltic Sea, how influential the catering service and eating habits are when a potential traveller is booking a cruise, more specifically, vegan travellers.

* 1. How old are you?

Under 18 years old

18-24 years old

25-34 years old

35-44 years old

45-54 years old

55-64 years old

65-74 years old

75 years or older

* 2. Gender

Female

Male

PICTURE 2. View of the questionnaire once it was online

5.2 Questionnaire publication

Today, there are many tools that help the researcher to design and publish a questionnaire online, also in printed version. There are also companies who work specifically in this field and whose aim is to provide results to research questions, for many purposes. In Finland there are many of these companies, one of them established in Tampere, Tutkimustie (<http://www.tutkimustie.fi>). Due to the aim of this thesis and the significance in the field, it was not needed. But it is a useful service for bigger researches.

A private company in this case would not fit the purposes, for this reasons an online survey tool was used to create the survey. There are several survey tools available online. Online surveys are easy to use and provide results very quickly, which was one of the requirements. There are free and paid options. The services provided by paid tools are wider than the free options. Some features offered by paid versions, not available for free versions, can be:

- Export data: export all the results as excel or pdf files. Some sites do not allow the user to download the data unless the paid version is purchased.

- Custom logo: in some cases, it is possible to include your own customized logo. This is useful in case the survey is sponsored by some brand or entity.
- Wider variety of question types: there is a basic list of question types. In case other types, more advanced or custom type of questions are needed, the paid version would offer this feature. The free service usually offers the basic types.
- Unlimited amount of questions and/or respondents: the free versions often limit the amount of questions and/or respondents. Larger researches would not benefit from free versions if the range of respondents should be great.

In this case a free version was a suitable option. The number of answers aimed for was about 100. For the purposes of this study, it was not necessary to gather a large amount of responses, as the aim of this thesis was to get a general opinion on the matter that was being covered. The same would apply to the amount of questions. There were 10 questions prepared for the survey. A large questionnaire usually induces people to provide less responses. The idea was to create a short questionnaire, which would be able to fill in less than five minutes. Thus, people would be able to complete the questionnaire in a short time, and the questionnaire would be shared.

There are several tools that could have been used. A few examples are Survey Monkey, Typeform, Google Forms, Client Heartbeat, Zoho Survey, Survey Gizmo, or Survey Planet. In this case Survey Monkey was selected, as it is simple and uncomplicated to use. Moreover, as for the researcher, this tool was used previously with satisfactory results. The free version was used, as the limit of respondents and questions was suitable for the purpose of this thesis.

Once the tool was chosen, the questions were uploaded and the design applied. After that, as described previously, a pilot test was performed. There were some impressions, improvements and errors identified during the pilot test. Those were fixed and applied to the questionnaire. Thereupon the final version was ready, and the questionnaire was published on 15th March 2016 at 15:12. The questionnaire was published in social media, as it is the most accessible service to reach people quickly and within a certain range of distance. The main location was Facebook, more specifically a closed group called Vegaanihaaste 2016 (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/788056577983938/?fref=ts>). This group is composed mainly by people who have been vegan for some time and are capable of provid-

ing tips and info about vegan life, promoting vegan lifestyle at the same time; in addition to new vegans in search for information, recipes and other related issues to veganism.

The questionnaire was available under <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/GZQQDV2>. The questionnaire was also available in several people's wall. The location of the people were Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland; as the main segment would be people who travel through the Baltic Sea.

5.3 Questionnaire closure

The questionnaire was made public on 15th March 2016 at 15:12. The aim of the amount of the answers for the purpose of this thesis were 100 respondents. The questionnaire was divulged through social media, as it is very easy to obtain answers in a very short time. After two days, on 17th March the aim of the amount of the respondents was accomplished. After the amount of the responses was achieved, the survey got closed. The vegan community is very active in social networks. This fact made it possible to obtain all the answers in a record time. Moreover, people sharing the link helped to achieve the goal in such a short time.

Once the questionnaire was closed, the data analysis process started. Online survey tools have a good and simple data analysis view, which improves the research process, as it is simple and almost effortless to gather all the results and present graphically the findings of the questionnaire survey.

In the following chapter of this thesis, the findings of the answers will be provided. Moreover, all the answers from the open-response question are attached to this thesis in the appendix, so that further information is available by all means.

5.4 Data analysis

This section of the thesis shows the analysis obtained after processing the answers from the 100 respondents. The information is provided according to the questions present in the questionnaire, and ordered as it appeared in the survey.

The first question was “How old are you?” As explained previously, this and the following four questions were included in order to get an idea of the average vegan respondent, in order to include the individual in one of the marketing segments. To this question, the results were as follows:

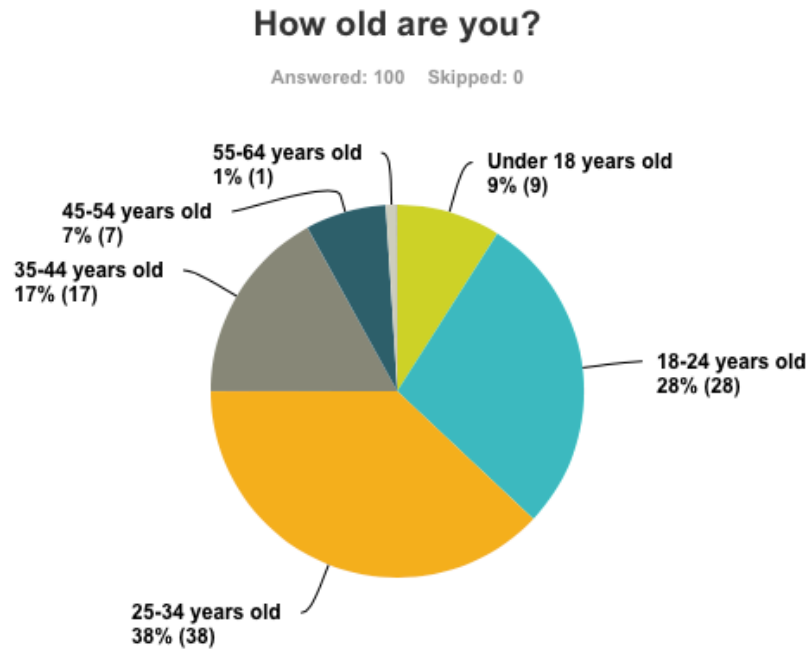


FIGURE 1. Q1 of the questionnaire: How old are you?

TABLE 1. Answer choices and responses for Q1

Answer Choices	Responses
Under 18 years old	9% 9
18-24 years old	28% 28
25-34 years old	38% 38
35-44 years old	17% 17
45-54 years old	7% 7
55-64 years old	1% 1
65-74 years old	0% 0
75 years or older	0% 0
Total	100

There were several possible answers in the options for the questionnaire. The age appears in different groups, in order to provide a clear view of the average vegan who participated in the survey. The ages were grouped in intervals of five years, as it is a common practice and it was suitable for the purpose of this thesis.

The group with greatest amount of respondents were vegans in the age between 25 and 34 years old, followed by 18 to 24 years old, and 35 to 44 years old. The amount of respondents by age is coherent with the use of social network and media. According to

Statista website, social media users are between 16-25 and 26-34 years old.

(<http://www.statista.com/statistics/274829/age-distribution-of-active-social-media-users-worldwide-by-platform/>). 9 people under 18 years old, 7 people between 45 and 54 years old, 1 person between 55 and 64 answered the questionnaire.

The second question was about the gender of the respondent. There were two possibilities for this question: female or male. The results for this issue were:

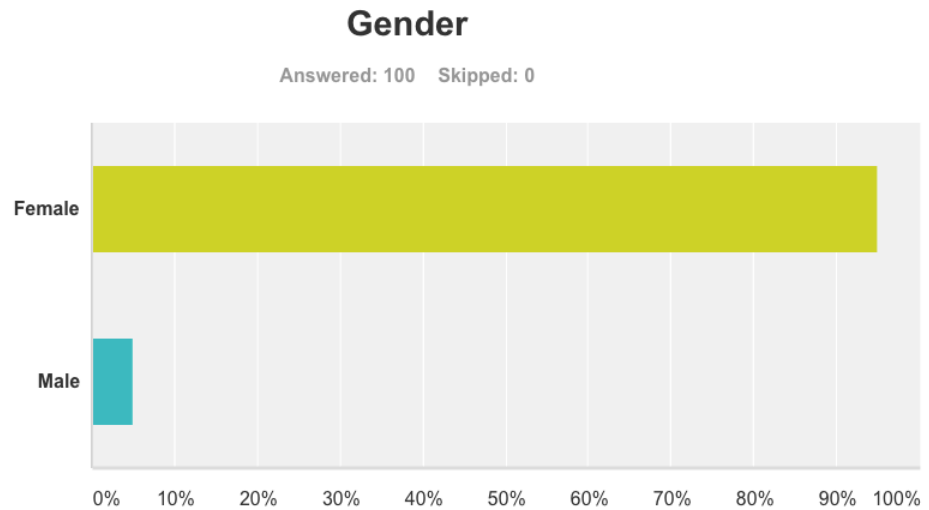


FIGURE 2. Q2 of the questionnaire: Gender

TABLE 2. Answer choices and responses for Q2

Answer Choices	Responses
Female	95.00% 95
Male	5.00% 5
Total	100

The results prove what an article in the Huffington Post stated. Amongst vegans there are more women than men. The research was performed only in US America in the year 2013. According to the research, 79% of vegans are women and 21% are men. The amount of vegetarians is more distributed between women and men with a total of 59% vegetarian women and 41% vegetarian men.

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/01/vegan-woman-lifestyle_n_5063565.html)

The difference of the gender shown in the results is remarkable. Out of 100 respondents, 95 % were women and only 5% were men. As there are very few researches on the field of veganism and vegetarianism it is difficult to provide an explanation for such a difference amongst the respondents.

Once the question about the gender had been answered, the next demographical question was about working life. With this question the aim was to obtain information about the average respondent vegan's working life. If the individual is currently working, it is logically understood that the amount of income will be greater than for the vegan who is currently unemployed and looking for a job. These were the findings on the matter:

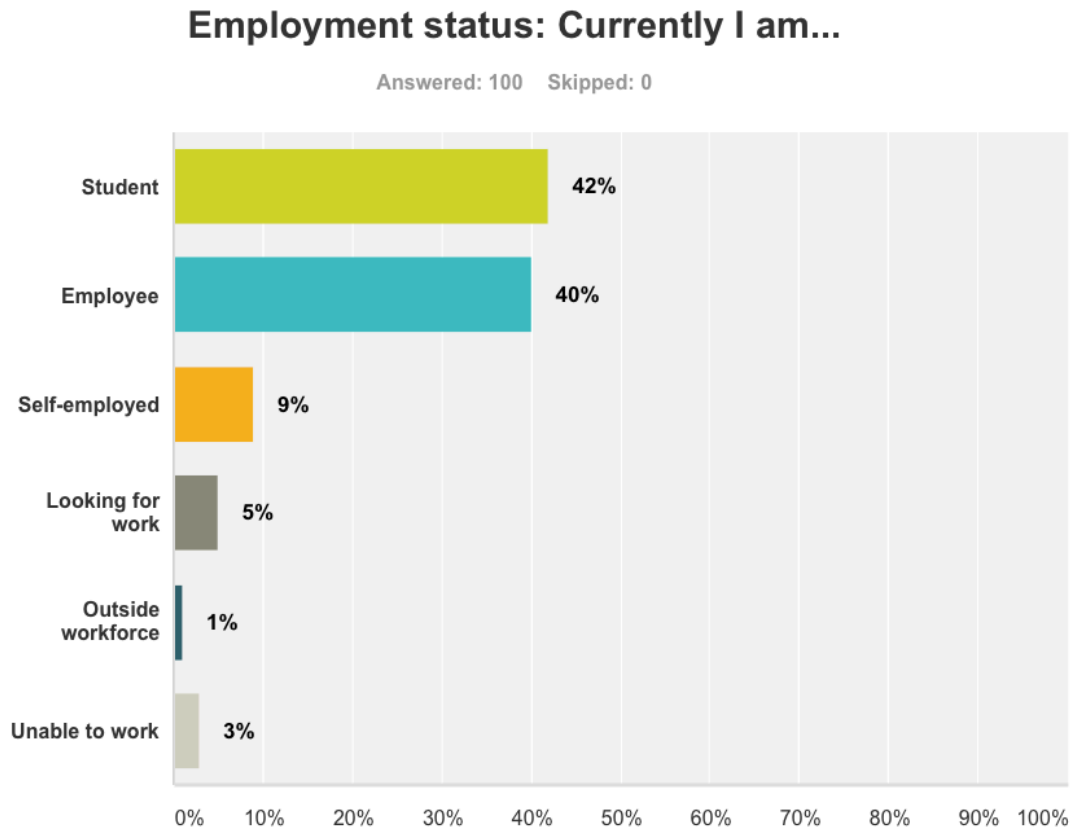


FIGURE 3. Q3 of the questionnaire: working life

TABLE 3. Answer choices and responses for Q3

Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Student	42% 42
▼ Employee	40% 40
▼ Self-employed	9% 9
▼ Looking for work	5% 5
▼ Outside workforce	1% 1
▼ Unable to work	3% 3
Total	100

Amongst the respondents there were two main groups: students with 42% of the total, and employees, with 40%. The rest were in order of higher amount to smallest: Self-employed (9%), unemployed and looking for work (5%), unemployed but not looking for work (1%) and people unable to work (3%). These results matched age results. People studying are often between 18 and 30 years old, which matches with the results obtained in the age question of the survey. The second biggest group was the employee group, with a 40% of the total. The workforce in Finland is considerably higher than in other countries, with only 9,4% of unemployment rate in the year 2015 (http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/index_en.html). This means that the working force group in Finland is quite high, and it is reflected in the results of this questionnaire.

The last demographic question would help defining the average respondent, in order to be able to identify clearly the segment of the population that would belong to this group. In this case, the question focused on the time the individual had followed a vegan diet. Ranges of time were given as choices for the respondents to answer.

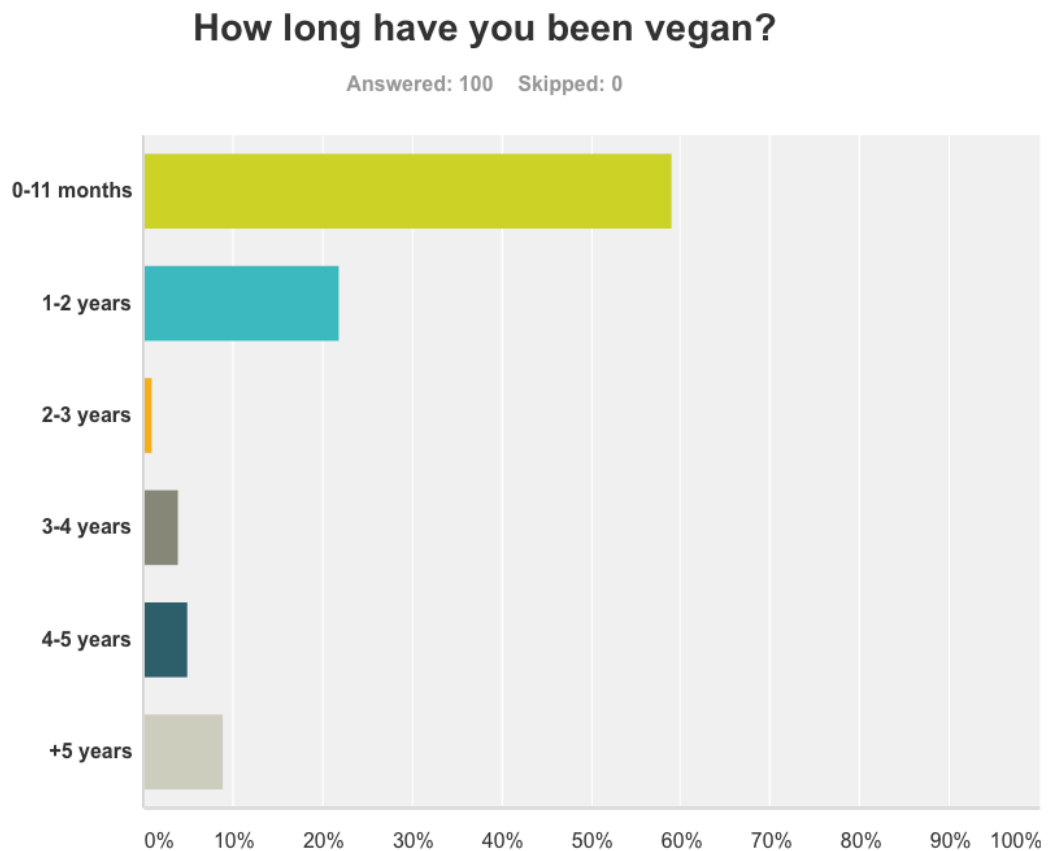


FIGURE 4. Q4 of the questionnaire: how long have you been vegan?

TABLE 4. Answer choices and responses for Q4

Answer Choices	Responses
0-11 months	59.00% 59
1-2 years	22.00% 22
2-3 years	1.00% 1
3-4 years	4.00% 4
4-5 years	5.00% 5
+5 years	9.00% 9
Total	100

The answers show that most of the people who answered to the questionnaire had been vegans for less than a year, a total of 59% of the respondents. The second biggest group had been vegans for 1 or 2 years, with 22%. It is quite surprising that the third biggest group was the group that had been vegans for more than five years.

With these results, we can clearly observe that vegan lifestyle has become popular in the last years. For this reason, the biggest groups were the ones who have been vegans for the shortest times. Moreover, the location where the questionnaire was published was a group called “the Vegan challenge” (Vegaanihaaste in Finnish). In this group there are experienced vegans giving and providing advice and information about vegan diet and lifestyle, and new vegans learning and acquiring knowledge about this specific lifestyle. The aim of this group also matches with the results obtained by the questionnaire.

After these four questions had been answered, it was possible to provide the description of the average vegan person who answered this questionnaire: It would be a young woman, between 25 and 34 years old, rather studying or working as an employee who started recently a vegan lifestyle. This profile also provides some more information. Young vegans are not so versatile in the vegan world and lifestyle yet. They would need help finding restaurants where to eat and find food and other products.

The next questions were related to their travelling life.

The first one of them requested information about the amount of travels in general in the past 12 months:

How many times have you travelled abroad in the past 12 months?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

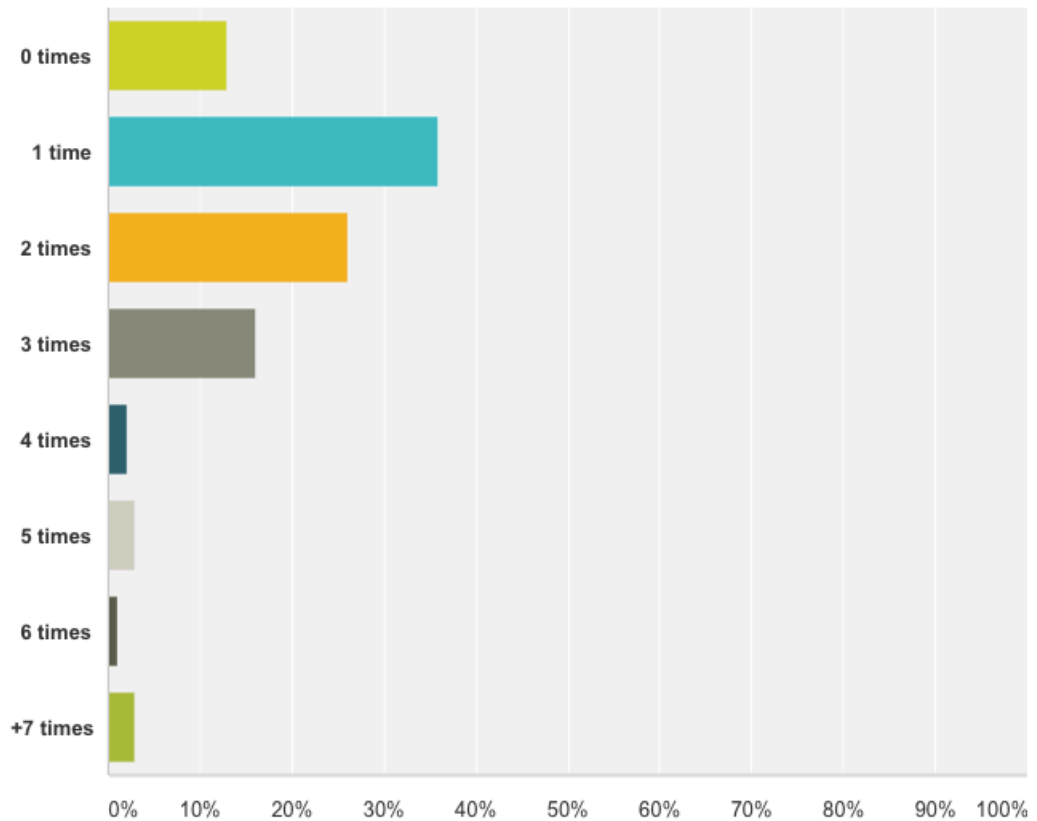


FIGURE 5. Q5 of the questionnaire: how many travels to abroad in the past 12 months?

TABLE 5. Answer choices and responses for Q5

Answer Choices	Responses
0 times	13.00% 13
1 time	36.00% 36
2 times	26.00% 26
3 times	16.00% 16
4 times	2.00% 2
5 times	3.00% 3
6 times	1.00% 1
+7 times	3.00% 3
Total	100

36% of the respondents were abroad at least once, and 26% were at least two times, 16% were three times, and 13% were not abroad at all.

The sixth question was also related to the previous questions, as it requested information about the average stay abroad.

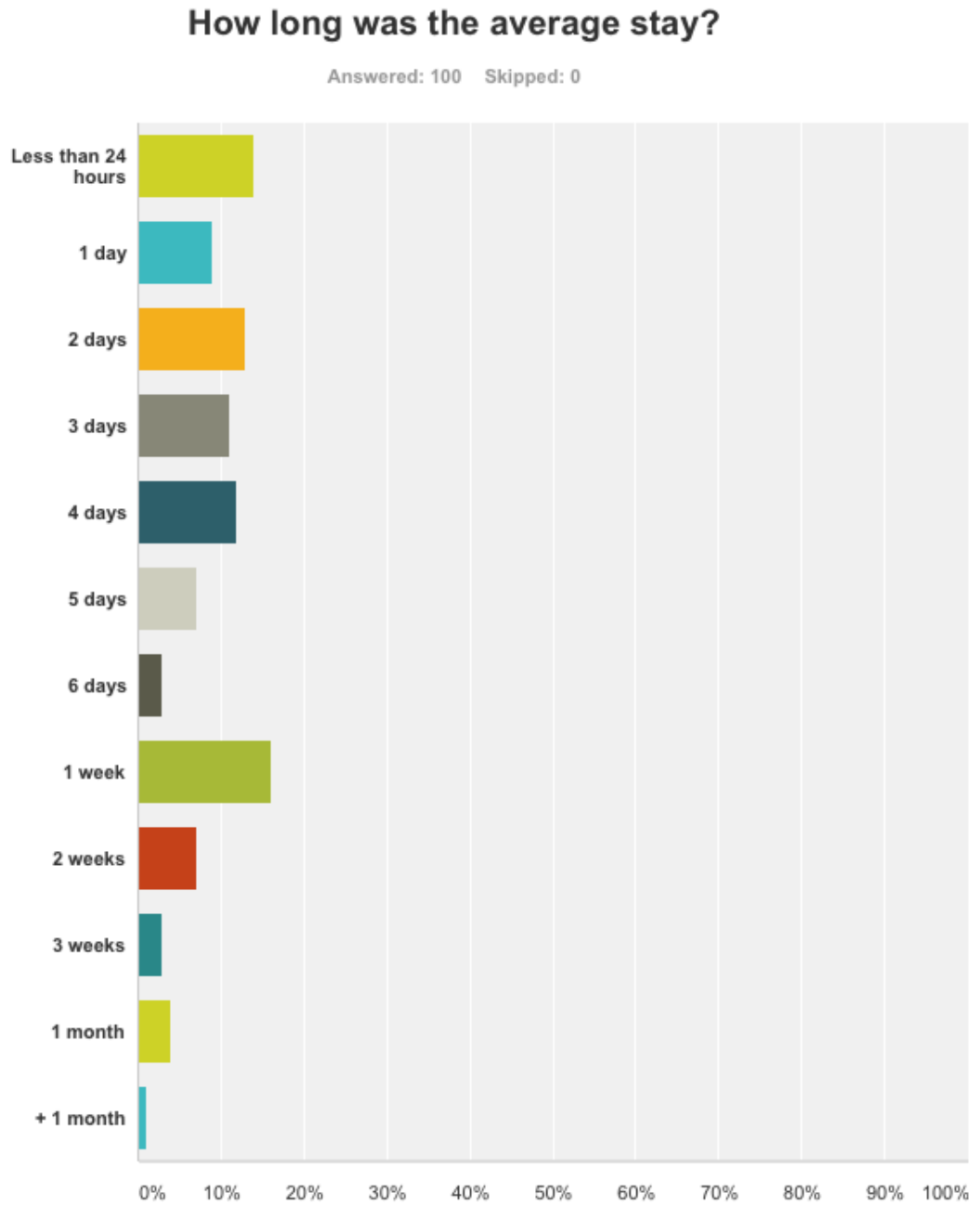


FIGURE 6. Q6 of the questionnaire: how long was the average stay?

TABLE 6. Answer choices and responses for Q6

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 24 hours	14.00% 14
1 day	9.00% 9
2 days	13.00% 13
3 days	11.00% 11
4 days	12.00% 12
5 days	7.00% 7
6 days	3.00% 3
1 week	16.00% 16
2 weeks	7.00% 7
3 weeks	3.00% 3
1 month	4.00% 4
+ 1 month	1.00% 1
Total	100

Combining these two questions, a general view of the travelling experience abroad in the past 12 months of the respondents was obtained. The average vegan had travelled one or two times within the past 12 months for rather a week, or a short period of time (less than 24 hours to 4 days). In this case the results for the average stay varied more than the results in other questions. So the results were not as conclusive as for other questions. The next question asked was specifically about travelling through the Baltic Sea:

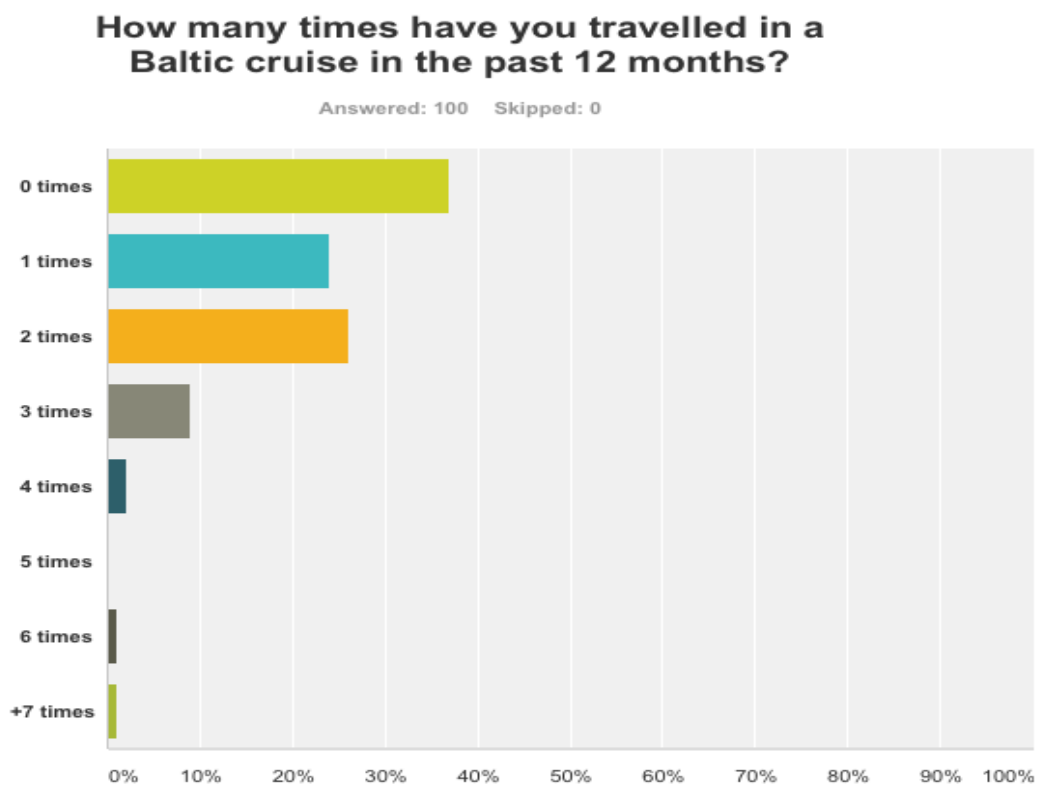


FIGURE 7. Q7 of the questionnaire: times travelled within the past 12 months

TABLE 7. Answer choices and responses for Q7

Answer Choices	Responses
0 times	37.00% 37
1 times	24.00% 24
2 times	26.00% 26
3 times	9.00% 9
4 times	2.00% 2
5 times	0.00% 0
6 times	1.00% 1
+7 times	1.00% 1
Total	100

The results for this question were revealing. Previous results showed that most vegans travelled one to three times during the past twelve months. That would be a 78% of the total of respondents. Nevertheless, a 37% of the total of respondents did not travel a single time through the Baltic Sea in the past year. This kind of trips through the Baltic Sea are accessible and affordable. Should the reason for not travelling be the availability of a vegan menu, the aim of this thesis would be achieved and accomplished successfully. In order to obtain more info about this matter the questionnaire would still need further analysis.

The next question in the questionnaire was related to the length of the cruise. The aim of this question was obtaining a view of the main type of a cruise vegans book. There are several travel packages available. The duration of each travel can vary greatly. There are trips for less than a day, and other trips for more than two weeks.

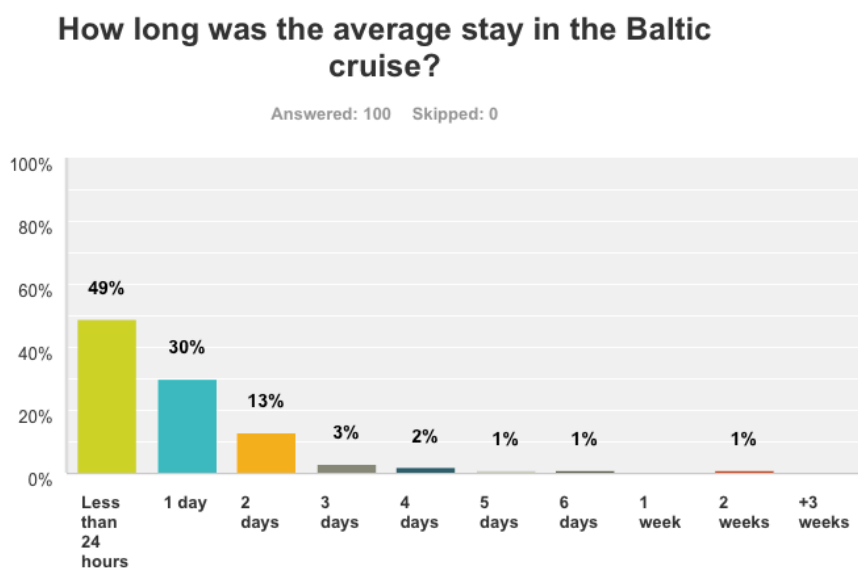


FIGURE 8. Q8 of the questionnaire: average stay in the Baltic cruise

TABLE 8. Answer choices and responses for Q8

Answer Choices	Responses	
▼ Less than 24 hours	49%	49
▼ 1 day	30%	30
▼ 2 days	13%	13
▼ 3 days	3%	3
▼ 4 days	2%	2
▼ 5 days	1%	1
▼ 6 days	1%	1
▼ 1 week	0%	0
▼ 2 weeks	1%	1
▼ +3 weeks	0%	0
Total		100

The results of this question show that most vegans travelled through the Baltic Sea for a short period of time: 49% of the respondents travelled for less than 24 hours, 30% travelled for 1 day, 13% travelled for 2 days. Only 1% of the respondents travelled for a longer period of time, which was 2 weeks.

The ninth question treated the topic of food on board of the cruise. The main goal of this thesis was related to the food on board, therefore, this and the next question were the key questions of the questionnaire. Previous questions were included as to obtain a background of the respondents and their travelling life in the past twelve months. The background was necessary in order to understand the travelling nature of vegans in the Baltic cruises.

Did you eat on board of the cruise?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

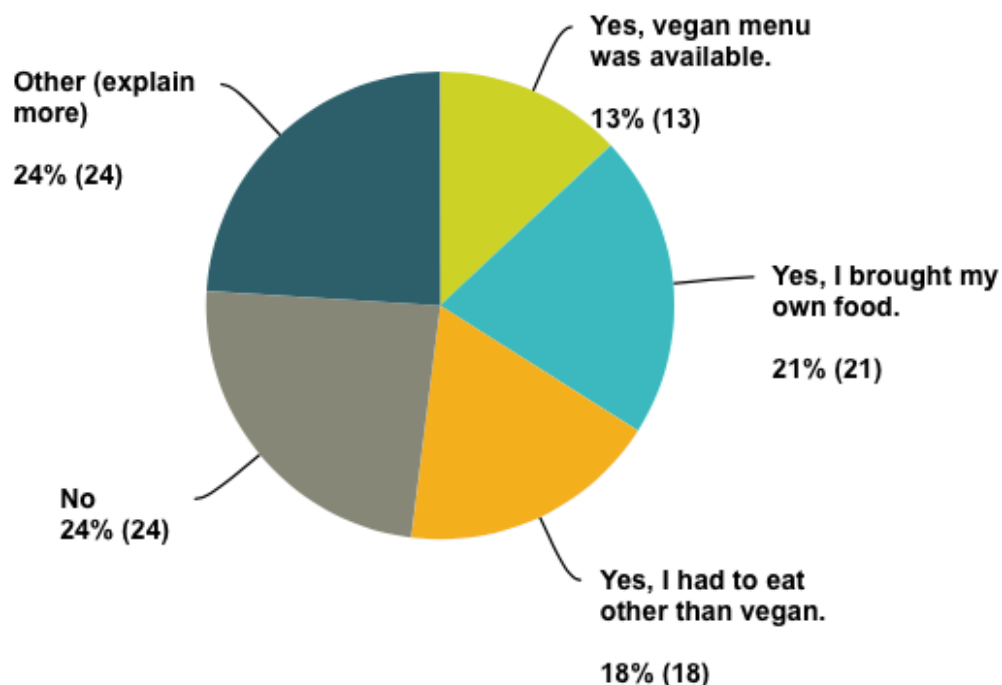


FIGURE 9. Q9 of the questionnaire: Did you eat on board?

TABLE 9. Answer choices and responses for Q9

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, vegan menu was available.	13% 13
Yes, I brought my own food.	21% 21
Yes, I had to eat other than vegan.	18% 18
No	24% 24
Other (explain more)	24% 24
Total	100

In this case, the amount of answers was equal for each single answer choice. The smallest group ate on board as there was vegan dishes available, 13% of the respondents. 24% of the respondents did not eat on board. Also 24% selected other as their choice. All the answers provided by this open-response system are included in the appendixes. Nevertheless, the most important and relevant, which was repeated by many respondents were:

- There was no vegan menu available, only vegetarian
- There was vegan menu, but it was bad.

- On the trip to Stockholm there were some vegan options, but not on the trip to Tallinn.
- I was not vegan back then.
- I ordered vegan menu beforehand, but I did not get it.

Most of these answers were in fact negative. These negative experiences prevent the traveller to use the services of a company for future trips. In cases where the trip is short, less than a day, the menu on board might not be as important as it would be in the case when the trip on board lasts for more than 2 days.

Another conclusion that could be extracted from these answers is that the identification of vegan, vegetarian and other restricted food is not very well established. In some cases, the respondents were not sure if what they were eating was completely vegan, or if there was cheese, or other animal products on their dishes. Vegan and vegetarian food was not indicated in the dish.

The last question was the main question in this questionnaire. The aim of this thesis was finding out if the availability of vegan food offered on board would attract vegan tourists and make them book cruises through the Baltic Sea.

How important is a vegan menu on board? Would it influence you when booking a cruise on the Baltic?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

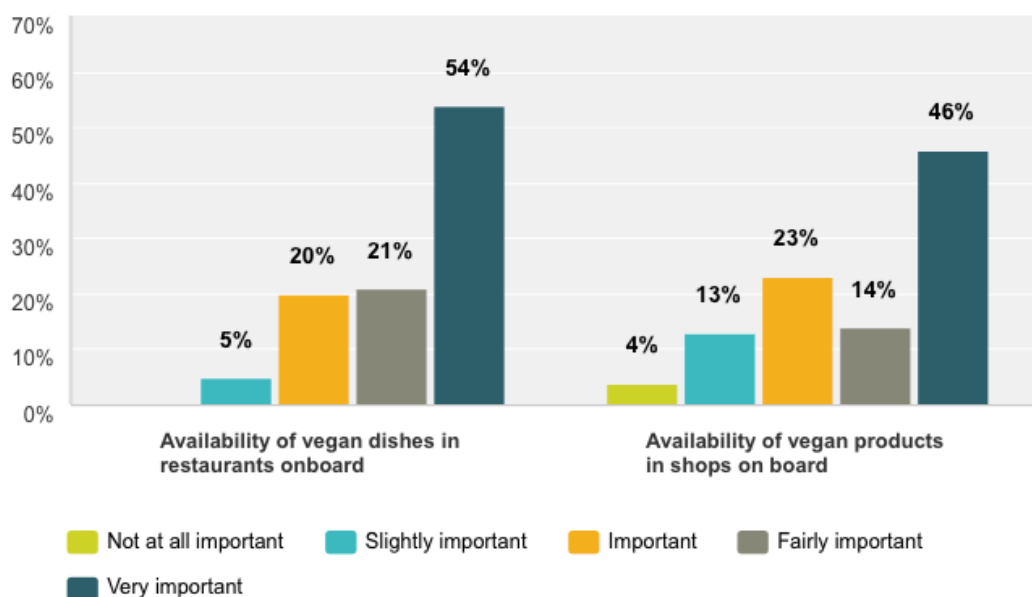


FIGURE 10. Q10 of the questionnaire: influence of vegan menu

TABLE 10. Answer choices and responses for Q10

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Fairly important	Very important	Total
Availability of vegan dishes in restaurants onboard	0% 0	5% 5	20% 20	21% 21	54% 54	100
Availability of vegan products in shops on board	4% 4	13% 13	23% 23	14% 14	46% 46	100

The graphics show the opinion of the vegans about two main issues:

1. Availability of vegan dishes in restaurants on board: more than half of the respondents considered very important the availability of vegan dishes on board, followed by 21% of the respondents who think it is fairly important and 20% thinking it is important. Only 5% think it is slightly important, and 0% thinks it is not important at all. Therefore, we can state that vegan menus on board would be a great service and assets to offer to the clients. In fact, it would give the vegans the impression that they are important in the society. A happy customer will always come back and repeat the service.
2. Availability of vegan products in shops on board: 46% of the respondents think it would be very important to be able to purchase vegan products on the shops of the cruising boat, 14% think it is fairly important, 23% think it is important, 13% think it is slightly important, and only 4% think it is not important at all. On board there are many duty free shops which are appealing to the travellers. These shops offer a great variety of products for a cheaper price than inland. It is an appealing and attracting service offered during the cruising time. The availability of vegan products would improve this service, according to the thought of the respondents. It is not as important as the availability of vegan dishes available on the menu offer of the cruising boat; however, it is a possible improvement to the already existing services on board.

Now that the questionnaire was completed and analysed, it was possible to provide an image of the average vegan respondent and the thoughts on the issue covered in this thesis: the average vegan who answered this questionnaire is a woman, between 18 and

34 years old, student or an employee, who became vegan recently. She has travelled 1 to 3 times within the past 12 months, and the average stay was rather a week or a very short period of time, which would be from less than a day, to four days. She travelled to the Baltic Sea, zero, one, or two times within the past 12 months, and she was less than a day on the cruise ship. It is possible that she did not eat at all on the boat, or that she had a not so positive experience in the buffet on board. She would also think that the availability of vegan food in the menu and in shops on board would be important and necessary.

6 CONCLUSION

Veganism is a reality. Unfortunately, most people confuse veganism and vegetarianism. A vegetarian person does not intake meat, poultry or fish products, but might intake dairies and eggs (lacto-ovo vegetarian). A vegan in the other hand, does not intake any product with animal origin. This includes dairies and eggs, and in some cases also honey or other products not meant to be eaten, such as creams, or clothing.

Food tourism is also affected by veganism. There are also vegan travellers around the world, and they have the same expectations as the rest of the tourists: new experiences, new knowledge and new tastes. For this reason travelling companies should be able to provide different diets to their clients in order to provide a satisfactory service. It is important though to understand what food or culinary tourism is. Not all the travels to restaurants are considered food tourism. Culinary or food tourism is considered when the main aim or goal is to enjoy and be actively involved with food during the travel, when food becomes one of the decisive factors when deciding the destination or the activities. Several travelling companies include different kinds of food in order to provide a positive and memorable service to their clients during the trip.

Cruising companies are less known as airlines for travelling. But these companies also offer catering services worldwide. There are many companies operating in the Baltic Sea. Unfortunately it is complicated to find information about vegan menus on board. In some cases even after a direct contact with the company, the information received was ambiguous and the company offered vegetarian menus even though the inquiry stated that the information was for a vegan traveller.

The average vegan travellers in the Baltic Sea have experienced some issues on board with their diet. In fact, an improvement of the service is considered very important by the average vegan. A wider availability and range of vegan products on the menus on board and the availability of vegan products also in the shops of the ships would be a decisive and influential factor when a possible vegan customer would book a cruise through the Baltic Sea.

The aim of this thesis was providing an answer to the research question: Is a vegan menu a decisive factor when booking a cruise through the Baltic Sea? After analyzing

the results of a questionnaire survey with 100 vegan respondents from the Nordic area, the answer is clear: Yes, it is.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Email sent to Viking Line

From: Manuela Barrero Toral [mailto:manuelabarrerotoral@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2016 1:23 PM
To: International Sales
Subject: Special diet needs

Good afternoon,

I am interested in booking a cabin for a cruise in the Baltic Sea. I am checking different options. I have tried to do it online, but when doing the booking I realized that there is no option to indicate that I am vegan. How could I indicate it? Is any vegan food available on the menu? Unfortunately, I could not see any of this information in your website.

Thank you very much in advance.

Best regards,
Manuela

Appendix 2. Viking Line Buffet menu

BUFFET



Cold fish dishes

Matjesherring terrine
Vodka and lime marinated herring
Mustard herring
Onion herring
Archipelago herring
Fried herring and pickled leek
Maki roll with cucumber, sweet bell pepper and omelette
Sushi with cold smoked whitefish
Smoked egologic soy
Blini topped with chili seasoned Swedish Skagenröra
Shellfish salad with lime, peas, red onion and romaine lettuce
Salmon ceviche with mango, chili and coriander
Sugar and salt cured salmon, dill crème and maître d'hotel sauce
Cold smoked salmon with wasabi seasoned smetana
Warm smoked salmon with caper crème and roasted onion
Assortment of roe - white fish roe
Assortment of roe - yellow and black seaweed caviar
Smetana and red onion
Shrimps with Rhode Island sauce, lemon crème and garlic mayonnaise
Egg halves with chives

Cold meat dishes

Juniper berry marinated lamb fillet, dried blueberries and lingonberry sauce
Pulled deer on rye bread with rosmarine and thyme crème
Spanish cold cuts - air-dried Iberico ham, salami and marinated olives
Chicken skewers and Ranch dressing
Hunters pâté with pickled mushrooms and small bell peppers filled with hummus

Main dishes - Dinner

Gnocchies with soy protein, garlic, thyme and tomato
Baby ribs with BBQ sauce
Warm smoked salmon, lemon, dill and horseradish

Cooked cod loin with bouillabaisse
Coq au vin
Peru style chorizo
Arrabiata pasta rolls
Oven-baked avocados
Gratine aubergine
Roasted vegetables of the season
Potato au gratin with thyme
Boiled potatoes with dill and butter
Red wine sauce
Spicy tomato sauce
Cognac sauce
Béarnaise sauce with fresh herbs
Dijon mustard

From the Carvery

Whole-fried flank steak / roast beef / entrecôte
Oak smoked belly of pork

Bread selection

Aaland Island black bread
Selection of fresh bread
Rustic crisp bread

Vegetables & vegetarian alternatives with accompaniments

Romaine lettuce
Mini mozzarella with tomato and basil
Small bell peppers filled with hummus
Zucchini rolls, olives and artichoke leaves
Roasted champignon salad with leek, parsley, balsamico and olive oil
Creamy potato salad with capers, Dijon mustard, chive and crème fraîche
Trofie pasta salad, grilled vegetables and Grana Padana cheese
Salad with red quinoa, soy protein, sun-dried tomatoes, red onion and vinaigrette
Moghrahieh couscous salad with soy protein, roasted bell pepper, silverskin onion and herb vinaigrette
Olives with stones marinated with herbs
Sliced pickled cucumber

Rocket salad with goat cheese and roasted beetroots
Roasted pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, walnuts and sugar roasted hazelnuts
Herb croutons and grissini
Coleslaw
Tomato salad
Bean salad
Red vinaigrette sauce
Balsamico sauce
Thousand Island sauce
Sour cream sauce with herbs

Cheeses with accompaniments

Goat cheese with figs and cognac
St Nectaire cheese
Tome Noire President cheese
Blue cheese
Comté cheese
Selection of crackers
Fig marmalade
Apple jam
Tistron jam
Thyme-flavoured honey
Truffel-flavoured honey

Desserts

Fruit salad with cranberries and mint
Passion fruit mousse cake
Tiramisu
Melon curd with whipped cream and mint
Éclair filled with vanilla
Carrot cake
Panna cotta with raspberry and liqourice
Lime cheesecake
Macarons
Cherry pavlova
Lemon pavlova
Vanilla ice cream
Chocolate ice cream
Season sorbet
Strawberry sauce
Caramel sauce
Chocolate sauce
Dried candied fruits
Candies

PRODUCTS CAN VARIATE DUE TO AVAILABILITY

VIKING LINE

Appendix 3. Email sent to Tallink Silja



Manuela Barrero Toral <manuelabarrerotoral@gmail.com>

para international.. ▾

12:23 (hace 4 horas) ☆



Good afternoon,

I am interested in booking a cabin for a cruise from Helsinki to Tallinn. I have tried to do it online, but when doing the booking I realized that there is no option to indicate that I am vegan. How could I indicate it? Is any vegan food available on the menu? Unfortunately, I could not see any of this information in your website.

Thank you very much in advance.

Best regards,
Manuela

