

[HOME](#)
[ARCHIVE](#)
[ABOUT](#)

[SUOMEKSI -
IN FINNISH](#)

Half of Finland's water footprint is from abroad

Marja Haapamäki leafs through the restaurant menu on the sunny terrace of Kiasma, Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art. She sees symbols that rarely appear on restaurant menus.

A water drop next to the name of the item indicates how many litres of water were needed to produce the raw material for the food.

"Water footprint", she reads. The word has a familiar ring.



print this

The water footprint markings on the menu are linked with Helsinki's year as World Design Capital, and with the recent WWF report on water footprints, which is the first attempt at calculating indirect water consumption by Finns. According to the findings, the daily average per capita water footprint for Finns is nearly 4,000 litres, about half of which occurs abroad.

"Beef and rice", are two water-intensive foods mentioned by Haapamäki and her friend **Laura Tamminen**.

According to the new report, maize, sugar cane, olives, and grapes require large amounts of water to produce. Most of the water consumed in the world, about 70 per cent, is used in agriculture.

The aim of the menu notations is to raise awareness of the global water situation. There is no shortage of water in Finland, but we can unwittingly deplete water resources in other countries with our everyday food choices.

If Haapamäki and Tamminen were to order a dish with rice from the Kiasma list, they would effectively be competing with South Asians over their limited water resources.

Mutton also involves a large amount of water usage, but the menu points out that there is no shortage of water in New Zealand.

Do these kinds of reminders of global responsibility have a negative effect on the ladies' appetites?

"Not at all. I choose foods that I want to have. Given the choice of two equally tempting dishes, I will go for the one with a smaller water footprint", Haapamäki says.

The two feel that slight guilt-tripping as a way of improving the world is acceptable.

Fortunately, there are some pleasant surprises on the menu.

"The water footprint of vendace and elk meat is zero", Haapamäki explains.

The new findings by WWF do not change the basic guidelines for environmentally-friendly eating.

"A predominantly vegetarian diet consumes the least amount of water resources. Meat and milk increase the Finnish water footprint", says **Jussi Nikula** of WWF.

Domestic food is a risk-free choice as far as water footprints are concerned. Only the production of chicken and pork involve feeds that are produced abroad, which may come from crops grown in areas with limited water resources.

Links:

▶ [WWF - Reducing the impact of humanity's water footprint](#)

Helsingin Sanomat

23.5.2012 - TODAY

- ▶ [Finnair cuts costs by outsourcing European routes](#)
- ▶ [Half of Finland's water footprint is from abroad](#)
- ▶ [Finland's Pernilla Karlsson eliminated in Eurovision semi-final](#)
- ▶ [Talvivaara birds died of poisoning](#)
- ▶ [Fierce battle brewing up over leadership positions in SDP](#)
- ▶ [Childlessness a problem for many Finns](#)
- ▶ [Rail traffic badly disrupted by accidents in Southern Finland](#)
- ▶ [City of Helsinki has a backlog of 250,000 invoices](#)
- ▶ [Finnish National Theatre and National Opera facing cost-cutting measures](#)
- ▶ [Nokian Tyres to dismiss 120 employees at its factory in Finland](#)
- ▶ [Nordic World Ski Championship sprint events could take place at Helsinki Olympic Stadium](#)

[Back to Top ^](#)