



FINLAND IS AGAIN RANKED THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. THE US FALLS TO ITS LOWEST- EVER POSITION - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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People walk along a street in Helsinki, Finland, Saturday, March 15, 2025.

[Finland](#) is named the happiest country in the world for the eighth year in a row, according to the World Happiness Report 2025 published Thursday.

Other Nordic countries are also once again at the top of the [happiness](#) rankings in the annual report published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford. Besides Finland, [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#) and [Sweden](#) remain the top four and in the same order.

Country rankings were based on answers people give when asked to rate their own lives. The study was done in partnership with the analytics firm Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

"Happiness isn't just about wealth or growth — it's about trust, connection and knowing people have your back," said Jon Clifton, the CEO of Gallup. "If we want stronger communities and economies, we must invest in what truly matters: each other."

Sharing meals and having somebody to count on

Researchers say that beyond health and wealth, some factors that influence happiness sound deceptively simple: sharing meals with others, having somebody to count on for social support, and household size. In Mexico and Europe, for example, a household size of four to five people predicts the highest levels of happiness, the study said.

Believing in the kindness of others is also much more closely tied to happiness than previously thought, according to the latest findings.

As an example, the report suggests that people who believe that others are willing to return their lost wallet is a strong predictor of the overall happiness of a population.

Nordic nations rank among the top places for expected and actual return of lost wallets, the study found.

Overall, researchers said global evidence on the perceived and actual return of lost wallets shows that people are much too pessimistic about the kindness of their communities compared to reality — actual rates of wallet return are around twice as high as people expect.

The U.S. falls to its lowest-ever position in the happiness ranking

While European countries dominate the top 20 in the ranking, there were some exceptions. Despite the war with Hamas, [Israel](#) came in at 8th. [Costa Rica](#) and [Mexico](#) entered the top 10 for the first time, ranking at 6th and 10th respectively.

When it comes to decreasing happiness — or growing unhappiness — the [United States](#) has dropped to its lowest-ever position at 24, having previously peaked at 11th place in 2012. The report states that the number of [people dining alone](#) in the United States has increased 53% over the past two decades.

The [United Kingdom](#), at position 23, is reporting its lowest average life evaluation since the 2017 report.

[Afghanistan](#) is again ranked as the unhappiest country in the world, with [Afghan women](#) saying their lives are especially difficult.

[Sierra Leone](#) in western Africa is the second unhappiest, followed by [Lebanon](#), ranking the 3rd from the bottom.

Almost one-fifth of young adults globally have no social support

In a concerning development, the study said 19% of young adults across the world reported in 2023 that they have no one they could count on for social support. That is a 39% increase compared to 2006.

All countries are ranked according to their self-assessed life evaluations averaged over 2022 to 2024.

Experts in economics, psychology, sociology and beyond then seek to explain the variations across countries and over time using factors such as GDP per capita, healthy [life expectancy](#), having someone to count on, a sense of freedom, generosity and perceptions of [corruption](#).