

The clown laughs forever

THE FLAVOR OF PACKAGED CROISSANTS NO LONGER HAS VERY MUCH IN COMMON WITH THAT OF OVEN-FRESH PRODUCTS FROM THE BAKER, BUT THEY CLING ON TO THEIR PLACE IN THE FOOD SHELVES NONETHELESS



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++ figure 1

In Germany, a lot of filled croissants are advertised as products for children

Open-textured, flaky-crisp and with a tender crumb – freshly-baked croissants entice many people to the breakfast table. Freshness plays a decisive role, especially with the Danish pastries made in France. If stored too long, the dough absorbs moisture, loses its open texture, the layers stick together and the baked product becomes sticky. It has now really lost all the outstanding properties that go to make up a croissant. However it still tastes quite good nevertheless. If rebaked in an oven, even a croissant that is several days old definitely has its appeal. And if it is filled with a nut-nougat cream or jam, that makes it an attractive cake product.

There are two variants that can be found in the food retail: firstly butter croissants for baking off again, with a minimum shelf life of around 20 days. Consumers can find them on the shelves alongside the bread rolls for baking off. Secondly they are sold individually packed with a filling as a sweet snack for in between meals, with a minimum shelf life of around 60 days. This variant can be found among the packed ready-to-eat cakes and fresh egg waffles.

Figures from Germany show there definitely are potential customers for packed croissants. According to the Symphony IRI market research group, Düsseldorf, Germany, around 11.5m t were sold in the German food retail in 2012, earning a turnover of around EUR 59.6m. Of this, around 1.2m t (approx. EUR 7.6m) was accounted for by bake-off croissants and approx. 10.3m t (around EUR 52m) by filled products, with growth rates of around 10% compared to the previous

year. German consumers pay between EUR 0.50–1 per 100 g for four butter croissants to bake off (between 180–200 g). Edeka's croissants are the cheapest. The company markets four items in an aluminium tray under its own Edeka Buttercroissants brand for 99 cent. There is also a mini-variant: ten items (300 g) individually packed and offered in a bag for EUR 1.49. The company does not manufacture the products on its own premises. Lidl asks a similar price for its butter croissants. The latter company also markets four items (200 g) in an aluminium tray under its own Graftschaller brand for EUR 1.09. They are produced under the name Kornmark by Lieken AG in Garrel, Germany, so they probably originate



++ figure 2

Lidl markets its croissants under the Graftschaller brand. Consumers bake them off at home

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++ figure 3
New croissants with the Wickie character



++ figure 4
The nut-nougat filling is regarded as a classic

from the same plants as the butter croissants from Golden Toast, a subsidiary of Lieken AG. Golden Toast also offers four butter croissants (200 g) in an aluminium tray. However, their price is EUR 1.49. The most expensive is Délifrance S.A., Paris, France. Here four items (175 g) cost about EUR 1.79. The French pack their croissants in a blister instead of an aluminium tray. They also have a mini-variant in their product range. Another supplier is the IBIS Backwaren Vertriebsgesellschaft GmbH in Aachen, Germany, which offers six butter croissants individually packed in a bag (240 g) and also has a mini-variant of ten items in a bag (300 g) in its product range. Kuchenmeister GmbH in Soest, Germany, sells a 300 g bag of medium-sized bake-off croissants for EUR 1.49.

A filled croissant cake snack is also not particularly expensive. It costs between 41 and 66 cent per 100 g. In addition to Kuchenmeister and IBIS Backwaren, the suppliers here are Condites Feine Kuchen GmbH in Haselünne (for Lidl), Chipita Germany GmbH in Düsseldorf, both from Germany, and Bauli SPA in Verona, Italy. The filled croissants are marketed as a storage pack with four to six individually packed pastries. For example at Lidl there is a pack with five croissants (240 g) under its own Maitre Jean Pierre brand manufactured by Condites for 99 cent. The products marketed for example at Aldi und Edeka under the name Conradi Kuchen Party and produced by Kuchenmeister have the same price. Under its own Kuchenmeister brand, the company also offers a pack with four croissants for EUR 1.29. IBIS croissants, mostly in a pack of six (288 g) are offered at EUR 1.29 to 1.89 EUR and are widespread throughout the food retail. Chipita markets its products under the 7 Days brand. Their 260 g pack (4 x 65 g) costs EUR 1.49. The highest priced are the products from Bauli. They are available at Rewe as a 6-pack (300 g) for EUR 1.99.

It is conspicuous that the designs of the majority of the packs are very colorful. Jolly clowns or bears laugh at the consumers. This year Kuchenmeister began in the food retail with a new croissant with milk and cocoa cream filling on which there is advertising with the animated cartoon character Wickie (see figure 3). For some of its other products Kuchenmeister explicitly uses the name: "5x für Kinder Hörnchen" (5x for children croissants; see figure 1). Karl-Heinz Schönenberg, Sales Director of the Chipita Germany GmbH from Düsseldorf, says "In this country filled croissants are advertised

almost exclusively as products for children." The most widespread fillings in Germany, nut-nougat cream and milk cream, are certainly also aimed at children's tastes. The family also includes caramel milk cream and cocoa cream. Simple packs can occasionally be found only in the larger hypermarkets. They originate from two suppliers, one of which is Chipita Germany. The company is a sales company of the Greek parent Chipita S.A., Attica, and markets croissants under the 7 Days brand in simple yellow-red film. The second in the league is Bauli. This company uses pale purple film. ▶

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The significance of packed filled croissants among southern Europeans is different to that in Germany. For example people there take less time for their breakfast at home. The packed croissant is a frequent and practical snack in the office or while travelling. Croissants purely as a product for children would be unthinkable there. That's why the product range in these countries is considerably bigger. For example as well as the German classics cocoa cream or milk cream, 7 Days also has varieties such as for example strawberry, hazelnut, coconut, vanilla cream with sour cherries, vanilla cream with orange or sparkling wine filling in its range. Schöenberg says, "With strawberry and sour cherry we address more the female consumers, whereas hazelnut is aimed at the masculine taste." However, up to now this diversity has not been available in German supermarkets. The German product range is enriched solely by filled mini-croissants in a small bag (200 g) for EUR 1.39 – although here again in most cases only in the cocoa cream variety. Internationally, Bauli can come up with flavors such as, for example, chocodrops, milk and honey, apricot, 5 cereals with blueberry-raspberry filling or 5 cereals with peach-pomegranate filling. But in Germany even the Italians cannot show what is in their croissants. Here they are represented with their cocoa and milk cream varieties.

Chipita is Europe's biggest supplier of filled croissants. It manufactures this product on more than 40 lines. The 7 Days croissants for the German market come from Poland. The Sales Director from Germany says "The products are baked there according to a western European recipe. Southern Europeans tend to eat sweeter things." Chipita also takes the differing tastes into account. The company markets its filled croissants in more than 35 countries across large parts of Europe, North America, a few African countries and Australia. And expansion is being continued steadily and vigorously. In addition to croissants, Chipita also markets individually packed apple strudel, sponge pastries and bread chips under the 7 Days brand. The Greek company also has jams (Spinspan brand) and nut-nougat cream (Finete brand) in its product range. In all, it has production sites in Greece,

++ figure 5
Kuchenmeister's
croissants for
baking off



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Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Russia and the USA. The Bauli Group is a leading supplier of Easter pastries, Christmas pastries and croissants, biscuits/cookies and crackers. It produces at three sites in Italy and supplies more than 60 countries on all the continents.

The superiority of the southern Europeans with regard to filled croissants is clear. Kuchenmeister, a heavyweight in the European ready-to-eat cake scene, markets its products in only 18 other European countries. Its varieties are limited to the flavors nut-nougat, milk-cream, caramel-milk-cream, milk and cocoa cream and apricot. Like Chipita, Kuchenmeister also does not deliver to Spain. The Iberians for their part are very strong in producing filled croissants for the food retail. The IBIS marketing company in Aachen obtains a large part of its goods from there. However, even the Spaniards are unable to demonstrate their product diversity in Germany. IBIS offers only the two flavors nut-nougat-cream and milk-cream. +++



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++ figures 6+7

Consumers can find filled and unfilled baked goods in various weight ranges and a wide variety of flavors in the shelves of the food retail



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