

The consumer of today and tomorrow

PURATOS COMPILED A WORLDWIDE CONSUMER STUDY SIX MONTHS AGO. THE BELGIAN COMPANY HAS NOW GIVEN FURTHER INSIGHTS INTO PURCHASING AND EATING BEHAVIOUR



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+ In which situation do consumers now see themselves? And, following from that: Which baked goods concepts can manufacturers develop that will appeal to consumers? The Puratos Group in Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, working through the market research company Insites Consulting NV in Ghent, Belgium, studied these questions among 6,400 consumers from 14 countries (Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Italy in Europe, Russia, Turkey, India, China and Japan in Asia, and the USA, Mexico and Brazil on the American continent).

There are already clear differences between the various countries today with regard to their points of purchase. Thus in Germany and France, for example, far more than half of all consumers say they buy bread and fine baked goods mainly in a bakery/patisserie shop. Considerably fewer buy their products in a supermarket. These responses include the two alternatives of pre-packed and fresh, unpackaged. In addition, about the same number of people say they bake their bread themselves at home. Brazilians also buy bread in bakeries, the proportion being even larger than for the Germans or French. On the other hand supermarkets come closer with their fresh product range. In China, India and

Russia, however, bread is bought both from bakeries and in supermarkets, and more Russians even say they prefer to buy their bread pre-packed from the shelf than from a baker or fresh in a supermarket. An interesting fact is that filling stations, vending machines or buying online are already among the usual points of purchase in China and above all in India, where they are positioned well into the double digit percentage range.

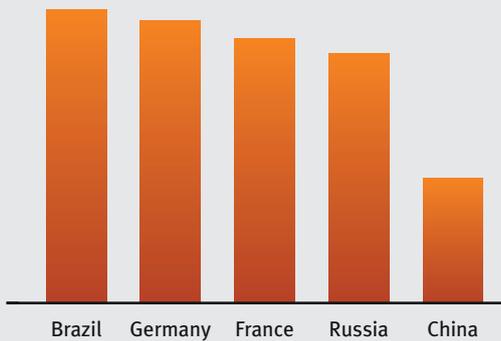
Puratos also specifically examined the question of money. For this the consumers were asked to imagine they would suffer a drop in their monthly income. Interestingly, very few Russian and German participants said they would then buy less bread. In India, China, Brazil and France these figures were always in the double digit range. For fine baked goods and chocolate, nearly half of the French were particularly keen savers and would definitely buy fewer if they had less money.

In answer to the question about where and on what occasions baked goods were eaten, 2/3 of consumers in Germany, France, Brazil and Russia agreed that they do it mainly at home and while sitting, not out of the house and on the road (in a car, walking etc.) (see figure 1). Only in the Asian region is the

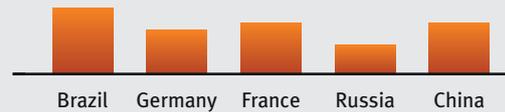
++ figure 1

Where is bread eaten? – comparison between various countries

at home and sitting down



out of home and on-the-go

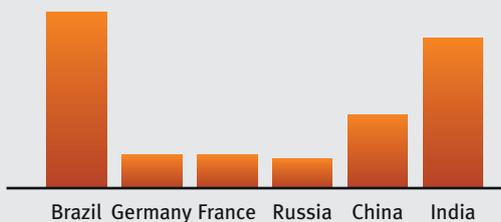


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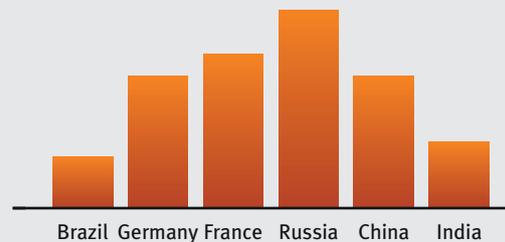
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On what occasion is bread eaten? – comparison between various countries

snack



special occasions



source: Puratos

contrast less pronounced: Chinese consumers say they eat bread both at home and while sitting, but half of this number also confirm regular out-of-home and on-the-go eating. Use can be made of these figures: for example half of the German consumers say they would find fresh bread deliveries to their home or office attractive. They would also like appropriate packaging from which individual portions can be taken out and thus eaten more easily as well as being more convenient to transport.

When the respondents were asked about the different occasions on which baked goods were consumed, the questionnaire reveals that bread is very often eaten for breakfast. In Germany this happens more often during the week than at the weekend. The country-specific differences are conspicuous here: whereas in Brazil bread is often eaten as a snack, this hardly ever happens in France (see figure 2). On the other hand French consumers say they eat bread on special occasions. On such occasions, and also for breakfast, also fine baked goods are often eaten in all countries; the only exceptions are European countries such as France and Germany, where fine baked goods are never/barely eaten at breakfast time. For patisserie and chocolate products, Chinese consumers are again an exception to the otherwise uniform pattern. They eat these products for breakfast, not on special occasions. These typical national subtleties are in turn very good at revealing the special features of individual customers. Thus German consumers would find it attractive if in future bakeries and confectioneries specialize in products that make

them stand out from the crowd. At the same time customers would like to be able to design these products to their individual requirements. The majority of consumers think this means they are buying an individual, personal and thus exclusive product. Moreover, customized adaptations of known products are handled differently depending on the country. The preference in the USA is to adapt baked goods by for example offering rather large macaroons with peanut butter and jam flavor. In South America, on the other hand, the demand is for baked goods to be integrated into local specialities, whereas people in Asia like manufacture that is typical of the place of origin, so they enjoy typical French croissants "just like from Paris". +++

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