

The French still like to buy groceries from local shops ... but for how much longer?

These days more and more French people go to big supermarkets to do their shopping - but local shops are holding out well.

91% of French people have a positive perception of their town's local shops.

The bakery is one of the most popular local shops: 67% of French people could not do without it!

Local shops have several advantages:

- within easy reach: there is often no need to take the car;
- social aspect: you can talk to the shopkeeper and your neighbours;
- the products: fresh, quality produce can often be found there.

At the same time, **supermarkets** (hypermarkets) have been swiftly gaining ground since the 1960s, especially on the outskirts of towns. Customers find them practical as they have the advantage of bringing together all types of products at often cheaper prices than can be found in local shops.

The main **hypermarket** chains in France are French brands: Auchan, Casino, Carrefour, Leclerc, etc.

Local shops suffer from the expansion of **hypermarkets**, and this is why legislation is trying to limit their development. Convenience stores (**supettes**) are also cropping up increasingly in cities. They sell food products as well as a limited range of everyday products (cleaning products, hygiene products and so on).

Did you know?

In his book *Au bonheur des dames* (*The Ladies' Paradise*), Zola described life in the Parisian **department stores** at the end of the 19th century. Nowadays, such **stores** as Le Bon Marché, Les Galeries Lafayette and BHV specialise in high-end, luxury products.

And elsewhere?

Countries in Southern Europe (Italy, Portugal, Greece, Spain) have a high density of **local shops**, whereas Northern European countries (UK, Scandinavia, Germany) are dominated by **hypermarkets**.