

Spaniards prefer fresh fish, bought in traditional fish markets

The Spanish still prefer fresh fish instead of canned fish, according to a study on fish consumption trends in Spain conducted by Planet Retail for the Norwegian Seafood Council.

Another of the main conclusions is that, although supermarkets and markets lead fish sale, traditional fishmongers' are still a very strong and an important channel in Spain, unlike other European countries, since they account for about a quarter of sales of fish and seafood.

Habit and availability are important aspects for Spaniards when choosing where to buy fish, so they attach greater importance to fishmongers', where they can see the fish they buy, and also to fact that the purchase place is close from home or work.

"According to our studies, the price is also naturally important, as well as the offers of fish and seafood and, of course, that the products are of good quality. The image of the Spanish consumer is, therefore, that of a person who prefers easy and good access to fresh quality products and, like many other businesses, is based on habit," says Bjorn Erik Stabell, director of the Seafood Council of Norway in Spain.

"An interesting question in this context is whether electronic commerce with a guarantee of freshness will satisfy the preferences of Spaniards. One assumption is that as long as the consumer trusts that the product is of good quality, the convenience of home delivery will outweigh the old purchasing habits," adds Stabell.

A division of consumers into age groups can help to see what the main causes are when choosing a store to buy fish and shellfish. The most marked differences are between the oldest (50-65) and the youngest (18-34). Older respondents say that proximity to the home is



particularly important, and they also say that they act more on the basis of habit. The preference for fresh fish is also stronger in this group.

According to Planet Retail, another trend in the retail sector shows that the growth of fresh food in grocery stores has been much less than overall growth. The question is whether discount stores can win at the expense of e-commerce development and if they are willing to make that leap.

Several factors may also play a role in the future: the significant and growing proportion of single-family homes in Spain, which will increase the demand for products that adapt to lower consumption, in addition to the increase in low prices and the decrease in hypermarkets.

According to a reputation study conducted by the Norwegian Seafood Council in collaboration with Kantar, about half of Spanish consumers (44 per cent) are concerned about the origin of the fish they buy and associate Norway as a salmon-producing country. These consumers also account for the lion's share of salmon consumption, over 60 per cent.

Spain is one of the five countries with the highest fish import growth in Norway and ranks as the seventh market in relevance for the Nordic country. The Norwegian species that is the most appreciated by the Spanish are salmon, cod, Skrei, fjord trout and red royal crab.

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