

FRENCH CONSUMERS: Improving but Still Near the Bottom

Greendex Score: 49.5 (Rank: 13th of 17)

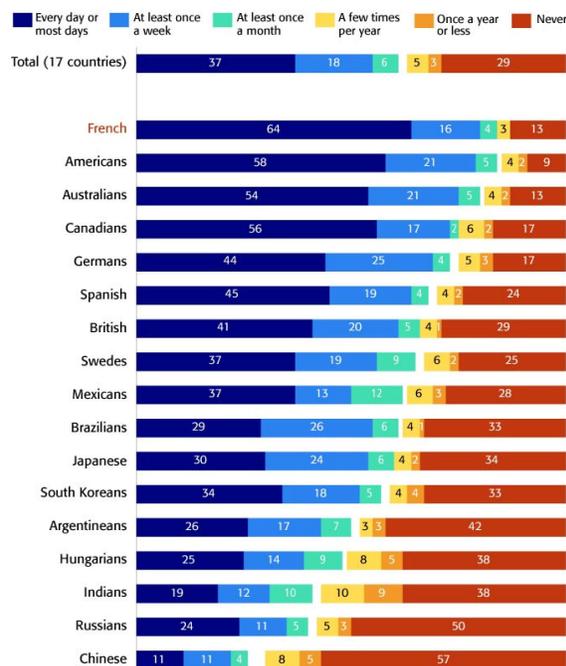
↑ 3.0 points since 2008

French consumers rank 13th overall on the 17-country Greendex. While their overall ranking has not changed greatly, their overall score has improved by 3 points due to a notable improvement in their housing score (9 points) and modest gains in the food and goods sub-indices (both up by almost 2 points). While French consumers continue to rank in the bottom third on housing and transportation, they perform slightly better in the food and goods sub-indices.

On the **housing** sub-index, French consumers, like those in all of the other countries polled in both 2008 and 2009, have improved. However, despite a 9-point gain, they continue to hold a ranking in the bottom third (13th). The increase in their score is partly due to improvements in behaviors such as keeping their heating/cooling setting on low, minimizing the use of fresh water, and increasing their use of cold water for laundering (63 percent, 69 percent, and 35 percent, respectively, do so all the time or often). Primary drivers of their continued low ranking include a high rate of having home heating (95 percent) and hot running water (96 percent), low ownership rates for energy-saving appliances, a low rate of purchase of “green” electricity (6 percent), and lower-than-average use of cold water for laundry (15 percent do so all the time, compared with the average of 30 percent). However, mitigating this somewhat is the low incidence of air conditioning (9 percent) and an above-average tendency to minimize the use of fresh water (69 percent do so all the time or often).

As for the **transportation** sub-index, French consumers continue to rank near the bottom (14th). Their score on this measure has decreased slightly, indicating only modest changes in their transportation habits. Contributing to this ranking is a higher-than-average rate of car and truck ownership (88 percent), the highest rate of regularly driving alone (64 percent do so on most days), one of the lowest rates for using public transportation (only 23 percent do so at least weekly), lower-than-average use of trains (only 9 percent do so at least once a month), and the second lowest rate of owning a fuel-efficient vehicle (2 percent). Above-average rates of using a compact car (42 percent compared to the 17-country average of 32 percent) or walking and biking (57 percent do so always or often compared to the average of 51 percent) lift their transportation score somewhat. Also on a positive note, 53 percent of French consumers say they have decreased their vehicle fuel consumption, the highest rate among those surveyed.

Frequency of Driving Alone in a Car/Truck
Percentage of Consumers in Each Country, 2009



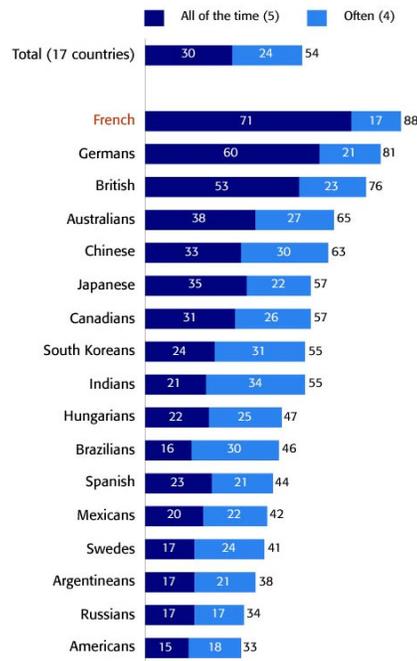
The white space in this chart represents "DK/NA."

As in 2008, French consumers are in the middle of the rankings on the **food** sub-index, and there has been a modest 2-point gain on this measure. The only notable improvement is a decrease, consistent with the trend elsewhere, in bottled water consumption (64 percent to 51 percent); however, this is still above the average of 43 percent (several times per week or more often). Generally, French food habits are similar to the 17-country average across a variety of measures

On **goods**, French consumers' rank has moved up from second-last place in 2008 to 10th of 17. The improved ranking is due to a 2-point gain among French consumers coupled with slight score decreases for a number of consumers in other countries. Improvements this year include an increased rate of recycling — 76 percent of French consumers recycle always or often, up from 70 percent and compared to 61 percent on average — consistent with the trend in most other countries, and an increase in buying used over new products (33 percent, up from 23 percent in 2008). The French are the most likely to bring their own bag to the store (88 percent do so often). Negatively affecting their score are a high ownership rates for major appliances such as dishwashers (57 percent own one or more) and motorized lawn equipment (46 percent own one or more).

For most of the **attitudinal** measures of environmental engagement, French consumers are more or less average, consistent with the 2008 findings and generally in line with consumers in the other Western countries surveyed. The only discernable change from the previous year is an increase in agreement (from 55 percent in 2008 to 62 percent) that society needs to consume a lot less for the benefit of future generations.

Frequency of Using Own Bag in Store/Market
 "All of the Time (5)" or "Often (4),"* Percentage of Consumers in Each Country, 2009



*On a scale where 1 means "Never," 3 means "Sometimes," and 5 means "All the time."