

**BRITISH CONSUMERS: Staying Close to Bottom**

**Greendex Score: 49.4 (Rank: 13<sup>th</sup> of 17)**

**↑ 1.2 points since 2008**

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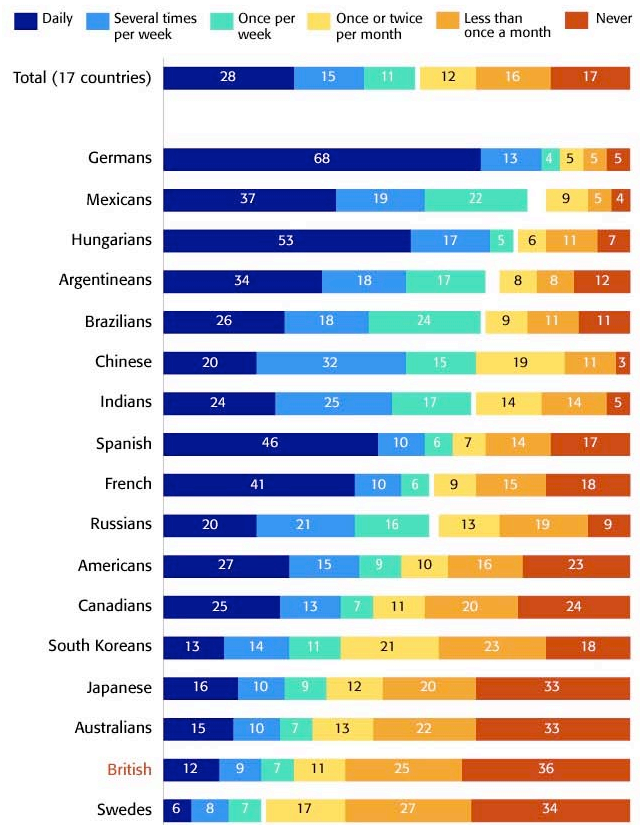
British consumers' (defined as consumers from England, Scotland, and Wales) ranking has slipped close to the bottom on this year's Greendex. Their overall score has shown only a slight gain, while their housing score has improved in line with the trend in other countries. While they rank in the bottom half on housing, transportation, and goods, they perform better (fourth overall) on the food sub-index.

Despite a 6-point gain in their **housing** score, British consumers tie for second last place on this measure. Contributing to their score is a tendency to have large residences, as 50 percent of British homes have seven rooms or more compared to 19 percent of the 17-country average. British homes are among the most likely to have home heating (95 percent) and hot running water (98 percent). British consumers are less likely than others to minimize the use of fresh water or to use cold water for laundering. On the positive side, British homes are among the least likely (3 percent) to have air conditioning and are among the most likely (55 percent) to have insulation in their walls. Improving their overall housing score is an increase in ownership of energy-efficient televisions, laundering in cold water and keeping their heating/cooling setting on low.

British consumers' score on the **transportation** sub-index for this year is unchanged and puts them in 11<sup>th</sup> place overall. Only 16 percent of British consumers use public transportation on a daily basis, which is below the average across 17 countries surveyed. They are also among the least likely to say they choose to live close to their usual destinations to minimize their environmental impacts. While they are more likely than average to own a car or truck (80 percent), Britons tend toward driving smaller vehicles. This year 41 percent (about average on this measure) of British consumers say they drive alone, which is an 8 percent improvement from 2008.

On the **food** sub-index, British consumers rank fourth, behind those in India, Australia, and South Korea. British consumers' overall food score has improved slightly this year driven by reduced consumption of bottled water and increased consumption of locally grown foods. They have the second

Frequency of Consuming Bottled Water  
Percentage of Consumers in Each Country, 2009

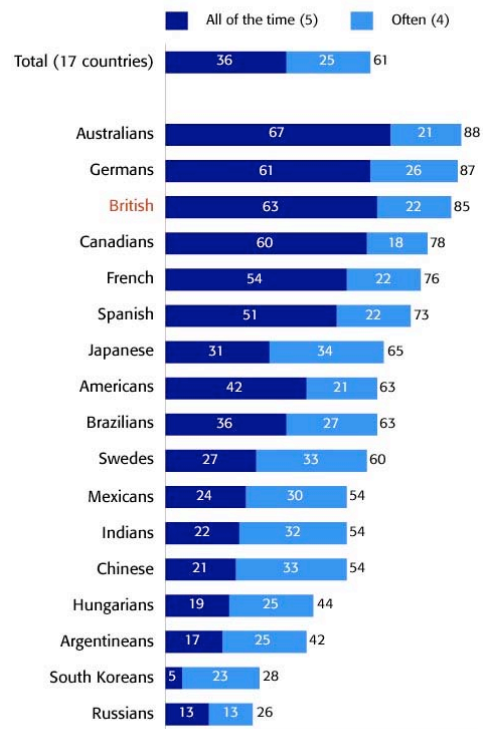


The white space in this chart represents "DK/NA."

lowest rate of bottled water consumption; just 21 percent drink it at least several times per week. Only Swedish consumers drink bottled water less often. Also contributing positively to their food score is a lower-than-average tendency to eat beef and a greater-than-average tendency to eat fruits and vegetables. Negatively affecting their food score is a strong appetite for imported foods and a less-than-average tendency to grow their own food.

British consumers tie for 12<sup>th</sup> on the **goods** sub-index. Their overall score on this measure has changed little since 2008, but there have been opposing shifts on a few of the components of this sub-index. On the positive side, there has been an increase in the percentage who are avoiding excess packaging, and a substantial increase (22 percent) in the percentage of British consumers who say they often use their own shopping bags. Offsetting these gains is an increase in agreement with the sentiment that environmentally friendly products are not worth the extra cost. Contributing to an overall low score are some negative purchase behaviors — avoidance of environmentally unfriendly products is below average as is the frequency of buying environmentally friendly products. Despite this last finding, British consumers are more likely than others to have bought energy-efficient light bulbs and recycled paper. Boosting their goods score is a high rate of recycling — the British are among those who recycle most often, with 63 percent doing so “all the time” — as well as their strong tendency to use their own shopping bags (76 percent do so often).

Frequency of Recycling Materials  
 “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.”

Consistent with the 2008 findings, the expressed **attitudes** among British consumers indicate they are among the least concerned about the environment across 17 countries surveyed — only 15 percent of British consumers strongly agree that they are “very concerned” about the environment, which is the second lowest among those polled. They are among the least likely to agree that their personal lifestyle is harmful to the environment, that they feel guilty about their environmental impacts, that environmental problems negatively impact their health, that an environmentally friendly lifestyle is good for one’s health, or that global warming will worsen their way of life. The only notable year-to-year difference is a 9-point decline in agreement that global warming will worsen their lifestyle.