



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

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## Austria

### Promotion Opportunities

### Austrian Consumer Preferences

2000

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**Report Highlights:** A recent poll indicates that Austrian cuisine and tastes are generally traditional and conservative. Great emphasis is put on health and the quality aspects of foods, and in this regard women are more demanding than men. While only a small share of the population claims to favor fast food, its consumption has been rising for quite some time. Due to traditional tastes and some market restrictions, the market for U.S. products is constrained. Nevertheless, there are market opportunities, particularly for U.S. wines, ethnic foods, seafood, and snacks.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Vienna [AU1], AU



## **Austrians Favor Traditional Cuisine**

According to a recent Nielsen poll, Austrian tastes and cuisine is basically conservative and traditional. However, through increased vacationing in foreign countries and continued immigration, the demand for ethnic food and seafood has been growing. Therefore, there are market opportunities for U.S. exporters on both sectors. Also, there is a small market for California wines and snacks.

Escalope Viennese (Wiener Schnitzel) with boiled potatoes and lettuce is statistically still the preferred meal. In general, eating is an important leisure activity.

## **Preferences**

For most people (around 80%), good tasting food is most important. The great emphasis put on non-genetically modified foods during the summer of 1999 is slowly losing momentum. However, according to the poll 55% still do not want to eat such foods. For young people from 14 - 24 years, ease of meal preparation is essential whereas for people above 60 years, health and other quality aspects are the major concern. Health and quality aspects in foods play a greater role for women than for men.

The preferred meal is clearly the plain cuisine favored by 55% of Austrians. 22% want light meals and 15% prefer ethnic foods. Only one percent prefer fast food.

There is a great difference between old and young when looking at favorite meals. Older people like meat dishes while young people prefer pizza and spaghetti.

## **Consumption Habits**

Regarding actual consumption, more than half of all meals are served cold. Lunch is the main meal, and every second dish is a warm meat dish. Plain cuisine is served more often (63%) than desired (55%). However, consumption of light cuisine (22%) corresponds to preferences. Natural and Italian cuisines are not as often consumed as desired. The reasons for the disparity between actual and desired consumption seem to be a lack of experience in preparing such dishes and a small selection of restaurants to choose from.

Snacking is very common. Every second person (48% of men and 53% of women) consumes sweets or snacks on a daily basis. Chocolate is the most common while salty products are consumed less often.

Meat consumption is rising. However, the escalope Viennese is not eaten as often as in 1999.

Among drinks, fruit juice is the most common and, according to the survey, 22% of the population prefers this beverage to any other. Beer and wine are also very popular. Almost

every third person consumes some kind of alcohol daily. 64% drink coffee every day.

The following products are preferred by the Austrian population:

### **Foods**

escalope Viennese	12%	
spaghetti	7%	
seafood		7%
pizza	6%	
various noodles, etc.	6%	
meat dishes	4%	
roasted chicken	4%	
vegetable dishes	4%	
vegetables	4%	
roasted pork	3%	

### **Beverages**

fruit juice	22%
beer	13%
wine	11%
mineral water	10%
tap water	7%
tee	7%
cola	5%
coffee	4%
lemonade	3%
fruit sirup	2%

### **Snacking**

chocolate	44%	
biscuits	5%	
chocolate bars		4%
various cakes	4%	
potato chips	3%	
pretzels		3%
praline	3%	
dough nuts	2%	
tart	2%	
chewing gum	2%	

**Fast Food Explained:** Despite the low share of the population admitting to a preference for fast food, fast food chains are booming. These chains are frequented by children that were probably not included in the poll and young children do influence parental food choices, especially for restaurants. In addition, people who are not necessarily in favor of fast food often eat such food because of a lack of time. Consumption of fast food is expected to continue to rise, particularly as children who are now used to fast food age and begin to make purchasing decisions of their own.

### **Conclusions for U.S. Exporters**

Although the Austrian taste in cuisine is generally conservative and traditional, there is some room for non-Austrian and non-European foods. Rising rates of foreign travel and immigration, and an increase in ethnic restaurants, has made Austrians more familiar with ethnic foods and seafood. Snack foods and fast food are growing in their own right and show market promise. U.S. wine exports to Austria have also grown rapidly in the last three years and are now believed to be nearly \$7 million annually. The U.S. Embassy led an effective wine promotion in 1998-99 and will begin a seafood promotion this Fall.