



Patty-cake, patty-cake - home office for it`s sake

Thanks to the Corona crisis, home baking is once again very popular among young and old. Whether this trend also has an influence on the consumption of ready-made products and could boost the market for fine baked goods remains to be seen. Anja Postler and Dr. Uwe Lebok from K&A BrandResearch approach the trend.

We remember the spring of 2020.

There was not only a shortage of toilet paper and pasta, but also of baking ingredients such as yeast and flour. There was a yawning void on the supermarket shelves, as well as in the corridors of many German offices. Thanks to homeworking and short-time work, travel restrictions and a degraded cultural and social life, Germans have time in abundance.

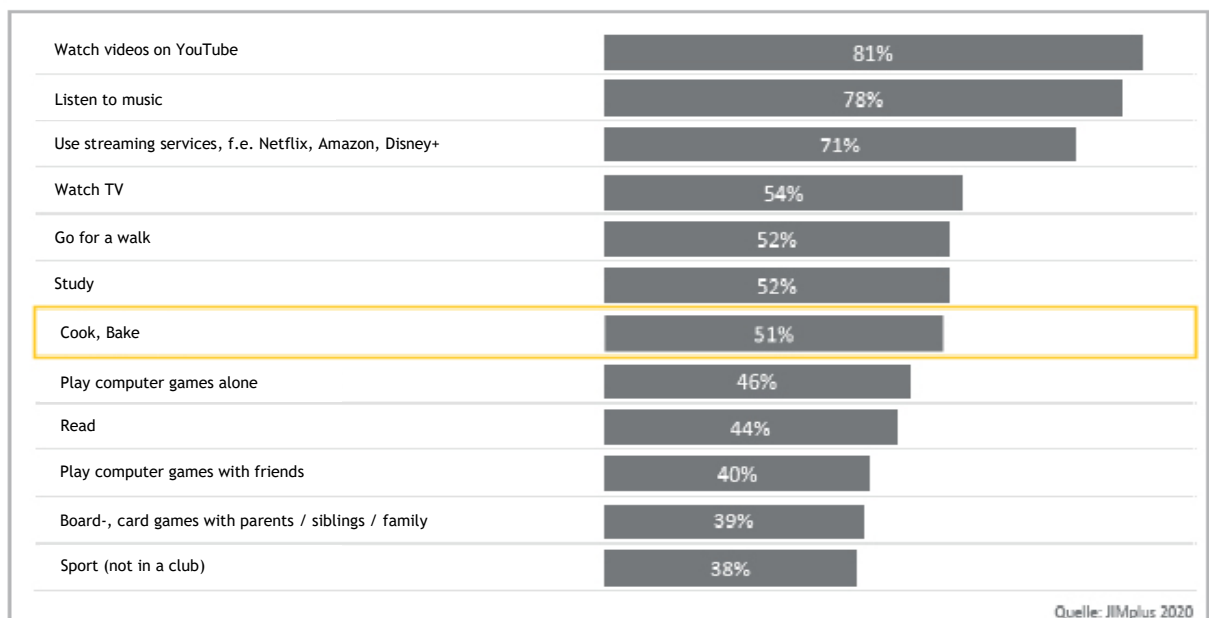
and sometimes discover hidden Talents at home. Under the hashtag #stayathome, old hobbies like gardening, cooking and even baking are experiencing an unexpected revival. Especially yeast dough and homemade bread are very trendy. On Google, the search queries on the subject of "Baking" upwards (see fig. 2).

The development is also taking hold of the younger generation. It's not just that baking with the little ones has brought some creative variety into everyday life, which is dominated by home office and homeschooling. The current short report of the German Youth Institute (DJI) from May 2021 states that young people between 12 and 19 years of age (so-called Gen Z) consume more digital media during the Corona crisis, but also engage in "analogue" activities such as reading (44%), going for a walk (52%) and precisely cooking and baking (51%) more frequently than in the times before (Fig. 1).

The report refers to the online study "JIMplus 2020" by the media pedagogy research network "Südwest" (mpfs), which also reveals a clear gender-typical

Bias: While boys play computer games at home almost every day (35 % boys, 11 % girls), girls try their hand in the kitchen more often and cook or bake almost every day (8 % boys, 15 % girls). Are the old role models of technology-savvy boys and homely girls playing with cookers and dolls reactivated in times of crisis? In fact, gender stereotypes were already growing significantly before Corona, despite the ongoing public gender debates.

So baking is once again very popular with young people, and with the older generations anyway. Especially savoury baked goods and homemade bread have become the focus of attention in recent months.





Authors: Psychologist Anja Postler has been working for K&A BrandResearch since 2010 and supports national and international clients from the FMCG and retail sectors. She is also doing her doctorate on the topic of promoting innovation and creativity. Dr. Uwe Lebok, Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at K&A BrandResearch, is considered a marketing expert in German-speaking countries for the positioning of brands and supports above all medium-sized companies by means of research-based brand strategies. (Photos: K&A BrandResearch)

At the beginning of the year, the media were overflowing with titles about the trendy topic: "Pandemic pastime: When baking bread becomes a trend" (ZDF, 23. 1. 2021), "Pandemic trend: The new desire to bake bread" (SWR, 2. 2. 2021), "Mega trend thanks to Corona pandemic:

Germans discover their love of baking bread" (RTL, 8. 2. 2021), "Our daily bread backs us today" (Berliner Morgenpost, 31. 3. 2021).

In the first Lockdown 2020, the company Brandwatch published a social insights analysis of what people talk about when baking under quarantine conditions on Instagram, Twitter and the like: Cakes and bread were mentioned by far the most. Many amateur bakers apparently try their hand at yeast dough and yeast plaits (increase of 207%) or the even more elaborate sourdough bread. This takes a long time, but time is one of the few things that was abundant in the context of the crisis.

In these times of social distancing, dough kneading has a special emotional value

What's more, kneading dough is not only a fairly inexpensive hobby. It is also meditative, helps to reduce stress and allows intensive contact - which has a special emotional value in times of social distancing. And the result tastes of childhood, authenticity and security. In short, baking bread and cakes yourself has recently regained an extremely favourable ratio of cost, effort and (emotional) result.

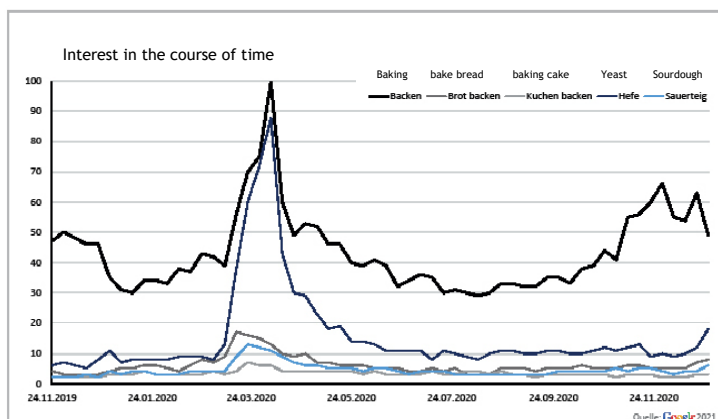


Figure 2: Baking and yeast hype at the beginning of the pandemic. (Charts: K&A BrandResearch)



Figure 3: Bringing the professional baker into your home via a live online baking course. (Photo: Todor Tsvetkov_istock by Getty Images)

In the context of the lockdown experience, sweet classics such as cheesecake, apple and chocolate cake are also being put in the oven more often - either baked by oneself or with the help of a baking mix. The latter allows beginners in particular to get to grips with the trendy topic without too much risk. It appears to be a quick, easy and sure-fire version of do-it-yourself baking. The trend here in recent years (irrespective of the pandemic) has been towards "healthier" baked goods. Accordingly, it is not surprising that carrot cake, lemon cake and the "good old" banana bread are also getting a slice of the trend (according to Brandwatch with a sensational plus of 171 %).

Clean ingredient list and organic certification

More than ever, consumers are demanding clean ingredient lists and organic certification. Products should be produced sustainably, regionally and fairly. And increasingly positive experiences are being made with the various alternatives to the unloved duo of white flour and household sugar: Whether wholemeal spelt, almond flour or tender oat flakes, raw cane sugar, coconut blossom or birch sugar or erythritol - everything seems better than the refined white "poison" of the industry.

Another baking trend is benefiting from the improved digital infrastructure that has established itself in German homes since March 2020. The live online baking courses of the start-up BakeNight are experiencing a real boom - as are the numerous YouTube channels on baking. According to Statista, Sally's World (with 1.9 million subscribers) still leads the top five by far in July 2021, followed by Lecker schmecker (604,000), Kiki's Kitchen (483,000) and BakeClub (428,000). Here, too, savoury bread and snacking topics cavort alongside sweet baking trends and decorating classics. As expected, yeast baked goods and sourdough bread are currently in high demand, alongside macarons, theme cakes and lava cakes. Vegan recipes are also popular, as is baking with celebrities such as Enie van de Meiklokjes and Ross Antony, who also demonstrates his talent in the TV series "Celebrities bake in private". And what will happen to Germans who love to bake - will the DIY hype continue, or will people soon be turning to bakery products and ready-made cakes again? One thing is certain: convenience products are welcome kitchen helpers even under pandemic conditions and creativity can be applied not only to the dough but also to the topping.

The possibilities for decorating and refining the baked goods with all kinds of sprinkles, flavours, extracts and baking spices are as varied as the tastes, and in completely different everyday contexts. Ready-made cakes in any form, ideally hygienically packaged individually, also appear to be quite Corona-compliant, especially as spontaneous provisions for excursions and outdoor activities or when it is not worth getting out the baking tray for a single piece of cake in a single household.

Currently, it is not evident that the consumption of ready-made bakery products would have declined significantly due to the increase in home baking. On the contrary: the development of the sweet pastries and cakes category in 2020 (sales + 8.7 %) and until April 2021 (+ 2.8 %) clearly shows that industrially produced fine bakery products have significantly increased since spring 2020 after many years of stagnation (source: IRI).

Appreciation of finished products based on own baking experiences

The Central Association of the German Baking Trade (Zentralverband des Deutschen Bäckerhandwerks) was positive about the future of artisan baked goods. Through their own baking experiences, many people only become aware of how time-consuming and difficult baking sometimes is. This results in "a more conscious attitude towards high-quality bread and first-class baked goods from guild bakers" (source: dpa). Even if sharing occasions have become rarer these days, the need to eat good bread and delicious cake remains. And when free time at home becomes a scarce commodity again with the return to the office, it can also be assumed that the new wealth of experience of home baking will influence the benchmark by which industrially produced baked goods are also evaluated. ka-brandresearch.com

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