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By Mike Knowles

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Healthy man of Europe? Brits top five-a-day poll



Photo: Sainsbury's

Just one in seven in the EU eating five portions of fruit or veg a day, with one in three failing to eat any, says new report

The UK, Denmark and the Netherlands have emerged as the surprise front-runners in a survey of fruit and vegetable consumption habits, with the three countries leading the way when it comes to the proportion of their adult population eating at least five portions each day.

The Eurostat poll, which investigated the fruit and veg consumption habits of people over the age of 15 in all 28 EU member states during 2014, found that the share of those eating at least five portions daily varied from almost one third in the UK to less than 5 per cent in both Romania and Bulgaria.

In the meantime, the proportion not eating fruit and vegetables on a daily basis ranged from almost two-thirds of the population in Romania (65.1 per cent) to just 16.5 per cent in Belgium.

Within individual countries, the greatest disparity came in the Netherlands, where 25 per cent of consumers polled achieved the five-a-day target, but almost 46 per cent went without a single portion on at least one day a week.

While much has been made over the past decade about the World Health Organization's recommended minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables per day in order to sustain a healthy and balanced diet, the results of this latest survey suggest that regular, widespread consumption of fresh produce throughout the continent remains some way off.

Across the EU as a whole, more than 34 per cent of the population aged 15 or over failed to eat a single piece of fruit or vegetable on a daily basis during the 12-month period, with only 14.1 per cent consuming the recommended minimum five portions per day.

Northern exposure

According to Eurostat, 33.1 per cent of the population aged 15 or over consumed at least five portions of fruit or vegetables daily in the UK, with Denmark (25.9 per cent) and the Netherlands (25.0 per cent) in second and third place respectively.

"At the opposite end of the scale, the lowest shares of daily consumption of at least five portions of fruit or vegetables were registered in Romania (3.5 per cent), Bulgaria (4.4 per cent), Croatia (7.0 per cent), Austria (7.2 per cent), Slovenia (7.5 per cent) and Greece (7.8 per cent)," the organisation noted.

Meanwhile, the lowest share of the population aged 15 or over not eating a single piece of fruit or vegetable daily in 2014 was recorded in Belgium (16.1 per cent), ahead of per per cent), Spain (25.0 per cent), Slovenia (27.0 per cent),

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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Croatia (27.5 per cent) and Greece (30.1 per cent).

In contrast, more than half of the population did not eat fruit or vegetables on a daily basis in Romania (65.1 per cent) and Bulgaria (58.6 per cent). Those countries were followed by Latvia (48.5 per cent), Slovakia (46.6 per cent), the Czech Republic (46.3 per cent), the Netherlands (45.9 per cent) and Germany (45.2 per cent).

Eating smarter?

The survey also investigated consumption frequency

among groups with different levels of education, finding that the percentage consuming at least five fruit or vegetables each day was higher among those with a high education level than among those with a low education level.

“Overall in the EU, 18.8 per cent of the highly educated population aged 15 or over ate at least five portions of fruit or vegetables on a daily basis, while this concerned 12.1 per cent of the population with a low education level,” Eurostat reported.

Across all of EU member states, the widest gap between people with high

and low levels of education when it came to consuming at least five a day was in the UK (40.5 per cent and 24.9 per cent respectively), followed by Denmark and Portugal.

In contrast, the difference between those groups was least pronounced in Greece, Germany and Austria.

[Click here to view Eurostat's full report, including statistical tables from each country.](#)