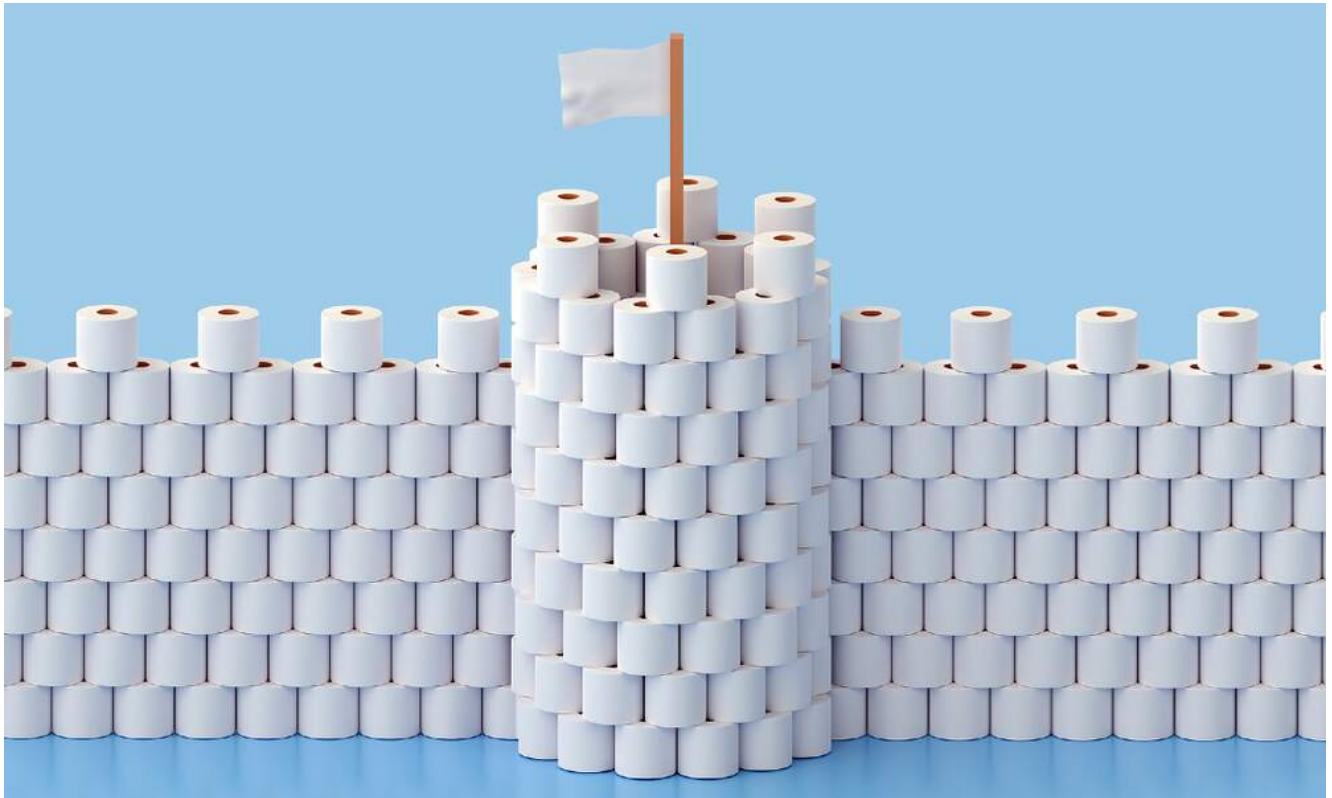


One in 10 Germans planning to stock up on toilet paper in coming weeks



When the coronavirus pandemic first hit Germany earlier this year, panicked customers flocked to the shops to stock up on toilet paper and pasta, forcing some supermarkets to start rationing supplies. Now, with cases rising and the threat of new restrictions looming, it seems that some people are back at it.

Toilet paper was March's most prized possession

The imposition of the first coronavirus lockdown in March this year saw toilet roll transform overnight from a bog-standard basic to a prized commodity, as anxious shoppers headed out en masse to engage in a good spot of panic buying (fantastically termed as *Hamsterkauf* in German).

Market researchers Iri estimate that sales of toilet paper in the second week of March more than doubled compared to the same week of 2019, leaving the unfortunate slow worm shoppers faced with nothing but empty shelves. By the time restrictions were loosened in the summer, demand had finally stabilized – but it seems that rising infection numbers in Germany are driving people back to their old ways.

Demand for staple products rising in Germany

Two of the biggest supermarket chains in Germany – Aldi Süd and Lidl – confirmed last week that they had noticed an increase in demand for certain products, including toilet paper – a pattern similar to the one registered in March in the lead-up to the first lockdown. At the same time, pictures of empty shelves in supermarkets began making the rounds on social media once again.

A representative survey by the opinion research institute YouGov in mid-October also found that around one in ten consumers in Germany was planning on stocking up on toilet paper, pasta, and other everyday items over the next two weeks – with those aged between 25 and 34 being the worst offenders.

No need to panic buy, say German politicians

However, a substantial majority (64 percent) said they were expressly against panic buying, thus echoing the message being repeated by a number of politicians – that panic buying is not necessary, and actually does more to threaten Germany's supply chains than anything else.

“There is no reason to panic buy,” said Germany's Agriculture Minister, Julia Klöckner in an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* this week. “Whoever is hoarding is not only acting illogically but also with a lack of solidarity. In the end, a lot of these items end up in the bin.” She emphasized that concerns about supply bottlenecks were unfounded. “The supply chains are working... If everyone shops normally, we won't have to face the prospect of empty shelves.”

Abi Carter

Abi studied History & German at the University of Manchester. She has since worked as a writer, editor, and content marketer, but still has a soft spot for museums, castles, and anything “old”.

Source:

<https://www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/german-expat-news/one-10-germans-planning-stock-toilet-paper-coming-weeks>

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