What buyers want
Homebuying trends in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain
Key findings

Savills World Research surveyed buyers across the Savills network seeking property in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain during February and March 2021. The findings, based on just under 500 responses, provide an insight into homebuyer motivations and desires today.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about changes to the way people live and work, altering what buyers deem important in their homes. From the search for more space, the need for connectivity to facilitate increased homeworking, to rising environmental awareness, the findings highlight trends which are being seen not only in the markets surveyed, but across residential markets globally.

In search of a rural idyll

In the search for more space, 58% of those in the market for a main residence are planning to buy in a rural environment. For those seeking a second home, the figure rises to 80%.

Of those aged 60 to 69 years old, 73% are hoping to purchase in a rural environment (for either a main or second home purchase), this compares with just 37% for those aged under 40.

Environmental credentials

Buyers are increasingly considering their environmental footprint when it comes to their property, something that can also help to minimise running costs for homeowners.

Almost 70% of buyers deemed energy efficiency an important property feature, while half of those surveyed cited sustainable building materials as important.

For those seeking a new-build property, these factors are of even greater importance: 87% deemed energy efficiency important, while almost three-quarters (74%) stated sustainable building materials are important.

Part home, part office

With the pandemic forcing many people to work from home, over a quarter (27%) of respondents stated increased home working had influenced their purchasing decision in some way.

Just under three quarters (74%) expect to work from home at least one day per week after Covid-19, up from only half prior to the pandemic.

Connectivity and amenities

Proximity to amenities, high-speed internet access and a good view rank as the top three factors for homebuyers. Outdoor space matters too, with those buying in an urban environment placing high importance on small or medium sized outdoor spaces, such as balconies or patios, while those purchasing in a rural setting are prioritising larger gardens.

Of those aged 60 to 69 years old, proximity to sports facilities as important, compared to 34% for those over 40.

Of those aged under 40, 53% place greater emphasis on proximity to the countryside: 57% deem this important compared with 32% of those aged under 40.

Introduction

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Focus on second homes

Purchasing a second or holiday home remains a significant motivation for prime property purchasers. Of those surveyed, 37% stated this was their reason for purchase.

In a boost to the sector, increased remote working means that owners will be spending more time in their second homes. Property preferences vary by country and nationality. Owners in France are willing to travel for longest to their second homes, while German buyers are open to the broadest range of property types.

23% of respondents plan to spend between 9 and 12 weeks at their second home per year.

Half of those buying in France are willing to travel over five hours to reach their second home, compared to just a quarter of those buying in Spain.

There is a strong preference by French buyers for second-hand property.
What do property buyers in France deem important?

**LOCAL FACTORS**
- Proximity to amenities: 81%
- Proximity to medical facilities: 65%
- Proximity to a park or public green space: 58%

**PROPERTY FEATURES**
- A good view: 94%
- High-speed internet access: 88%
- Large outdoor space such as a garden: 66%

**ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**
- Energy efficient: 62%
- Sustainable building materials: 50%
- Renewable energy sources: 39%

**Property buyers’ motivation for purchasing**
- **Relocation**: 33% Urban, 17% Rural
- **Second/holiday home**: 39% Urban, 16% Rural
- **Upsizing**: 27% Urban, 12% Rural
- **Full-time rental investment**: 10% Urban, 6% Rural
- **Downsizing**: 10% Urban, 5% Rural
- **Change in personal circumstances**: 6% Urban, 4% Rural
- **First-time buyer**: 9% Urban, 3% Rural
- **Other**: 12% Urban, 9% Rural

**France remains a predominantly domestic market**

**Nationality of second home seekers in France**

- **French**: 40%
- **British**: 28%
- **Italian**: 2%
- **Swiss**: 4%
- **American**: 6%
- **Belgian**: 6%
- **German**: 6%
- **Other**: 8%

*Savills Research*  
*Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding*

Nearly half of those surveyed had a budget greater than €1 million, 13% had a budget over €3 million.
What do property buyers in Italy deem important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL FACTORS</th>
<th>Proximity to amenities</th>
<th>87%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to medical facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to a park or public green space</td>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPERTY FEATURES</th>
<th>A good view</th>
<th>94%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-speed internet access</td>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium outdoor space e.g. patio or deck</td>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES</th>
<th>Energy efficient</th>
<th>72%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renewable energy sources</td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable building materials</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Savills Research. Note: Respondents citing ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’.

An international prime market

The second home market in Italy is highly international, with Brits accounting for the largest share of second home purchases from our survey (43%). The market for main residences, however, remains predominantly domestic but international buyers are also active.

A typical prime purchaser in Italy is aged 50 to 59 years old, with one third of those surveyed falling in this age bracket and almost two-thirds (63%) over the age of 50.

Prime purchasers in Italy, however, had the highest share of respondents aged under 40 out of the markets surveyed.

14% of respondents buying in Italy were younger than 40, compared with just 1% in Spain.

Source: Savills Research

*figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

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Portugal

What do property buyers in Portugal deem important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL FACTORS</th>
<th>PROPERTY FEATURES</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to a beach</td>
<td>High-speed internet access</td>
<td>Energy efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to amenities</td>
<td>A good view</td>
<td>Renewable energy sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to a major airport</td>
<td>Swimming pool</td>
<td>Sustainable building materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Savills Research. Note: Respondents citing 'very important' or 'somewhat important'.

Golf remains a key driver: buyers in Portugal value proximity to golf

How important are the following factors to buyers when considering where to purchase?

- Proximity to sports facilities: Portugal 37%, Spain 27%, France 23%
- Proximity to golf: Portugal 22%, Spain 15%, France 8%, Italy 15%

Source: Savills Research

Portugal is popular among British and Irish second home buyers

15% of those surveyed had a budget over €3 million.

Demand for second homes in Portugal remains high among Brits, accounting for half (47%) of those surveyed looking to buy a second home in Portugal. Irish and Portuguese buyers account for the next largest share, with 15% each.

Source: Savills Research

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Country Highlight

Spain

What do property buyers in Spain deem important?

LOCAL FACTORS
- Proximity to amenities: 90%
- Proximity to a beach: 77%
- Proximity to a major airport: 65%

PROPERTY FEATURES
- A good view: 94%
- High-speed internet: 87%
- Large outdoor space e.g. a garden: 71%

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES
- Energy efficient: 70%
- Water conserving appliances: 50%
- Renewable energy sources: 47%

Source: Savills Research. Note: Respondents citing ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’.

Brits remain the dominant nationality for second home purchases

Nationality of second home buyers surveyed

Source: Savills Research

Three-quarters (74%) of respondents planning to buy in Spain had a budget of less than €1 million.

82% of prime property buyers are aged over 50, 40% are aged 50-59.

A house remains the preference for prime purchasers in Spain, 57% of respondents stated they hoped to buy this property type. For those with a budget over €1 million, this increases to 76%.

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