

Introduction

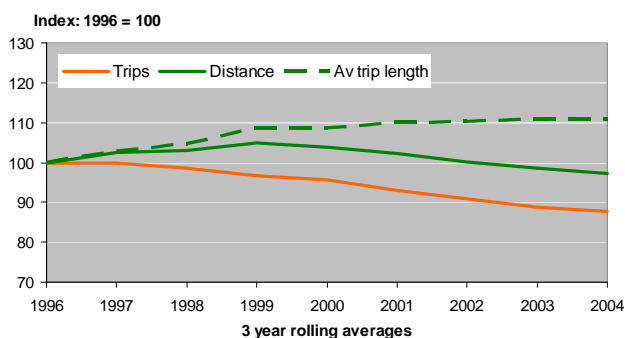
This Factsheet summarises findings from the [National Travel Survey \(NTS\)](#) on travel to and from the shops. The results cover shopping trips within Great Britain by household residents and are based on data for 2005 unless otherwise stated.

NTS technical note: A trip is a one way course of travel having a single main purpose. A shopping trip is defined as 'any trip to the shops, whether or not anything was bought, and even when there was no intention to buy'.

Overview

- Shopping accounts for a fifth (20%) of all trips by household residents in Great Britain.
- On average people made 206 trips to or from the shops in 2005, travelling 879 miles.
- The average number of shopping trips per person per year fell by 13% between 1995/97 and 2005 while the average distance travelled to the shops fell by 4%. (Chart 1) Over the same period, the average number of trips for all purposes fell by 4% and average distance travelled per person per year rose by 3%.
- The average length of a shopping trip has increased by 10% since 1995/97 to 4.3 miles. This is still shorter than the average trip length for all purposes, which was 6.9 miles in 2005.

Chart 1: Trends in shopping travel, 1996-2004

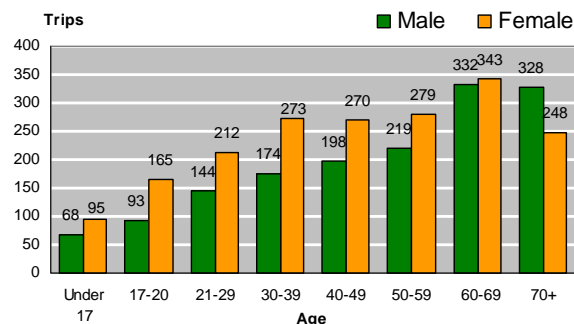


- Approximately half of all shopping trips are for food shopping (105 trips per person per year) and the remainder are for non-food shopping.
- Food shopping trips tend to be shorter than non-food shopping with an average trip length of 3.1 miles compared with 5.4 miles respectively.

Who goes shopping?

- On average, females make 26% more shopping trips than males. This difference is particularly pronounced for food shopping trips, with females making 37% more of these trips per person per year than males.
- Shopping accounts for 18% of all trips by males and 22% of all trips by females.
- The average number of shopping trips increases with age up to 60-69. Among both men and women, people aged 60-69 make the largest number of shopping trips.

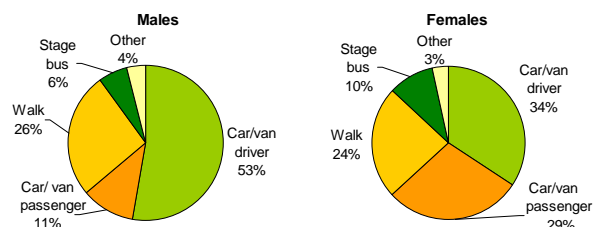
Chart 2: Shopping trips per person per year by sex and age, 2005



How do people travel to the shops?

- The car is the main mode of travel for nearly two thirds (63%) of all shopping trips, with 42% made as a car driver and 21% as a car passenger. A quarter are made on foot and most of the remainder (8%) are made by bus.
- Males are more likely to travel to the shops as a car driver than females (53% of trips compared with 34% respectively) and females are more likely to travel as a car passenger (29% for females and 11% for males). (Chart 3)

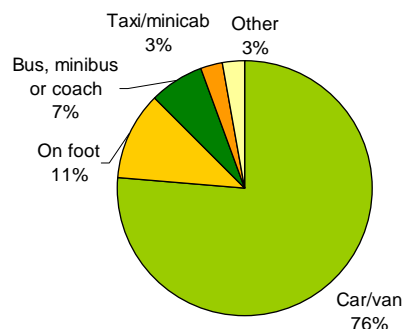
Chart 3: Main mode of travel for shopping trips by gender, 2005



Main food shopping

In each household participating in the NTS, the person who does the main food shopping for that household is asked about their usual mode for these trips.

Chart 4: Usual mode of travel for main food shopping, 2005



- Just over three quarters of households do their main food shopping by car, 11% on foot, 7% by bus and 3% by taxi. (Chart 4)

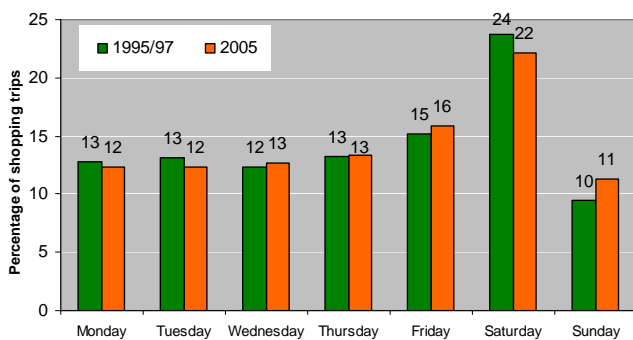
Difficulties with main food shopping

- Among those who do their main food shopping by car or motorbike, 14% said they experienced difficulties travelling to the shops. The most common difficulty mentioned was traffic congestion/roadworks (mentioned by 8%) and lack of parking (4%).
- A higher proportion (25%) of people who do their main food shopping by public transport experienced difficulties travelling to the shops. The main problems experienced were difficulties carrying the shopping (15%), personal disability (5%) and unreliable public transport (3%).

When do people travel to the shops?

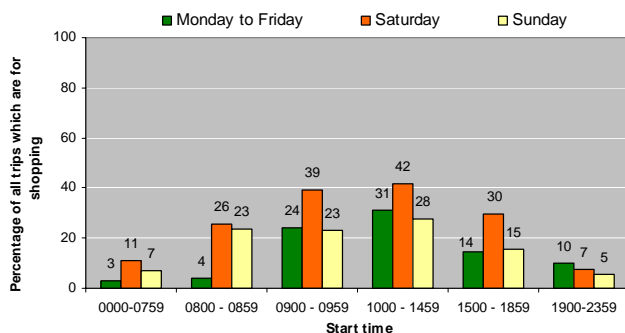
- Saturday is the most common day for shopping trips (Chart 5). Over a fifth (22%) of all shopping trips are made on a Saturday, accounting for a third (32%) of trips made on this day.

Chart 5: Shopping trips by day of week, 1995/97 & 2005.



- On weekdays, shopping accounts for only 4% of trips that start between 8 and 8:59am but 24% of trips starting between 9 and 9:59am. (Chart 6)

Chart 6: Shopping as a proportion of all trips by start time and day of week, 2005



Access to local shops

Households are asked how long it would take for them to get to various key services on foot or by public transport, whichever is quickest.

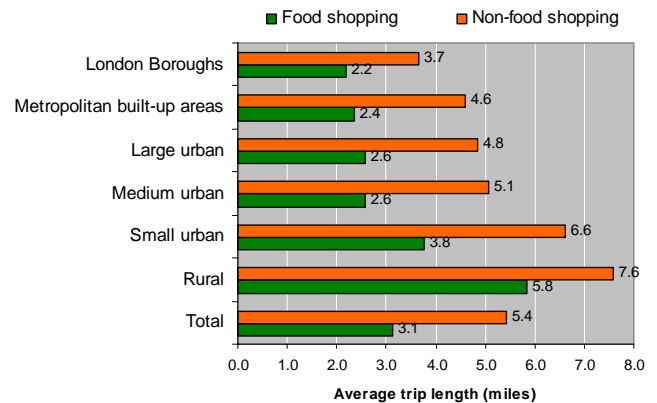
- 93% of households live within 15 minutes of their nearest shop selling groceries and 56% live within 15 minutes of their nearest shopping centre.
- There is some variation between areas. In particular, a lower proportion of households in rural areas live within a 15 minute walk or public transport journey from their nearest shop selling groceries (70%) and shopping centre (21%).

Shopping and area type

Level of access to shops affects the shopping patterns of households in different areas.

- The average trip length is 2.2 miles for food shopping and 3.7 miles for non-food shopping for London residents, compared with 5.8 and 7.6 miles respectively for people in rural areas. (Chart 7)
- Similarly, people living in rural areas make a higher proportion of shopping trips by car compared with people living in urban areas.

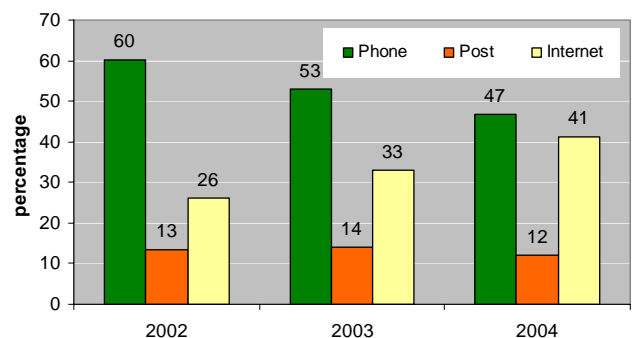
Chart 7: Average trip length by area type, 2005



Shopping from home

- In 2004, half (50%) of all households ordered goods by phone, post or the internet, a slight increase since 2002 (44%).
- Among households who had ordered goods in 2004, the most common items were holiday/travel tickets (55%), clothes (53%) and books (53%).
- Of those who had ordered goods, 8% said they did this at least once a week and a further 37% said at least once a month.
- Households who order goods at least once a year were asked how they ordered their last delivery. 47% said they had ordered the goods by phone, 41% via the internet and 12% by post.
- The proportion of people ordering goods by phone appears to be falling, while the proportion ordering goods via the internet is increasing. (Chart 8)

Chart 8: Method of ordering last delivery, 2002-04.



Further information

Since 2002, NTS fieldwork has been conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). The main results from the National Travel Survey are published at: www.dft.gov.uk/transtat along with details of the methodology. For further information and any queries please contact: national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk or telephone 020 7944 3097