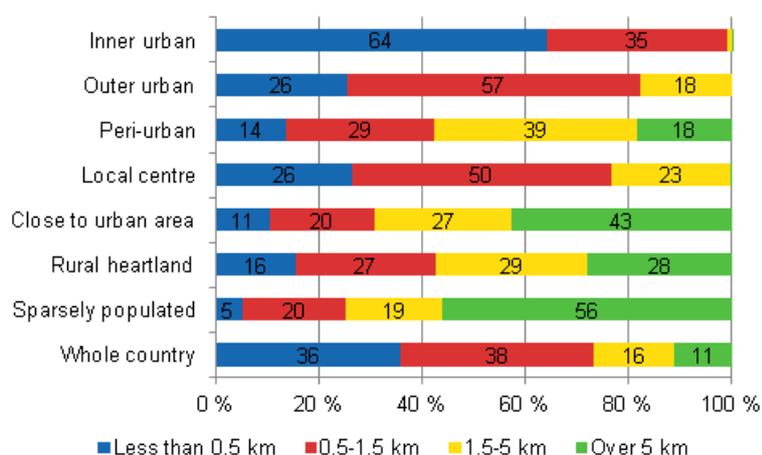


# Households' consumption 2012

## Grocery stores are close to the home

Approximately one-third of Finnish households have less than one-half kilometre to the nearest grocery store measured along streets and roads. Three in four households live less than one and half kilometres away from the closest grocery store. On average, the distance to the grocery store is two kilometres. These data derive from the data of Statistics Finland's Household Budget Survey from 2012.

### Household's distance to the nearest grocery store based on the urban-rural classification of the area of residence in 2012



More information about the urban-rural classification: <http://www.ymparisto.fi>

The distance to the nearest grocery store is only 0.7 kilometres if it is expressed as the median (Table 1). Its value is attained when all households are listed in ascending order by distance. The median is the middle observation of this distribution. In other words, one-half of Finnish households live at most 700 metres away from the nearest grocery store. Here, the nearest grocery store refers to the self-service shop, supermarket or department store located closest to the household.

For most households, the nearest grocery store is at walking distance. The distance examination of services shows that it may be difficult to find enough customers for online food shopping.

The distance from home to the library's cultural services is longer than to the nearest grocery store. The household's dwelling is located, on average, 5.6 kilometres away from the nearest library. Measured by the median, one-half of households live less than 2.1 kilometres away from the nearest library. The average distance to the nearest health care centre is slightly longer than to the library, around six kilometres, while the median is 2.3 kilometres. The average distance to the nearest post office is 3.2 kilometres.

## *A majority of households live in towns*

Altogether, 3.4 million Finns live in inner or outer urban areas or in local centres in rural areas where the services are nearby (Table 2).

The distance of services is viewed based on the urban-rural classification, which is independent of municipal borders and is based on spatial data sets. There are three urban areas: Inner urban area, outer urban area, and peri-urban area. There are four rural areas: local centres in rural areas, rural areas close to urban areas, rural heartland areas, and sparsely populated rural areas.

In the inner rural area the average distance to the nearest grocery store is around one-half kilometre, one kilometre to the post office, and slightly over one kilometre to the library and health care centre (Table). Nearly four in ten (37%) of a total of approximately 2.6 million Finnish households live in inner urban areas, which include dense, unified and efficiently built areas. A total of 1.7 million people live in the households of the inner urban area.

The distance from services grows the further away from the inner urban area the household's dwelling is located. For example, in areas classified as peri-urban areas the distance to the nearest grocery store is longer (2.7 km) than the average for the whole country (2 km). Approximately one in five (18%) of households living in peri-urban areas have to travel over five kilometres to the nearest grocery store. Areas that are part of the intermediate zone between urban and rural and which are directly linked to an urban area are classified as peri-urban areas.

**Table 1. The distance from home to main local services in such areas based on the urban-rural classification in 2012**

Area	Service							
	Nearest grocery store		Library		Health care centre		Post office	
	Average (km)	Median (km)	Average (km)	Median (km)	Average (km)	Median (km)	Average (km)	Median (km)
Inner urban area	0.5	0.4	2.3	1.1	2.2	1.4	1.1	1.0
Outer urban area	0.9	0.8	3.8	2.5	3.7	2.7	2.0	1.8
Peri-urban area	2.7	1.8	6.7	5.7	5.8	5.0	3.4	2.7
Local centre in rural areas	1.0	0.8	6.3	1.9	8.9	2.4	6.7	1.3
Rural area close to urban area	5.1	4.2	10.7	10.9	10.5	10.6	5.7	4.6
Rural heartland area	3.8	1.9	9.9	6.1	12.6	8.8	5.9	2.1
Sparsely populated rural area	8.4	6.9	15.6	13.0	22.6	15.2	9.5	7.4
Whole country	2.0	0.7	5.6	2.1	6.0	2.3	3.2	1.4

**Table 2. The numbers of households and persons living in such areas based on the urban-rural classification in 2012**

Area	Households, total		Persons in households	
	%	N	%	N
Inner urban area	37.0	959 100	31.5	1 678 400
Outer urban area	24.4	630 900	27.1	1 444 000
Peri-urban area	8.7	225 300	10.3	550 200
Local centre in rural areas	5.8	149 900	5.2	278 000
Rural area close to urban area	6.0	156 600	6.6	350 100
Rural heartland area	11.6	300 100	11.8	628 100
Sparsely populated rural area	6.5	169 100	7.4	395 000
Whole country	100	2 591 000	100	5 323 800

### *Grocery store nearly as close in parish villages as in cities*

In local centres in rural areas, the nearest grocery store is close by, as three in four (76%) of households' dwellings are located under 1.5 kilometres from the nearest grocery store. On average, the distance to the nearest grocery store is one kilometre. Many other basic services are also close by. The distance to the library is over six kilometres and almost nine kilometres to the health care centre. Local centres in rural areas include population centres located outside the larger urban areas, small towns and large parish villages.

"Rural areas close to urban areas" and "rural heartland areas" do not differ much from one another when it comes to the availability of services but measured by the median, the services in rural heartland areas are slightly closer than in rural areas close to urban areas. Rural areas close to urban areas are areas with a rural character that are functionally and physically connected to urban areas. An area where land use is intense, or farmed, or an area with a relatively dense population and a versatile economic structure is classified as a rural heartland area.

By contrast, the distance to services is clearly longer in sparsely populated rural areas. The average distance to the nearest grocery store is longest for households living in sparsely populated rural areas, over eight kilometres. The median shows that one-half of households are located more than 6.9 kilometres from the nearest grocery store. On average, postal services are slightly farther away (9.5 km) than the grocery store. The average distance to the library is approximately 16 kilometres and good 22 kilometres to the health care centre.

Sparsely populated rural areas are areas in which functionally versatile local clusters either do not exist or they are small and located far away from each other. Most of the land areas are forest. Altogether 170,000 households live in sparsely populated rural areas, which represents close on seven per cent of all households. A total of 395,000 persons live in these households.

### *Forming the data*

The distance of households from their home to the nearest store, library, post office and health care centre along streets or roads in different types of urban and rural areas are described above. Appendix table provides additional information on the distances between households and services. Other services for which distances have been calculated are the day care centre, primary level comprehensive school and secondary school, upper secondary school, letter box, ATM machine, food kiosk and restaurant. In terms of grocery stores, the distance has been separately calculated for the self-service shop, supermarket and department store. The nearest grocery store is the one that is closest to home.

The distances between households and services by road have been calculated for the sample of the Household Budget Survey 2012 using geographic information (map coordinates). The background variable

is the urban-rural classification, which has been formed using geographic information methods that utilise data covering the entire country based on precise location data. The calculation has mainly been done using 250 x 250 metre grid squares. Chargeable data concerning the distance of services is available for research use from Statistics Finland.

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## Appendix table

### Distance of households from services based on the urban-rural classification of the area of residence in 2012

Service	Area															
	Inner urban area		Outer urban area		Peri-urban area		Local centre in rural areas		Rural area close to urban area		Rural heartland area		Sparsely populated rural area		Whole country	
	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.	Mean	Med.
Health care centre	2.2	1.4	3.7	2.7	5.8	5.0	8.9	2.4	10.5	10.6	12.6	8.8	22.6	15.2	6.7	2.3
Library	2.3	1.1	3.8	2.5	6.7	5.7	6.3	1.9	10.7	10.9	9.9	6.1	15.6	13.0	5.6	2.1
Day care centre	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.6	2.2	1.4	0.9	0.8	5.3	4.2	6.5	3.4	13.3	10.5	2.5	0.6
Primary level comprehensive school	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.0	2.4	1.6	1.3	1.1	3.7	2.6	4.7	2.2	9.1	6.8	2.2	1.0
Secondary school	1.0	0.8	2.1	1.8	5.9	5.5	3.5	1.6	10.3	10.6	8.6	5.2	14.9	12.5	4.2	1.5
Upper secondary school	2.2	1.1	4.2	2.9	7.6	6.6	6.9	1.9	13.9	14.0	12.6	9.8	25.7	20.1	6.9	2.3
Post office	1.1	1.0	2.0	1.8	3.4	2.7	6.7	1.3	5.7	4.6	5.9	2.1	9.5	7.4	3.2	1.4
Letter box	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.9	5.4	0.5	2.7	1.3	3.9	1.2	6.5	3.2	1.8	0.5
ATM machine	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.3	4.0	3.6	1.4	1.1	7.5	6.6	5.5	3.1	11.9	10.3	2.9	1.0
Food kiosk	0.7	0.6	1.8	1.6	4.7	4.1	1.4	1.2	12.0	12.2	11.3	8.7	21.2	19.3	4.6	1.3
Restaurant	0.4	0.4	1.3	1.1	3.5	2.7	1.3	1.0	7.7	6.7	7.4	4.3	14.8	12.9	3.2	0.9
Self-service shop	0.6	0.5	1.2	1.0	3.1	2.4	1.4	1.1	6.1	4.9	4.7	2.2	10.5	9.8	2.5	0.9
Supermarket	0.9	0.7	1.8	1.6	5.3	4.5	2.8	1.3	10.7	10.9	8.9	5.8	17.3	15.6	4.2	1.4
Department store	1.6	1.4	3.1	2.8	8.5	7.9	16.9	4.4	19.2	18.5	23.9	22.1	61.1	49.0	11.0	2.9
Nearest grocery store <sup>1)</sup>	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.8	2.7	1.8	1.0	0.8	5.1	4.2	3.8	1.9	8.4	6.9	2.0	0.7

1) The nearest grocery store is the self-service shop, supermarket or department store located closest to the household.

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Source: Households' consumption 2012. Statistics Finland