

MORE THAN A CORNER STORE: SPÄTIS STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL IN A CHANGING BERLIN

Somewhat ironically, the antecedent of the Späti was thus introduced to combat excessive consumption of alcohol by selling safe-to-drink mineral water. Later down the line, the GDR introduced the term "Späti" as the shops began to stock other essential items to serve the needs of shift workers who couldn't buy groceries during standard supermarket hours.

Today, aside from the vast array of stock, Spätis serve much the same purpose, acting as a lifeline to those (like many newcomers) who tend to forget about Germany's strict no-shops-open-on-Sunday policy and find their cupboards empty when the weekend rolls around.

Is gentrification putting spätis at risk?

Yet while large numbers of spätis do remain open on Sunday, the legality of this practice is dubious, with some businesses in recent years receiving fines of up to €2500 for doing so. It's a move from local officials that has caused anger among business owners and the public, with a [petition](#) launched in 2016 that called on the German Ordnungsamt (regulatory agency) to reconsider their stance on the issue.

The endeavour was partially successful, but Spätis opening on Sundays - usually their busiest day - [still](#) risk hefty fines and the threat of closure.

So why all the big fuss? You could, after all, hardly imagine people in the U.S running around wearing "I ♥ 7/11" t-shirts equivalent to the "I ♥ PAMUK SHOP" shirts sold at the Moabit Späti, or Brits fighting tooth and nail for a local Spar. The essential difference has much to do with the fact that Spätis tend to be independent businesses, a model that Berliners largely prefer over chain supermarkets.



Um viertel nach elf nachts noch schnell in den genialsten und verrücktesten Laden der gesamten Hauptstadt: Lichterkette kaufen, um die Kids morgen früh zu Überraschen