

Meals-for-one - UK - December 2009

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What is this report about?

This report examines the eating habits of adults in OPHs. No one consumer product market will be examined, however, Mintel will explore a whole range of food products, with reference to how they fit into the daily eating patterns of people living on their own.

There are an estimated 8.4 million OPHs in the UK in 2009, and in the next five years, their numbers are forecast to increase by 5.4% representing 32% of all UK households. The decreasing size of the average UK household has been due to rising divorce rates, people living longer and young adults delaying marriage as they establish themselves in their careers.

What have we found out?

- Almost half of One Person Households (OPHs) feel cooking from scratch is more economical than buying a ready meal, and they are likely to be cooking in bulk, and freezing the excess food.
- Adults living on their own are more likely to complain about the expense of shopping for one, compared to two or more. Retailers need to factor in their needs when using store promotions.
- OPHs are key targets for frozen foods companies as a third buy frozen foods to reduce wastage. But their usage of frozen food products, such as frozen vegetables, chips and fish products, is lower than larger households, highlighting an opportunity for manufacturers to run cross promotions in the frozen food aisles to increase usage among smaller households.
- Faced with rising food costs, over 65yr olds in OPHs are more brand loyal and are less likely to buy more own label food items than other age groups
- Men in OPHs feel it is not worth cooking a proper meal if you live on your own. But this group view ready meals as being good value for money, providing a key target for ready meals suppliers.
- Almost a quarter of OPHs have cut back on luxury items/treats faced with rising food costs. Retailers should ensure these items are included in store promotions, positioned as 'affordable treats' even where budgets may be tight.

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