

Prepared Meals and Meal Kits - UK - May 2011

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What is this report about?

Estimated at £3.3 billion in 2010, the prepared meals and pies and pasties market has experienced growth of 11.9% between 2005 and 2010.

Almost seven in ten consumers use chilled and frozen ready meals, with three fifths (57%) using chilled and half (48%) using frozen. Usage of meal kits and ready-to-cook foods stands at around a third of adults (33% and 32% respectively) with more than a quarter (28%) of consumers using both ready meals and ready-to-cook foods.

What have we found out?

- The convenience proposition continues to provide a strong selling point for ready meals and meal kits, set to appeal to the three in four adults who see the meals as “good when you are pressed for time”.
- Brands and retailers should do more to emphasise improvements in the quality of ready meals, meal kits and ready-to-cook foods, which have gone unnoticed by around two fifths of consumers.
- Premiumisation looks to have further potential in the market. Meals positioned as allowing consumers to recreate the restaurant experience in the home are well-placed to attract the three in four consumers who see ready meals/meal kits as a cheaper alternative to a takeaway/eating out.
- Promoting the health credentials of prepared meals that contribute towards a person’s five-a-day target would help to alleviate concerns by the quarter (27%) of consumers who believe that ready meals and meal kits are “unhealthy” and attract the 50% of consumers who always try to eat healthily.
- Ready-to-cook foods could benefit from further educating consumers about their proposition. This could help to engage people who are undecided on whether ready-to-cook foods are a healthier, better quality or convenient alternative to competing categories such as ready meals and takeaways/eating out, making up more than half of people using prepared meals.
- Emphasising their proposition of convenience combined with control over and involvement in cooking could help meal kit brands to appeal to the 29% of consumers who enjoy part-cooking.

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