

Prepared Meals - US - May 2016

Report Price: £2466.89 | \$3995.00 | €3133.71

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"Sales of prepared meals turned slightly positive in 2015, but weak results are in line with a broader move away from more processed foods in favor of fresher and healthier alternatives. Still, the category's defining convenience benefit remains compelling, and there is considerable opportunity for brands offering products made from natural ingredients and highlighting specific benefits."
- John Owen, Senior Food & Drink Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Category sales turn positive but remain weak
- Consumers cutting back outnumber those eating more
- Convenience is foundation, but growth could come from other areas

This Report builds on the analysis presented in Mintel's *Prepared Meals and Sides – US, November 2015* and *Prepared Meals & Side Dishes – US, May 2014*, in addition to *Frozen Meals – US, May 2013*, as well as the same title in May 2012, September 2010, 2008, 2007, 2006, and previous years. This Report also builds on the analysis presented in Mintel's *Side Dishes – US, June 2010* as well as the same title in June 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, and 2003.

For the purposes of this Report, prepared meals are defined as complete meals or entrées that are precooked and frozen or refrigerated. These meals usually include a side dish and require minimal preparation or cooking time.

Side dishes are defined in this Report as products intended to be used alongside an entrée or meal center. These items can be frozen or refrigerated. Please note that while the industry has a clear definition of side dishes, the demarcation is not so clear to the consumer, who may well use specific side dishes as a meal or a snack.

The primary segments include the following:

- Single-serve frozen meals
- Multiserve frozen meals
- Refrigerated meals
- Frozen side dishes
- Refrigerated side dishes (including refrigerated side dishes that are sold in meat and deli cases and require only microwaving), and refrigerated salads

Excluded from this Report are meals and side dishes prepared in-store and sold in the fresh deli or other departments. Also excluded are meals and side dishes sold through foodservice venues.

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This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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