Soup - US - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- **The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the soup market**
- **Current and expected change in soup consumption frequency**
- **Reasons for eating soup more often**
- **Soup attitudes**
- **Interest in soup packaging and innovation**

Despite the role of the traditional can in the soup category, consumers express strong interest in other forms of packaging – especially gla**ss**. Glass packaging outperforms plastic packaging in packaging interest, pointing to consumers' interest in packaging that conveys quality, freshness and sustainability. Ensuring that packaging provides a convenient experience will remain a priority, but category players should consider how convenient formats such as pull-tops, microwaveable or single-serving products can evolve to tell a premium and fresh story.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to stockpiling and increased at-home cooking and eating, all of which supported increased soup purchasing and consumption across category segments, and huge dollar sales gains in 2020. A year later, however, consumers are less reliant on foods with long shelf-lives and are renewing their health goals, which is contributing to reduced consumption. As consumers increasingly return to their pre-pandemic routines through the remainder of 2021, foodservice operators and more portable, prepared foods will benefit from consumers eating, working and learning away from home once again.

One of the biggest threats to the soup market is a lack of interest from the next generation of soup consumers – **those aged 18-24**. Consumers aged 18-24 are some of the most likely to plan to cut back on their soup consumption or to have already cut back. Younger consumers are interested in smaller, portable packaging formats such as drinkable and snack-sized soups as well as soups

"The $8.7 billion soup market is expected to decline modestly in 2021 as consumers increasingly adopt pre-pandemic routines, reducing the demand for shelf stable foods such as canned soup. But some areas of the category continue to thrive due to their role in scratch cooking or their connections to healthy eating."
- Kaitlin Kamp, Food and Drink Analyst

with wellness claims and functional benefits, indicating category players will be challenged to modernize packaging and positioning.

The circumstances of COVID-19 caused consumers to turn to their own kitchens more than typical, causing them to hone their skills, invest in new household appliances and enjoy cooking as a hobby. Their newfound habits and appliances will open doors for brands to make soups of all types a cooking staple. Soup products can elevate the flavor and nutritional profile of both homemade soups and non-soup dishes, such as by adding broth to rice and vegetables. Popular household appliances, including the Instant Pot, present opportunities for partnerships and recipe inspiration.

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