

# Food Packaging Trends - US - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- How food packaging has responded to and been shaped by COVID-19
- The impact of ecommerce on food packaging
- Food packaging formats, including consumer attitudes and perceptions
- Packaging trends related to format, size, materials and diverse claims
- The importance of environmental responsibility in food packaging

In addition to playing a functional role, packaging serves as a vital communication platform for engaging consumers in-store or online. It can entice shoppers while also relaying a range of practical information (nutrition, health benefits, preparation). Packaging's role in food safety, storage and freshness was thrust into the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic, as at-home food consumption soared. The pandemic also changed shopping habits, leading to a growth in use of online retailers to order groceries for delivery or pickup. Emerging from the pandemic, there are new opportunities for packaging to continue to respond to evolving consumer needs, interests and shopping habits, including embracing new technologies and meeting the environmentally friendly desires.



“Food packaging has been front of mind during the COVID-19 pandemic as a vital tool for keeping food safe and stocking up in the pandemic as well as supporting consumers making more at-home meals and snacks.”

– **Beth Bloom, Associate Director US Food and Drink Reports**

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### What's included

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- Environmental claims fall, as plastics remain primary material**
- Packaging will drive technological path forward**

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- Packaging showcases nostalgic brands and indulgent treats
- Suggesting satisfaction through comfort food and health food
- Consumers value transparency...except when they don't
- Pandemic drives demand for variety in pack sizes  
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- Functional packaging often found in pouches and closures

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- Half of online shoppers turn to brands they would buy in-store
- Environmental engagement high by many measures
- Two-thirds hold manufacturers responsible for eco-friendly choices

**IMPORTANT FOOD PACKAGING FEATURES**

- In-store, consumers factor more packaging features into product choice
- Core nutrition, health and preparation information key for packaging
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- **Packaging has strongest perceived impact on food freshness**

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- **Few perceive price premium, some are willing to pay more**

Figure 41: Attitudes toward environmentally friendly packaging, March 2021

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