

## Prepared Meals and Side Dishes - US - May 2014

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

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“Category purchasers value the convenience of prepared meals and side dishes and prefer items with natural ingredients, cleaner product labels, and better-for-you claims. Addressing the specific reasons consumers purchase these items, and promoting their versatility, can benefit the category overall.”  
– Amanda Topper, Food Analyst

### This report looks at the following areas:

- How can perceptions of the frozen category be improved?
- What will the main source of innovation for the category be?
- How can the use of prepared meals and side dishes be expanded?

The prepared meals and side dishes category declined from 2008 to 2013, partly due to negative perceptions about the nutrition and quality of frozen foods and the high cost associated with these products. Indeed, the top factors that would influence consumers to purchase more prepared meals and side dishes are natural ingredients, higher-quality items, and larger portions for the same price. The category is largely dictated by sales within the single-serve and multiserve frozen meal segments, which continue to experience sales declines. However, the refrigerated segments examined in this report, including refrigerated meals and side dishes, increased as many purchasers indicate they prefer the variety of cuisine types and taste of these meals.

Overall, the category is expected to decline from 2013-18. Future growth for the category will require product innovation focused on the inclusion of natural ingredients and higher-quality items. Additionally, BFY (better-for-you) options, such as products with fewer ingredients and high protein or fiber, as well as products meeting the individual usage needs of core purchasers are important to reverse the downward category trend.

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.

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