

Bread: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - September 2020

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“COVID-19 has provided a boost to the bread category. With the nationwide lockdown, bread volume sales, which have been on a downward trajectory for several years, rose, thanks to out-of-home breakfasts and lunches shifting to the home overnight.”

– **Alice Pilkington, UK Food and Drink Analyst, 30 September 2020**

This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the bread market
- Launch activity and opportunities for 2020
- Factors that consumers find appealing in bread
- Purchase and usage of bread
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes related to bread
- Where people buy bread

47% of people who eat and buy bread agree that eating a lot of bread is unhealthy. This is despite steps from the industry to improve the health credentials of their products over recent years. This poses a continuing challenge to the market in terms of growing volume sales. Furthermore, the growing spotlight that COVID-19 has brought onto the state of the nation’s health further dials up the need for bread brands to push their health credentials.

The recession and income squeeze triggered by COVID-19 will mean that consumers will be looking to make savings, with packed lunches and having breakfasts at home providing easy economising wins. As such, bread has the potential to benefit from this cost-cutting behaviour. Furthermore, more working from home is predicted to be a long-term result of the pandemic, meaning more potential meal occasions for bread. However, emphasising the versatility of bread will be crucial in order to compete with other lunchtime foods and tap into consumers’ love of variety.

The healthiness of bread will remain a key consumer concern going forward. While the government has renewed its pledge to fight obesity, eating healthily has become a higher priority for nearly a third of consumers since the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, providing consumers both with the benefits they find appealing in bread and those they would wish to gain from an ideal diet will be crucial in order for brands to navigate the post-COVID world.

Immunity is likely to be a greater concern for consumers going forward due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. This provides opportunities for bread brands, given the links already being made within the media between fibre intake and gut health, and the positive effect that this may have on immune health. Vitamin fortification can also help bread brands to capitalise on this increased interest in immunity, with various vitamins approved for immune system claims by EFSA.

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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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No clear winner, but health-related factors chime

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Snacking-friendly formats could help to tap into new occasions

Value perception of sandwiches spells good news as recession hits

Three quarters think breads make international meals more enjoyable

Healthiness of bread is still an issue

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No clear winner, but health-related factors chime

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