

Cooking Sauces and Pasta Sauces: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - December 2020

Report Price: £2195 | \$2995 | €2600

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the cooking and pasta sauces retail market.
- Launch activity in 2020 and future product development opportunities.
- Factors influencing choice of cooking and pasta sauces.
- Reasons to pay more for cooking and pasta sauces.
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes related to cooking and pasta sauces.

That low price is the top factor influencing shoppers' choice when buying cooking and pasta sauces signals a warning to the market in light of the financial pressures facing households in 2021. However, it's only a consideration for 50% of buyers, clearly indicating that brands can look to competitive levers beyond price to stand out.

The restrictions and lockdowns enacted to combat the spread of COVID-19 in 2020 have provided a boost to cooking and pasta sauces. Beyond these, the category has benefited from the edict to work from home, a reluctance to visit foodservice venues and people tightening their purse strings. The new wave of lockdowns starting in January 2021 will have a similar effect to the previous periods of heightened restrictions, while the expected shift towards more homeworking long term will keep up sauce occasions going forward, providing a boost to the lunchtime occasion.

This has resulted in a boost to home cooking, benefiting cooking/pasta sauces. That shop-bought sauces are part of most scratch cooks' repertoires highlights potential for manufacturers to convince these consumers to switch to more convenient cooking sauces more often, but also the threat they face as the pandemic has seen many people improve their cooking skills.

With finances under pressure going into 2021 and people likely to remain hesitant about mixing in enclosed spaces, this will continue to curb dining out even once restrictions are eased. This presents opportunities for food sold at retail, including cooking sauces, to position itself as an alternative to a meal at



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– Amy Price, Senior Food & Drink Analyst

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a restaurant. This is particularly applicable to premium sauces, with 64% of users/buyers agreeing that a home-made meal made using a premium cooking/pasta sauce is a good alternative to a meal at a restaurant.

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