

Cookies - US - 2021

Report Price: £3695 | \$4995 | €4400

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the cookie market.
- Current and expected change in cookie consumption frequency.
- Reasons for eating cookies more often.
- Cookie motivations.
- Interest in cookie innovation.

Cookies are known for their indulgence, and consumers are largely motivated to eat cookies for a treat and to satisfying cravings. Yet, when asked what they would choose if cookies were not available, 43% of cookie consumers noted they would choose **fruit**. While retaining good flavor and enjoyment in the category will be key to meeting primary consumer demands, there are opportunities to better tap into health aspirations. Swapping processed sugars for more natural options, such as dried fruit, is one way to add permissibility.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to increased at-home comfort eating, snacking and baking, all of which supported increased cookie consumption and strong dollar sales gains in the category. 44% of those eating cookies more often in 2021 are doing so for comfort. Consumers are expected to slowly return to their pre-pandemic routines through the remainder of 2021, and as they do, they will have other, away-from-home opportunities for indulgence, including dining out.

Consumers' increased interest in at-home baking remains both a threat and an opportunity for the cookie category. 42% of US adults who eat homemade cookies are planning to eat them more often, potentially luring consumers to competing categories including baking mixes and ingredients and away from packaged cookies and cookie dough. Cookie dough players can appeal as the quicker and easier route to at-home baking, while packaged cookie brands will be challenged to inject experience and customizability into products, whether through personalized products or through messaging that shows consumers how to add their own touches to pre-made options.



“The cookie category found significant growth in 2020 due to increased at-home snacking and comfort eating during the COVID-19 pandemic. The category will find continued, although much reduced, growth in 2021, even as consumers slowly return to pre-pandemic routines.”

– **Kaitlin Kamp, Food and Drink Analyst**

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Online food and drink shopping accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and cookies were not an exception. 29% of consumers who have increased their consumption of cookies purchased from an online retailer in 2021 are planning to continue doing so, leaving ecommerce as a long-term opportunity for the category. Enabling ecommerce and online purchasing methods will be the first step, but brands have opportunity to get creative with DTC formats, such as subscription services, or enable consumers to order customized, special-edition or limited-time cookies online.

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