

Ready Meals and Ready-to-cook Foods - UK - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the ready meals and ready-to-cook foods market
- Key trends in recent launch activity and opportunities going forward
- Factors prioritised by consumers when choosing a ready meal/ready-to-cook food
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes related to ready meals and ready-to-cook foods
- Concepts of interest in ready meals and ready-to-cook foods

Two in five people (39%) would like to be more involved in the cooking process of a ready meal/ready-to-cook meal. Of these, 65% would find ready meals/ready-to-cook foods that can be heated in a pan appealing. Helping people feel that they contribute more to the cooking of these foods will help the market tap into the growing interest in cooking during the pandemic.

The growth of interest in cooking from scratch seen during COVID-19 and the desire of many to continue this will increase the pressure on the market going forward. However, despite the market being hit in 2020, the convenience proposition of these meals will become more appealing once more as lives become busier again in the post-pandemic normal. Increased focus on health due to COVID-19 will make continued healthier NPD crucial.

Ready meals/ready-to-cook foods struggle to compete for the lunch occasion, 40% of people agreeing that they feel too heavy to have for lunch. The at-home lunch will be an increasingly significant opportunity for brands to capitalise on, given the long-term predicted trend of more flexible working. This accelerates the need for this category to improve its image as a suitable lunch option.

Ready meals/ready-to-cook foods are seen as a good way to reduce food waste by 48% of those who eat ready meals/ready-to-cook foods, up from



“The market was hit in 2020, but the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in 2021 will see busier lifestyles return, making the convenience of these meal solutions more attractive once again. Consumer interest in freshly-made ready meals, and the view of these foods as combatting food waste, hold potential for the market.”

– Alice Pilkington, Food and Drink Analyst

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38% in 2019. An increased focus on sustainability is predicted to be one of the long-term consequences of COVID-19. With recipe box services having made reducing food waste a central part of their USP, brands within the ready meal/ready-to-cook category can look to these companies for inspiration as to how to promote the sustainable credentials of their products.

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- ...and makes Charlie himself central to its 2021 campaign
- Nielsen Ad Intel coverage

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- Healthiness is a priority for two in five
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