

# Free-from Foods - UK - 2022

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- Impact of cost of living/inflation on the market
- Post-COVID market recovery
- Consumers' habits around food/ingredients avoidance and buying free-from products
- Consumer behaviour surrounding and attitudes towards free-from food/drink.

The COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak gave the free-from retail market a boost in 2020, a pattern seen across various food and drink retail markets. Added to this, the scarcity of standard products prompted trial of free-from food and drink, 21% of current free-from users saying they started using products during the COVID outbreak.

The rising cost of living presents a challenge for the free-from market in 2022. As many consumers will rein in spending, including on groceries, free-from products too face growing scrutiny. Half of users say they cut back on free-from products when money is tight.

Across all main free-from categories, products that taste better than standard equivalents are the top enticement that would win over non-users. However, that only around a fifth of non-users would be won over by this in each category poses a significant challenge for the market. This points to a specialist image as catering to allergy sufferers still being a key hurdle for expanding their user bases.

Their environmental footprint remains a long-term area of opportunity for the dairy-free segments of the free-from market, as consumers continue to look for ways to reduce their impact on the environment. Providing easy to understand and tangible explanations on how their products can help consumers in this respect is crucial for brands to tap into this.



“As concerns about inflation and the rising cost of living intensify, free-from products face growing pressure to justify their presence in consumers' shopping baskets. Messaging around the environment remains a key one for operators even amidst these pressures given the long term expected greater emphasis on this area.”  
 – Angharad Goode, Research Analyst, April 2022

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