

# Ready Meals and Ready-to-cook Foods - UK - 2022

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- Usage of ready meals and ready-to-cook foods overall and among key demographics
- 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

Shelf-stable, vegetable-based ready meals from familiar shelf-stable brands appeal to 48% of eaters and buyers of ready meals/ready-to-cook foods. That agreement is higher amongst hybrid workers points to opportunities to tap into the at-home lunch occasion as well as the increasingly significant flexitarian trend.

Pressures on household incomes will lead some to curb their eating out, enabling ready meals/ready-to-cook foods to step in as a more affordable alternative. However, high food inflation may also prompt some to trade down within the category.

An increased focus on health over the long term and the strong perceptions of home cooking as healthy will make it crucial for brands within this space to continue to explore healthier NPD. Making healthy ingredients clearly visible offers a powerful means to tap into this trend, as it would prompt 29% of those who buy these foods to choose one over another.

50% of people agree that information about how these foods are produced would make them more trustworthy, whilst 46% would be won over by knowing how the same dish could be made from scratch. Providing consumers with greater transparency can not only combat fears around these foods being processed but also provides an opportunity to boost their convenience proposition by highlighting complicated and time-intensive techniques.



“Ready meals/ready-to-cook foods can offer an affordable alternative to eating out. Making healthy ingredients visible will help the category respond to the predicted long-term focus on health, whilst interest in shelf-stable, vegetable-based ready meals points to an opportunity for the segment to tap into the increasingly significant flexitarian trend.”

– Alice Pilkington, Food and Drink Analyst, July 2022

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