

# Cheese - Canada - 2022

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the cheese market.
- The impact of rising food inflation on consumer behaviour and cheese.
- What considerations are most and least important when choosing what cheese to purchase.
- Perceived usage and acceptance of plant-based cheese.

Cheese is a very established category in Canada as nearly all Canadians eat cheese at some point, which means that there is little room to grow penetration in the market. This leaves frequency – or, in other words, getting cheese eaters to eat more cheese more often – as the best path for growth, and in this respect feedback shows there remains ample room for growth. Cheese’s versatility is the category’s main asset. This Report provides an overview of the Canadian cheese consumer, delving into what types of cheese Canadians eat, how often they eat cheese and in what ways. This Report also examines where Canadians typically purchase cheese, as well as what considerations matter more (and less) to them when choosing what cheese to purchase. Beyond that, the cheese formats that Canadians eat most often are identified (eg slices, grated), in addition to broader attitudes toward cheese. These attitudes, more specifically, look at what impact the pandemic has had on cheese consumption from consumers’ point of view, the willingness of consumers to make trade-offs around quality in the face of rising food prices and perspectives toward plant-based cheese. As with all Reports, feedback is broken out by demographic where warranted.

Some other points from this Report are as follows.

- **Canadians are split on whether they are willing to pay extra for convenience when it comes to cheese and whether they are willing to sacrifice on quality in exchange for lower prices. As inflation causes many Canadians to tighten their budgets, offering tiered assortments of cheese**



“The path to growth for the cheese category is in driving frequency. As cheese is sold in a wide variety of formats and meets an array of need-states, continually innovating formats that deliver on ease, while being a key source of both nourishment and enjoyment will be essential in uncovering new avenues for growth.”

– Joel Gregoire, Associate Director for Food & Drink

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by quality and price can help address different needs when it comes to budgeting.

- Although Canada appears to have moved beyond pandemic-related lockdowns for the time being, many Canadians continue to work from home. Cheese stands to benefit from this arrangement with more ready access to their fridges throughout the day, meaning more opportunity to incorporate cheese into meals and snacks.
- Younger Canadians are much more likely to state that they are cutting back on their consumption of dairy-based cheese in support of the environment. As the impact of climate change intensifies, it will be incumbent on cheese (and other) brands to ensure that sustainability is a central strategic pillar in order to remain relevant with today's emerging consumer base.
- 'Local' strongly resonates with Canadians. The vast majority of Canadians agree that "supermarkets should have a greater range of cheeses from local producers", which can include 'made-in-Canada'. Given 'local's' popularity among Canadian consumers, when applicable brands and retailers can look to promote 'local' and make the production process more transparently traceable using both traditional and newer, more technologically integrated methods.

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