

COVID-19

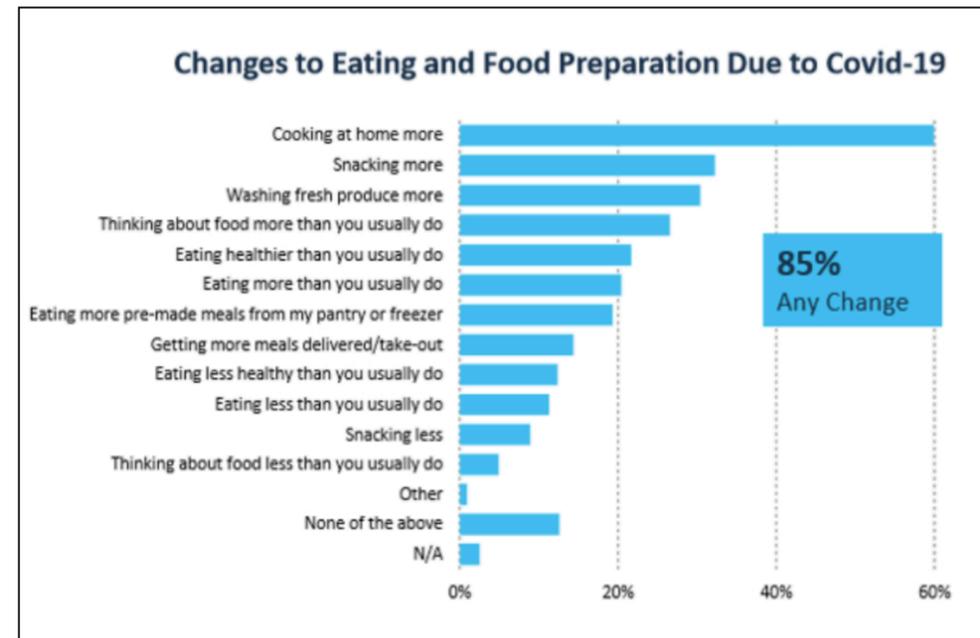
SERIES

Week One – Changing Food Habits

October 6, 2020

Consumers' relationship with food has changed

It's no surprise that consumers of every walk of life have had to adopt new eating habits since the onset of the pandemic. Whether it's out of necessity or by choice, COVID-19 has compelled everyone to give more thought to their meals.



Consumers now make an average of 6 homemade dinners per week, up from 3.8 before COVID-19.

For many, this led to the discovery of new foods – 38% say they've stumbled upon a new ingredient recently and 45% have purchased a new brand.

Whole protein (30%) and fruits & vegetable (43%) consumption increased with consumers cooking more and eating less food on-the-go than pre-COVID.

Conversely, a growing amount of consumers admit that quarantine has led to eating more takeout and junk food/snacks.

To use stockpiled food without adding extra grocery trips, 67% of people have found themselves in a position where they've had to adapt a typical recipe based on what's available in their pantry or freezer.

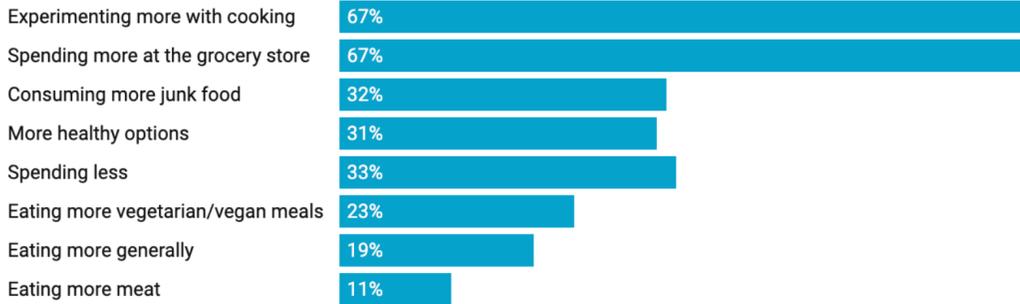
Cooking at home grew a fanbase

The first few months of the pandemic gave way to a honeymoon period for new cooks. With more time on their hands, consumers found experimenting in the kitchen to be an entertaining way to cure the monotony of quarantine.



Covid-19 transforms kitchen life

The average American used to spend \$86 a week on food at home. Current figures show that amount is now closer to \$155 a week. Eating habits generally have changed as well.



Source: [Self.inc](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)



This grace period converted those who favored quick meals to appreciate more time in the kitchen.

In April, 73% of consumers reported that they were enjoying the cooking process more than usual.

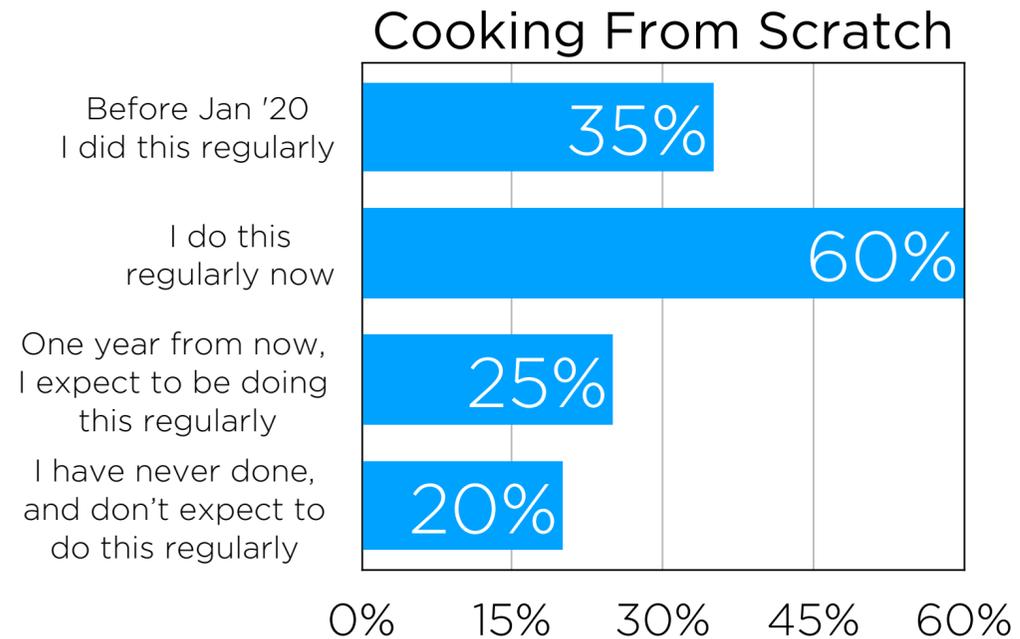
For many, more time in the kitchen meant more time experimenting with new ingredients and techniques.

At the peak of stay-at-home orders, nearly half of consumers were attempting to cook from scratch, which most commonly came in the form of trying out a trendy, intricate recipe (54%)

It was once unheard of in some households to spend time seeking out recipes, yet one-third of adults found themselves doing so – mainly searching online (58%) through influencers or cooking apps and websites.

Fatigue has set in and is here to stay

Flash forward to eight months into the pandemic, and excitement around cooking has begun to fade. The effort required to make homemade meals is taking a toll on consumers who's days are filled with work, childcare, and other tasks.



For many, spending more time in the kitchen was a temporary feat. In fact, 73% of consumers now claim they want to spend the same amount of time making meals as they were before COVID-19, despite having more time on hand than before.

COOKINGS' MOST FATIGUING ASPECTS

1. Prep work 46%
2. Clean up 43%
3. Planning meals for the week 42%
4. Cooking 35%
5. Collecting ingredients 34%
6. Waiting for food to be ready 28%

It's difficult for weary chefs to pinpoint a single reason they haven't been enjoying cooking lately, but it comes down to the handful of tedious tasks that have to be done at each stage in the cooking process.



The average respondent has cooked the same meal **28** times since the start of COVID-19.

Consumers are looking for ways to make cooking from home easier. Quick fixes for easy, healthy meals (69%) and cooking hacks to eliminate prep work (46%) are on their radar.

TAKEAWAYS

Create Solutions: Consumers aren't looking for recipes, they are looking for meal-time solutions. Brands should emphasize how easy it is to integrate their products into consumer routines.

Reminders: Disruptions to eating routines, food selections, and preparation processes mean brands need to remind consumers of the key roles their products play in consumers' menus.

Frequency: Food fatigue has left consumers disgruntled with their food rotation, which creates an opportunity for brands to save the day with frequent messaging that ensures the brand and product solutions are top-of-mind.

Menu Innovation: Foodservice operators can help fatigued consumers change their routines with new menu offerings and dining options.



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