

# Fresh produce purchasing during a global pandemic

## A changing world

When the pandemic began in March 2020, life changed abruptly. Working from home became the norm for many and the closing of restaurants made cooking from home a necessity. As time passed and some workplaces and business establishments re-opened, we wanted to know: How did fresh produce purchasing habits change during the pandemic?

To find out, Robinson Fresh conducted a consumer survey in Fall 2021. Here's what we found, and what retailers can do to meet the needs of today's shoppers looking for quality and convenience when buying fresh produce.

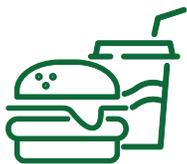


**54%** 

eat at home more frequently

Lunch and snacking categories show the largest increases.

**12%** responded they are eating more takeout.



**38%** 

purchase more fresh produce than before the pandemic

Consumers are purchasing more bagged and packaged produce than before. Shoppers are trying new produce items for the health benefits or from social media recommendations.

**68%** 

increase in online ordering of fresh produce

Orders for both pickup and delivery increased dramatically during the pandemic, offering potential for permanent changes in how people shop as long as the quality of produce meets expectations.

**MORE INSIDE**

More about how purchasing fresh produce changed during the pandemic

Specific ways you can appeal to in-store and online shoppers — including affluent, millennial and older demographics



# Who's buying more produce?

## Portrait of a produce shopper



Looking for more **pre-cut produce** – both fruits and veg – and packaged produce



Focus on fresh produce with health benefits like **digestive health** and **immunity boosting**



Finding produce recommendations on **social media**



Trying new item for **health benefits** or from an in-store display



### In-store inspiration

Meal kits – all ingredients for a healthy meal in a grab-and-go spot

Pre-cut produce for both meal preparation and snacking options

- Health benefits/nutrition
- How to tell if the item is ripe
- How to store at home
- Recipes

In-store samples

### Why does someone try something new in-store?

16%

It's on sale

12%

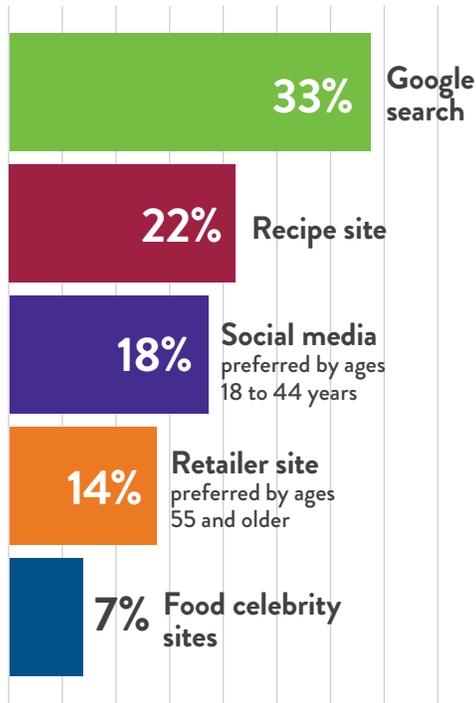
A display

10%

Free sample

## What do shoppers want online?

How do online users find produce recommendations?



Of those who increased their online ordering, 85% were also more likely to order packaged produce.

### Quality and price matter

Choosing produce in-store is still the preferred method, **but online orders delivering quality produce can encourage repeat orders.**

Matching the in-store experience for price and promotion also boosts online orders.

### Enhance the online ordering experience

- Include video recipes with option to add ingredients to online cart
- Offer food prep ideas/recipes
- Ensure only quality produce goes out the door
- Packaged produce travels better and is preferred by online consumers
- Make sure pricing and promotions match in-store offers through online and mobile app
- Grocer website content should appeal to all demographics

## What appeals to younger shoppers?



42% of shoppers buying prepared meals/meal kits at least once a week are under age 35 – this increased during the pandemic

Why do they try something new?

Age 18 to 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Restaurant experience</li> </ul>
Age 25 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-store displays</li> <li>• New recipes</li> </ul>

### Social media tips

- Follow online trends and food hacks (#tiktokfood #instafood, etc.) and incorporate into store's social media and promotion strategy
- Partner with social media influencers to post recipes using on-sale items
- Offer on-trend recipes with unique ingredients

### Of course, they like social media

18- to 44-year-olds prefer social media for fresh produce recommendations



## Try something fresh!

### Turn a viral recipe into a meal kit

For example, baked feta pasta is an easy meal that started with a social media trend. Put the ingredients together for a display that will grab attention or make it an easy click on your website.



### Have fun!

Attract shoppers with samples and recipes for an out-of-the-ordinary recipe. Try mango pineapple salsa or an eggplant dip. Or showcase a DIY spa day avocado mask — we could all use it these days!



### Create a healthy snack spot

Offer a promotional display with pre-cut packaged produce for snacking, health information, a simple recipe to enhance the item, and free samples.

### Make your takeout

Partner with a restaurant to promote a signature dish — perhaps a meal kit with a coupon for the restaurant. This appeals to those who want convenience, as well as those who want to try something new.

## About Robinson Fresh

Robinson Fresh is the fresh produce sourcing and supply chain services division of C.H. Robinson, one of the world's largest logistics platform. As one of the largest fresh produce distributors in the world, Robinson Fresh helps grow and manage customers' complex fresh produce businesses through its global suite of products and services. For more information about Robinson Fresh, visit [www.robinsfresh.com](http://www.robinsfresh.com).

## About the Survey

In Fall 2021, Robinson Fresh partnered with a third-party research firm to survey over 2,000 consumers regarding their fresh produce purchasing preferences during the pandemic. Respondents were geographically and demographically representative of the total U.S. population. To participate, the consumer needed to have purchased fresh produce during the previous six months.

## Let's talk fresh

To discuss Robinson Fresh's capabilities, please reach out to 855-229-6128  
For more information, visit [robinsfresh.com](http://robinsfresh.com) or [blog.robinsfresh.com](http://blog.robinsfresh.com)

