Food Sourcing in America 2025: Fragmentation and Focus

A Hartman Group syndicated research study

Fielding April-June 2025
U.S. market coverage

Food Sourcing in America 2025 illuminates the shifting world of food shopping, uncovering where stores and brands can better align with distinct and evolving shopper needs

Despite pockets of great success, the American packaged food industry is arguably underperforming. Over the past 10 years, macro trends have appeared favorable: food has elevated its status in popular culture, retailers have catered to home-bound pandemic diners, and packaged options have become crucial for budget-conscious households amid inflation. Despite this, **food service has grown twice as quickly as food at retail over the same 10 years**.

Battling for a slice of this shrinking pie, food retailers are compelled to **recruit more trips from more shoppers**, and/or to **grow the size and scope of those trips**. But American food shoppers are…not cooperating, to put it mildly. Shoppers now regularly split their spending over a larger number of stores. And the same eater who chooses fast food more often also chooses to multi-source their home eating more. **Stores may want consolidation, but shoppers almost seem to want fragmentation**.

From a pragmatic perspective, no retailer or brand can (or should) try to be all things to all shoppers in all places. But **choosing to focus** — deciding what sort of thing to be, and for whom — warrants a refreshed understanding of **how and why shoppers assemble and leverage their food sources**.

***Food Sourcing in America 2025* will provide food manufacturers and food retailers, both large and small, with actionable insights around:**

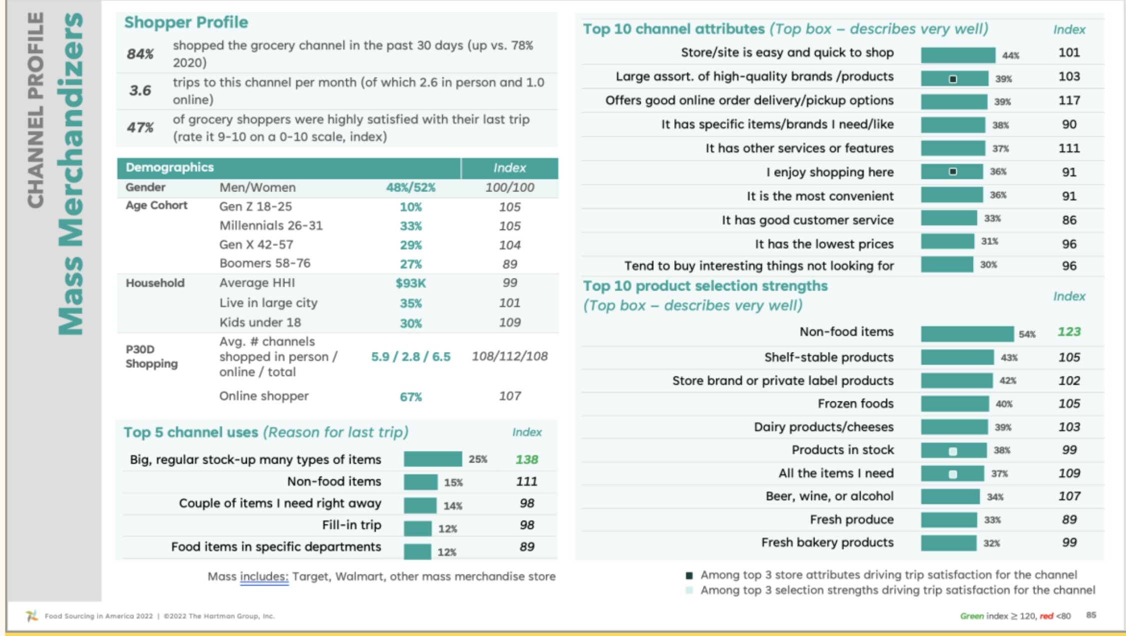
- **RETAIL CHANNEL:** How and why do shoppers turn to a mix of store types?
- **SHOPPER SEGMENT:** How and why do different types of shoppers make different decisions about how they source their food?

This report will provide recommendations to optimize tactics, positioning and planning to **obtain the right shopper's attention, attract their food dollars and, ultimately, their loyalty in an increasingly fragmented food sourcing marketplace.**

Activate on the rapidly shifting food sourcing environment by leveraging tracking data from past Hartman Group studies

The report will explore how consumer sentiment on the following topics has picked up momentum or morphed over time:

- **What are the key reasons for multi-store shopping?** Do shoppers consistently include each store for distinctive reasons and needs, or do they fluidly use the stores they visit for a range of reasons?
- **Do price-wary shoppers now add trips to find deals, or do they consolidate trips to stores selected for overall value?** Has the vast number of sourcing options led to “choice overload” before shoppers even reach decisions about products and brands?
- **What drives trip satisfaction at the channel level?** What can this tell us about the role shoppers want each of their stores to play?
- **How have digital apps changed trip planning?** How can brands remind shoppers to include them? Do shoppers expect their preferred brands to offer the same options at every store?
- **How has the rise of online browsing altered the pathway to product trial?** Where and when are shoppers most receptive to new products?
- **Do shoppers want pack sizes standardized or customized across channels?**


CHANNEL PROFILE
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Shopper Profile

84%	shopped the grocery channel in the past 30 days (up vs. 78% 2020)
3.6	trips to this channel per month (of which 2.6 in person and 1.0 online)
47%	of grocery shoppers were highly satisfied with their last trip (rate it 9-10 on a 0-10 scale, index)

Demographics			Index
Gender	Men/Women	48%/52%	100/100
Age Cohort	Gen Z 18-25	10%	105
	Millennials 26-31	33%	105
	Gen X 42-57	29%	104
	Boomers 58-76	27%	89
Household	Average HHI	$93K	99
	Live in large city	35%	101
	Kids under 18	30%	109
P30D Shopping	Avg. # channels shopped in person / online / total	5.9 / 2.8 / 6.5	108/112/108
	Online shopper	67%	107

Top 5 channel uses (Reason for last trip)		Index
Big, regular stock-up many types of items	25%	138
Non-food items	15%	111
Couple of items I need right away	14%	98
Fill-in trip	12%	98
Food items in specific departments	12%	89

Mass includes: Target, Walmart, other mass merchandise store

Top 10 channel attributes (Top box – describes very well)		Index
Store/site is easy and quick to shop	44%	101
Large assort. of high-quality brands /products	39%	103
Offers good online order delivery/pickup options	39%	117
It has specific items/brands I need/like	38%	90
It has other services or features	37%	111
I enjoy shopping here	36%	91
It is the most convenient	36%	91
It has good customer service	33%	86
It has the lowest prices	31%	96
Tend to buy interesting things not looking for	30%	96

Top 10 product selection strengths (Top box – describes very well)		Index
Non-food items	54%	123
Shelf-stable products	43%	105
Store brand or private label products	42%	102
Frozen foods	40%	105
Dairy products/cheeses	39%	103
Products in stock	38%	99
All the items I need	37%	109
Beer, wine, or alcohol	34%	107
Fresh produce	33%	89
Fresh bakery products	32%	99

■ Among top 3 store attributes driving trip satisfaction for the channel
■ Among top 3 selection strengths driving trip satisfaction for the channel

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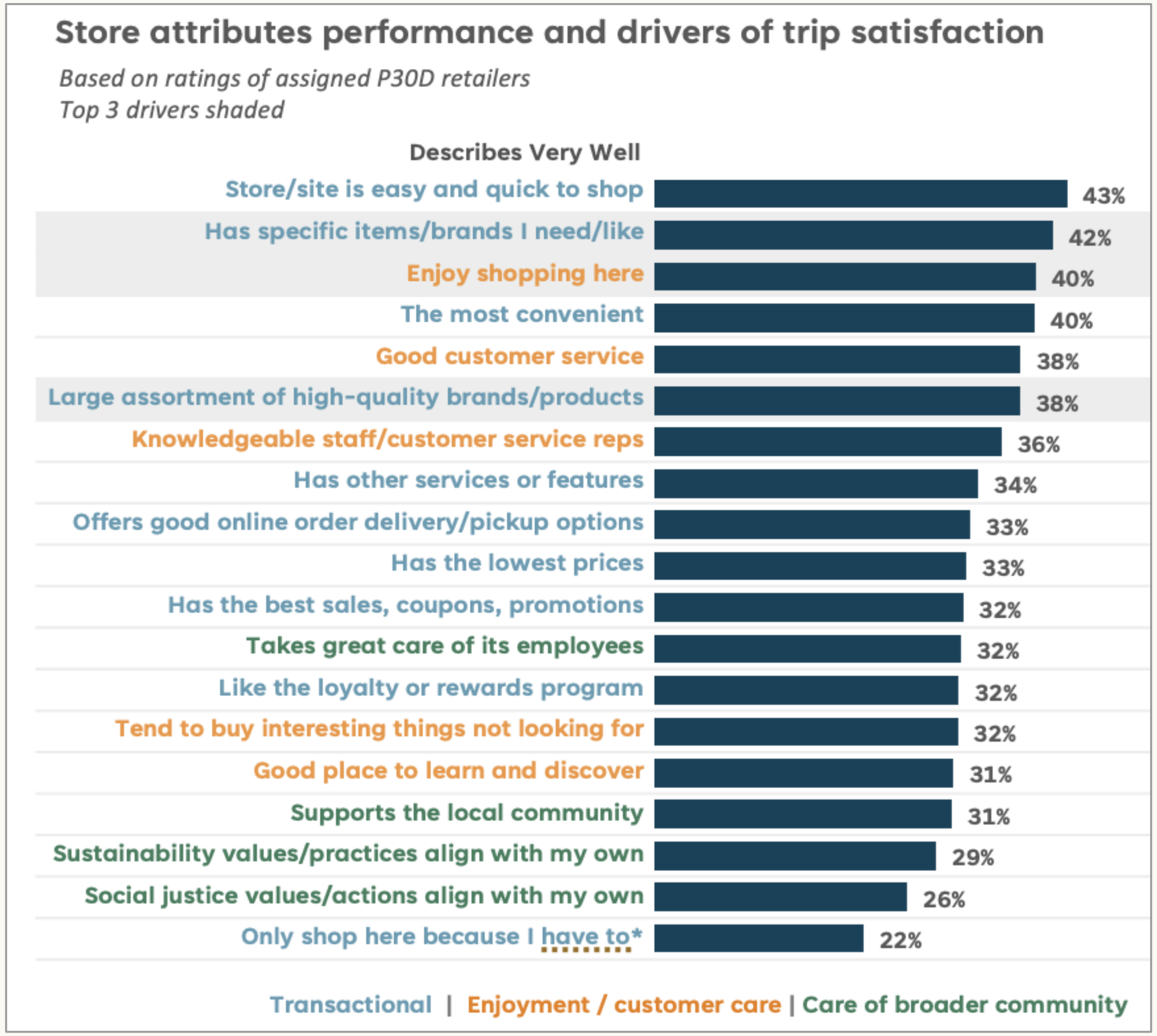
Green index ≥ 120, red <80 85

Channel and retailer-specific dashboards will be included in the final report.

The channel coverage will likely include **grocery, mass, club, drug, dollar, discount, natural/specialty and online**.

Retailers likely to be included are **Kroger, Albertsons, Ahold, Walmart, Target, Costco, Sam's Club, CVS, Walgreens/Rite Aid, Dollar General, Dollar Tree/Family Dollar, Aldi, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods Market and Amazon**.

Understand how and WHY consumers have spread their shopping across an array of retail and food service channels, and leverage a nuanced consumer segmentation to pinpoint your highest value shopper targets



The report will cover emerging topics such as:

- Has the shopper’s channel choice landed on a "new normal" in terms of the number of channels shopped and the needs driving the final store choice?
- Has the possibility of meeting all consumer needs in a single store finally evaporated? Do all channels need to specialize to remain competitive?
- In which channels might private brands be embraced as equivalent to national brands? Which consumers choose where to shop based on private brands?

A new, proprietary segmentation will be developed through this study to answer critical questions such as:

- Which shopper segments are most likely to shop certain channels? Which store attributes appeal to each?
- What sorts of in- and out-of-store communication tools resonate best with each shopper type?
- Do different shopper segments rotate their stores and sources for different reasons? What does that mean for winning their loyalty? For brand distribution?

Gain primary qualitative and quantitative insights with actionable guidance to inform your food sales strategy — without the financial or time investments of custom research

Robust integrated methodology

Quantitative Research: Nationally representative online survey of U.S. food shoppers aged 18-78, with a minimum total sample of n=2,000 and readable samples of demographic audiences such as age cohorts, race/ethnicity and income tiers. Where possible, data will be trended against similar questions fielded in 2022, 2020 and 2017.

Qualitative Research: Literature review of marketing, consumer publications and discourse on food sourcing; engagement with writings/podcasts by cultural informants; social listening on key consumer platforms; virtual interviews with shoppers of a variety of retail and food service channels.

Proprietary segmentation: This study will introduce a new food shopper segmentation based on both consumer attitudes and behaviors, which will enable and facilitate efficient consumer targeting and communications by food operators. All study data will be run by the segments, allowing study purchasers to interpret and take action on findings using their target segment as a guide.

Final report available June 30, 2025

Report Price: $12,500 (until March 31, 2025; $15,000 starting April 1, 2025)

An in-depth PowerPoint report will include an executive summary, implications and strategic recommendations, with a complete analysis of relevant data supported by robust charts and visuals.

A supplemental set of Excel data tables with a breakdown of key demographics will accompany the report.

Proprietary categories, questions and/or custom data cuts may be available. Requests are handled on a first-come, first-served basis. **Contact us for a quote and for feasibility by March 14, 2025**.

Turning insights into action: Activation Sessions

Please contact Melissa Abbott to learn more about how you can take your food sales strategy to the next level with the insights from the *Food Sourcing in America 2025* report: melissa@hartman-group.com.

Pre-order the *Food Sourcing in America 2025* report now

Report Price: $12,500 (until March 31, 2025; $15,000 starting April 1, 2025)

To purchase, please email: **melissa@hartman-group.com**

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Hartman GROUP

ABOUT HARTMAN GROUP
Our mission is to translate consumer behavior and food culture into strategic growth opportunities for our clients. Since 1989, Hartman Group's anthropologists, social scientists and business analysts have been immersed in the study of American food and beverage culture, using ethnographic observation, quantitative tracking surveys and deeply studying trends. What we have learned and continue to uncover allows us to upend many notions of our traditional American eating and drinking patterns, identifying unique opportunities and winning strategies for our clients.

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