



How Canadians Discover and Decide to Try Food and Beverage Products

National OMNIBUS Results

May 2026



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Methodology & Respondent Profile

Methodology



Methodology

Online survey among Canadian respondents 18 years of age or older (n=1,527).

Respondents were randomly recruited using LEO's online panel.



When

April 3 – 5, 2026



Significant Differences

Data in **red** indicate a significantly lower proportion than that of other participants. Conversely, data in **green** indicate a significantly higher proportion than that of other participants.



Weighting

Results were weighted by age, gender, and region to ensure the data is representative of the Canadian population, using the most recent census data from Statistics Canada.

Respondent Profile

All respondents (n= 1,527)

Gender

Male	49%
Female	51%

Age

18 to 34 years old	27%
35 to 54 years old	32%
55 + years old	41%

Area

Urban	43%
Suburban	37%
Rural	19%

Region

British Columbia	14%
Alberta	11%
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	6%
Ontario	39%
Quebec	23%
Atlantic	7%

Income

Less than \$60K	35%
\$60K to under \$100K	27%
\$100K or more	32%
Prefer not to answer	6%

Employment

Full time	42%
Part time	8%
Student	7%
Unemployed	7%
Self-employed / freelance	5%
Homemaker	4%
Retired	26%

Education

High School or less	29%
College	41%
University or more	31%

Ethnicity

White / Caucasian	79%
South Asian	5%
Black	4%
Indigenous	3%
Southeast Asian	3%
Chinese	3%
Latin American	2%

Other ethnicities mentioned <2%

Respondent Profile

All respondents (n= 1,527)

Born in Canada

Yes	81%
No	18%

Length in Canada

Less than 1 year	2%
1 year to 4 years	22%
5 years to 10 years	16%
11 years to 20 years	15%
21 years and more	44%

First Language

English	72%
French	20%
Other	8%

Children <18 in Household

Yes	27%
No	73%

Rent vs Own Main Residence

Own	65%
Rent	35%

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Key Insights



Canadians are exposed to food and beverage information from all directions, across media, platforms and everyday interactions. But **when it comes to actually trying something new**, the in-store environment still has the strongest influence.

1) In-store remains the most effective environment for driving trial

Nearly half of Canadians (47%) purchased a new-to-them food or beverage product in-store on impulse, compared with 30% online.

2) Practical incentives matter more than advertising

Sampling (46%), promotions (45%) and value for money (45%) are the strongest motivators for trying new products, while only 7% cite advertising as a key driver.

3) Visibility does not always translate into influence

Although Canadians encounter food and beverage information across many channels, only 43% say it influenced their purchasing decisions in the past three months.

4) Trust is strongest closest to the point of purchase

Family, friends and in-store promotions or sampling are considered the most reliable sources of information.

5) Discovery is increasingly fragmented across channels and generations

Younger Canadians are more influenced by social and digital platforms, while older consumers continue to rely more on traditional retail cues such as television, flyers and in-store signage.

6) Winning at the shelf remains critical

Brands that combine visibility, credibility and practical value at the moment of purchase are best positioned to convert consumer openness into actual trial.

In-store remains the moment that matters most

Taken together, the results point to a clear pattern.

Discovery is broad and fragmented, but trial is more concentrated. The closer a source is to the moment of purchase, and the more practical value it provides, the more likely it is to drive action.

- Canadians are not lacking information. They are selective about what earns their attention and what ultimately shapes their behaviour.
- No single channel dominates, and attention is spread across a wide range of touchpoints. Standing out takes more than reach. It takes relevance and credibility at the point of decision.
- In-store remains especially powerful because it connects awareness directly to action. It is one of the few environments where discovery and purchase happen side by side.

For retailers and manufacturers, building awareness across channels still matters, but winning at the shelf remains critical.

Products that are visible, well supported and easy to try in-store are best positioned to turn openness into actual trial. In crowded categories, the brands most likely to win are the ones that give shoppers a clear reason to say yes in the moment.

For brands, the next step is to move beyond the national average and identify where the opportunity is strongest for their category. That is where deeper analysis becomes especially useful, particularly when it comes to turning these findings into practical guidance for innovation, launch support and retail activation.



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Detailed Findings

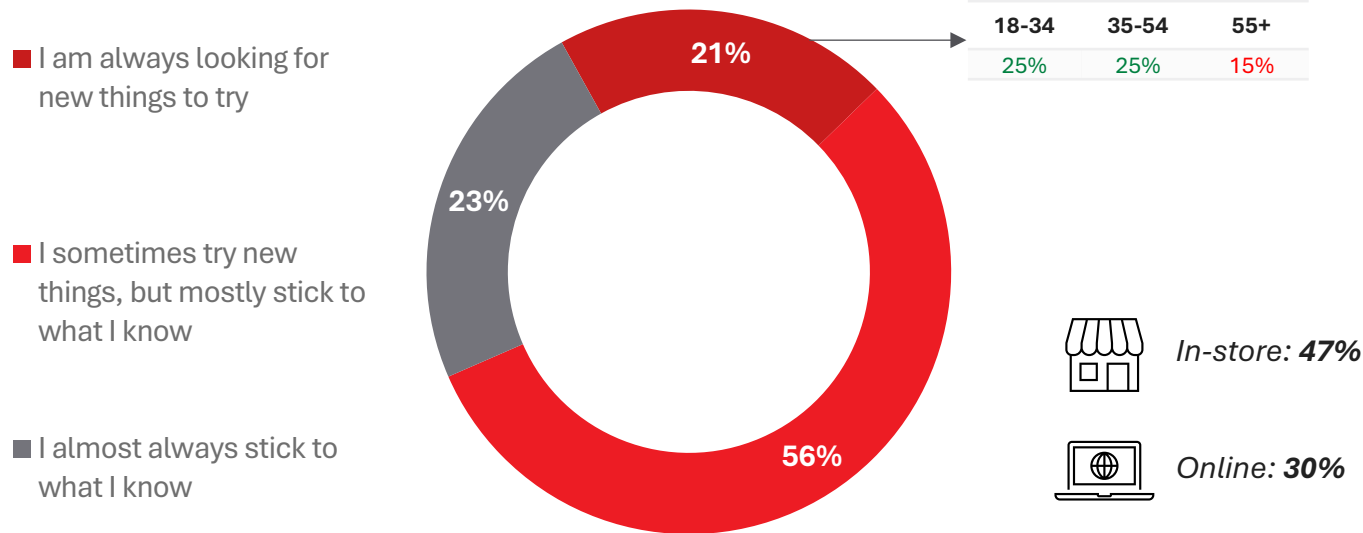


Shoppers are open to discovery, especially at the shelf

More than three-quarters of Canadians, 77%, say they are at least somewhat open to trying new food and beverage products, including 21% who actively seek out new options. That openness also shows up in real purchasing behaviour, especially in-store. Nearly half, 47%, say they bought a new-to-them product in-store in the past three months even though they had not planned to, compared with 30% who say the same happened online.

For retailers and manufacturers, that gap says a lot. Digital channels may continue to grow in reach, but the shelf remains one of the most effective places to convert interest into trial.

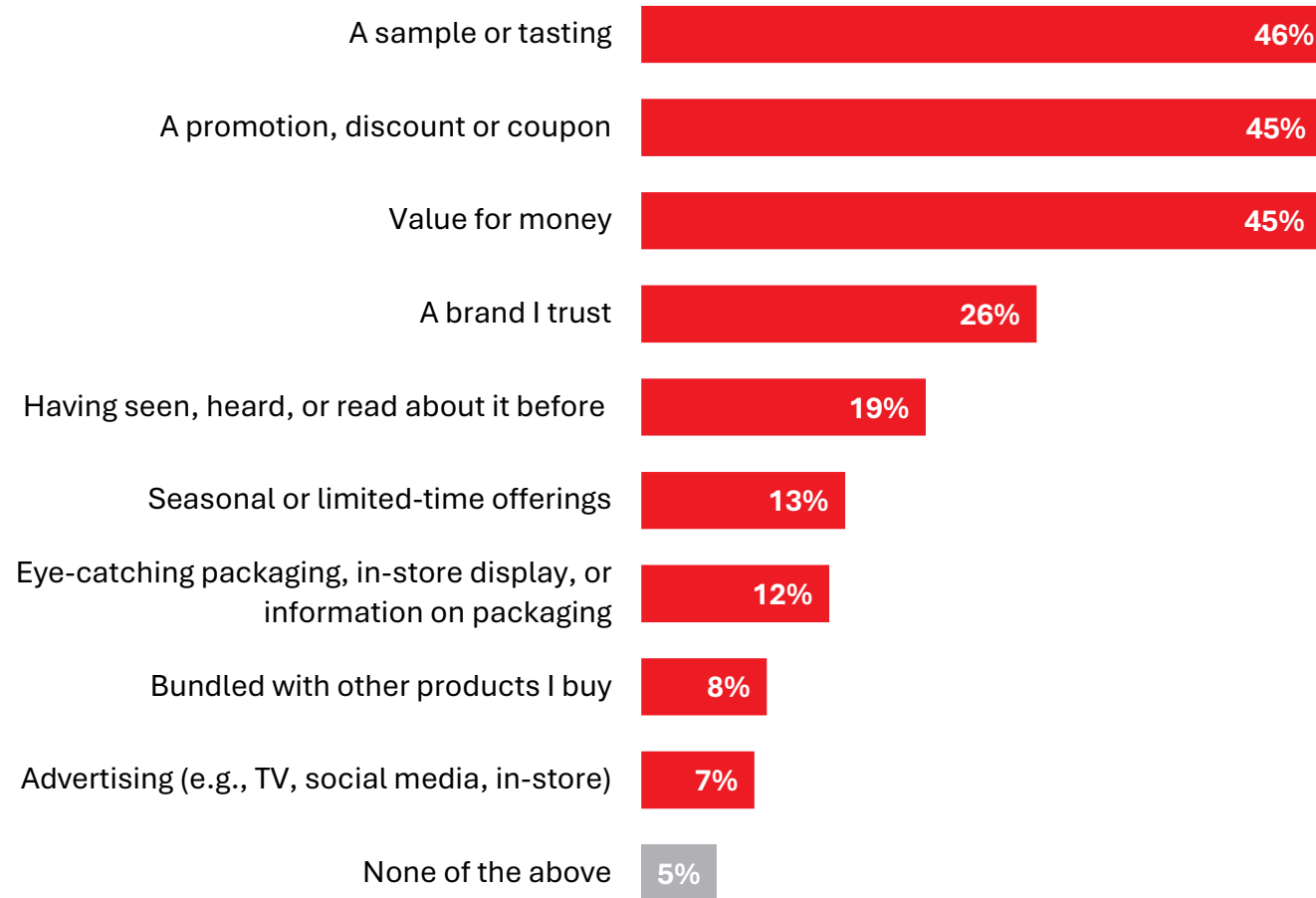
Openness to New Food & Beverages



Q8. In the past 3 months, have you come across a food or beverage product in-store that was new to you and decided to buy it, even though you hadn't planned to?
 Q9. And have you had a similar experience while shopping online – seeing a food or beverage product that was new to you and deciding to buy it even though you hadn't planned to?
 Q10. Overall, when it comes to food and beverages, which of the following best describes you?
 Base: All respondents (n=1,527)

Trial depends on practical reasons to say yes

Top triggers for trying a new product



Canadians are most likely to try something new when there is a practical reason to do so, whether that is a sample, a deal or clear value for money. The most commonly cited triggers are a sample or tasting (**46%**), a promotion such as a discount or coupon (**45%**), and value for money (**45%**).

Just **7%** cite advertising as one of the main factors that would encourage them to try a new product.

*For brands and retailers, that puts the emphasis squarely on execution in-store. **Sampling programs, promotional pricing and clear value communication are not secondary supports. They are central to driving trial.***



Q11. Which of the following would most encourage you to try a new product?
Base: All respondents (n=1,527) <5% not mentioned

Discovery happens across channels, but in-store still leads

The same pattern appears in how Canadians discover products

- The most common place they notice food and beverage information is in-store, with 32% pointing to products seen on shelves, displays or signage.
- From there, attention spreads across a range of channels, including Facebook (31%), television (30%), and word of mouth through family (29%) and friends or colleagues (28%).
- YouTube is mentioned by 27%, while in-store promotions or sampling are cited by 26%.

Generational differences also shape how these channels are used

- Among younger Canadians aged 18 to 34, social platforms play a bigger role in discovery, with Instagram reaching roughly three in ten (34%) and TikTok about one in five (21%).
- Older Canadians are more likely to rely on television (39%) and flyers (27%), both of which remain important sources of visibility.

Sources of food/beverage information



Q1. In the past 3 months, where, if at all, have you come across information about food and beverages that caught your attention?

Base: All respondents (n=1,527) <5% not mentioned

Being seen is not the same as shaping the decision

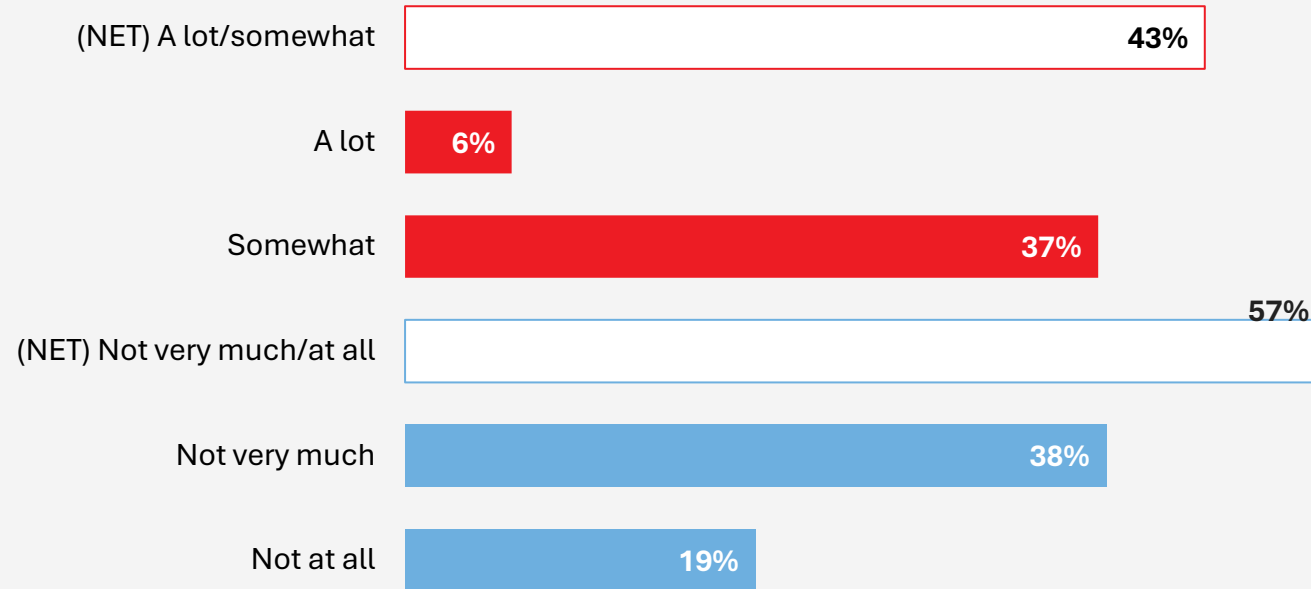
At the same time, visibility does not automatically translate into influence. Canadians may be encountering food and beverage content across many different sources, but only 43% agree that what they saw or heard influenced what they bought in the past three months. Just 6% say it had a strong influence, while a majority, 57%, say it had little or no impact.

That pattern also varies by age.

Younger Canadians are more likely to say that food and beverage information shaped their purchases, while older consumers are more likely to report little or no effect.

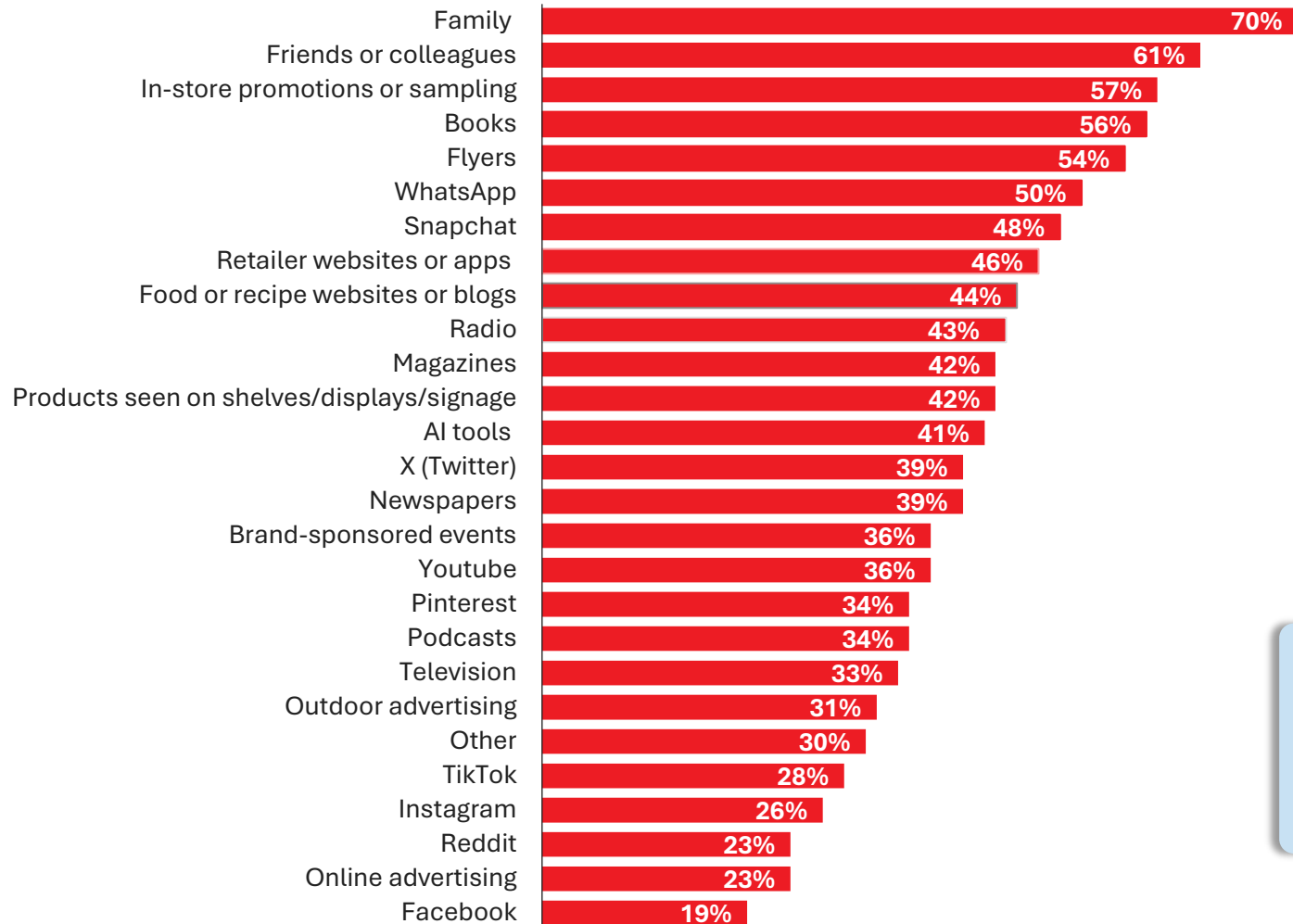


Influence of Food/Beverage Information on Purchase



Trust still sits closest to home and the point of purchase

Perceived Reliability by Source (Extremely/Very)



Reliability was measured among Canadians who said each source had caught their attention in the past three months.

Personal relationships came out strongest: 70% rate family as extremely or very reliable, and 61% say the same of friends or colleagues.

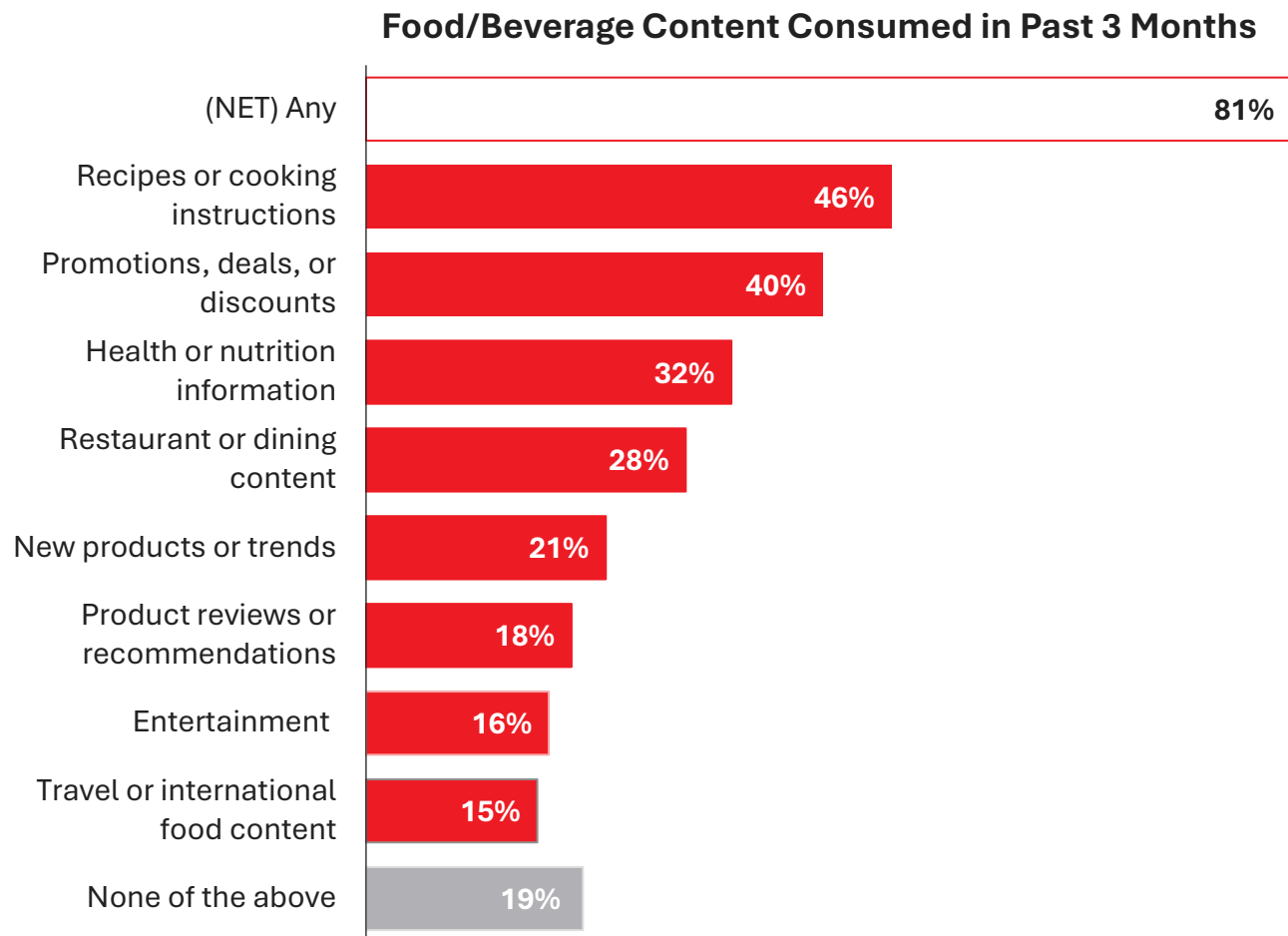
Practical shopping sources also perform well, including in-store promotions or sampling, flyers, retailer websites or apps, food or recipe websites or blogs, and products seen on shelves, displays or signage. Social platforms trail on trust.

Older Canadians are more likely to trust traditional and retail-driven sources such as flyers and in-store cues, while **younger Canadians** show greater openness to digital sources, even if those still rank behind interpersonal and retail touchpoints overall.

Q7. When deciding what food and beverages to buy, how reliable do you consider each of the following sources?

Base: Varies by source

When shoppers seek content, utility comes first



A large majority, 81%, engaged with some type of content in the past three months, most commonly recipes or cooking instructions, promotions or deals, and health or nutrition information.

Recipe content in particular skews female, with women more likely than men to seek out recipes or cooking instructions.



More exploratory content, such as new products or trends and reviews or recommendations appeals to a smaller audience overall.

This suggests product discovery often happens through practical content such as recipes and nutrition information, rather than through trend-driven content alone.



Creator-led content remains a more niche part of the landscape. Just 27% of Canadians say they regularly follow food and beverage creators, accounts or channels.

Among that group, Instagram and YouTube lead, followed by Facebook and TikTok.

Q2. In the past 3 months, what types of food and beverage content have you looked at, watched, listened to, or read?

Q4. Are there any people, creators, accounts, or channels you regularly follow for food and beverage content?

Q5. On which platforms do you follow them?

Base: All respondents (n=1,527)

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