



# 5 Ways COVID-19 Has Impacted MENA's Food Habits

June 2020





## **Introduction:** **Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on Food & Health Across MENA**

While COVID-19 has impacted people's lives in many ways, the pandemic has had a particularly profound impact on the food and beverage industry. With people spending more time at home and dining out becoming less accessible, there is a clear shift in people's attitudes and behaviors with regards to food and health. There have been clear changes in the way consumers are eating, shopping and interacting around food, some of which are expected to be permanent changes.

To understand this impact on consumer habits, Ipsos launched the **C19 Impact Series: Food & Health Edition**, speaking to 5,000 consumers via online surveys and running 22 online focus groups across 6 markets in the region, namely, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, KSA and UAE.

This report presents some of the key findings from that study, highlighting 5 key consumer trends that are currently shaping food and health habits across MENA.

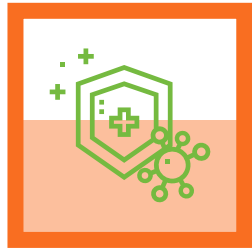
# Eating **Consciously**

COVID-19 has forced people to re-evaluate their overall health habits, and as a result, many have become markedly more conscious about their eating habits in specific. Across the region people are eating healthier, including more fresh fruits and vegetables in their diets to boost their immunity, and having more balanced meals. And while indulgences remain, people are taking advantage of their time at home to prepare wholesome and nutritious foods.



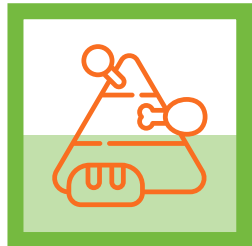
**54%**

are eating healthier



**52%**

are eating more immunity boosting foods



**45%**

are eating more balanced meals



# Unleashing Culinary Capabilities

One of the most striking effects of Covid-19 on the MENA family's kitchen is how much more time they're spending in it. Many more consumers across the region are personally preparing their own meals and getting creative; trying new recipes and looking for instruction and inspiration from online and TV chefs. Trying and incorporating new foods within their own dishes, people across the region are honing in on their culinary skills.



**81%**

are trying new recipes



**57%**

are personally preparing their own meals

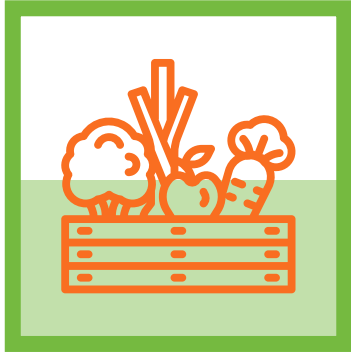


**49%**

watched food & cooking channels

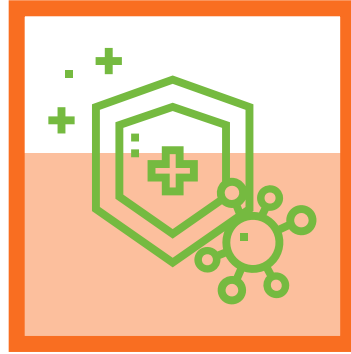
# Exploring Unfamiliar Territory

The perceived limited access to specific products and brands during lockdowns across the region has aroused a curiosity towards exploring new types of foods, as well as an openness to trying different brands; whether it be from necessity or creativity. While some people have been forced into their new purchases, having not found them in store, many have picked up new items as a result of new cooking and eating habits, and have found happy alternatives in these choices.



**48%**

tried new types or brands of food & beverages during the pandemic



**56%**

will continue using new food types or brands moving forward



# Shopping Closer To Home

Expectedly, online grocery shopping has increased across markets, due to respective lock-downs and a general hesitation to visit large and often busy hypermarkets. Many people across MENA continued to shop from their usual locations but through their online platforms, mobile applications and even through WhatsApp delivery. However, the biggest winner during this period is the neighborhood store, offering convenience and proximity when other channels were out of reach or needed a longer time to deliver. Neighborhood stores also gave consumers the ability to experience something more closely resembling their usual shopping habits.

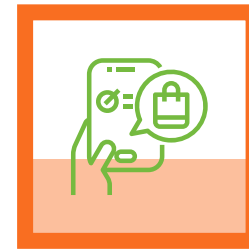


*% shopping more often per channel:*



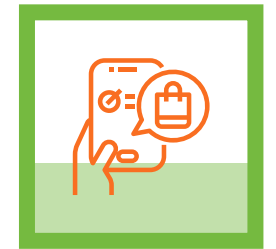
**39%**

Neighborhood  
Stores



**33%**

Online



**31%**

Hypermarkets &  
Supermarkets

# Uneager To Eat Out Again

Fears of contracting COVID-19 have kept the majority of people across the region away from enjoying their usual meals out. Prioritizing their health, people are also limiting the amount that they order in from restaurants for fear of inviting unnecessary exposure into their homes. Instead, they've found ways to replicate dishes from their favorite eateries at home, and the majority are wary of dining out once lockdowns are lifted.



**79%**

Are eating less often at restaurants



**76%**

Are replacing restaurant food with home recipes



**53%**

Are still not keen on dining at restaurants again



# Ask Us About Our **C19 Impact Series**



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**Food & Health**

Ipsos in MENA has been keeping track of the impact that Covid-19 is having on people's lifestyles, habits, and attitudes.

As part of our syndicated **C19 Impact Series**, we have launched a number of studies dedicated to understanding the pandemic's impact on different industries, covering key markets in the MENA region.

Get in touch for more information on our research, and visit our dedicated C19 Impact Series web page [here](#).



# Game Changers

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions. We deliver with security, simplicity, speed and substance. We are Game Changers

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