

## The Prepared-Food Picture

Exclusive research finds purchase incidence at c-stores is up significantly from last year

Over the last decade, and even more so in recent years, convenience store retailers have put significant time, effort and investment into developing high-quality fresh food offerings that meet the needs of today's time-starved consumers. According to the *2024 Convenience Store News Realities of the Aisle Study*, which surveyed 1,500-plus consumers who shop a c-store at least once a month, these efforts are paying off. The research revealed:



# 69%

of the surveyed shoppers said they bought prepared food at a convenience store at least once in the past month — **an impressive jump of 14 points from a year ago.**

Made-to-order prepared food purchases surpass grab-and-go purchases, with **39% of shoppers indicating they chose the made-to-order route vs. 30% for grab-and-go.**

**The remaining 31% said they purchased a combination of both.**



**Pizza is now the No. 1 prepared food** consumers say they regularly purchase at c-stores.

Rounding out the **top five are a hot dog, breakfast sandwich (last year's No. 1), deli/sandwich and hot snacks, such as French fries** (up from No. 8 a year ago).



Upon checking out, **six in 10 prepared food buyers said they consumed their purchases away from home, while four in 10 said they brought their items home and ate there.** The top spot for away-from-home consumption is in the car (42%).

# 90%

of prepared food buyers said they purchased another food or drink item as an accompaniment.

The top five pairings are:

1. Fountain drink (**37%**)
2. Bottled/canned soda (**33%**)
3. Bottled water (**30%**)
4. Coffee, tea or another hot beverage (**29%**)
5. Packaged salty snack (**25%**)

**Generation Z favors bottled water** — 51% purchased this alongside their prepared food — while **millennials are the most likely to grab a salty snack** — 33% made this selection.

