

# CONSUMER INSIGHTS

disease or gluten intolerance) are cited as reasons. Although price is a strong deterrent for some, a number of consumers say they would be interested in trying gluten-free items if the price were more wallet-friendly. Additionally, one-fifth of this group also say they do not purchase these items because there are no “proven benefits of not eating these foods” and “it’s just another diet fad.”

## GLUTEN-FREE IS A LIFESTYLE

The data highlight consumer attitudes about living a gluten-free lifestyle, incorporating BuzzBack’s propriety eCollage, an online technique in which participants use an assemblage of images as catalysts to reveal non-verbal thoughts and emotions.

In this survey, top imagery focuses on health and wellness; a gluten-free lifestyle is perceived as healthier, without wheat or bread and including more fruits and vegetables, and one that helps them lose weight. Some images also reflect confusion (mostly about what gluten is), as well as concerns about price, which is in line with earlier findings.

## ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE DIET

It is not a surprise that the movement toward gluten-free eating centers on achieving a healthier lifestyle and consequent weight loss because eliminating gluten is equivalent to lower carbohydrate intake. This trend aligns with the recent rise of superfoods such as kale, quinoa and chia seeds, as well as the “clean eating” movement and the Paleo diet. While these and other trends have both spiked and declined, gluten-free’s dominance and sustainability as a health trend is incontestable.

Its durability can likely be ascribed to consumers’ insatiable desire to be healthier and the marketability of gluten-free. With only 10 percent of consumers saying they purchase gluten-free products because they or someone in their household has celiac disease or gluten sensitivity and 85 percent reporting that eating gluten-free is for everyone, consumer perceptions surrounding this diet indicate a solid foundation for tapping into this market.

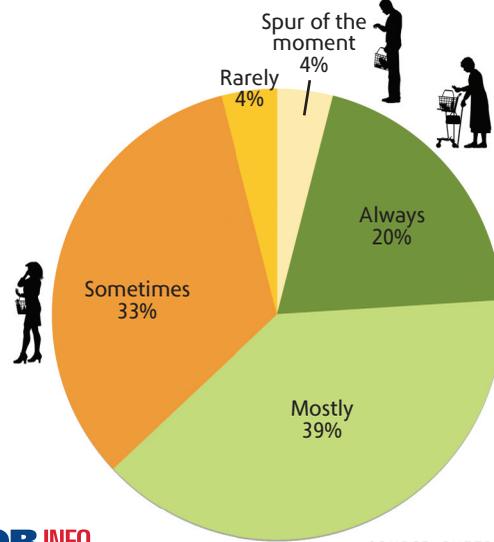
Further, unlike the Paleo diet, which restricts certain food groups, a gluten-free diet requires only removal of the protein composite. Today this regimen is much more feasible, allowing for a diet that encompasses all of the consumer’s favorite snacks, sans gluten.

With shoppers now buying gluten-free cookies, crackers, seasoned snacks and even cakes and pies — foods normally excluded in the typical diet — 25 to 30 percent also report having bought gluten-free french fries and candy in the past. However, despite the comparative leniency of this diet, critics argue

going gluten-free also can be unhealthy because foods lacking certain ingredients that contribute to flavor make up for their absence with sugar — a problem common in low-fat diets.

If consumers of gluten-free items are mostly buying them to be healthier overall, then perhaps this is a sector manufacturers should continue to pursue. For those who have yet to join the party, it appears going against the grain is a food trend that’s here to stay. **CST**

## WHEN DO YOU BUY GLUTEN-FREE?



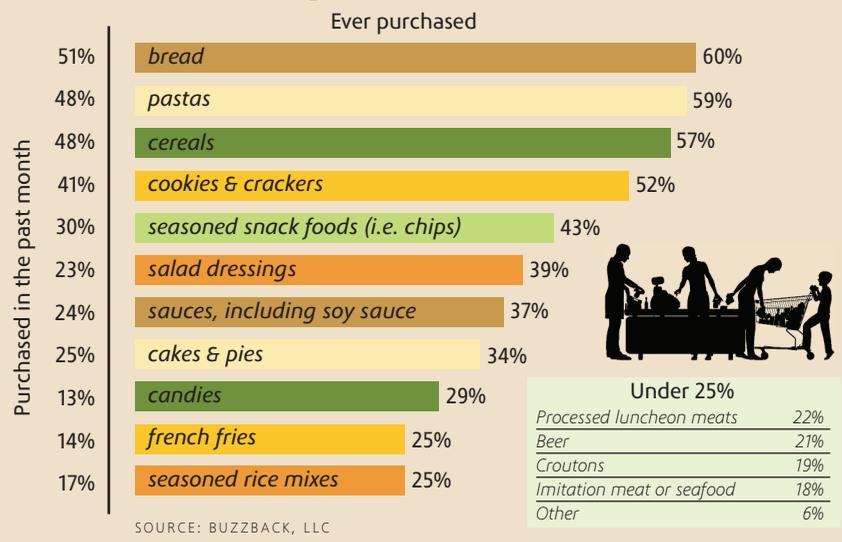
SOURCE: BUZZBACK, LLC

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## PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF GLUTEN-FREE ITEMS



SOURCE: BUZZBACK, LLC