

# The Grocer

## Focus On World Cuisine

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The pandemic deprived many of the opportunity to experience world cuisines, whether popping to a local restaurant or heading abroad. The past year has therefore seen an explosion of premium ready meals to mimic the occasion. Ambient cooking sauces, by contrast, have seen flat volumes. So as lockdown recedes from memory, how will Brits enjoy world cuisine? Can the growth of pricey ready meals continue, especially as budgets tighten? And if not, what will take their place?

**Diverse tastes:** Italian continues to dominate ready meals, accounting for a third of the category. With Indian and Chinese meals growing, and other foreign cuisines notching up decent growth, are people still compensating for lack of travel options by getting a meal in from the supermarket? And is the decline in English meals a sign of the same trend?

**Home working:** Despite the government's best efforts, hybrid working appears to be the latest new normal. More time at home translated to more time spent cooking early in the pandemic, and there are signs that those working at home are indulging in a wider range of ambient sauces for scratch cooking, despite the category's general drop. People also seem to have taken up convenient world cuisine again, perhaps due to their lives getting busier or a desire to treat themselves at lunchtime. As new habits continue to entrench themselves, where is the category likely to go next?

**Own label vs branded:** Own label remains dominant in ready meals, with branded only making up a tenth of the category. Even so, branded growth has been an impressive 26.8%, compared to own label's sluggish 2.6%. A price increase in branded, partly explained by a rise in the market share of premium branded ready meals, has not deterred consumers. Meanwhile in ambient sauces both branded and own branded have seen declines. How will the balance shift in world cuisine in the future?

**Health and sustainability:** Health and sustainability are expected to make a return after the pandemic, with potential impacts on world cuisine. The introduction of HFSS regulations will affect which items can be sold on the end of the gondola, with manufacturers having to balance health and taste. Recent CO2 shortages will also challenge suppliers on keeping food fresh. How will the industry balance these concerns?

**Ready meal data:** Using Kantar data we sum up how world cuisine ready meals have performed in the past year.

**Ambient sauce data:** Using Kantar data we sum up how the ambient sauces category has performed in the past year.

**4 x innovations:** We will profile four new products or ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before. For this we require a high-res product image, launch date, rsp and full product details.