

The Grocer

Focus On: Food to Go by Ash O'Mahony (Ashleigh.OMahony@wrbm.com)

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The Story

On the face of it, there is little to complain about in food to go. Sales are up a whopping £721.3m this year, with the vast majority of sectors in growth. Still, this is Britain, and there is always something to complain about. Growth in the category is actually slowing, with volumes slipping into decline. That makes average price increases the sole driver of growth. And as consumer confidence continues to decline, those price hikes are proving an increasingly strong deterrent. Step in budget meal deals that aim to give the supermarkets a run for their money. The likes of B&M and Poundland have unveiled deals costing as little as £1.75, over 42% less than the standard £3 price point. So, will these bargain meal deals tempt shoppers? Just how much of a threat do they pose to the supermarkets? And how can the food-to-go stalwarts tempt an increasingly thrifty nation?

Key themes:

Lunch on a budget: How are the likes of B&M and Poundland's meal deals performing in their first few months on shelf? Who are these ranges successfully targeting, and are they swiping shoppers from the mults?

Retail strategy: How has the rise in penny-pinching shoppers affected retailer food to go ranges? Which parts of the fixture have seen the most change, and how are the mults tempting customers into the fixture?

Posh nosh: Last year's star performer is this year's fastest faller. Sushi, the most expensive food-to-go option per pack according to Kantar, has lost a massive chunk of its value this year as shoppers trade down into cheaper options. Where else in the category has a higher price tag affected sales, and how can shoppers be persuaded to trade up on their food-to-go purchases?

Macro trends: Just how important is price becoming for shoppers? How does cost compare to wider influences such as health, convenience and plant-based?

Weather: It's not just tighter purse strings impacting food to go sales this year. The summer heatwave in 2018 drove Brits out of the home and into the food to go fixture, and sales soared as a result. This year, the comparably cooler weather has had the reverse effect, with many consumers opting for food at home rather than out and about. Just how dependent is food to go on the weather, and how did retailers combat the effect of a cooler summer this year?

Kantar data: Using Kantar data, we explain the factors affecting the different areas of the food-to-go market from snacks to quick meals and drinks.

Kantar retail data: Using Kantar commentary, we explain how the retailers have performed in the food-to-go market.

Harris Interactive: What is influencing shoppers in their food-to-go choices?

4 x innovations: We identify four new products or product ranges that have not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date, RSP and a picture of each.