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Ready-to-Eat Food - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2025 - 2030)

Market Report | 2025-08-01 | 150 pages | Mordor Intelligence

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Report description:

Ready-to-Eat Food Market Analysis

The ready-to-eat food market size stood at USD 398.25 billion in 2025 and is on course to expand at a 6.2% CAGR, reaching USD 538 billion by 2030. This expansion reflects the sector's ability to align convenience with changing dietary trends. Urbanization, smaller household sizes, and the increase in dual-income families are fueling demand for shelf-stable or quickly heated meals, which significantly reduce preparation time. The Asia-Pacific region, with its strong manufacturing capabilities, ensures cost-efficient production. Simultaneously, advancements in packaging technology are improving shelf life without compromising flavor. However, stricter regulatory focus on ultra-processed foods is encouraging major brands to reformulate their products. These brands are also investing in quality systems, which inadvertently create higher entry barriers for smaller competitors. Although digital grocery platforms currently hold a smaller market share compared to traditional supermarkets, they are experiencing strong growth. This growth is driven by efficient fulfillment networks, AI-powered inventory management, and targeted promotions, making repeat purchases more convenient for consumers.

Global Ready-to-Eat Food Market Trends and Insights

Rising number of single-person households and dual-income families

As household sizes decrease, food consumption patterns are shifting, driving a steady demand for convenient, portion-controlled meal options. Single-person households increasingly prefer ready-to-eat meals and frozen instant foods that require minimal preparation. They often choose smaller portions or compact packaging designed for individual consumption, boosting the growth of the ready-to-eat (RTE) foods market. Families with working wives display distinct spending behaviors: higher-earning dual-income households tend to dine out, while moderate-income families favor convenience foods for home meals. In 2024, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 49.6% of married couples in the U.S. had both spouses employed, a figure similar to the previous year. Additionally, 23.4% of these couples had only one spouse working. USDA research highlights that affluent households with limited time are more likely to purchase convenience foods, balancing time savings with higher costs. This trend is especially evident in urban areas, where longer commutes and demanding careers exacerbate time constraints, leading to a permanent shift in food purchasing behaviors rather than temporary lifestyle changes.

Rising penetration of E-grocery and Q-commerce fulfilment

Innovations in cold-chain logistics and last-mile delivery are making ready-to-eat (RTE) foods more accessible than ever. Online platforms now showcase a diverse range of RTE products, from niche and premium selections to regional and international delicacies, many of which are absent from brick-and-mortar stores. This not only broadens consumer choices but also draws in a wider audience. E-grocery platforms frequently provide subscription or scheduled delivery for RTE meals, ensuring consistent consumer demand and added convenience. Quick commerce platforms are rooted in metropolitan areas, with giants like Walmart, Amazon, and Costco dominating the U.S. landscape. By integrating AI-driven demand forecasting with automated fulfillment centers, businesses are boosting inventory turnover for perishable RTE products, cutting down on waste, and enhancing availability. The surge in smartphone usage and internet access is propelling e-grocery growth in emerging markets, especially in countries like India, leading to a heightened demand for online RTE foods. In 2024, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reported that 5.5 billion people were using the internet.

Growing ultra-processed-food regulation momentum

Health authorities worldwide are tightening regulations on ultra-processed foods, citing links to chronic diseases. In a bid to boost consumer transparency and combat diet-related health issues, the FDA, USDA, and HHS are working together to define ultra-processed foods more clearly. Starting January 1, 2027, Texas will require warning labels on products with 44 specific additives. Meanwhile, Louisiana has taken a step further, banning 15 ingredients in school meals and requiring QR codes on certain additive-containing products, with the rules kicking in on January 1, 2028. The President's Make America Healthy Again Commission is zeroing in on childhood health, echoing concerns from studies that consistently tie ultra-processed foods to obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. While major brands with research and developments capabilities can easily adjust their formulations, smaller companies might find themselves forced to abandon categories due to the high compliance costs.

Other drivers and restraints analyzed in the detailed report include:

Growth in food processing industry / Advancements in packaging technology / Health and nutritional transparency issues /

For complete list of drivers and restraints, kindly check the Table Of Contents.

Segment Analysis

Baked goods contributed 34.85% of the ready-to-eat food market share in 2024, buoyed by long ambient shelf life and the universal appeal of breads, buns and pastries. Investments in modified-atmosphere packaging sustain freshness across transcontinental shipping lanes, allowing Asian bakery giants to secure shelf idle times below eight days in U.S. specialty stores. The ready-to-eat food market size for baked goods is projected to climb steadily as sourdough, focaccia chips and protein-enriched banana breads penetrate breakfast and snack occasions.

Instant soups and snacks, forecast to record a 6.85% CAGR through 2030, satisfy rising office lunch demand where microwave access is limited. Innovations highlight freeze-dried barley, air-fried croutons, and collagen-infused broth bases, focusing on joint-health benefits. Ready meals continue to attract consumers by offering a rotating variety of global cuisines, such as Korean bibimbap, Nigerian jollof, and Peruvian lomo saltado, in portion-controlled bowls. Meat-centric SKUs utilize sous-vide cooking methods and recyclable, plastic-free trays to minimize resource usage. The combination of tradition, premium flavors, and functional ingredients sustains high category turnover, encouraging ongoing recipe development.

The Ready-To-Eat Food Market Report is Segmented by Product Type (Instant Breakfast/Cereals, Instant Soups and Snacks, Ready Meals, Baked Goods, and More), Category (Conventional, Organic/Clean Label), Distribution Channel (Supermarkets/Hypermarkets, Convenience Stores, and More), and Geography (North America, South America, Europe, and More). The Market Forecasts are Provided in Terms of Value (USD) and Volume (Tons).

Geography Analysis

In 2024, the Asia-Pacific region leads with a 41.82% market share, driven by rapid urbanization, increasing disposable incomes, and a shift toward smaller households that prefer convenient meal options. The region's well-established manufacturing infrastructure and supply chain networks support cost-efficient production and distribution. In China, consumers are showing a growing preference for healthier choices, as reflected in higher spending on fresh produce. This trend coincides with a decline in discretionary food delivery spending, presenting refined market segmentation opportunities. India demonstrates strong spending patterns across both essential and discretionary categories, indicating a stable economic environment and rising middle-class consumption. In Japan and South Korea, omnichannel shopping is gaining traction, with consumers increasingly opting for online platforms due to their convenience and product variety. The food processing industry in the region is expanding, supported by AI and automation technologies that enhance production efficiency and reduce costs, enabling greater market penetration for ready-to-eat products.

The Middle East and Africa are experiencing the fastest growth, with a 7.24% CAGR projected through 2030. This growth is driven by demographic changes and urbanization, which sustain demand for convenient food solutions. Middle Eastern consumers purchase prepared foods and order takeaways at rates significantly higher than global averages, while also expressing concerns about the health implications of ultra-processed foods. In Africa, urbanization and a growing population are fueling demand for prepared cereals, creating substantial market opportunities. Additionally, the MENA grocery sector is rebounding strongly in modern trade, supported by rising disposable incomes and shifting dietary preferences.

North America, South America, and Europe are mature markets characterized by established consumption patterns and regulatory frameworks that influence product innovation and marketing strategies. These regions are facing increased regulatory scrutiny regarding ultra-processed foods. They benefit from advanced cold-chain logistics and sophisticated retail infrastructure, which enable premium product positioning and efficient distribution. Innovation efforts focus on health-oriented formulations, sustainable packaging, and flavor diversification to meet evolving consumer preferences while adhering to strict regulatory standards.

List of Companies Covered in this Report:

Market Overview / Market Drivers / Market Restraints / Value Chain Analysis / Regulatory Landscape / Technological Outlook / Porter's Five Forces / Market Concentration / Strategic Moves / Market Share Analysis / Nestle S.A. / Conagra Brands Inc. / General Mills Inc. / The Kraft Heinz Company / Tyson Foods Inc. / Nomad Foods Ltd. / McCain Foods Limited / Campbell Soup Company / Premier Foods plc / Dr. Oetker KG / Amy's Kitchen Inc. / Kellogg Company / ITC Ltd. / MTR Foods Pvt Ltd. / Gits Food Products Pvt Ltd. / Hormel Foods Corp. / Ajinomoto Co. Inc. / JBS S.A. (Seara RTE) / CJ CheilJedang (Bibigo) / Ready Pac Foods Inc. /

Additional Benefits:

 The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format /
 3 months of analyst support /

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