

# The Latest Study From Better Homes and Gardens Reveals Trends About How America Cooks, Eats and Shops

**Findings show that women... are more inclined to eat at home nowadays.**

**...consider chocolate cake to be the ultimate indulgence!**

**...are serving more healthy foods than they did two years ago.**

NEW YORK, Jan. 31, 2011 [PRNewswire](#) -- *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine today announced the release of its 2010 Food Factor survey, conducted among more than 3,600 women across the U.S.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20090810/CG58830LOGO>)

Results provide a current profile of America's food shopping, cooking and serving habits, enabling *Better Homes and Gardens* to trend findings from the last Food Factor study, released in 2008.

**The *Better Homes and Gardens* Food Factor 2010: How America Cooks, Eats and Shops** identifies 10 key trends relating to American women's decision-making process when it comes to topics such as eating at home, entertaining, food safety and organic food shopping.

"It's always interesting to dip into the minds of American women to gauge their feelings towards cooking and eating," says Gayle Butler, Editor-in-Chief of *Better Homes and Gardens*. "With each survey, we're always surprised to see what trends emerge and evolve. Compared to two years ago, women are still focused on healthy eating, with a rising tendency for home-served meals to cut back on spending and concentrate on health."

## KEY FINDINGS

\*\* Please credit all data to ***Better Homes and Gardens* "Food Factor 2010" survey**\*\*

### ***Make it new; keep it fresh....***

- Consistent with 2008, women use an average of 2.1 new recipes each month and a total of 7 new and old recipes.
- More than 4 out of 5 women are still preparing side dishes (82%) and main meals (81%) from scratch. Nearly two-thirds (62%) make baked goods from scratch.
- Budget-conscious women are preparing meals at home regularly (86%) and using a variety of spices to add flavor to their family's favorites (77%).
- Women 18-34 and women 35-49 are more interested in trying foods they've never eaten before than women 50+ (86% and 80% vs. 54%).

### ***Recipes? Don't sweat the cooking (small) stuff.***

- Women are using convenience products and time-saving techniques to get meals on the table:
  - 76% use the microwave at least once weekly

- Nearly six in ten (57%) prepare meals ahead of time at least once a month
- Convenience produce (prepared salads, chopped fruits and vegetables, etc.) continues to make the lives of women easier with nearly three-quarters (71%) purchasing convenience produce and eight-in-ten (81%) purchasing convenient forms of fresh poultry and meats regularly.
- On average, U.S. women purchase 3.4 prepared food items in a typical shopping trip, down slightly from 3.7 in 2008.
- Moms are more likely than non-moms to use pre-cooked meat or poultry (34% vs. 26%) and pre-cut, ready-to-cook strips or cubes of meat/poultry (32% vs. 21%).

***You bet, entertaining is important... I choose quality over quantity.***

- Nearly six in ten women (59%) entertain at home at least once a month or more. On average, they host 7.5 people at holiday gatherings and 6.1 on non-holidays.
- Women enjoy hosting a variety of holiday gatherings in their home: 37% host formal sit-down meals, 37% host casual sit-down meals and 27% host buffet meals.
- Nearly 6 in 10 women prefer a more relaxed non-holiday gathering and host casual sit-down meals (59%). Other gatherings they find appealing: unplanned gatherings, outdoor barbecues, watching sports/movies, picnics, potlucks and buffet meals.
- On average, women are entertaining friends and family in their home almost two times (1.9) a month.
- Women 18-34 are six times more likely to have increased their home entertaining in the past two years than women 35-49 (28% vs. 5%) and ten times more likely than women 50+ (28% vs. 3%).
- The two largest challenges women face when entertaining at home are a clean house (48%) and budget constraints (44%).
- Women's self esteem is linked with cooking, saying they "like to impress people" with their cooking (63% of moms vs. 49% of non-moms).

***Home Sweet Home.***

- Two-thirds (66%) of women say they are eating at home more than two years ago. Women are still cost conscious and want to cut back on spending overall (81%).
- To eat at home more often, women use a variety of time-saving strategies and convenience foods. The majority (59%) cite eating leftovers more often and half (50%) are using quick and easy recipes.
- **71% of women would rather eat every meal at home!**

***Game over... Eating right wins.***

- **Women consider chocolate cake the ultimate indulgence. Close behind are ice cream, pizza, truffles, caviar and French fries.**
- **The biggest challenges to healthy eating include drinking enough water, too much junk food, overeating/portion size, budget and emotional eating.**
- Compared to two years ago, women are still focused on healthy eating:
  - 44% are eating more fresh fruits
  - 36% more vegetables
  - Health benefits remain the primary reason for fresh produce consumption for 91% of U.S. women
- Moms are eating more produce overall and are eating significantly more fresh fruits (54% vs. 41% of non-moms) and canned vegetables (30% vs. 11%).

***Shop Time. Save me pennies. Make it right.***

- The majority of women (52%) are still very concerned about the cost of food today and employ a wide variety of strategies to combat rising food prices. Most commonly, they eat out less often

- (64%), stock up on bargains (62%), use a shopping list (61%) and use cents-off coupons (60%).
- Virtually all women (95%) use manufacturers' coupons when they shop and on average they save almost \$28 a month using them.
- Coupon usage is far more prevalent among older U.S. consumers. 40% of women 35-49 and 51% of women 50+ use coupons every time they shop, compared to 17% of women 18-34.
- The vast majority of U.S. women (89%) have purchased store brand/private label products in the past two years. The cost/value of store/private label products remains the dominant factor driving increased private label purchases (90%).
- Even once the economy bounces back, more than three-quarters (77%) of U.S. women expect to buy a combination of brand name and store brand/private label food products.
- Women under 50 spend the most each week on groceries: women 18-34 spend an average of \$104 and women 35-49 spend \$105.
- Moms far outspend the national average, with weekly expenditures of \$123 compared to non-moms, who spend \$84 per week.

### ***Close to home.***

- Health (73%) and safety (66%) considerations are the primary reasons U.S. women buy organic food.
- Women are willing to pay a 27% premium for an organic product. The majority (52%) are willing to pay \$3.50 for an organic version of a food normally priced at \$3.00. Women are also willing to pay a 26% premium for locally grown foods.
- Women 50+ are especially driven by the socio-political benefits of eating organics: 74% buy organics in support of animal rights (vs. 39% of women 18-34 and 26% of women 35-49) and 63% do so because of the environmental impact (63% vs. 39% and 53%, respectively).
- **The main reasons for eating locally grown/produced foods include: freshness, taste, support of local/small businesses and knowing where the food came from.**
- **Since 2008, the percentage of U.S. women who regularly buy local foods decreased 10 percentage points (51% vs. 61%).**

### ***The importance of food safety.***

- **32% of U.S. women have used a food way past its sell by date.**
- Two-thirds of women (65%) are only somewhat confident that the food they buy is safe to eat. Food safety confidence appears to decrease with age: 36% of women 18-34 are very confident vs. 21% of women 35-49 and 22% of women 50+.
- Foods causing the most concern include fish/seafood, meats and poultry. Women are taking the same top precautions as they did in 2008 to stay safe: 85% check expiration dates on food for freshness, 80% check foods for unusual colors/discoloration and 80% wash foods thoroughly before preparing.

### ***Food and Health, a perfect pair.***

- **60% of U.S. women would prefer to eat only healthy foods and live longer vs. 35% would rather eat whatever they want and live until they are 70.**
- **73% of U.S. women would rather win \$20,000 than lose 20 pounds.**
- Nearly two thirds (62%) of U.S. women are paying more attention to nutrition information on food packages and recipes than two years ago. One-third (34%) are paying the same amount of attention.
- Almost all (91%) of U.S. women are interested in learning how to eat right rather than how to diet and nearly three-quarters (73%) believe dieting is more mental than physical.
- Younger women are especially likely to have negative associations with dieting. 72% of women 18-34 and 68% of women 35-49 think everyone is too diet-focused, compared to 57% of women 50+.
- Women 18-34 are more challenged by junk food (63% vs. 43% of women 35-49 and 42% of women 50+), emotional eating (44% vs. 27% and 35%, respectively) and taking multi-vitamins every day (21% vs. 14% and 12%).
- Women 50+ exhibit the most comprehensive awareness of food benefit claims—particularly the benefits of oats/whole grains (86% vs. 55% of women 18-34 and 66% of women 35-49),

Omega-3 (79% vs. 61% and 65%, respectively) and nuts (74% vs. 53% and 62%).

- **Top 3 signs of a successful diet: fitting into my clothes, having more energy, losing 5 lbs.**
- **Since 2008, women are increasingly dissatisfied with the poor taste of diet food, and lack of a variety of food.**

### ***Cooking traditions and new inspirations...***

- In keeping with findings from two years ago, cooking is a family tradition passed through the generations. About three-quarters (76%) of women report they first learned to cook from their mother or grandmother, while nearly one-quarter (23%) are self-taught.
- As in 2008, when interested in learning new cooking skills, more than half (56%) of American women turn to cookbooks as their primary source of information.
- New in 2010, blogs already have 1-in-10 users while online social networks are developing as a new resource. They are more popular among women 18-34 (12%) than women 35-49 (9%) or women 50+ (4%).
- Women without children are more inclined to use cookbooks (58% vs. 44%) and newspapers (16% vs. 9%) than those with kids.
- Moms (vs. non-moms) rely more on relatives (28% vs. 19% for mother/grandmother and 19% vs. 13% for other relative) and social media sites such as Facebook (9% vs. 6%) for recipes.

**\*\* Please credit all data to *Better Homes and Gardens* "Food Factor 2010" survey\*\***

*Better Homes and Gardens* Food Factor 2010: How America Cooks, Eats and Shops" is an online survey sent to BHG readers and a national sample of women 18+. Fieldwork: March 29 – April 14, 2010. Results based on 3,607 respondents. Maximum margin of error for the qualified sample is +/- 3.3 percentage points.

*Better Homes and Gardens* serves and connects women who are passionate about their homes and the life they create there. *BHG* inspires her to dream and gives her the confidence to move from dreaming to doing. For more information, please visit [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com).

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