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## Americans prefer shopping in grocery stores to buying online

*Survey shows the ability to select their own food products a key driver for shoppers*

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Despite an abundance of new options for buying groceries online, American consumers still overwhelmingly prefer to do their shopping in stores, according to a new survey sponsored by facilities management company Vixxo. The research also found that providing an exceptional in-store experience and high food quality are key drivers for keeping supermarket customers happy and loyal.

The company surveyed more than 1,260 U.S. consumers to assess attitudes and buying preferences in a time of growing online alternatives for purchasing food products. It found that 87% of consumers prefer to shop in person. This preference also spanned different age groups, with nearly all Baby Boomers (96%) and a vast majority of Millennials (81%) reporting that they prefer the in-store experience to online.

The key driver was selection: most Americans (84%) like the advantages of being able to inspect and pick out their own products. Others (60%) said they simply favor the atmosphere and experience of shopping in brick-and-mortar stores.

The ability to personally select food is the key driver of the in-store advantage, the survey also revealed. Food quality emerged as the most important factor when selecting an item at the grocery store, according to 45% of shoppers.

Freshness of the ingredients is also critical to the buying decision, with 43% of shoppers demanding that their prepared foods be freshly made. For instance, approximately one-quarter of respondents buy prepared food from their grocery stores, including pizza (31%), pasta salad (29%), rotisserie chicken (28%), sandwiches (24%), and sushi (15%).

While consumers may have their favorite stores, few are exclusively loyal, the survey found. Only 14% said that they shopped at one store. Nearly half (45%) said they shopped at three or more stores in an average month. This “infidelity” pattern of shoppers underscores the importance of delivering a superior in-store experience to attract and retain more customers in a highly competitive market, according to the study.

When asked why they choose one store over another, consistency of product quality was the top attraction (29%), followed by variety of options (25%) and store location (25%). The social aspect of shopping factors heavily in the shopping choice for some. Millennials, for example, are three times more likely than other age groups to say that they enjoy the social interactions they experience in grocery stores.

**Source URL:** <https://www.supermarketnews.com/consumer-trends/americans-prefer-shopping-grocery-stores-buying-online>