

How tighter household budgets are changing Kiwis' food shopping and consumption behaviours

Research results at a glance:

- Kiwi households are spending an average of \$240 per week on food – just \$2 more per week than in 2023
- To combat rising food prices and reduced food budgets (in relative terms), Kiwis are preparing better for grocery shopping, with more saying they plan meals and use shopping lists
- More Kiwis now say they are cooking or preparing a meal seven-plus times a week, while more also indicate they eat out and/or purchase takeaways two or more times a week
- Food provenance is increasingly important to New Zealanders, with a growing number checking where their food has been produced
- While one in five Kiwis say they are planning to reduce meat consumption, this proportion is down on recent surveys, with a growing number in Gen Z (aged 18-28) say they are planning to increase meat consumption
- Kiwis in Gen Z have been instrumental in driving a drop in the number of New Zealanders identifying as vegans (2% from 3% in 2023) and vegetarians (6% from 9% previously)
- Usage of food delivery services like HelloFresh and Uber Eats has dropped after several years of strong growth.

Research by Rabobank and KiwiHarvest has highlighted noteworthy changes in how Kiwis shop and prepare food, as well as where and what they eat.

Rabobank Head of Sustainable Business Development Blake Holgate said the research – completed in July as part of a wider study undertaken by agricultural banking specialist Rabobank and food rescue charity KiwiHarvest – found the average New Zealand household is now spending \$240 per week on food, just \$2 more than in 2023 despite high food price inflation over this period.

“Stats NZ data¹ shows New Zealand food prices have risen by around 6 per cent since our last survey in mid-2023 and, with average house food spend up by less than 1%, Kiwis are spending a relatively lower amount on food than was the case 24 months ago,” he said.

Mr Holgate said Kiwis were having to do more with less, and this had led to changes in how they shopped.

“In response to rising prices, Kiwis' shopping behaviours are changing, with 31% saying they have reduced the amount of groceries they buy, 48% saying they are deliberately

¹ Stats NZ annual food price data - [Annual food prices increase 5.0 percent | Stats NZ](#)

looking for price reductions and promotions, and 31% saying they have downgraded the brands or products they buy²,” he said.

“We’re also seeing an increased level of preparation ahead of food shopping, with 64% of New Zealanders saying they always use a shopping list (up from 60%) and 39% saying they always plan their meals in advance (from 36%).

Mr Holgate said Kiwis’ relatively lower food budgets were also likely a key contributor to changes in household meal decisions.

“In terms of where and what is eaten, the survey found more Kiwis now say they are cooking or preparing a meal seven times or more a week (27% from 22%) while, perhaps surprisingly, there was also an increase in the number of Kiwis who say they were eating out in a restaurant or café (18% from 14%) or ordering takeaways (23% from 19%) two or more times a week,” he said.

“When we dig a bit deeper into these results, we see a real divergence by demographic, with the lift in the frequency of home-cooked meals driven by Baby Boomers (aged 61+), and those in rural locations.

“While, on the flip side, the increased volume of restaurant / café and takeaway meal purchases were driven by urban-based respondents in Gen Y (29-44) and Gen Z (aged 18-28).

“This is an interesting trend, and it’s possible that older Kiwis and those in rural locations are looking to reduce their food budgets by preparing more meals at home, while younger, urban Kiwis – who have easy access to a wide variety of dine-in and takeaway options – may feel eating out or ordering takeaways is the more cost-effective option for them.”

Food provenance

While the survey found price-related factors were driving many food-related decisions, it also found Kiwis were increasingly interested in the provenance of their food.

“More New Zealanders now say they check where food has been produced before purchasing (50% from 38%), that they are more likely to buy food that has been produced locally (67% from 63%) and that they are willing to pay more for food if they know extra is going to the producer (42% from 38%),” Mr Holgate said.

“New Zealanders’ knowledge of food production has lifted from 2023 survey, and this may be helping to drive these numbers up.”

“Or it might just be down to the fact that they think locally-produced food tastes better, with this deemed to be the case by 38% of respondents (from 32% last survey) who said they like to buy direct from the grower or farmer.”

² Kantar NZ Consumer Sentiment Barometer, April 2025

Kiwis' dietary preferences changing

As has been the case with previous surveys, the latest survey found more Kiwis say they plan to reduce meat consumption (22% from 25% previously) than those planning to eat more meat (9% - unchanged).

"However, the worm does appear to be turning on this trend, as the number saying they plan to decrease meat consumption has now fallen for the third straight survey," Mr Holgate said.

"If we look at the breakdown of the results by generation to examine who's driving the change, we see that less Baby Boomers are now saying they are planning to reduce meat consumption (22% from 30% previously) and a sizeable 23% (from 17%) of those in Gen Z now say they plan to increase meat consumption."

The survey also found there were less vegans and vegetarians than in 2023, with the proportion of Kiwis identifying as vegan dropping from 3% to 2% and as vegetarian falling from 9% to 6%.

"Again, those in Gen Z have been the big movers here, with less identifying as vegan (5% from 11%) and less as vegetarian (8% from 18%)."

"And one potential reason for this may be coverage of recent New Zealand research showing red meat is a better source of protein than processed plant based-alternatives³."

Food delivery services

Following strong growth across the last decade, the survey found usage of food delivery services like Uber Eats, HelloFresh, My Food Bag and Delivereasy has now fallen.

"In 2022 survey, the number of respondents saying they had utilised food delivery services over the last 12 months peaked at 62%. This was down slightly to 58% in 2023 and dropped further to 42% in the latest survey," Mr Holgate said.

"None of the major providers were spared with Uber Eats, Hello Fresh, My Food Bag and Delivereasy all recording falls in usage."

Mr Holgate said the strong rise in usage of food delivery services in the early part of this decade had, in part, been driven by Covid-19 lockdowns and the related restrictions on dining out.

"Since these restrictions ceased in late 2021, we have seen a decline in usage as consumers have been able to return to restaurants, while concerns over the cost of using these services may also be another factor in this fall," he said.

³ [Research Confirms Red Meat Nutritional Advantage Over Plant Based Alternative](#)

“The other factor driving down the usage of the individual food delivery service providers is increased competition following the relatively recent entry of US food delivery giant DoorDash to the New Zealand market.”

“Having first launched in Christchurch and Wellington in 2022, DoorDash has expanded rapidly over the last couple of years and it is now a significant player in the home delivery market in major towns and cities across New Zealand.”

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About the Survey

Rabobank partnered with KiwiHarvest in 2020 as part of the bank’s wider commitment to work alongside its rural customers to support sustainable food production and its global vision around global food security. The Rabobank-KiwiHarvest Food Waste Survey was first conducted in April 2021, with the findings released in June of that year. The 2025 Rabobank-KiwiHarvest Food Waste survey was administered by independent research agency KANTAR and involved interviews with 1501 New Zealanders between July 14 and July 28, 2025. Data collection was nationally representative to ensure that results could be used to measure New Zealanders attitudes and behaviours.

Rabobank New Zealand

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