

# Methodology: Primary quantitative research

## SURVEY TOPICS

Understand shopping fragmentation and focus by examining:

- What types of stores do shoppers use for food today, and how has this changed?
- How do shoppers believe stores vary in their availability and selection of merchandise?
- How and where does food service compete with retail alternatives, such as fresh-prepared?
- How has the rise of online shopping altered the pathway to product discovery and purchase?
- What is driving trip satisfaction at the store level?
- Where do shoppers spend the most money and why?
- Who is shopping in multiple stores and what are the main drivers for multi-store shopping?
- How do segments of shoppers differ in their styles of shopping and how can food businesses leverage this for distinction and growth?

## METHODOLOGY

- Online national survey April 27, 2025–May 1, 2025
- n=2,282 U.S. adult primary shoppers aged 18–79
  - Margin of Error (MOE)  $\pm 2.1\%$  at 95% confidence level
  - Respondents recruited as a nationally representative sample balanced by age, gender, division, income, race/ethnicity, and kids at home to match 2025 US Census Current Population Survey
- Readable samples include, plus other key demographics:
  - Generations: Gen Z (18-28 years) n=330, Millennials (29-44) n=640, Gen X (45-60) n=648, Boomers (61-79) n=664
  - Shopper segments: Routine n=462, ROI n=657, Reliability n=359, Reactivity n=256, Renewal n=548
  - Retail channels (P30D shoppers/trips): Mass (1943/717), Grocery (1835/1180), Drug (1418/624), Dollar (1321/925), Convenience (1283/306), Club (1194/643), Discount (1155/794), Specialty/natural (919/994), Online-primarily (969/533), Ethnic (P30D n=515)

## READING THE CHARTS

### Main charts



### Generations

- Gen Z
- Millennials
- Gen X
- Boomers

### Shopper segments

- Routine
- ROI
- Reliability
- Reactivity
- Renewal

## INDEXING, SIGNIFICANCE TESTING & TREND

Indexing is used in most of the report to show comparisons versus the total. When comparisons are made with 2022, significance testing at the 95% confidence level is used.

^ Notates where statistically significant point changes at the 95% confidence level vs. 2022 are shown.

# Methodology: Primary qualitative research

## PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS

- Mix of genders, household structures and ethnicities
- Minimum high school graduate
- Mix of employment status
- Mix of geographies (urban/rural, coastal/interior, U.S. regions)
- HHI minimum \$40K (unless student)
- Do at least half of the household grocery shopping
- Mix of channel/banner usage, including some specialty channels/stores
- Mix of cooking engagement

## METHODOLOGY

- 1 Digital ethnographies**
- n=14 participants
  - Week-long immersive engagement via asynchronous virtual platform

- 2 Follow-up in-depth interviews**
- n=7 selected from digital ethnography participants for 60-minute follow-up 1-on-1 interviews

**Research topics included orientations to grocery shopping; shopping habits, routines and strategies; reasons for and drivers of multi-store shopping; channel/store-specific shopping experiences and reflections; foodservice usage; impacts of inflation**

## PARTICIPANT PHOTOS\*

Respondent-provided images



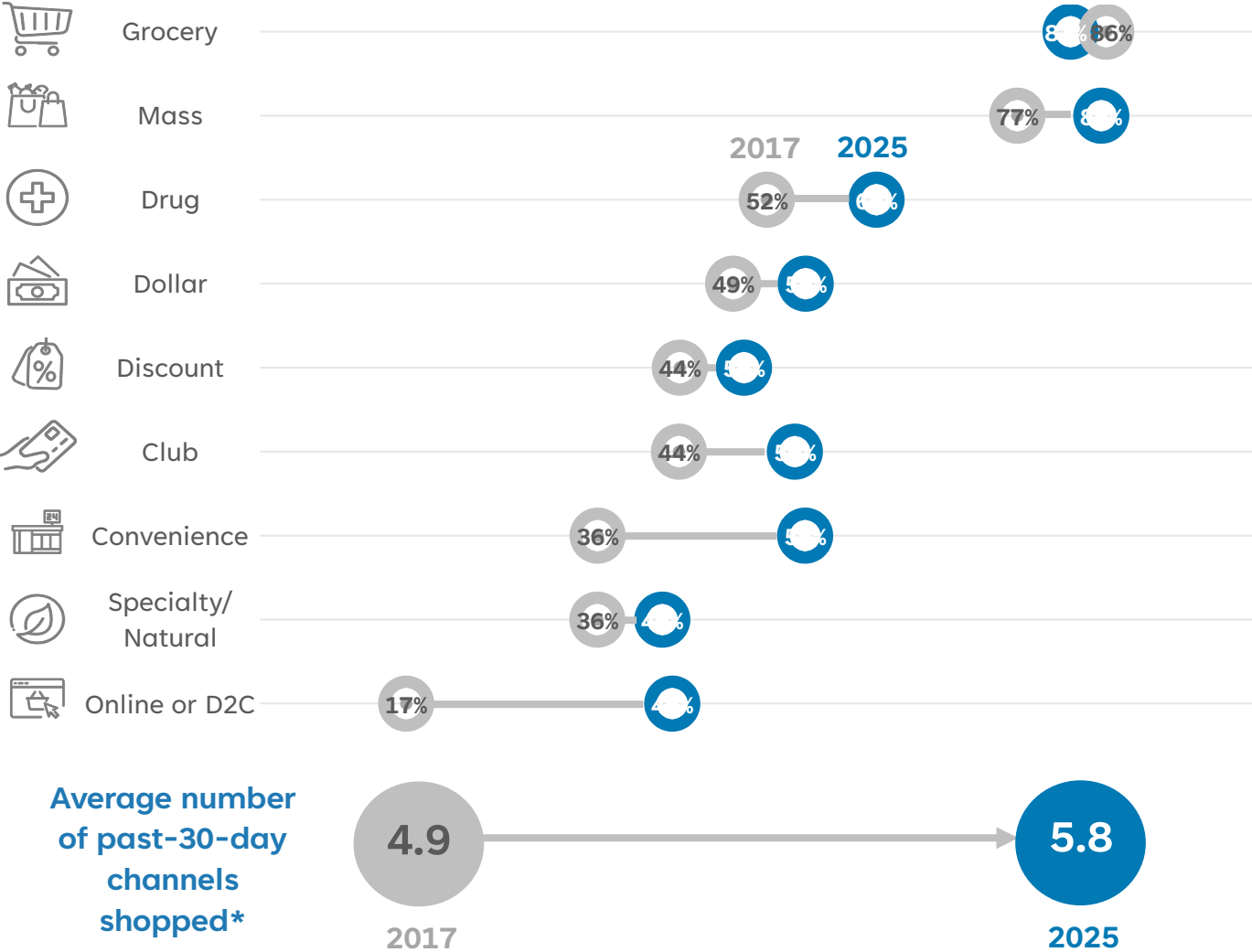
# The average American shopper has added an entire channel to their monthly rotation since 2017

This past decade has seen the rise of Mass as a grocery source, the rise of smaller-format stores such as Drug and Convenience for everyday food needs, and an expansion of the monthly reach of Dollar and Discount stores. Overall, this amounts to a markedly broader mix of retail food sources among American shoppers.

FSA 2025. S15. Specifically, when did you last shop IN PERSON or ONLINE at each of the following types of stores to buy groceries (i.e., food, beverage, household or personal care items, or non-prescription medications) for your household? (Select one response for 'in person' and one for 'online' for each type of store) Base: All shoppers (n=2282), 2022 (n=2279), 2020 (n=2008), 2017 (n=2004) . \*For trended calculations, includes Ethnic and Other (not shown); Other for 2025 applied to all years; Discount and Dollar were captured as one channel in 2017, so each channel's 2017 totals are based on 2020 to enable comparisons; no adjustments are made for small differences in age range across annual samples.

## Past 30-day channel engagement pre- and post-pandemic

Among all shoppers (showing all engagement: in person or online)

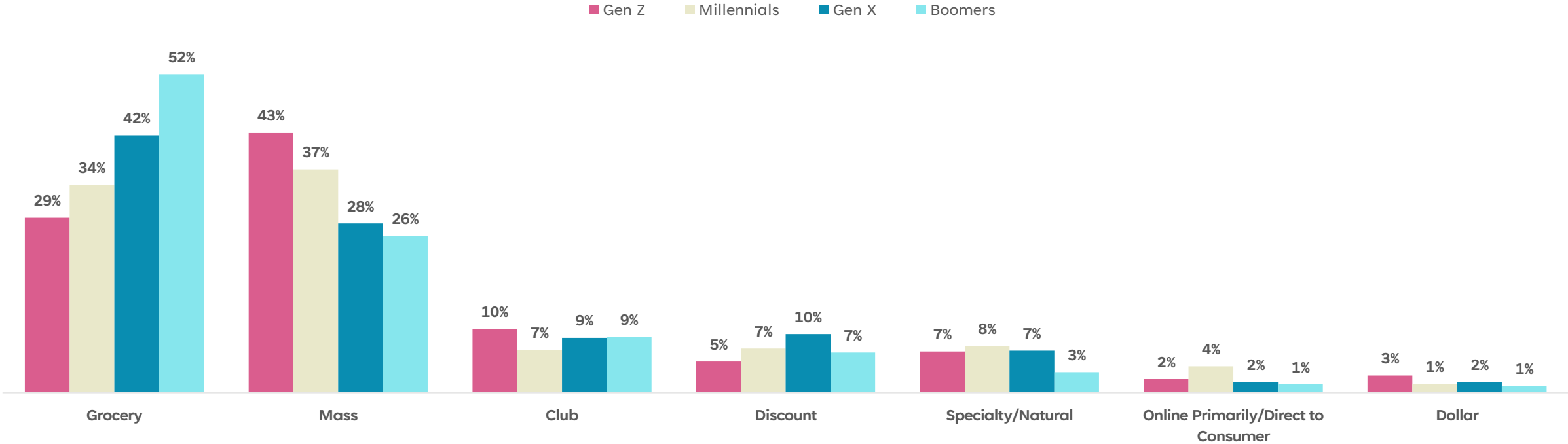


# Younger shoppers prefer Mass for their primary store, representing a natural source of ongoing growth for the channel

While most shoppers' primary stores are in the Grocery channel, this is not true for all generations. Millennials and especially Gen Z are more likely to choose a primary store in the Mass channel over a Grocery store. Gen Z are also the most likely group to choose a Club store as their primary store.

## Channels of primary stores

Among all shoppers, by generation



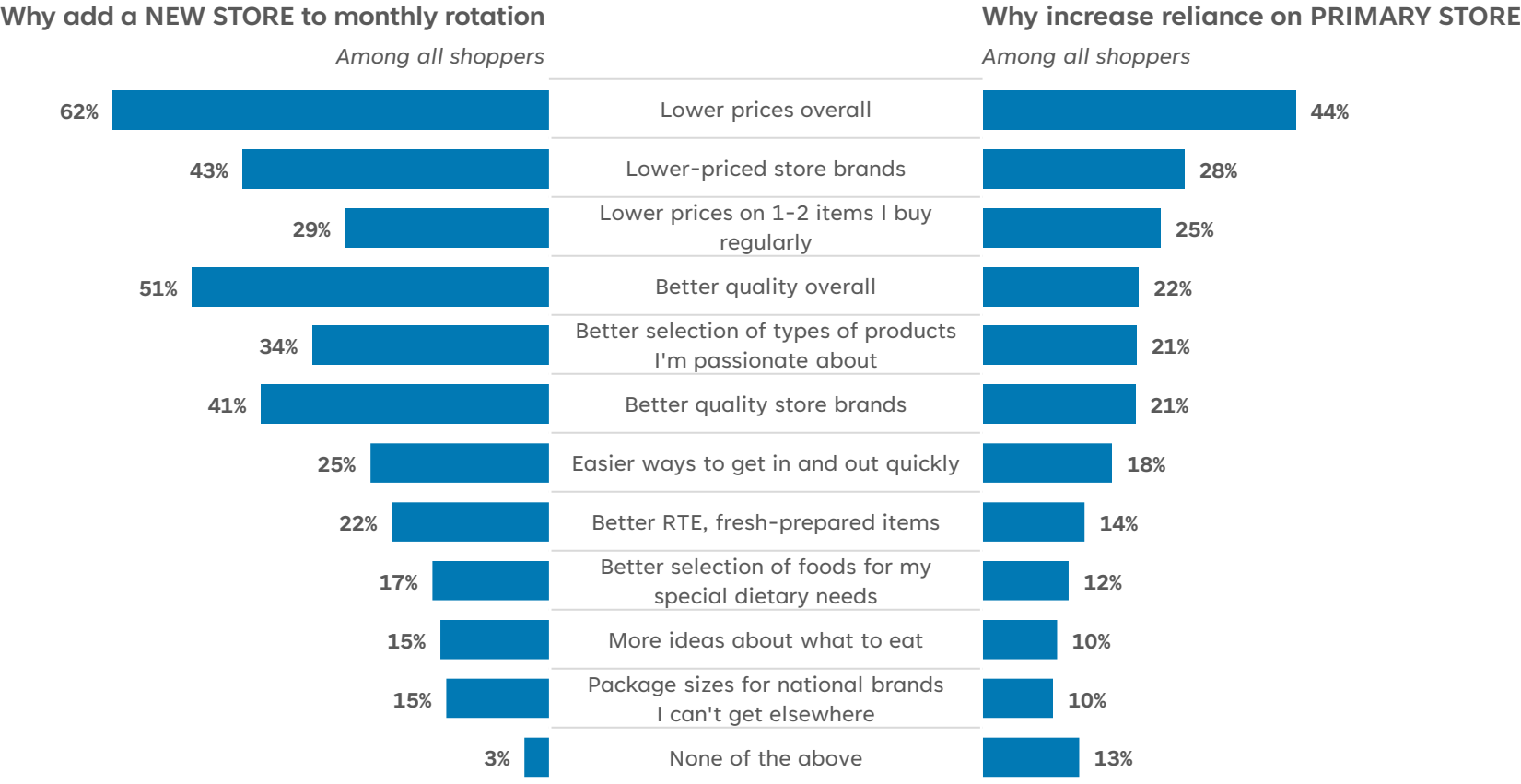
FSA 2025. FF1. Which store or service do you consider your PRIMARY source of food and groceries? In other words, where do you spend the MOST MONEY on food and groceries for use in your home? Base: Generation.

# While shoppers want better prices from their current stores, better quality is just as likely to motivate a more diverse mix of sources

Better prices overall—and to a lesser degree, store brands and regularly purchased items—are the key motivator for both increased reliance on current primary stores and inclusion of a new store in shoppers’ food store mix.

But better quality—overall and on store brands—is also a highly compelling reason why shoppers say they would shift some of their shopping to new store options. While not a top-of-mind unmet need, the promise of better quality is likely to generate interest and attract shoppers to use new stores or to use existing stores in new ways.

## Reasons to shift reliance on stores



FSA 2025. FF4. What, if anything, could [PRIMARY STORE] do to get you to rely on it EVEN MORE and use other stores even less? I would actually rely on this store EVEN MORE if it offered... (Select all that apply); FF6. Imagine a new store opened in your area. What, if anything, could a NEW STORE offer that would lead you to ADD it to those you already use each month? (Select all that apply) Base: All shoppers (n=2282).

# Shoppers have become less satisfied with their trips for groceries

Trip satisfaction (43% overall) declined from 2022 across most channels—likely reflecting consumers’ general reaction to the recent period of high price inflation—with only Mass, Specialty/Natural and Club avoiding significant declines.

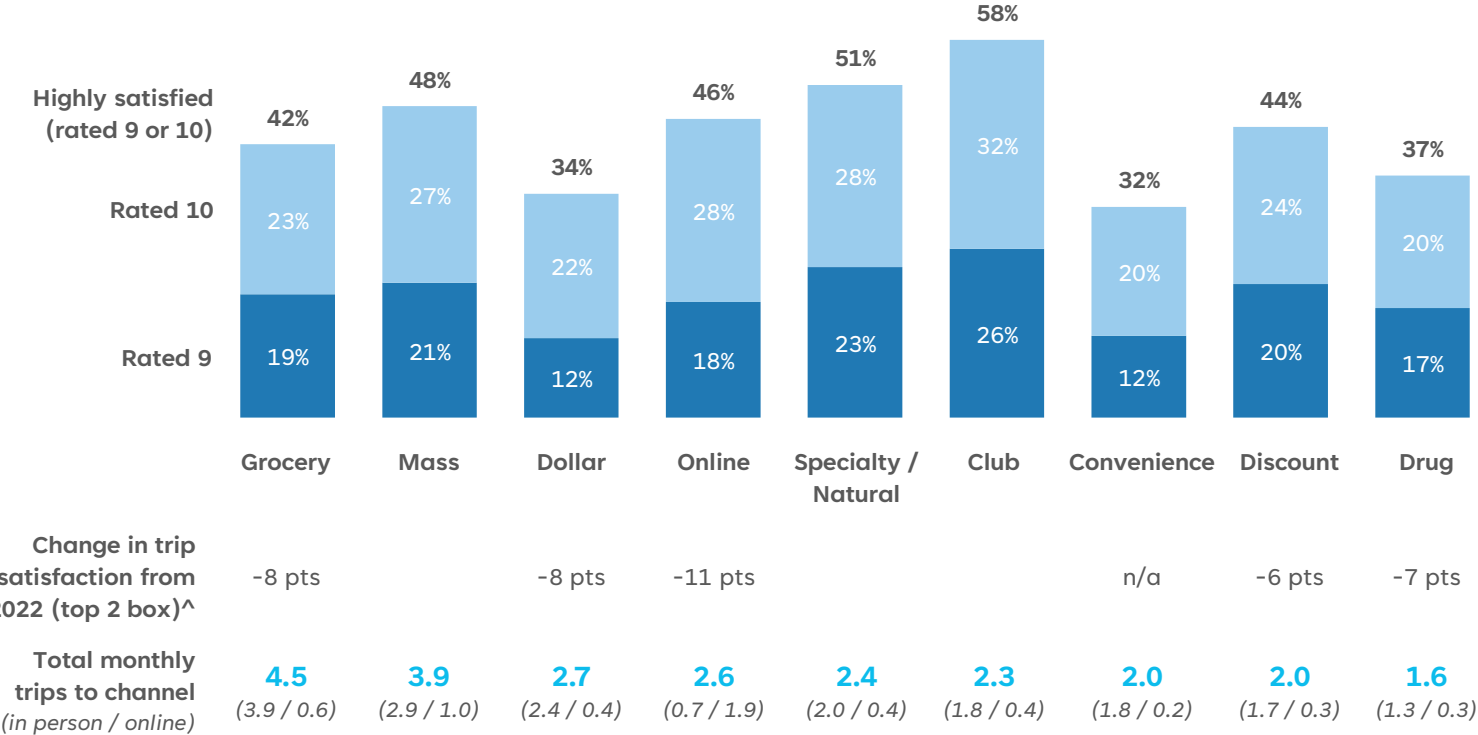
Channels more narrowly specialized in their assortment or types of trips they serve continue to get higher ratings for meeting the needs of those trips. Trips to Specialty and Club elicit the most enthusiasm at present.

**42%**  
Satisfied with in-person trip  
-6 pts from 2022

**51%**  
Satisfied with online trip  
-6 pts from 2022

### Highly satisfied with last trip/order

Aggregated from P30D shoppers of individual retailers within each channel  
Rated on a 0-10 scale where 10 is “highly satisfied” and 0 is “not at all satisfied”  
Sorted by number of Past 30-Day trips to channel—high to low



FSA 2025. CP5b. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘Not at all satisfied’ and 10 means ‘Highly satisfied,’ how satisfied were you with your last visit to this [ASSIGNED STORE] Base: Assigned to rate a P30D retailer in the channel Base: Assigned retailer (n=306-1180). ^ Significant change vs. 2022.

# High prices, out-of-stocks and household budget limitations are shoppers' biggest challenges

Many shoppers have noticed that inflation itself has abated: almost half (45%) say that grocery prices are now “higher than usual but fairly stable.” However, elevated prices remain as much of a perceived challenge now as two years ago, when food inflation was peaking. Meanwhile, fewer shoppers note out-of-stocks this year, but it remains one of the most commonly cited frustrations for shoppers.



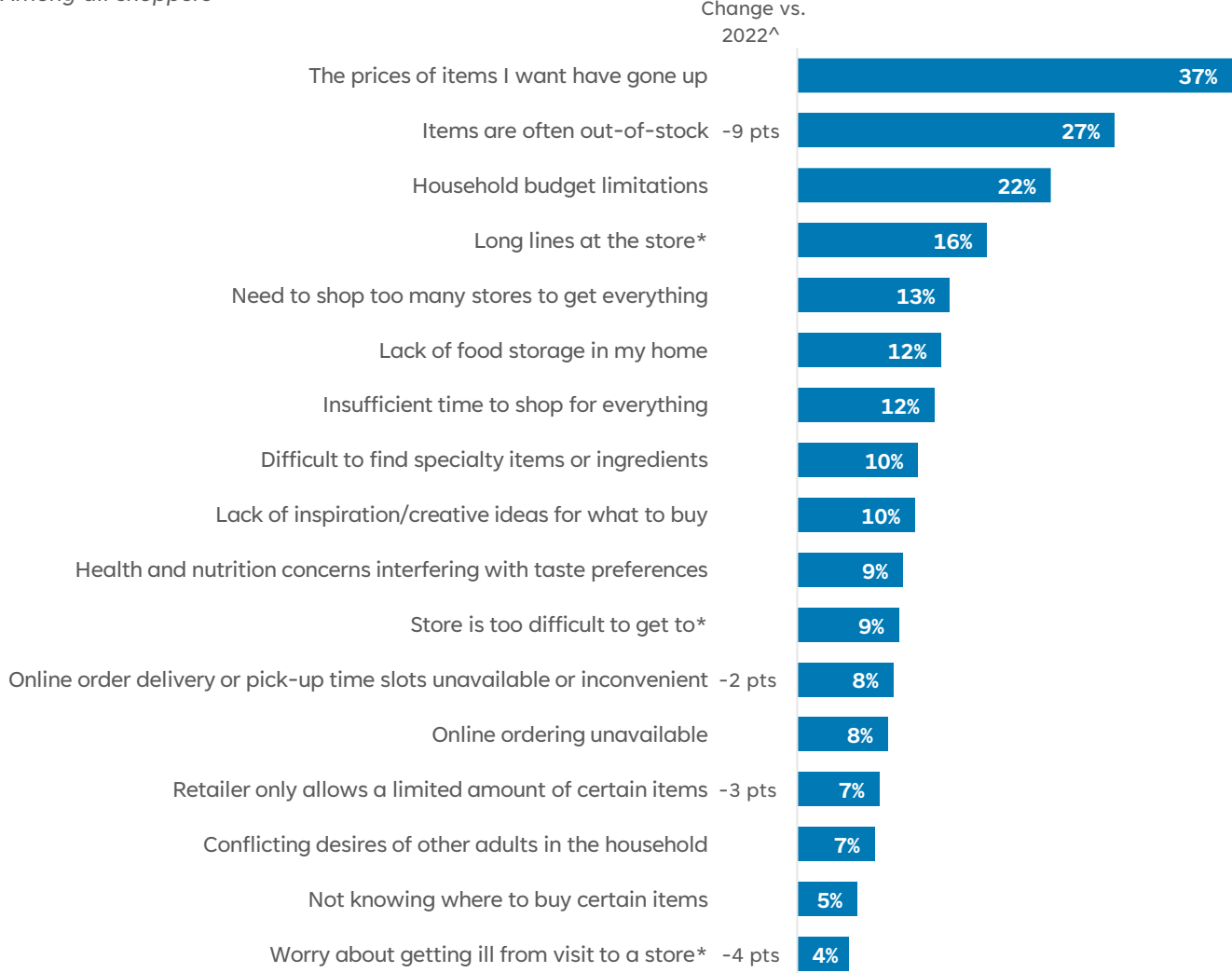
Respondent-provided image:  
“Where this store falls short: Out-of-stocks”

*Something that is frustrating is they are consistently out of products, for example the rotisserie chicken is something I am always looking forward to and it's out of stock I'd say at least half the time I go there.*

—Marco, 32

## Most frequent shopping challenges

Among all shoppers



FSA 2025. Q40 When it comes to foods, beverages and other grocery items, would you say that PRICES THIS MONTH are...? (Please select one). dSP5. Which of the following issues MOST OFTEN make it difficult for you to shop for items that you need? (Select up to 5 of the most common issues). All shoppers n=2282. \*Based on P30D in-person shoppers (n=2253). ^ Significant change vs. 2022.

# CHANNEL PROFILE

## Dollar

Shoppers are more likely to select the Dollar channel when they need items immediately, for fill-in shopping and for non-food offerings. Good customer service and knowledgeable staff drive satisfaction for this channel. Despite underperforming other channels, category strengths for the Dollar channel include packaged snacks, CSDs, juice and other beverages and coffee/tea items.



### Channel usage

**56%** of U.S. shoppers shopped this channel in the **past 30 days** (down vs. 59% 2022)

**2%** of U.S. shoppers consider a store in this channel to be their **primary store**

**34%** of channel shoppers were highly **satisfied** with their last trip (rate it 9-10 on a 0-10 scale, index)

**22%** of trips are **online**

### Shopper profile

			Index
<b>Gender</b>	Men/Women	<b>49%/51%</b>	104/97
<b>Generation</b>	Gen Z 18-28	<b>19%</b>	<b>130</b>
	Millennials 29-44	<b>30%</b>	104
	Gen X 45-60	<b>27%</b>	95
	Boomers 61-79	<b>25%</b>	85
<b>Household</b>	Average HHI	<b>\$92K</b>	86
	Live in suburbs	<b>35%</b>	95
	Kids under 18	<b>28%</b>	119
<b>P30D shopping</b>	Avg. # channels shopped in person/online/total	<b>6.4/2.6/6.9</b>	<b>120/130/119</b>
	Online shopper	<b>71%</b>	108

Dollar includes: **DOLLAR GENERAL**



Other dollar store



### Top trip missions

**22%**  
**Immediate need**  
Index **128**

**22%**  
**Fill-in**  
Index **148**

**15%**  
**Non-food**  
Index **124**

### Top 10 channel attributes

			Index
Store/site is easy and quick to shop	<b>44%</b>		90
Most convenient for me to visit	<b>44%</b>		103
Makes it easy to shop and pay quickly	<b>43%</b>		88
Lowest prices	<b>41%</b>		<b>129</b>
Good customer service	<b>33%</b>		<b>75</b>
Place I enjoy shopping at	<b>31%</b>		<b>76</b>
Specific items/brands I need/like	<b>30%</b>		<b>66</b>
Knowledgeable staff/customer service reps	<b>29%</b>		<b>79</b>
Best sales, coupons or promotions	<b>28%</b>		93
Products in stock consistently	<b>27%</b>		<b>62</b>

### Top 10 product selection strengths

			Index
Packaged snack foods	<b>15%</b>		<b>68</b>
Bottled/canned non-alcoholic beverages	<b>13%</b>		<b>61</b>
Other non-grocery items	<b>11%</b>		<b>53</b>
Store brand or private label products	<b>11%</b>		<b>53</b>
Coffee/tea supplies/ingredients	<b>10%</b>		<b>60</b>
Frozen foods	<b>9%</b>		<b>52</b>
Baking supplies/ingredients	<b>9%</b>		<b>58</b>
Condiments, sauces and spices	<b>9%</b>		<b>49</b>
Vitamins and supplements	<b>8%</b>		<b>46</b>
Dairy products/cheeses	<b>8%</b>		<b>47</b>

☐ Among top 3 **store attributes** driving trip satisfaction for the channel

☐ Among top 3 **selection strengths** driving trip satisfaction for the channel

Note: 'Store/site I trust' and 'Store/site I recommend' not included in driver analysis Indexed against the average across channels.

Green index ≥ 120, red <80