

Hartman Group’s Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database

Hartman Group’s Compass Database documents the context, needs and behaviors associated with eating and drinking occasions.

Hartman Group’s Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database uses a powerful online recall methodology that randomly selects two eating or drinking occasions that a respondent has had in the past 24 hours. Our unique method allows us to access respondents very close to their eating occasions for optimal recall of information.

The database includes daypart, location, social composition and need states as well as items consumed and broadly when and where items were acquired. Hartman Group has been consistently fielding the survey since 2012 and has been surveying teens (ages 13-17) since 2016, leading to a total sample of over 38,000 self-reported teen eating occasions.

The respondent sample reflects U.S. teen population demographics. These respondents recall eating occasions distributed across days of the week, leading to an occasion sample reflecting all U.S. teen occasions.

Eating & Drinking Occasions Sample

Fielded as 3 annual waves (spring, summer and fall) among a national sample (balanced by age, gender, region, education, income, number of children and race/ethnicity) of U.S. teens (ages 13-17). The following base sizes and age ranges are used throughout this report:

Year	Teen (13-17) Occasions Sample
2024	n=3,903
2023	n=4,400
2022	n=3,442
2021	n=3,545
2020	n=3,608
2019	n=3,865

Adult Generations	2024 Occasions Sample
Gen Z 18-27	n=1,562
Millennials 28-43	n=3,929
Gen X 44-59	n=3,540
Boomers 60-78	n=3,704



Want to know more?

Hartman Group’s Compass Eating & Drinking Occasions Database also captures adult (18-78) occasions and parent-reported child (under 13 years of age) occasions. If you would like more information around adult or child occasions, or an in-depth report specific to your category, business objectives or a specific demographic group, please reach out to Shelley Balanko, Senior Vice President, at shelley@hartman-group.com.

Defining characteristics of teens intersect with their eating and drinking occasions

In addition to circumstance and age, teens' eating and drinking occasions are largely impacted by various cohort-defining traits and values. Teens' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors have been—and continue to be—shaped by a world of technological, societal and political shifts. Teens are highly social, well-connected and have never known a world without the internet and social media—all of which impact how they eat today.

Friends play a particularly important role in teens' community. Time spent in isolation during COVID has led to a strong desire to connect with others in-person, and teens will often use food and beverage to do so.

Digital platforms allow teens to engage with others and express themselves through food while also influencing how and what they eat, drink, make and buy.

The following report will provide an in-depth analysis of teen eating and drinking occasions along with insights into how to best cater to their specific needs.

Digital Natives

40% of teen restaurant-sourced occasions involve ordering ahead by phone, app or website (vs. 33% for adults), and teens play video games on 19% of at-home occasions (vs. 9% for adults)

Diverse & Inclusive

22% of teen occasions are about having flavors/foods from regions and countries with distinctive food traditions (vs. 19% for adults) and 14% are about having new/interesting/unusual flavors (vs. 11% for adults)

Globally Connected

52% of teen occasions are about having authentic global flavors (vs. 45% for adults)



Socially Active

65% of teen occasions are focused on connecting socially with others through food/drink (vs. 51% for adults)

Economically Conscious

Even though many teens rely on their parents/others to purchase foods and beverages, a full two-thirds (66%) of teen occasions are about spending as little as possible to meet their needs (vs. 69% for adults)

Seeking Balance

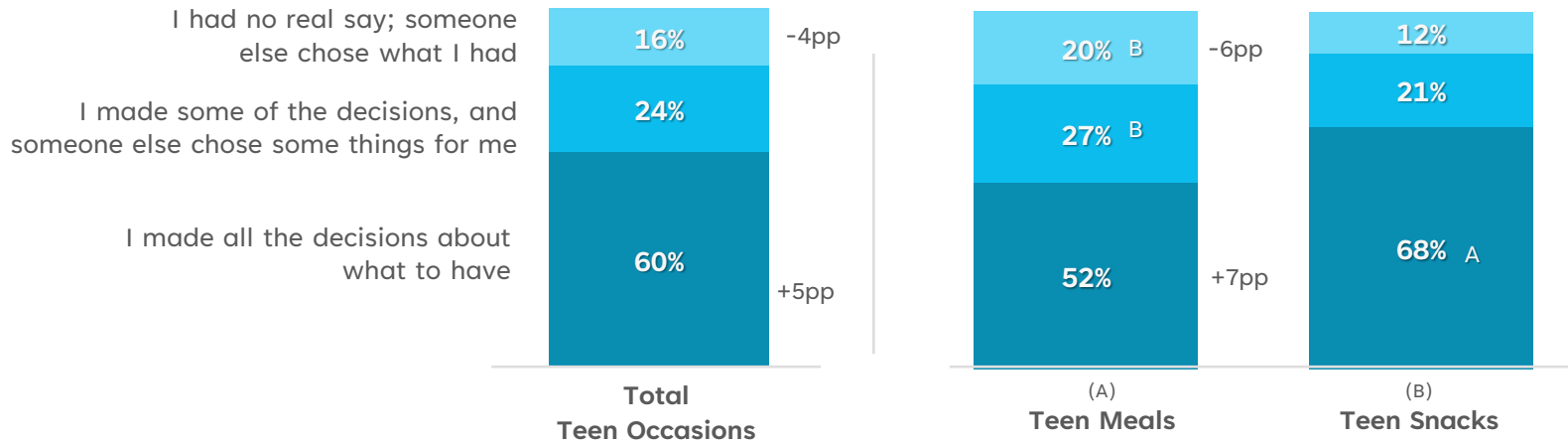
Teen occasions are more often about enjoying iconic brands than adult occasions (74% vs. 62%, respectively), yet a similar amount are focused on having foods made with simple, real ingredients (72% for teens vs. 77% for adults)

Teens make at least some of the decisions about what to have on most of their eating and drinking occasions

Teens are making the decision about what to have on 3 out of 5 of their eating and drinking occasions, which is up significantly since 2023 and is driven by an increase among meal occasions. In general, however, teens tend to have more autonomy when snacking; they have a say about what to have on almost 9 in 10 snack occasions.

INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE SELECTION 2024

Among total teen (13-17) occasions, trended to 2023



“ I can't be like, no, you can't eat this. You shouldn't eat this. I grew up eating it, and I think I turned out perfectly fine. So, I'm trying to teach them everything in moderation.

- David, parent of children 13 & 7 yo
(Hartman Group, Taste of Tomorrow 2023)

Source: Hartman's Eating & Drinking Occasions Compass Database 2023-2024, Teens 13-17. Date pulled: 05.22.2025. Base: Teen occasions 2024 (n=3,903), 2023 (n=4,400); Teen meal occasions 2024 (n=2,656), 2023 (n=2,966); Teen snack occasions 2024 (n=1,247), 2023 (n=1,434).

Interpreting Dashboards

Data reported on dashboards represent % of teen eating/drinking occasions for the specified **daypart**.

KEY DETAILS DASHBOARD

Size of Prize: Estimated total number of teen (13-17) eating/drinking occasions per year.

Level of Teen Involvement: Share of occasions across different levels of decision making and preparation.

Who Specifics: Share of occasions that take place alone or with others (couple, family or friends).

Where Specifics: Share of occasions that take place at home or away from home (at work/school, a restaurant or other away from home location).

What Was Consumed: % of occasions that include consumption of the specified foods or drinks. Percentages do not add to 100% since multiple foods/beverages can be consumed. Top 10 foods/beverages shown.

Top 5 Food & Beverage Attributes: % of occasions where specified food and beverage attribute is important. Percentages do not add to 100% as multiple attributes can be present on one occasion. Top 5 attributes shown.



Measuring Impact with Index Scores:

Index scores are reported alongside percentages on each dashboard to shed light on what is relatively more or less important/characteristic of the specified occasion when compared to teen occasions overall.

Index scores are calculated as the ratio of the specified occasion % to the total occasion % multiplied by 100.

Orange font shows over-indexing ≥ 120 . **Blue** font shows under-indexing ≤ 80 .

Index scores closer to 100 mean the specified occasion % is approximately equal to the total occasion %.

NEED STATES DASHBOARD

Emotional Context: % of occasions where a certain feeling/emotion is present prior to deciding what to have/serve or prepare. Percentages do not add to 100% as multiple feelings/emotions can be present on one occasion. Top 10 emotions/feelings shown.

Top 10 High-level Need States: % of teen occasions where specified need state is selected as top-3 box consideration. Top 10 need states shown. The top 3 high-level need states with specific follow-up needs asked are identified with icons.




Top 3 Specific Need States: For the top 3 high-level need states with specific follow-up needs, showing the top 4 specific needs ranked by % selected when the higher-level need is a top-3 box consideration.

Brand spotlight: Highlighting brands and products that may be aligned with teens' behaviors and needs at each daypart.

TEEN OCCASIONS KEY DETAILS DASHBOARD: MID-MORNING SNACK


Teen mid-morning snacks occur most often at home and with family, however, these occasions are more likely than total teen occasions to take place with a significant other, friends and/or at work/school. Mid-morning snack occasions are also more likely than total teen occasions to involve foods and beverages that are ready to eat/drink. Breads, common breakfast items (e.g., pancakes, waffles, cereal), fruit, bars, eggs and crackers all over-index during the mid-morning snack occasion along with a variety of beverages such as chocolate milk and coffee.


TEEN SIZE OF PRIZE 	
3.0 B	occasions per year
8%	of total teen occasions

LEVEL OF TEEN INVOLVEMENT



DECISION MAKING	%	Index
I had no real say, someone else chose	16%	101
I made some of the decisions	21%	88
I made all the decisions about what to have	63%	104

PREPARATION	%	Index
<i>Among occasions not entirely from a restaurant</i>		
No preparation (ready to eat/drink)	54%	149
I wasn't involved, someone else did prep	16%	68
I helped prep/assemble	9%	72
I did all/most prep	21%	76

WHO 	%	Index
Alone	26%	94
Couple	7%	128
Family	54%	91
Friends	13%	166

WHERE 	%	Index
Home	53%	76
Work/School	37%	193
Restaurant	6%	87
Other away from home	4%	106

WHAT WAS CONSUMED: TOP 10 CATEGORIES

FOODS 	%	Index	BEVERAGES 	%	Index
Breads/Bread-like products	18%	124	CSD/Soda/Pop	14%	84
Common breakfast items*	17%	137	100% fruit juice	12%	93
Cheese	16%	111	Chocolate milk	11%	124
Dairy products other than cheese	15%	117	Coffee	10%	180
Fruit/Fruit Snacks	14%	126	Water	9%	75
Bars	13%	194	Juice drink	7%	135
Eggs	12%	142	Fruit smoothie	6%	162
Crackers	11%	128	Coconut water	5%	174
Salty snacks	7%	96	Cider	3%	151
Casseroles/Pot pies	6%	110	Milk, plain (dairy)	3%	63

TOP 5 FOOD & BEVERAGE ATTRIBUTES 	%	Index
Easy to eat	34%	131
Tide me over until the next meal	33%	129
A familiar taste experience	25%	80
Sustained energy	22%	118
Would refresh me	21%	95



Pop-Tarts continues to remain relevant to teens with ongoing partnerships and unique flavor launches. Recently, Marvel and Pop-Tarts partnered on a re-release of the blue raspberry flavor featuring Fantastic Four-themed branding. Pop-Tarts caters to teens' needs for both something quick and easy to eat on the go and an iconic brand experience (see next page).

*E.g., pancakes, waffles, toast, cereal, etc.
See appendix for additional details available for food & beverage categories.

Source: Hartman's Eating & Drinking Occasions Compass Database 2024, Teens 13-17. Date pulled 05.22.2025. Base: Teen Mid-Morning Snack Occasions 2024 (n=207-281). Indexed vs. Total Teen Occasions 2024. Indices ≥ 120 are highlighted orange, indices ≤ 80 are highlighted blue.