Starcom

DATA INTELLIGENCE

HUMANGRAPHEXPERIENCE

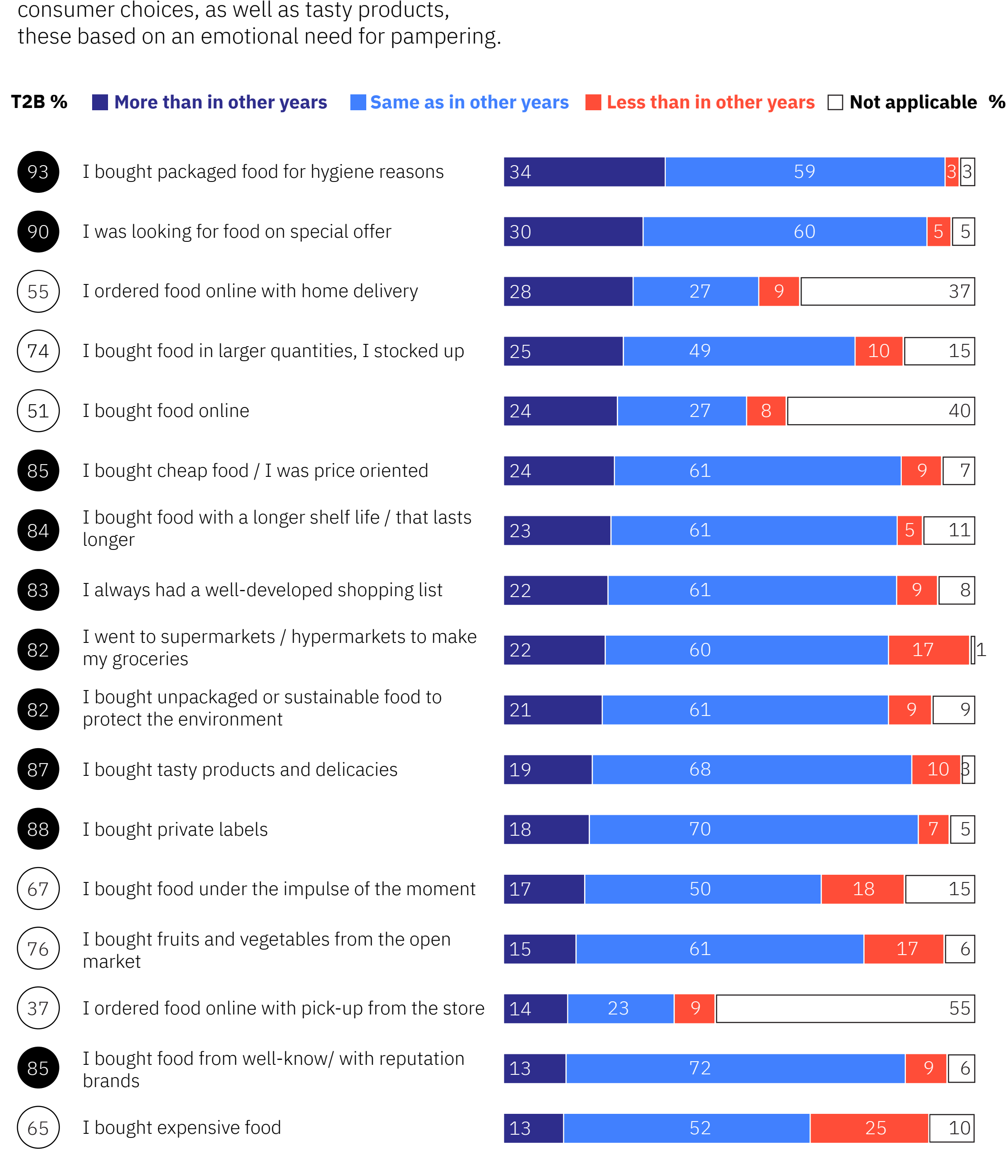
The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Consumption

Food Buying Behavior

Food Shopping Behavior

Packaged food was bought more than in other years for hygiene reasons, while unpackaged food was an alternative choice to protect the environment.

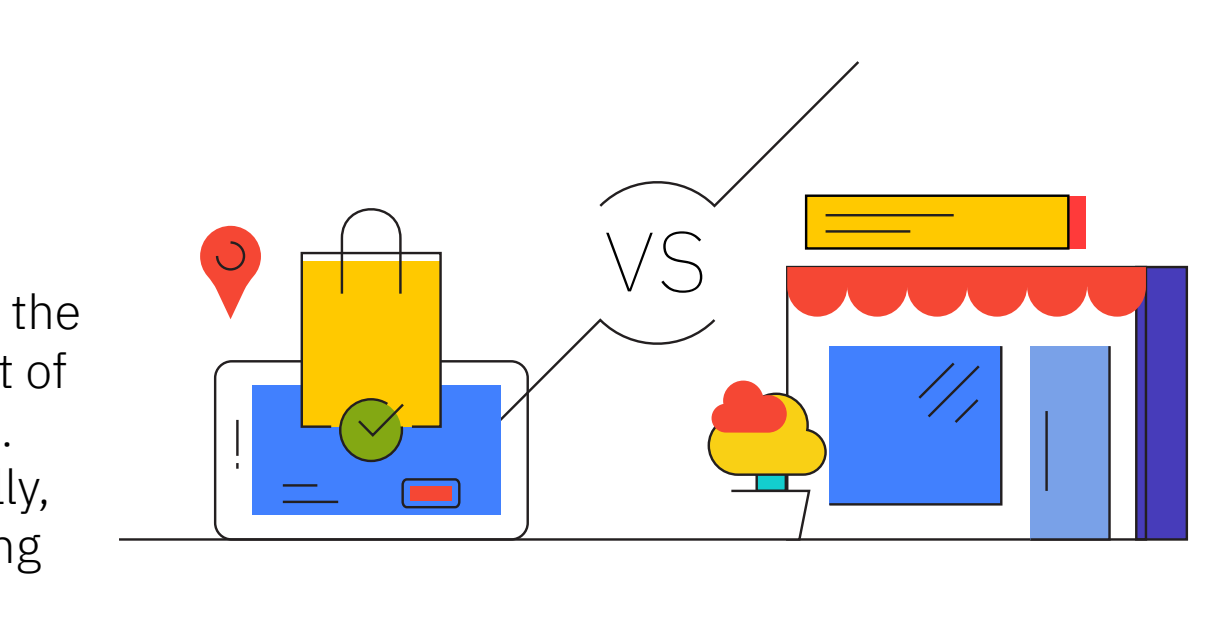
Being careful of their finances reflects also in food purchase, many Romanians from urban areas being more price oriented or trying private labels. However, well known brands remained among consumer choices, as well as tasty products, these based on an emotional need for pampering.

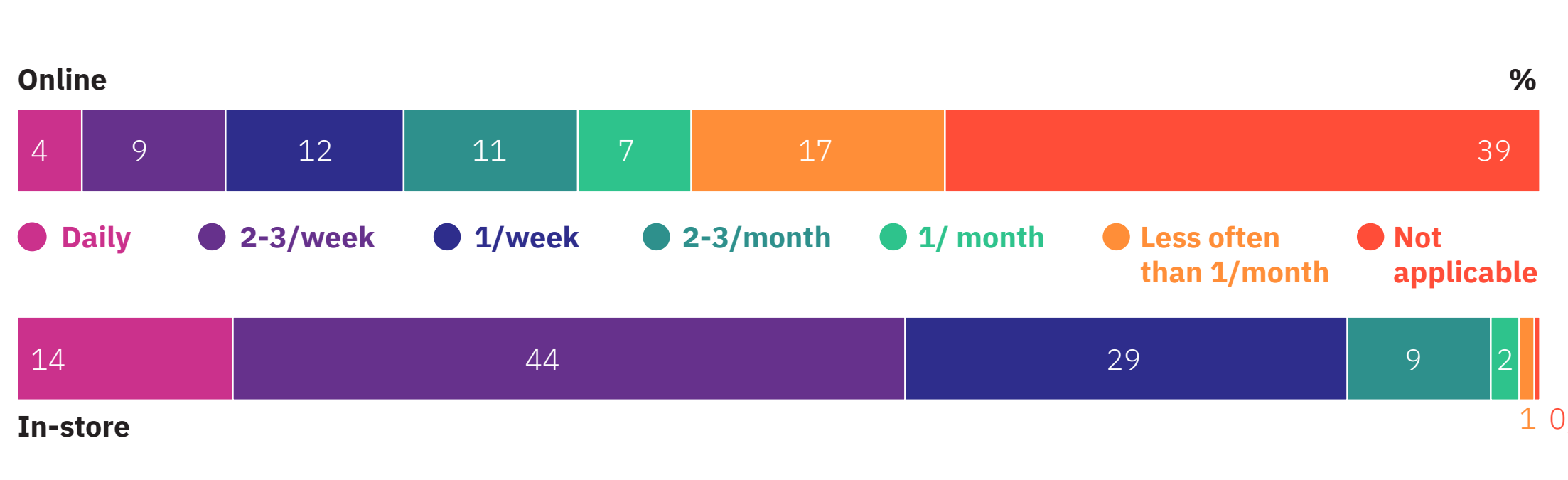


T2B %		More than in other years	Same as in other years	Less than in other years	Not applicable
93	I bought packaged food for hygiene reasons	34	59	3	3
90	I was looking for food on special offer	30	60	5	5
55	I ordered food online with home delivery	28	27	9	37
74	I bought food in larger quantities, I stocked up	25	49	10	15
51	I bought food online	24	27	8	40
85	I bought cheap food / I was price oriented	24	61	9	7
84	I bought food with a longer shelf life / that lasts longer	23	61	5	11
83	I always had a well-developed shopping list	22	61	9	8
82	I went to supermarkets / hypermarkets to make my groceries	22	60	17	1
82	I bought unpackaged or sustainable food to protect the environment	21	61	9	9
87	I bought tasty products and delicacies	19	68	10	3
88	I bought private labels	18	70	7	5
67	I bought food under the impulse of the moment	17	50	18	15
76	I bought fruits and vegetables from the open market	15	61	17	6
37	I ordered food online with pick-up from the store	14	23	9	55
85	I bought food from well-know/ with reputation brands	13	72	9	6
65	I bought expensive food	13	52	25	10

Frequency of Groceries Shopping Channel

When it comes to shopping channel, most of the respondents visit brick & mortar stores, most of them doing their groceries on a weekly basis. Online shopping was used mainly occasionally, most of Romanians from urban area accessing e-stores at most 2-3 times a month.





%	Daily	2-3/week	1/week	2-3/month	1/ month	Less often than 1/month	Not applicable
Online	4	9	12	11	7	17	39
In-store	14	44	29	9	2	1	0,4

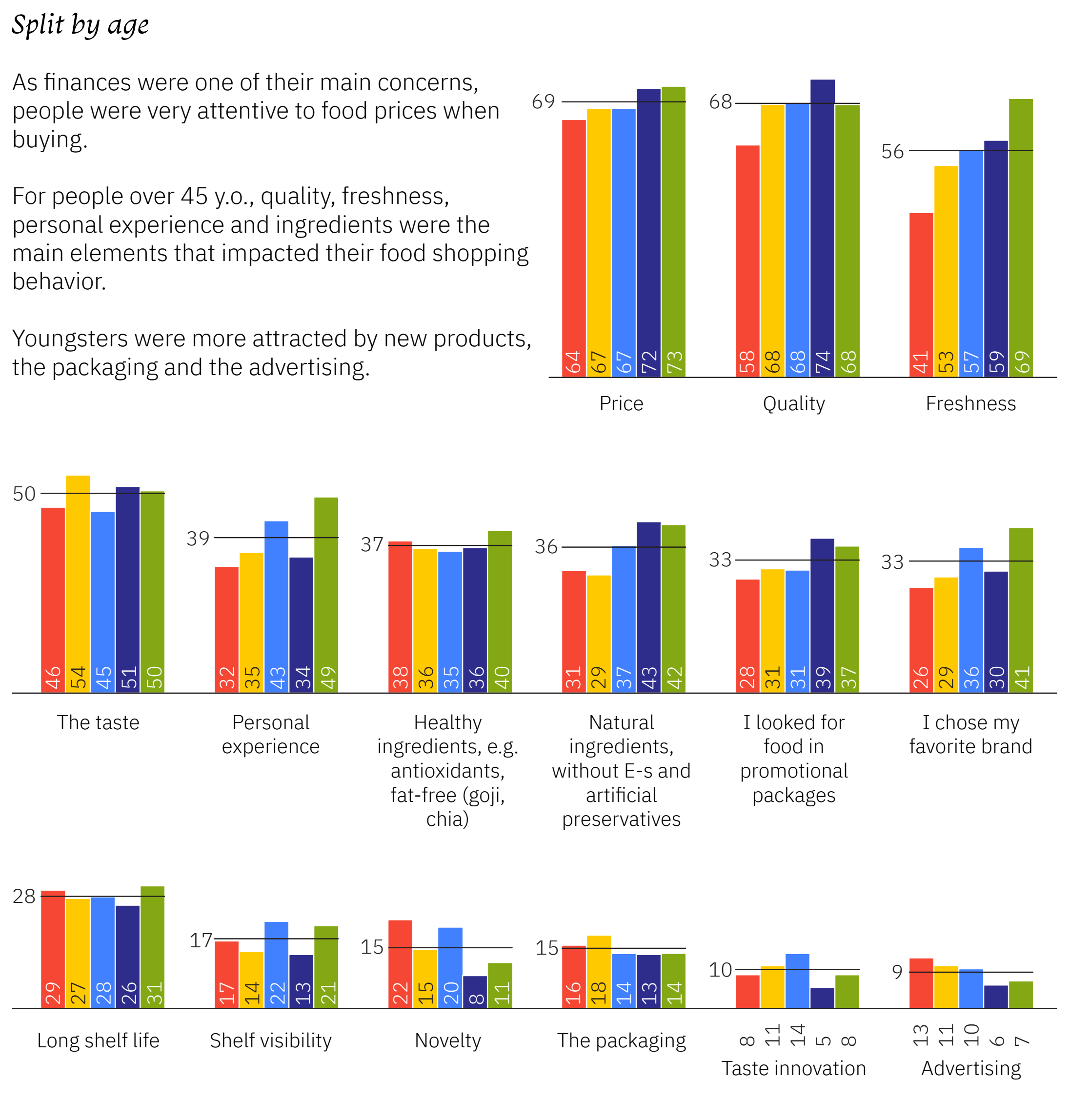
Main Food Selection Criteria

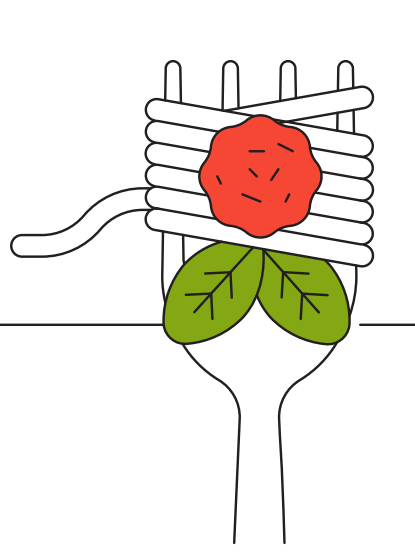
Split by age

As finances were one of their main concerns, people were very attentive to food prices when buying.

For people over 45 y.o., quality, freshness, personal experience and ingredients were the main elements that impacted their food shopping behavior.

Youngsters were more attracted by new products, the packaging and the advertising.



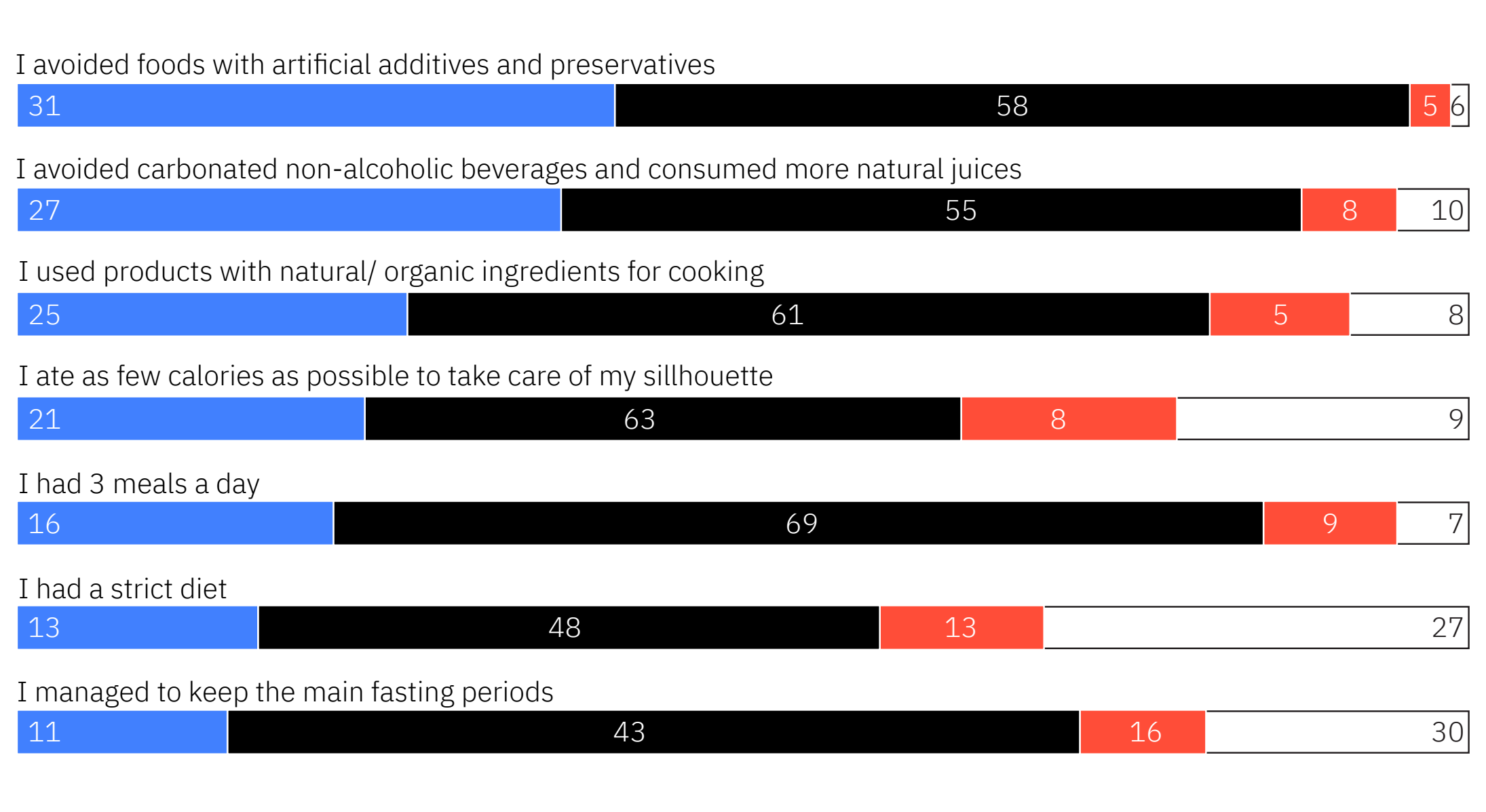


Food Consumption Behavior

Healthy/Natural Behavior

During the pandemic, health become the main aspect in people's life. In this respect, they started to be more aware of what they consume and how they consume.

People have chosen natural product, or even organic food over that with artificial additives. 8 out of 10 respondents avoided carbonated beverages, replacing them with natural juices.

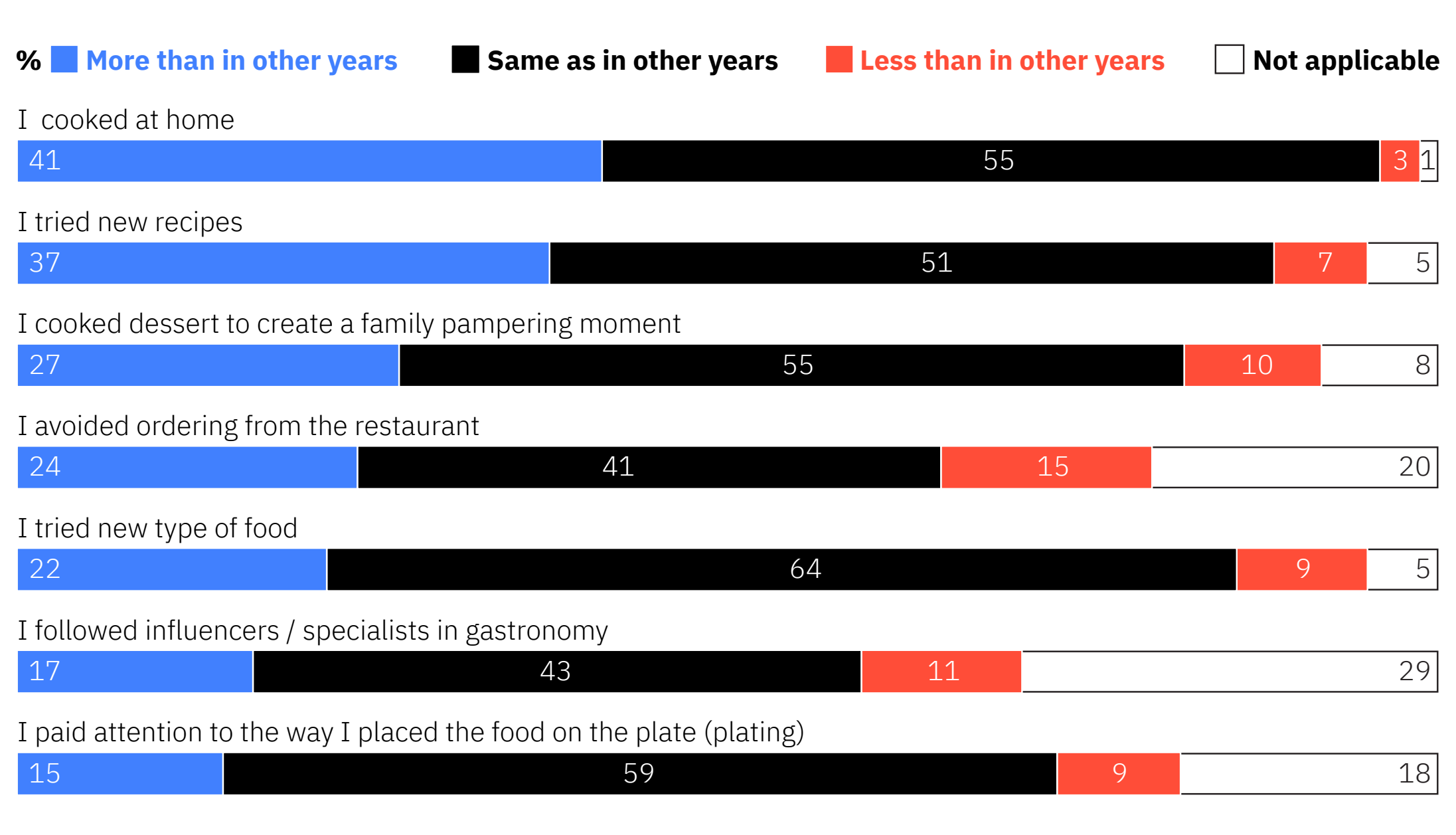


%	More than in other years	Same as in other years	Less than in other years	Not applicable
I avoided foods with artificial additives and preservatives	31	58	5	6
I avoided carbonated non-alcoholic beverages and consumed more natural juices	27	55	8	10
I used products with natural/ organic ingredients for cooking	25	61	5	8
I ate as few calories as possible to take care of my sillhouette	21	63	8	9
I had 3 meals a day	16	69	9	7
I had a strict diet	13	48	13	27
I managed to keep the main fasting periods	11	43	16	30

Food Became my new Hobby

Pandemic helped people in developing many passions and interests, one of them being cooking.

The new context has certainly changed routines, including cooking & eating ones: people tried new recipes and new type of food, consumed more home made desserts to create family pampering moments.

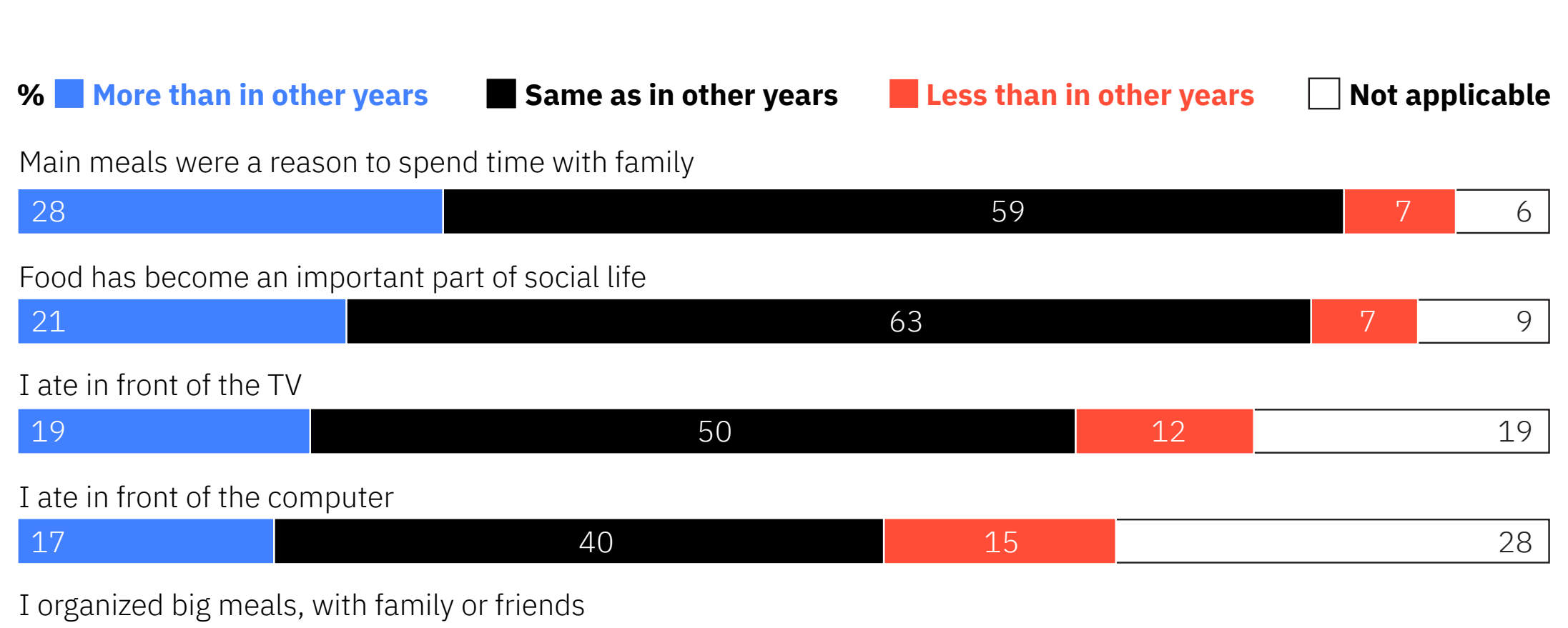


%	More than in other years	Same as in other years	Less than in other years	Not applicable
I cooked at home	41	55	3	1
I tried new recipes	37	51	7	5
I cooked dessert to create a family pampering moment	27	55	10	8
I avoided ordering from the restaurant	24	41	15	20
I tried new type of food	22	64	9	5
I followed influencers / specialists in gastronomy	17	43	11	29
I paid attention to the way I placed the food on the plate (plating)	15	59	9	18

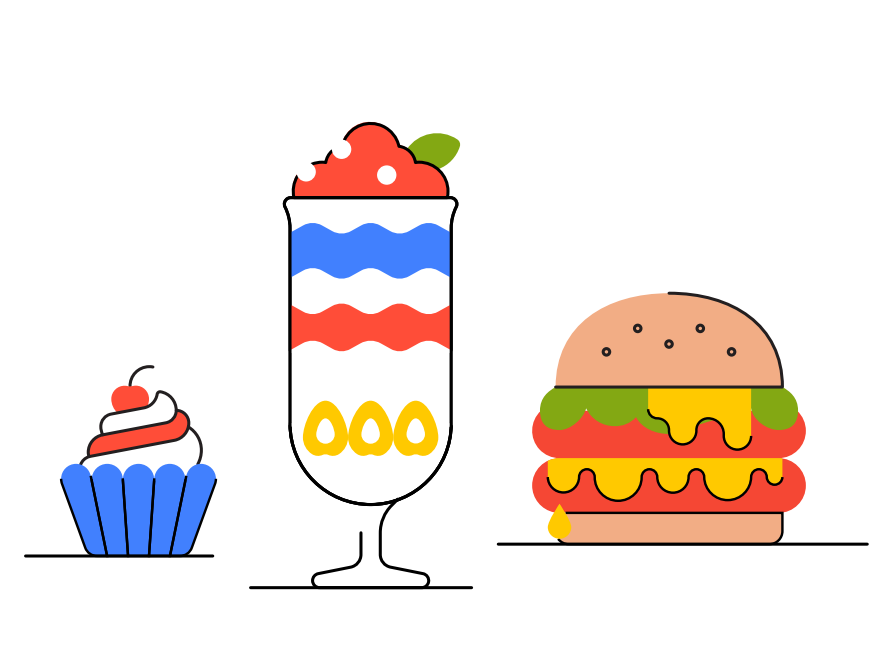
Food my new Social Life

Seeing each other less often than before, people saw main meals as an opportunity to bring the family together. However, many Romanians from urban areas were cautious and organized big meals less than in other years.

6 out of 10 respondents ate in front of the TV, while 5 out of 10 did this in front of the computer.

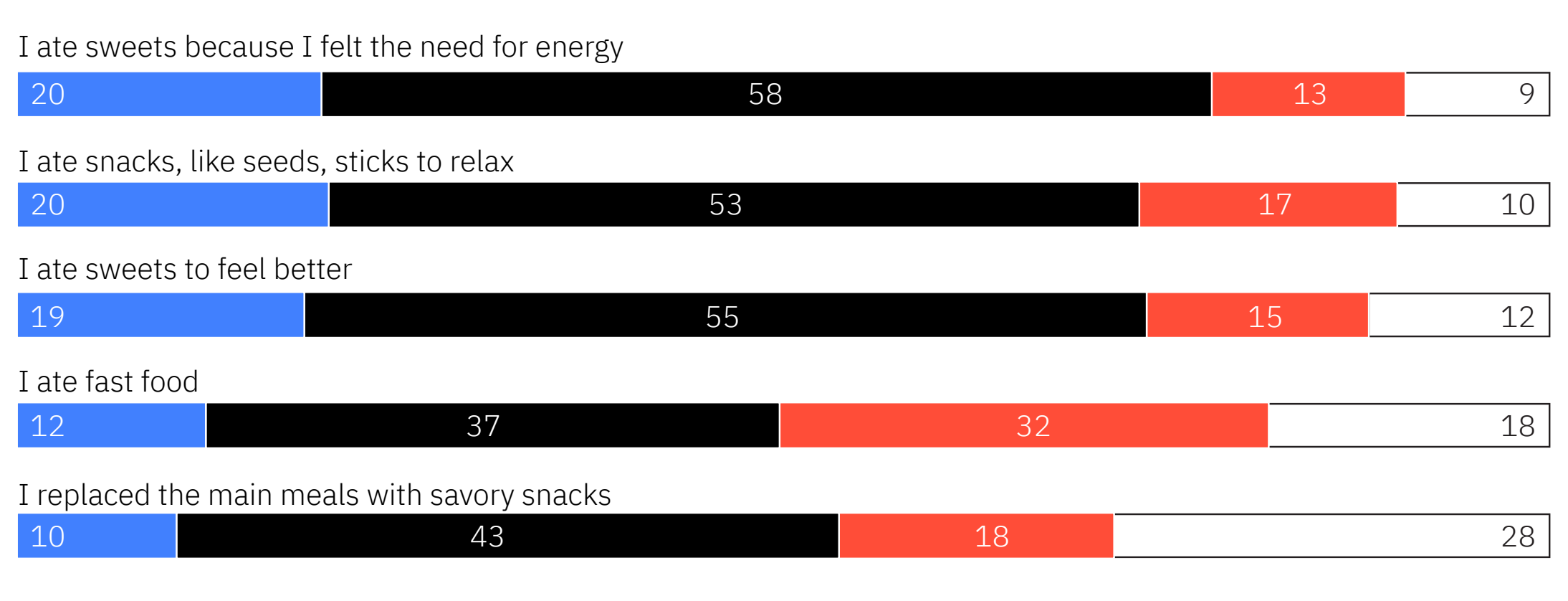


%	More than in other years	Same as in other years	Less than in other years	Not applicable
Main meals were a reason to spend time with family	28	59	7	6
Food has become an important part of social life	21	63	7	9
I ate in front of the TV	19	50	12	19
I ate in front of the computer	17	40	15	28
I organized big meals, with family or friends	9	35	40	17



Junk Food & Sweets made me Feel Better

While sweets began to be consumed more often for energy and to feel better, eating snacks became a way to relax.



%	More than in other years	Same as in other years	Less than in other years	Not applicable
I ate sweets because I felt the need for energy	20	58	13	9
I ate snacks, like seeds, sticks to relax	20	53	17	10
I ate sweets to feel better	19	55	15	12
I ate fast food	12	37	32	18
I replaced the main meals with savory snacks	10	43	18	28

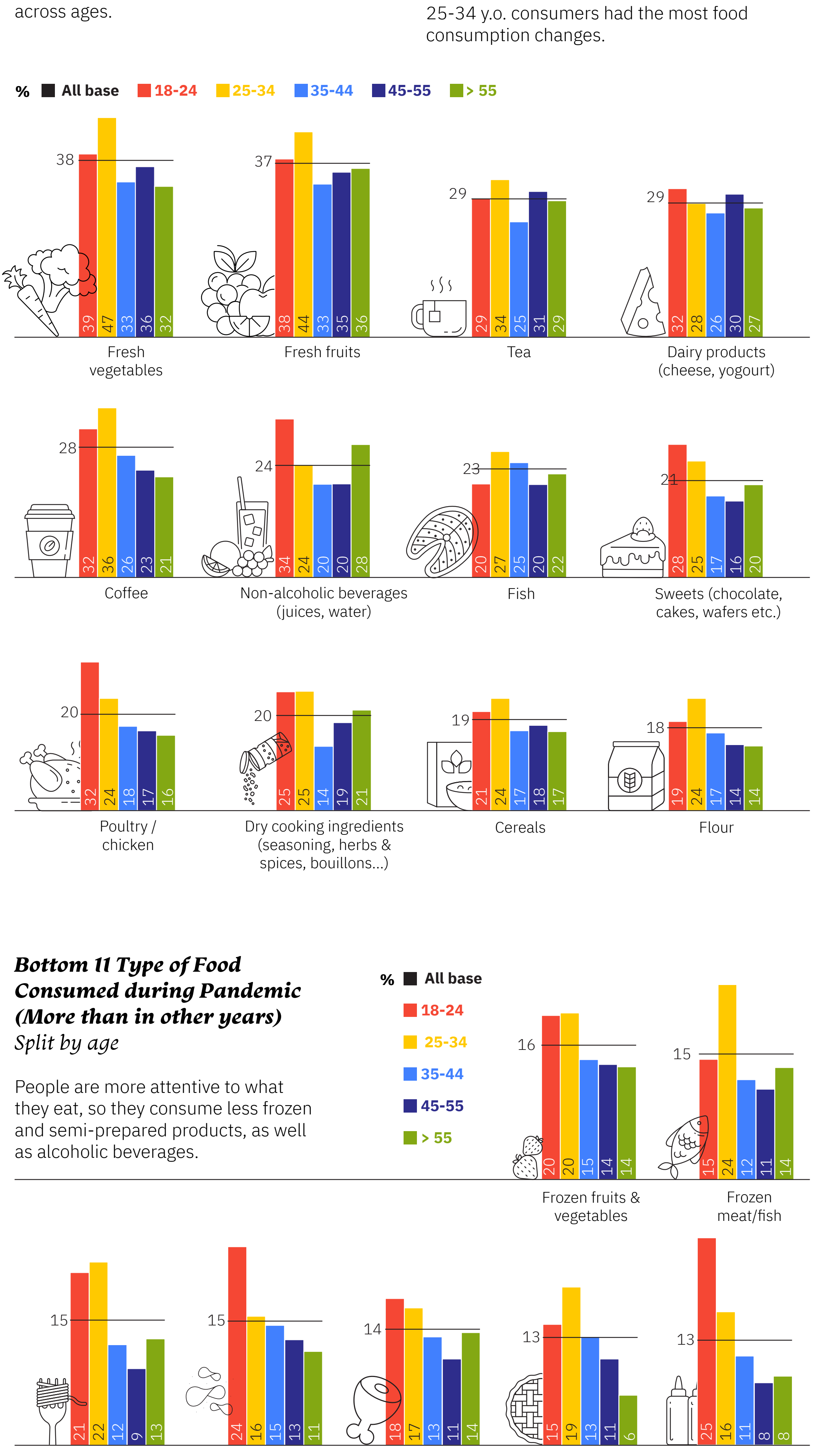
Top 12 Type of Food Consumed during Pandemic (More than in other years)

Split by age

People started to consume more fresh products: fruits and vegetables consumption being higher than meat consumption during the pandemic, across ages.

Coffee consumption increased among people aged 18-34 y.o.

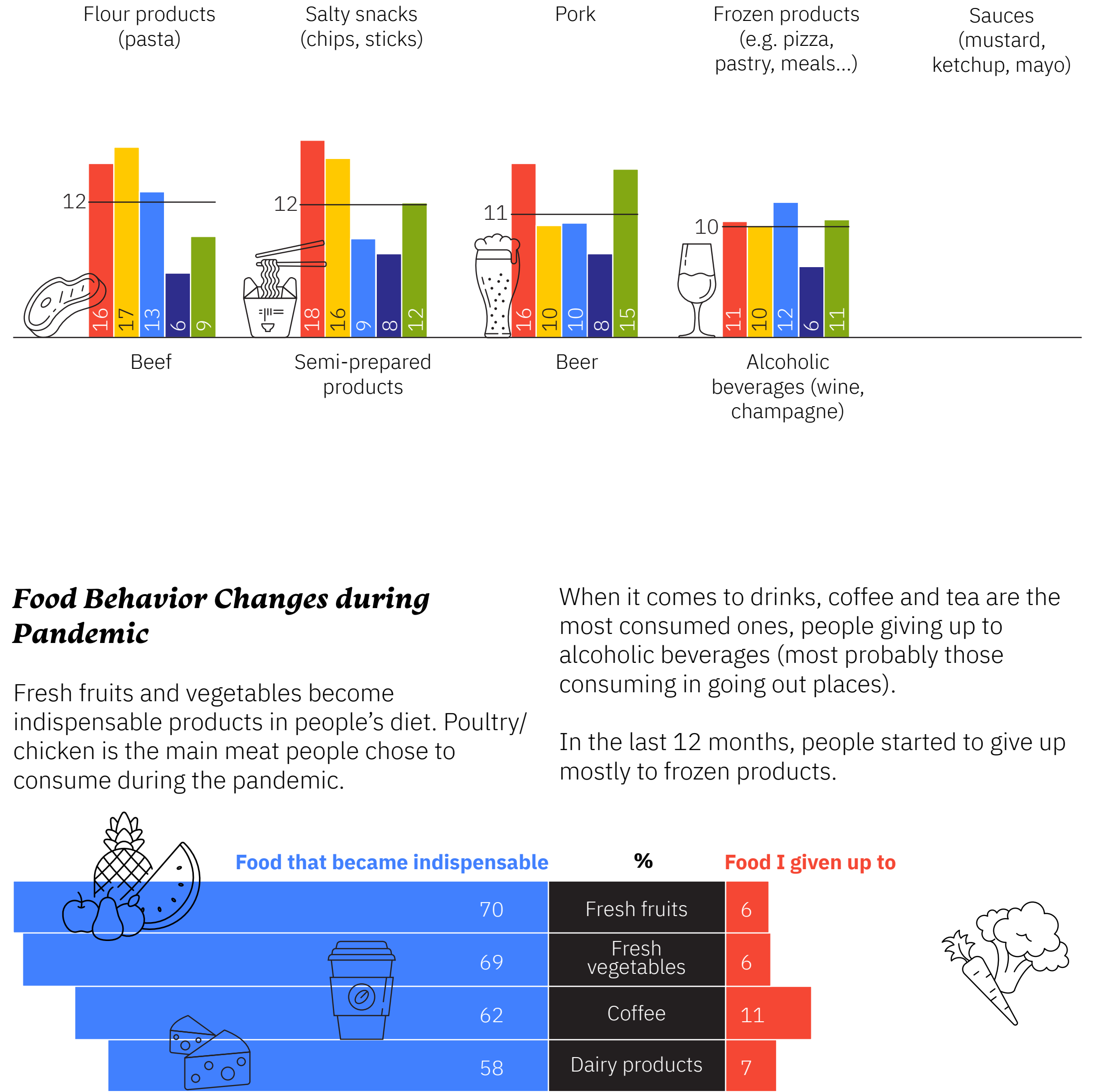
25-34 y.o. consumers had the most food consumption changes.



Bottom 11 Type of Food Consumed during Pandemic (More than in other years)

Split by age

People are more attentive to what they eat, so they consume less frozen and semi-prepared products, as well as alcoholic beverages.

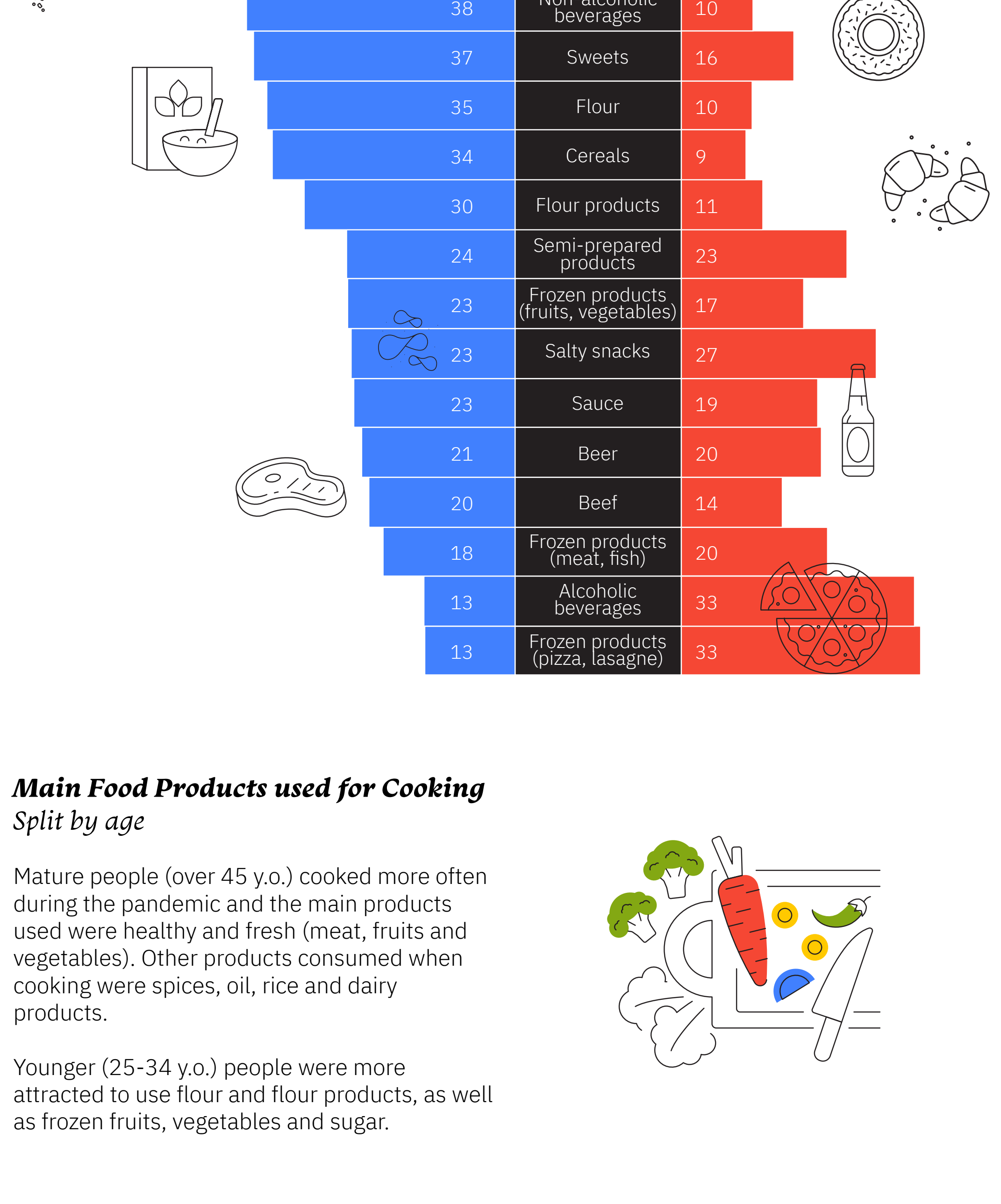


Food Behavior Changes during Pandemic

Fresh fruits and vegetables become indispensable products in people's diet. Poultry/ chicken is the main meat people chose to consume during the pandemic.

When it comes to drinks, coffee and tea are the most consumed ones, people giving up to alcoholic beverages (most probably those consuming in going out places).

In the last 12 months, people started to give up mostly to frozen products.



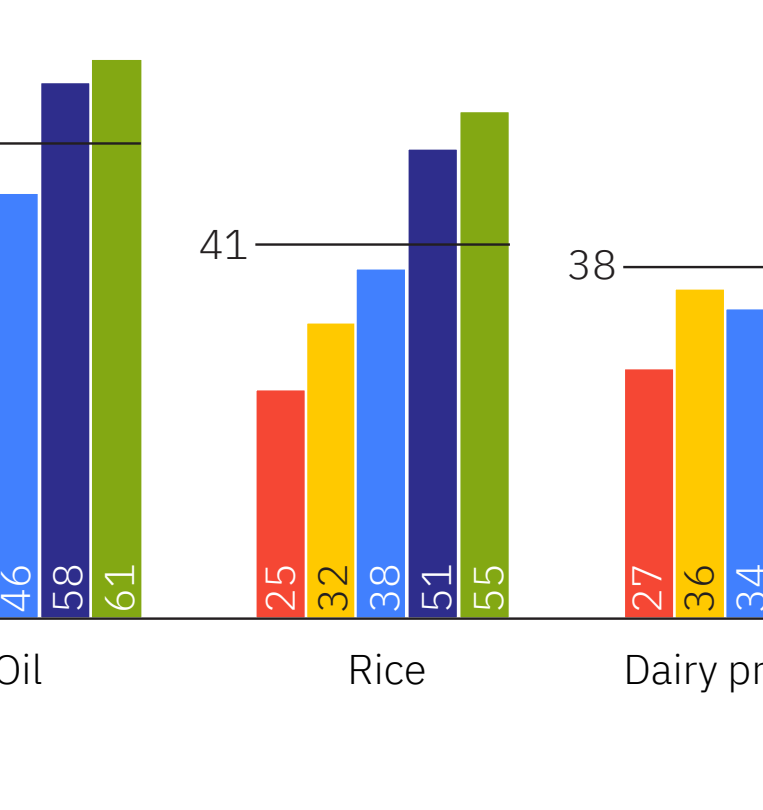
Food that became indispensable	%	Food I given up to
70	Fresh fruits	6
69	Fresh vegetables	6
62	Coffee	11
58	Dairy products	7
55	Poultry / chicken	8
44	Tea	8
43	Pork	10
41	Fish	9
40	Dry cooking ingredients	7
38	Non-alcoholic beverages	10
37	Sweets	16
35	Flour	10
34	Cereals	9
30	Flour products	11
24	Semi-prepared products	23
23	Frozen products (fruits, vegetables)	17
23	Salty snacks	27
23	Sauce	19
21	Beer	20
20	Beef	14
18	Frozen products (meat, fish)	20
13	Alcoholic beverages	33
13	Frozen products (pizza, lasagne)	33

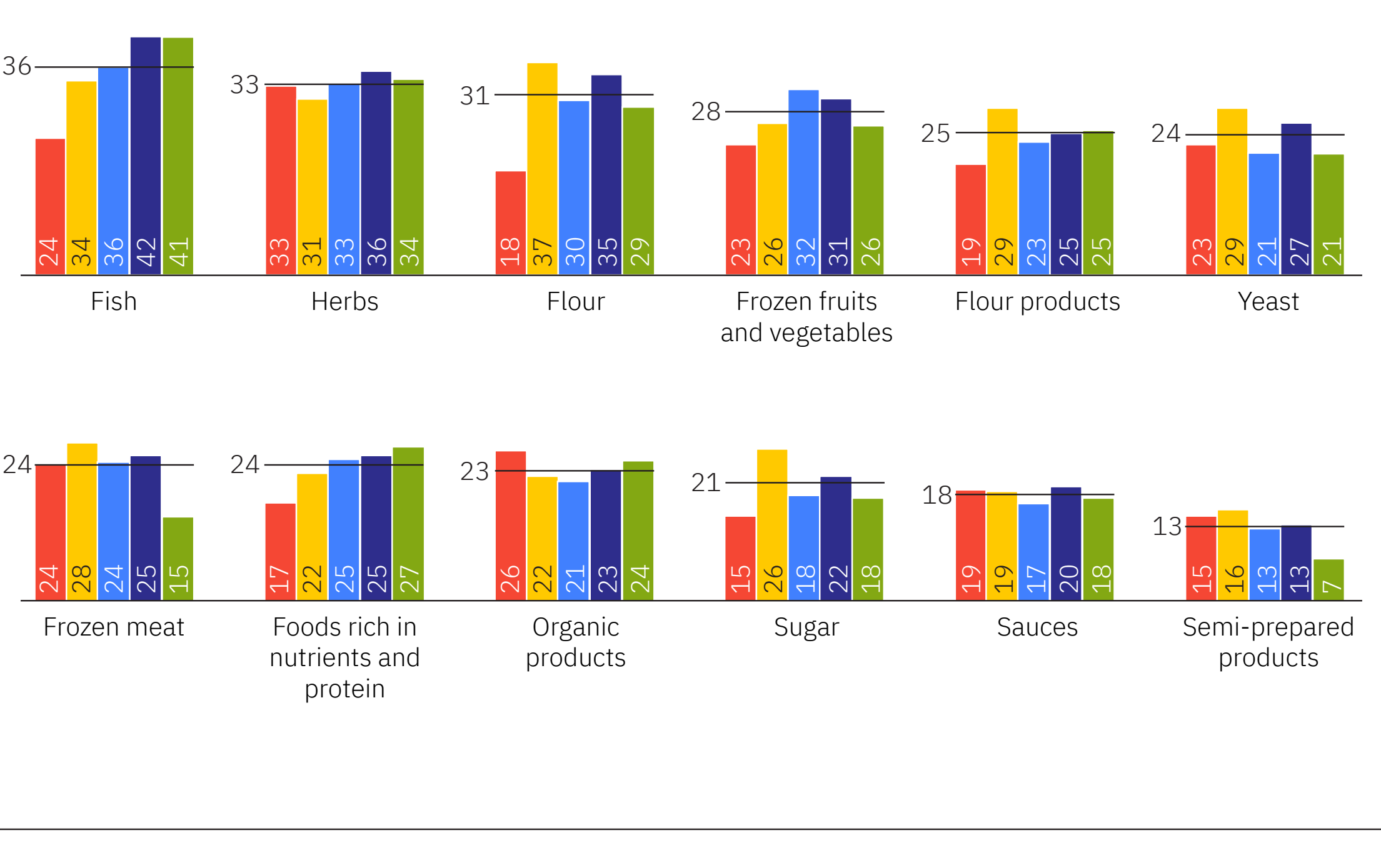
Main Food Products used for Cooking

Split by age

Mature people (over 45 y.o.) cooked more often during the pandemic and the main products used were healthy and fresh (meat, fruits and vegetables). Other products consumed when cooking were spices, oil, rice and dairy products.

Younger (25-34 y.o.) people were more attracted to use flour and flour products, as well as frozen fruits, vegetables and sugar.




% All base 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-55 > 55
Fresh meat 64: 49 59 62 74 74
Fresh fruits and vegetables 58: 39 52 56 64 70
Spices 52: 49 45 52 54 62
Oil 52: 49 47 46 58 61
Rice 41: 25 32 38 51 55
Dairy products 38: 27 36 34 49 43
Fish 36: 24 29 36 42 41
Herbs 33: 33 31 33 36 34
Flour 31: 18 37 30 35 29
Frozen fruits and vegetables 28: 23 26 32 31 26
Flour products 25: 19 29 25 25 25
Yeast 24: 23 29 21 27 21
Frozen meat 24: 28 28 24 25 15
Foods rich in nutrients and protein 24: 17 22 25 25 27
Organic products 23: 26 22 21 23 24
Sugar 21: 15 28 26 22 18
Sauces 18: 19 17 17 20 18
Semi-prepared products 13: 15 16 14 13 7

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