

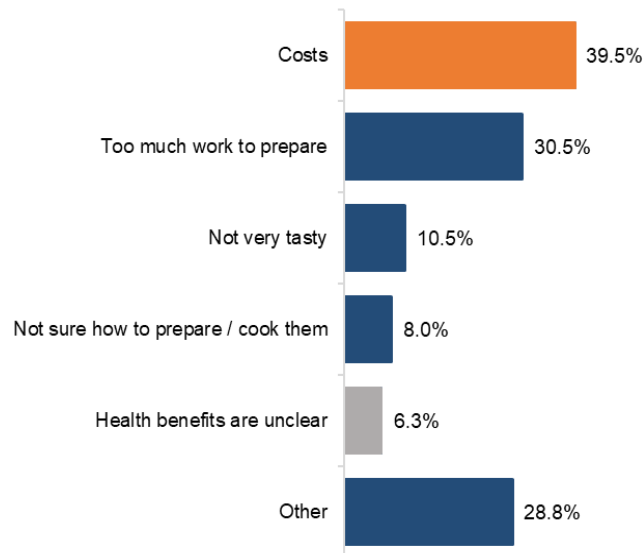
A new report suggests 29.3% of Canadians buy enough produce to match recommended amount by Canada’s new Food Guide.

Halifax, September 2 2021— The year 2021 is the year of International of fruits and vegetable. This latest investigation looks at the consumption of fruits and vegetables in Canada and the inherent risks related to the consumption of produce in general.

British Columbians and Ontarians are produce lovers

The first series of questions were related to where Canadians buy produce and how frequent. While a total of 86.6% of consumers primarily buy their fruits and vegetables at a grocery store, 4.6% claim that they buy most of their produce at a farmers’ market. Interestingly, 1.2% of Canadians grow all their produce themselves. On frequency, 43.1% of Canadians buy enough produce to match Canada’s Food Guide recommended amount, a few days a week, and 29.3% will buy the recommended amount every day. The highest rate of daily purchases is in **British Columbia** at 31.4%, followed by **Ontario** at 31.0%. The lowest rate in the country is **Prince Edward Island** at 11.6%, followed by **Newfoundland and Labrador** at 19.7%.

**What would be the reasons why you don't eat more FRUITS and VEGETABLES?
(Please select all that apply)**



Barriers to purchase fruits and vegetables are numerous. The number one reason why Canadians do not buy produce more often is the **price**. A total of 39.5% of Canadians believe price to be the most significant barrier, followed by the fact that produce requires **too much work to prepare**, at 30.5%. Taste (10.5%), Not sure how to prepare them (8.1%) and unclear health benefits (6.3%) are other popular reasons. Health benefits appear to really motivate Canadians to buy produce. A total of 74.6% of Canadians as an important reason to buy produce.

Frozen/Fresh dilemma and local focus

The dilemma between fresh and frozen impacts what produce Canadians buy. A total of 64.9% of Canadians will only buy fresh produce, and 18.7% prefer frozen produce. That is a significant difference. Majority of Canadians prefer fresh over frozen. As **for local produce**, 27.4% of Canadians claim to buy only local fruits and vegetables. The highest ration of consumers who will only buy local produce is on **Prince Edward Island**, at 39.5%, followed by both **Quebec** and **Nova Scotia** at 30.7%. **Saskatchewan** has the least number of consumers only buying local foods, at 17.5%.

Provinces	Percentage of consumers only buying locally grown produce	Percentage of consumers eating recommended produce amount every day, as per CFG
Prince Edward Island	39.5% (1)	11.6% (10)
British Columbia	27.9% (5)	31.4% (1)
Nova Scotia	30.7% (2)	25.7% (7)
Quebec	30.7% (2)	30.7% (3)
Ontario	29.2% (4)	31.0% (2)
Alberta	21.5% (7)	27.1% (5)
New Brunswick	22.6% (6)	21.3% (8)
Newfoundland and Labrador	20.4% (8)	19.7% (9)
Manitoba	20.1% (9)	29.6% (4)
Saskatchewan	17.5% (10)	27.1% (5)

Consumers will also use different **information sources** to influence their fruit and vegetable choices. The number source for Canadians are food and cooking website at 39.0%. Nutritionists are at 25.3%, followed by Canada's Food Guide at 20.8%. **Dr. Sylvain Charlebois**, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab was intrigued by these results. "Typically, celebrities and websites are quite popular for Canadians looking for information, but with fruits and vegetables, authoritative sources like nutritionists and our food guide appear to be more popular."

Food safety concerns

During our investigation, some questions were asked about pesticide residue. Many Canadians are concerned about chemical residue. A total of 63.4% of Canadians are concerned about **pesticide residue** on produce in grocery stores. While a total of 60.6% of Canadians are concerned about pesticide residues on produce bought at other retail locations, 47.2% are concerned about pesticide residues on produce bought at farmers' markets.

**What sources of information influence your FRUIT and VEGETABLE purchases?
 (Please select all that apply)**



Health benefits

Fruits and vegetables are synonymous with healthy eating. The survey also included questions related to bioactives, cancer risks and microbiome. These results were interesting. Only 21.4% of Canadians will think about bioactive properties when purchasing a fruit or a vegetable. Related to cancer risks, 42.6% of Canadians think about them when purchasing produce and 47.6% eat produce to reduce cancer risks. A total of 66.0% of Canadians see fruits and vegetables as superfoods¹. A total of 66.8% of Canadians eat produce to lose weight and 71.3% eat fruits and vegetables for their microbiome and gut health.

Dr. Vasantha Rupasinghe, co-author of the study and Killam Chair in Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals, believes Canadians may now know enough about the health virtues of fruits and vegetables. “Many fruits can act as bioactives² and can really support Canadians in their quest for a better quality of life. Our survey shows Canadians don’t know enough about how produce can serve as bioactives.”

Download the preliminary results in English and French at <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>.

¹ The term “superfood” is a new term referring to foods that offer maximum nutritional benefits for minimal calories. They are packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

² A bioactive compound will have an effect on a living organism bioactive molecules.

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Methodology: A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in the Summer 2021, in partnership with Caddle. 10,006 Canadians participated in this survey.

Margin of Error: +/- 1.3%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Research Ethics Certificate: No. 2020-5215.

Disclosure: Funding for this survey was provided by **Caddle** and **Dalhousie University**.