



RESEARCH  
& INSIGHT

# Eating & Drinking research 2021

Prepared by B&A



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Having studied eating & drinking **trends in Ireland since 1996**, B&A decided to undertake a comprehensive review of this interesting topic area in August 2021 and this report details the findings of this fascinating nationally representative survey and qualitative research.

## Quantitative



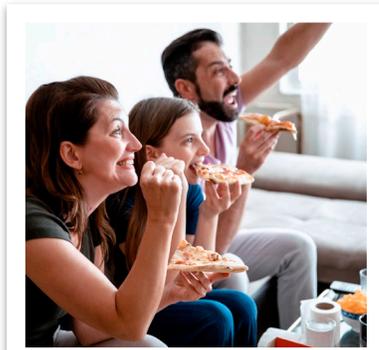
- An online survey of 1,000 adults aged 16+.
- Nationally representative sample.
- 8<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.
- Syndicated study with the IRIS network (22 countries involved in study.) 

## Qualitative



- A series of focus group discussions conducted online.
- ABC1 groups in Dublin & Cork

# Key themes...



**Nights out  
becoming nights in**



**Are we losing the  
traditional Irish pub?**



**We're all foodies**



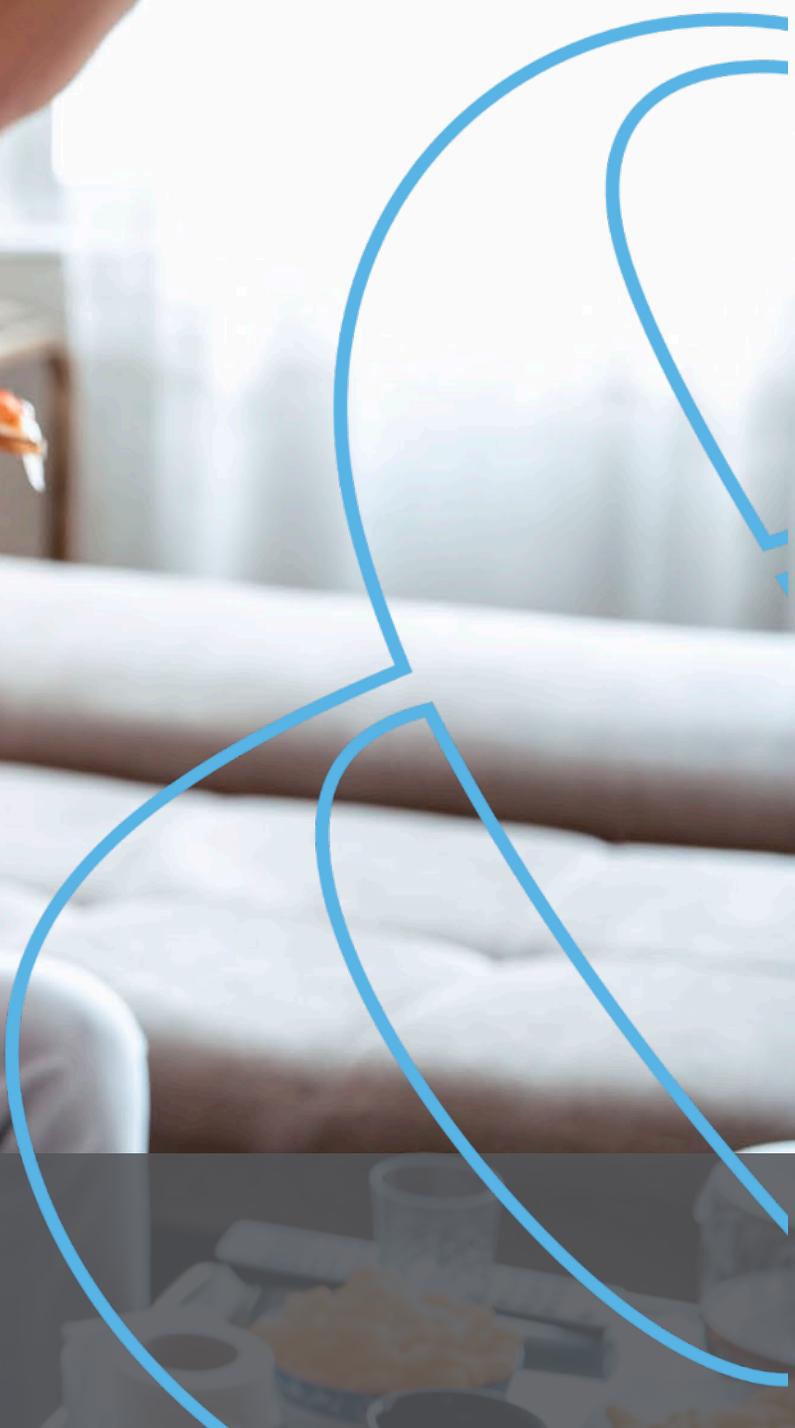
**The health paradox**



**Hard wired for  
reward**

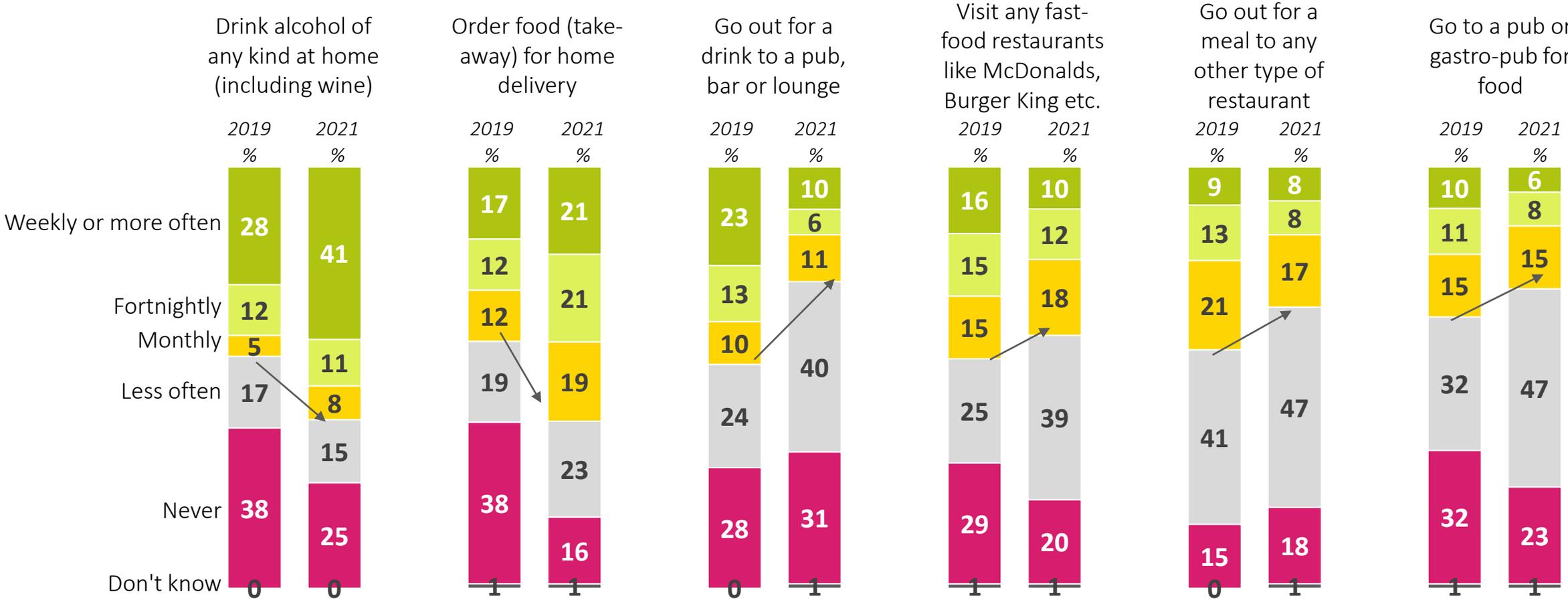


**Behind the curve on  
sustainability**



Nights out becoming nights in

# Understandably, our 'nights out' have shifted to 'nights in' over the past two years



**2 in 5 Irish adults now drink alcohol at home weekly or more often (+13% pts in comparison with 2019), while 42% are ordering food for home delivery monthly or more often (+13% pts).**



# Increased consumption in the home

## AVERAGE FORTNIGHTLY SPEND

2019: Pre-COVID

2021: Post-COVID



**Food for home delivery**

Annualised:  
**€1,100 mn**

Total: **€40 mn**

Average\*: **€27**

VS

Annualised:  
**↑ €1,740 mn**

Total: **€67 mn**

Average\*: **€32 ↑**

Average spend is up, higher frequency and higher proportion of population ordering home delivery.



**Drinks at home**

Annualised:  
**€1,115 mn**

Total: **€40 mn**

Average\*: **€23**

VS

Annualised:  
**↑ €1,700 mn**

Total: **€65 mn**

Average\*: **€28 ↑**

Average spend is up, and a much higher proportion drinking at home.

\*Average fortnightly spend among spenders

# Entertaining at home

Sign of the times 2021: Of those working from home n = 354

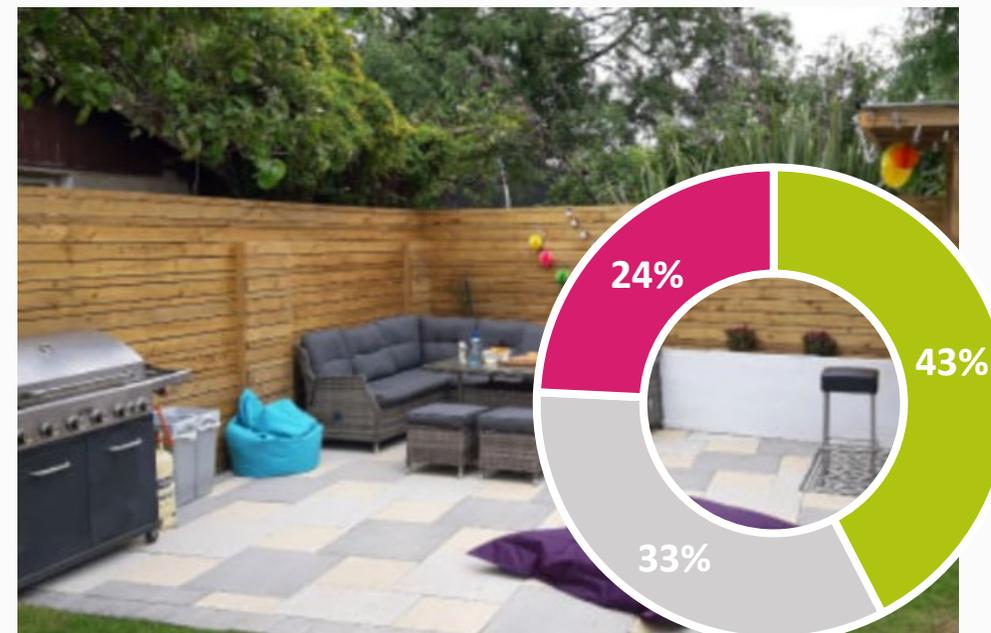


- Any agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Any disagree

*When Covid-19 ends, what will be your main priorities ... Going to restaurants/pubs*



*Even when Covid-19 ends I think I will spend more time entertaining in my home than before Covid-19*

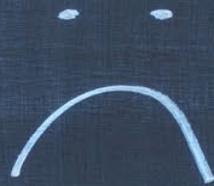


-34s: 52%  
35-54: 42%  
55+: 34%

The home is likely to have a more prominent position in food and drink as we emerge from the pandemic.

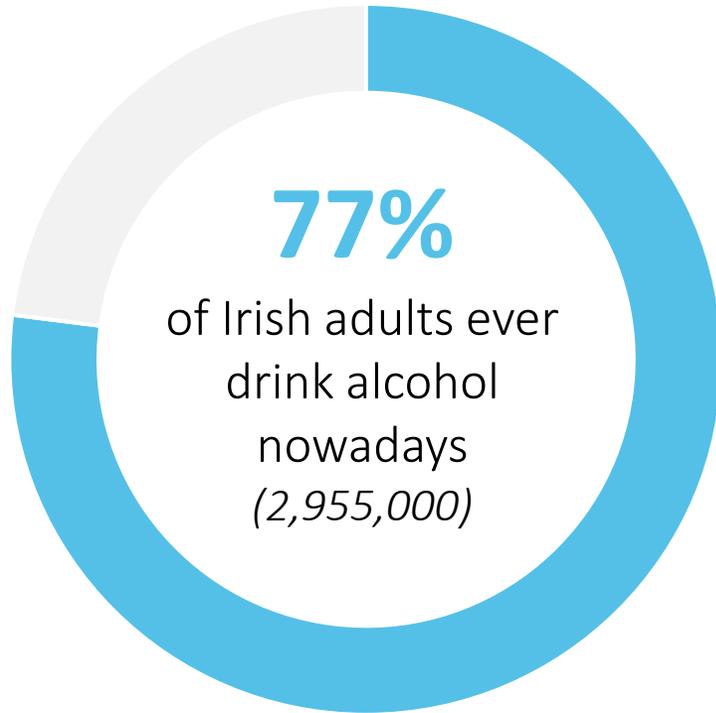


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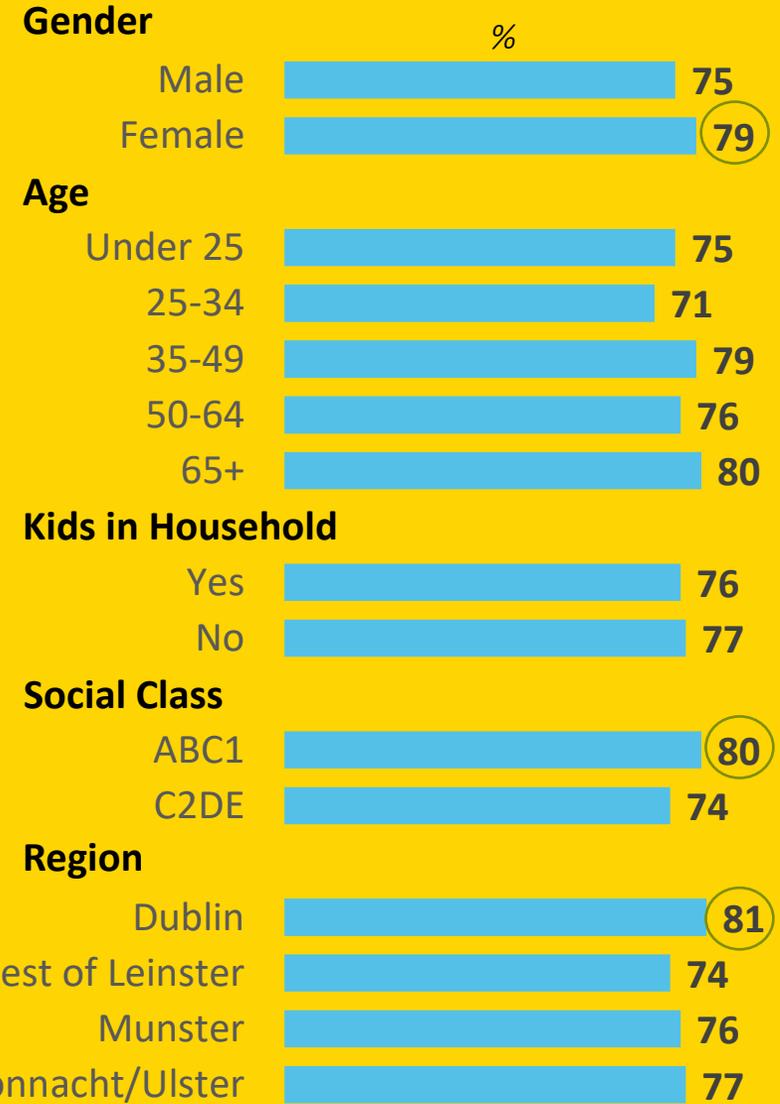
Are we losing the traditional Irish pub?

# More than three quarters of us drink alcohol nowadays



**Women more likely to drink alcohol than men, while proportion of drinkers higher among middle class and Dubliners also.**

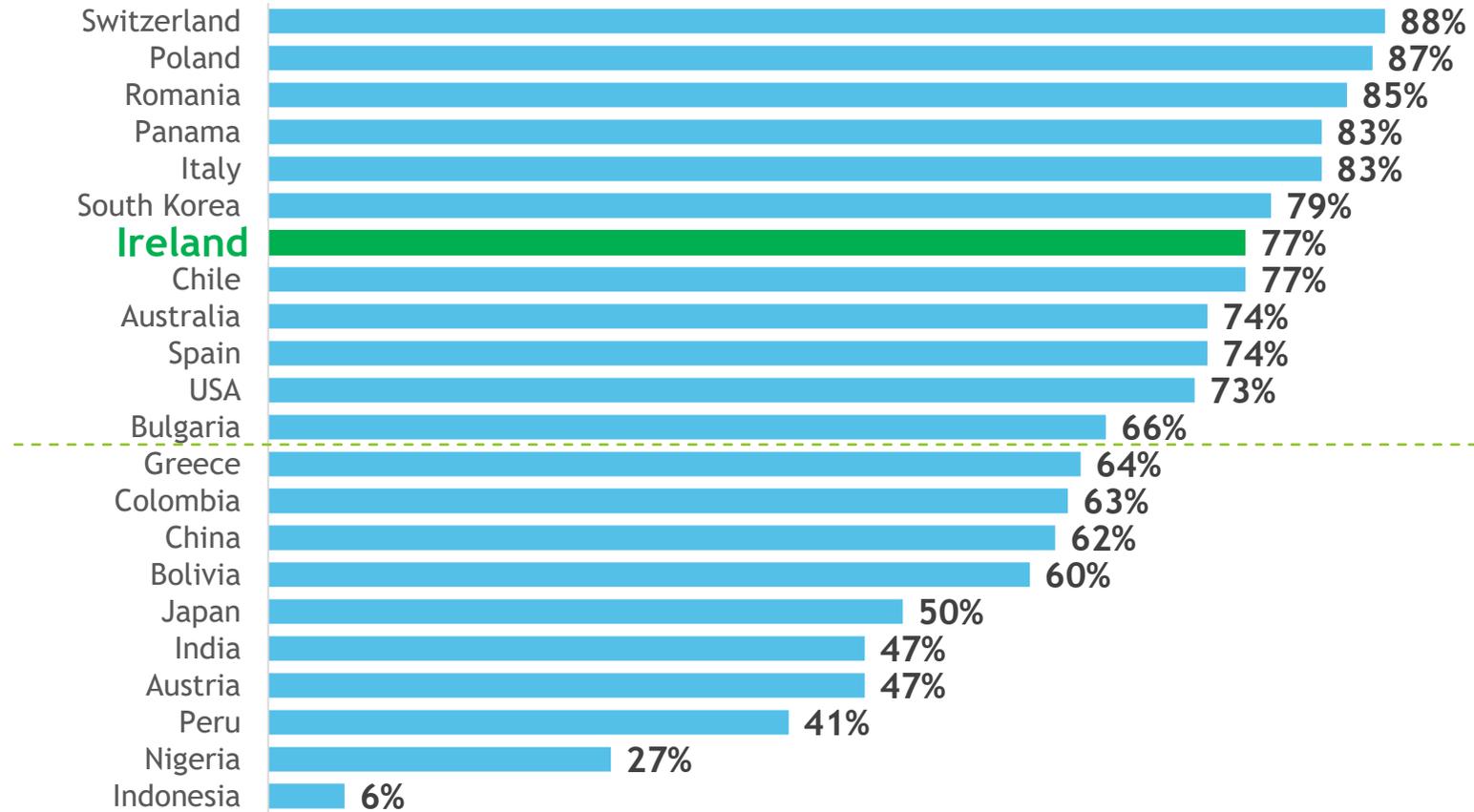
## Ever Drink Alcohol



Base: All adults aged – 1,029/3,839,000

# When we compare ourselves on a global scale, we're above average, but not the most likely drinkers...

*% drink alcohol nowadays*

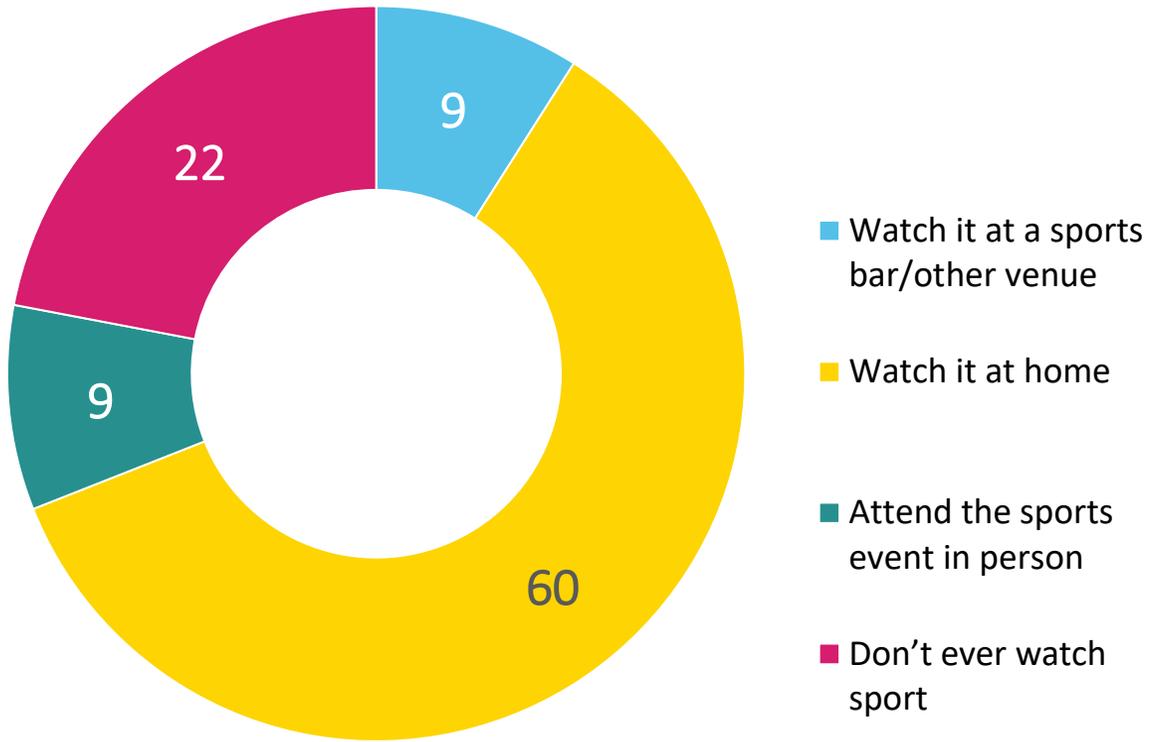




More than 1 in 4 (28%)  
adults go for drinks  
outdoors/in a park  
nowadays....

Rising to 72% of under  
25s and 53% of 25-34s.

# Majority of sports fans would most likely watch a big event at home



3 in 5 adults would watch a sporting event at home while only 9% would watch it at a sports bar or other venue.





We're all foodies

# Our bond with food has risen to a new level

## Discovery in the kitchen



With more time on our hands, cooking was and continues to be prioritised by many.

## An increased confidence in our abilities



More knowledge and confidence means that previously uncharted waters in the kitchen can now be navigated.

**An increasingly discerning grocery shopper has emerged.**

# Many of our needs have graduated to a new level

## Graduated needs



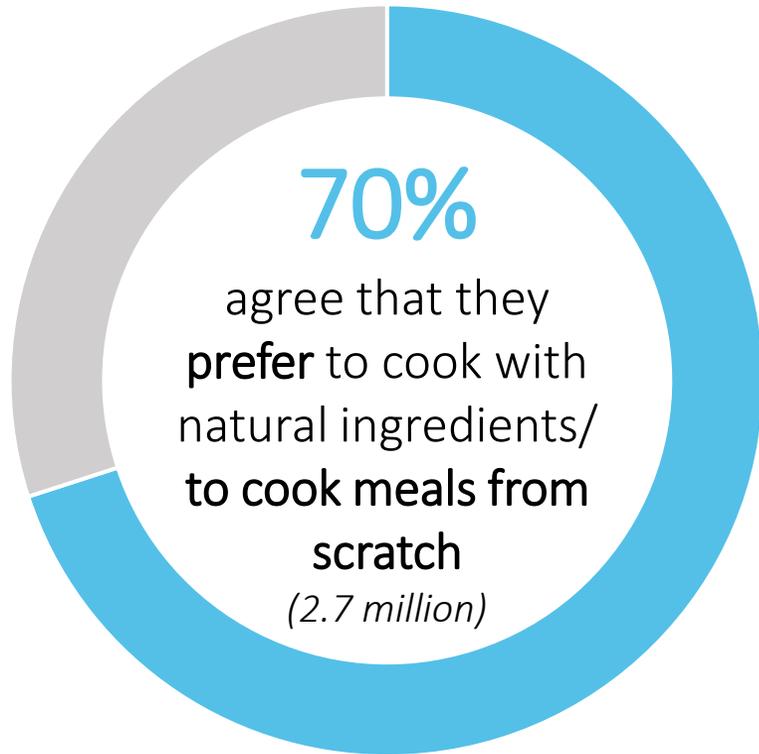
Some products that previously would have been classified as 'a treat' have graduated to 'a need' as a more discerning shopper has emerged.

“

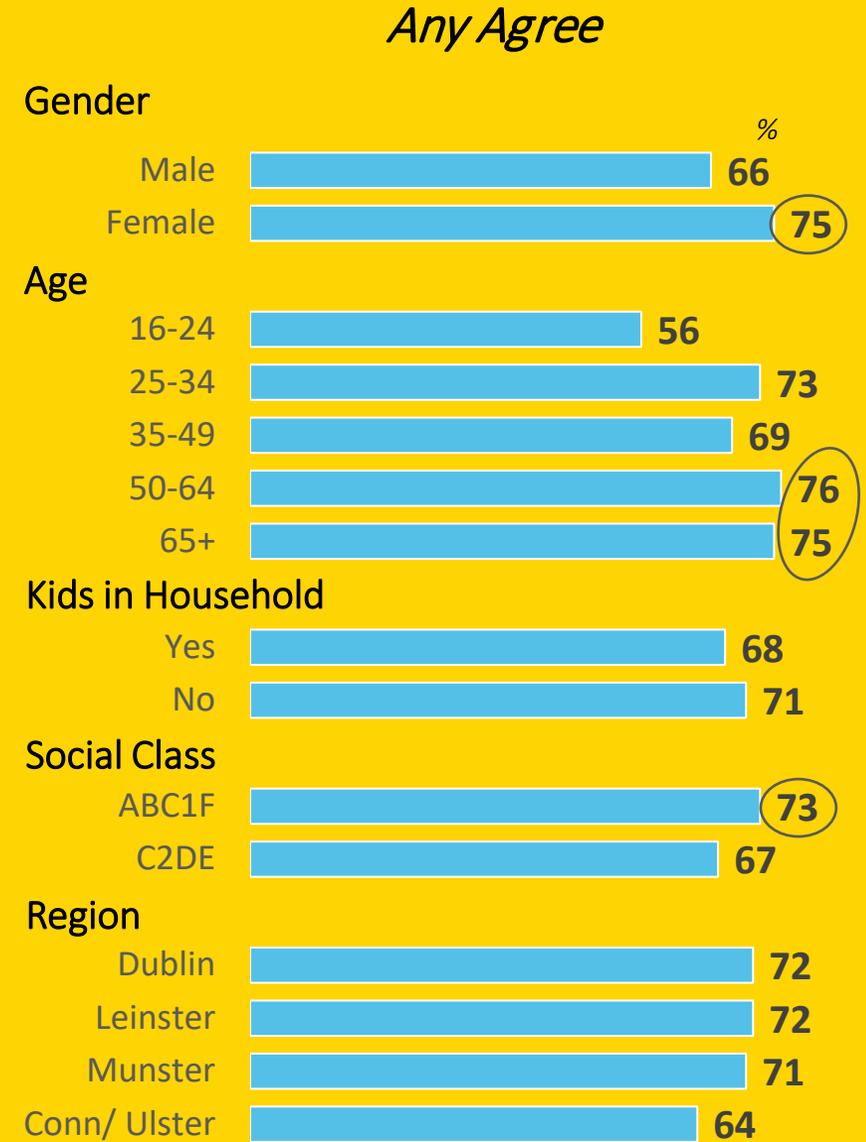
*I'd never go back to using own label tins of tomatoes now I know how much better the Roma branded ones are!*

**Brands need reassess the value that they are delivering to today's shopper.**

# Majority are getting 'back to basics' when cooking



Women, older adults and the middle class are the most inclined to agree that they prefer cooking meals from scratch. Under 25s the least likely to say so.

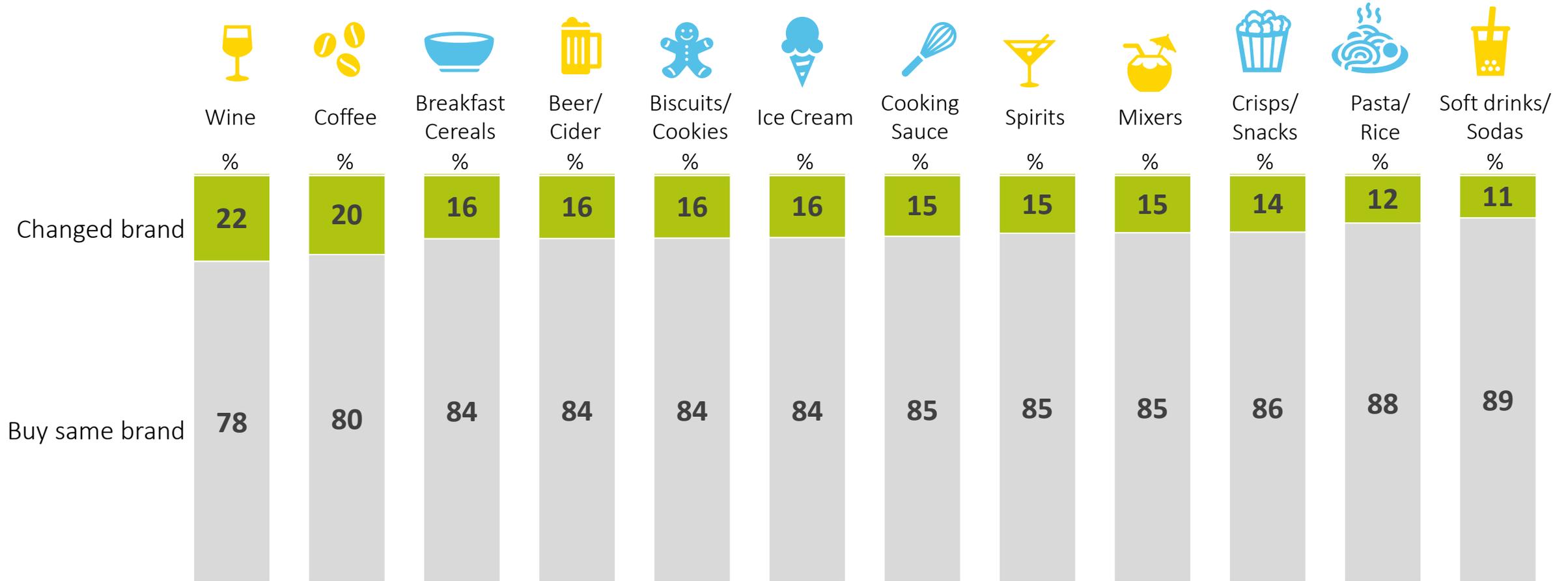


Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000



Q.4 Looking at the statements below, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them.

# And while the majority claim to have stuck with their typical brand since the start of the pandemic, 47% of adults have switched at least one brand



More than a fifth (22%) of wine purchasers switched brand during the pandemic, while 1 in 5 coffee purchasers have changed their coffee brand.



Q.5a For each of the following types of products, could you please tell us whether or not you have changed the brand you buy since the start of the pandemic?



The health paradox

## Health is highly salient



The pandemic clearly highlighted the importance of keeping healthy.

Those who were healthier had better health outcomes and less lifestyle restrictions during the pandemic.

## Permissible indulgence



We are considering health more often.

But at the same we are more accepting of 'treating ourselves'.

## Achieving balance



Instead of playing at opposite ends of the health spectrum throughout the year in preparation for holidays and other events etc...

there is a newfound appreciation of achieving a more holistic and consistent balance.

## Food on mood



Greater attention to the enjoyment of food and how it can regulate our overall mood and wellbeing (both physical and mental).

## Picking our sins



Giving ourselves a mental budget of sins during the day.

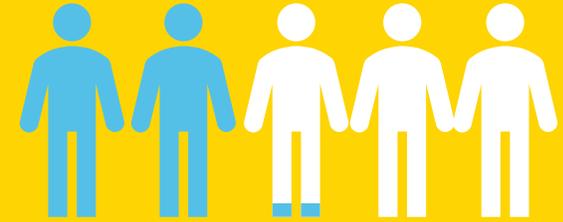
‘Getting dinner right’ from a health perspective can offset sins elsewhere.

## Readjusting to on-the-go



As we reengage with convenience, we are looking for options that fit within our evolving definitions of health.

Making ‘better choices’ throughout the day is more salient. Can brands adjust to this new definition of convenience?



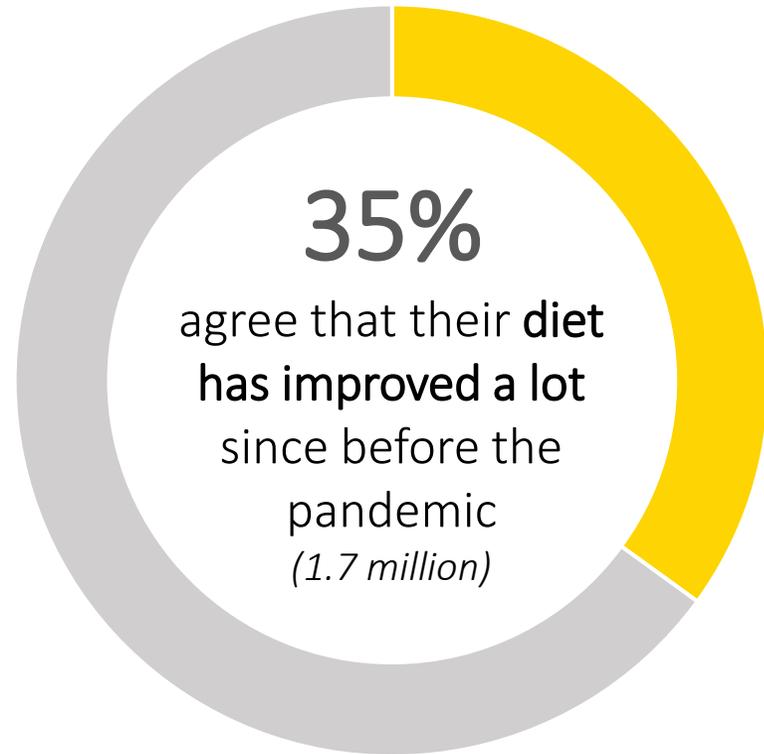
**More than 2 in 5 (44%)** adults agree that their diet has changed a lot since the pandemic.

Rising to **55%** of **under 35s.**



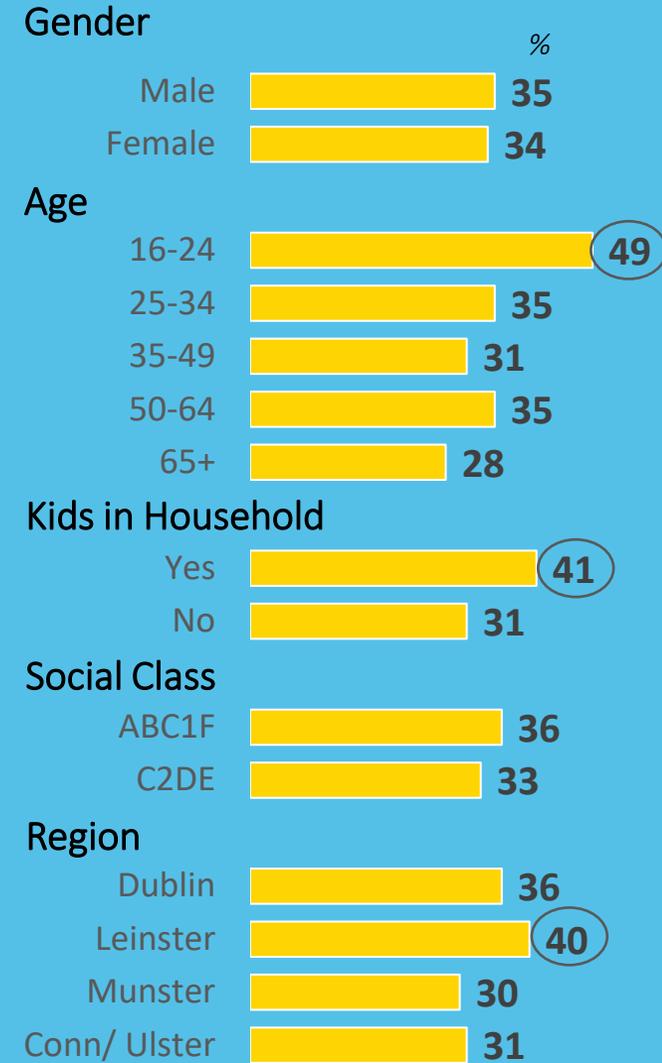
Q.4 Looking at the statements below, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them.

# Many who have changed their diet have done so for the better



Half of under 25s agree that their diet has improved a lot since before the pandemic, while middle class more likely to agree with this than the working class.

## Any Agree



Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000



Hard wired for reward

# Many are struggling to drop snacking behaviours picked up during the pandemic

## Wired for reward



- Sacrifices elsewhere granted extra permission.
- Anticipated consumption/to have something to look forward to.

## Grazing



- Less for fuel and more for reward and alleviating boredom.
- But snacking for 'fuel' is making a comeback as we become increasingly on-the-go

## Need to control



- Some reigned in their snacking behaviour.
- Others are prolonging reward ('treat brain').

# Many of us have become wired for reward

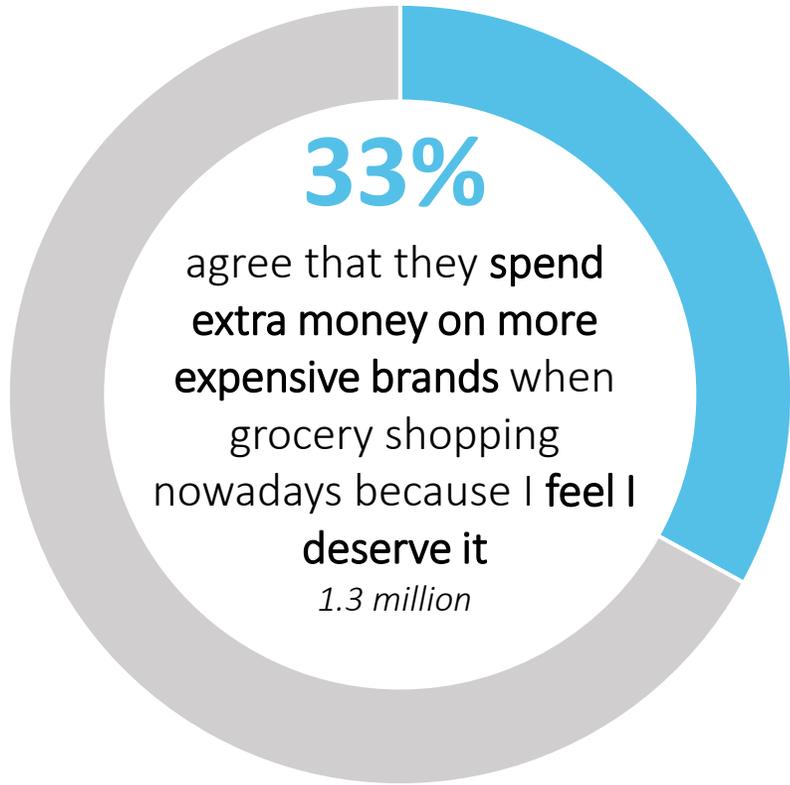


Many are finding it hard to let go of the 'me to me' purchasing

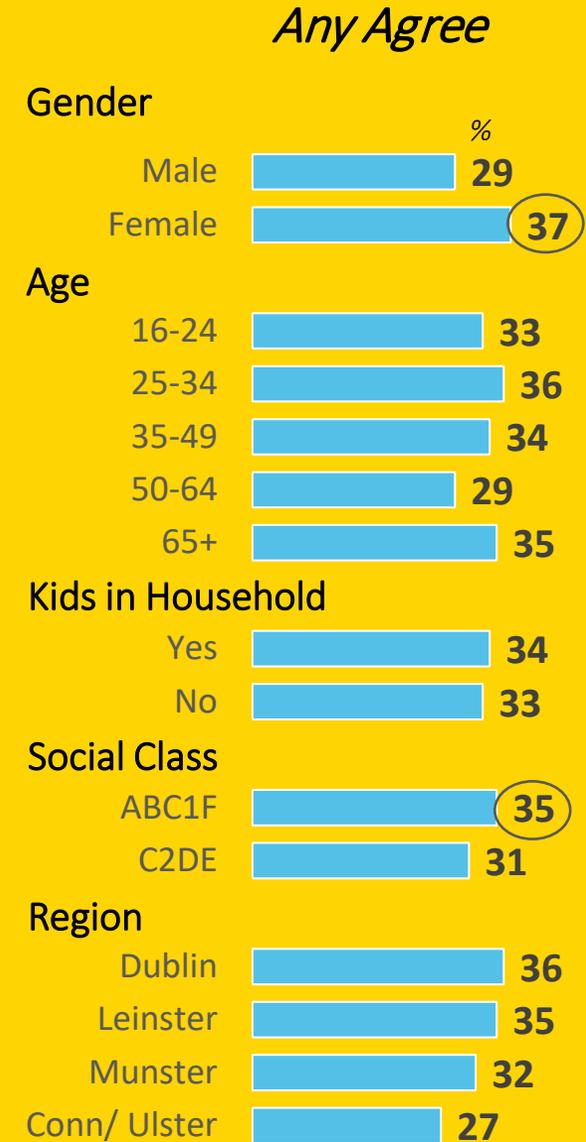
“

*I'm not feeling guilty about spending because I am a foodie and I do like nice wine.*

# 1 in 3 feel they deserve a treat when grocery shopping



**Women and the middle class more inclined to agree that they are spending more on expensive groceries because they feel they deserve it.**

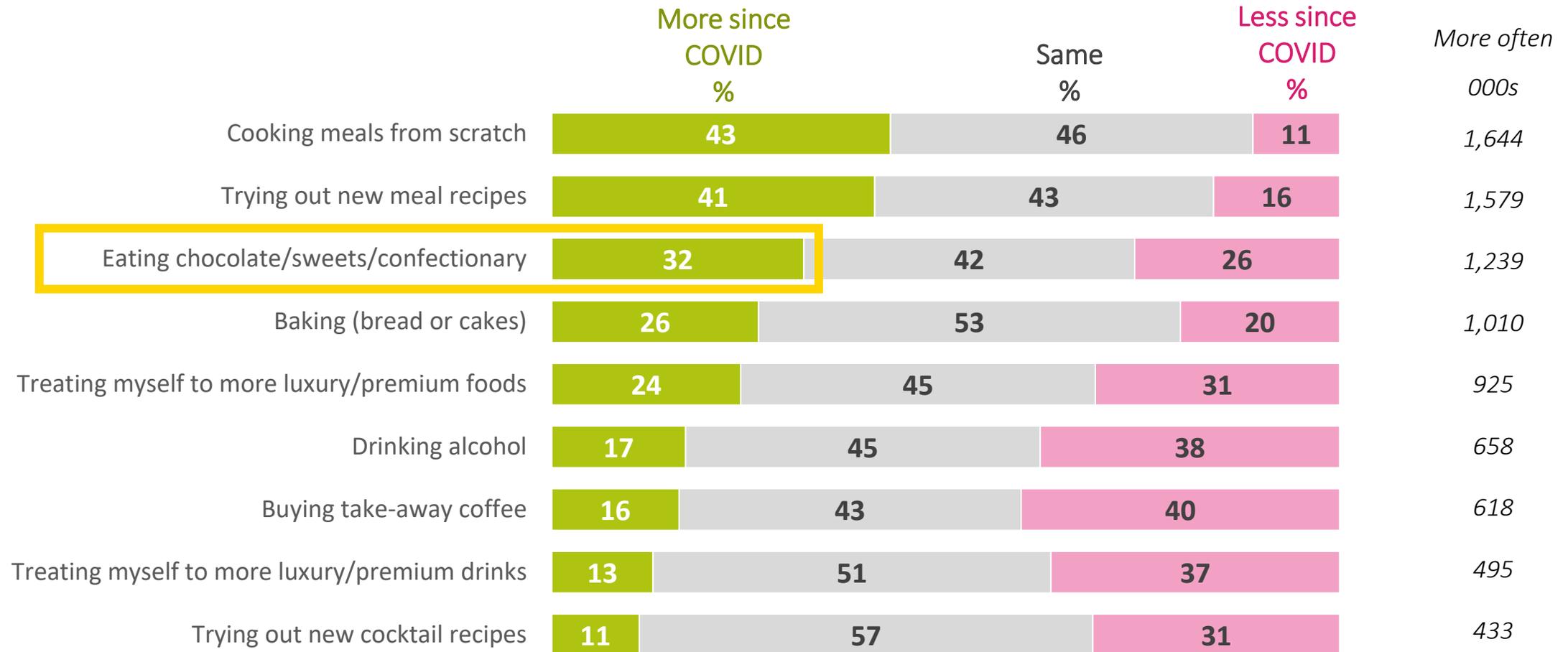


Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000



Q.6 We'd now like you to think about reasons for buying. For each of the statements below, please tell us how strongly or otherwise you agree or disagree with each of them.

# One third of us are eating chocolate/sweets/confectionary more often now than we were pre-pandemic

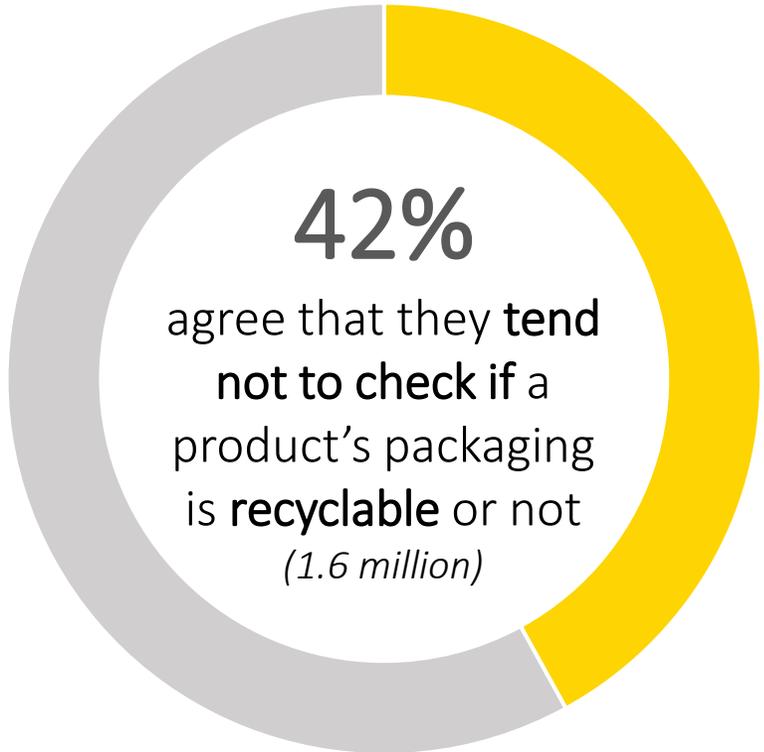


More than 2 in 5 (43%) are cooking meals from scratch more now than they were before COVID (1.6 million), while 41% are trying out new meal recipes (1.58 million).



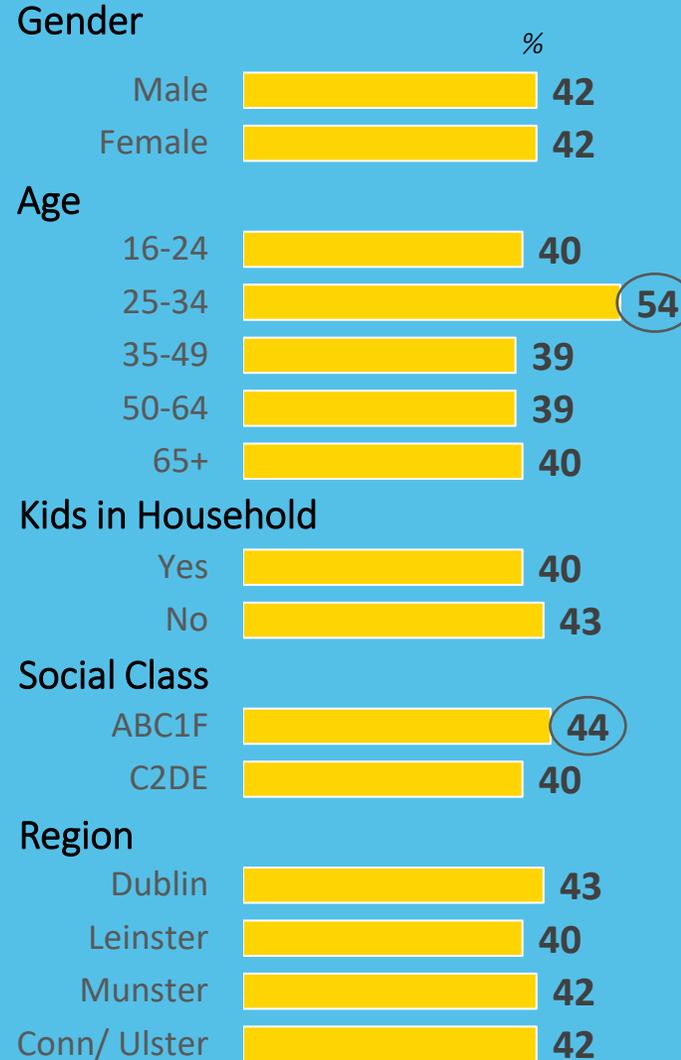
Behind the curve on  
sustainability

# More than half (54%) of 25-34s do not check if the packaging of products they buy is recyclable or not



**Marginally higher level of agreement among middle class adults also.**

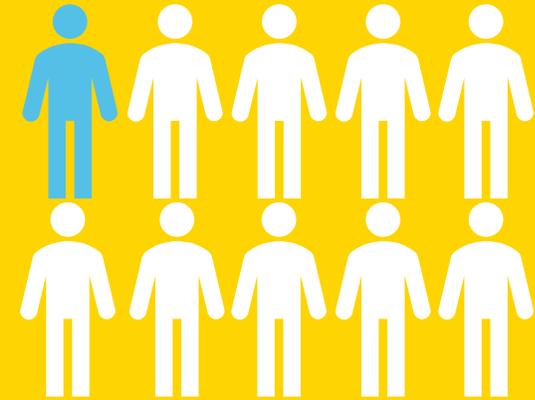
## Any Agree



Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000

Q.6 We'd now like you to think about reasons for buying. For each of the statements below, please tell us how strongly or otherwise you agree or disagree with each of them.





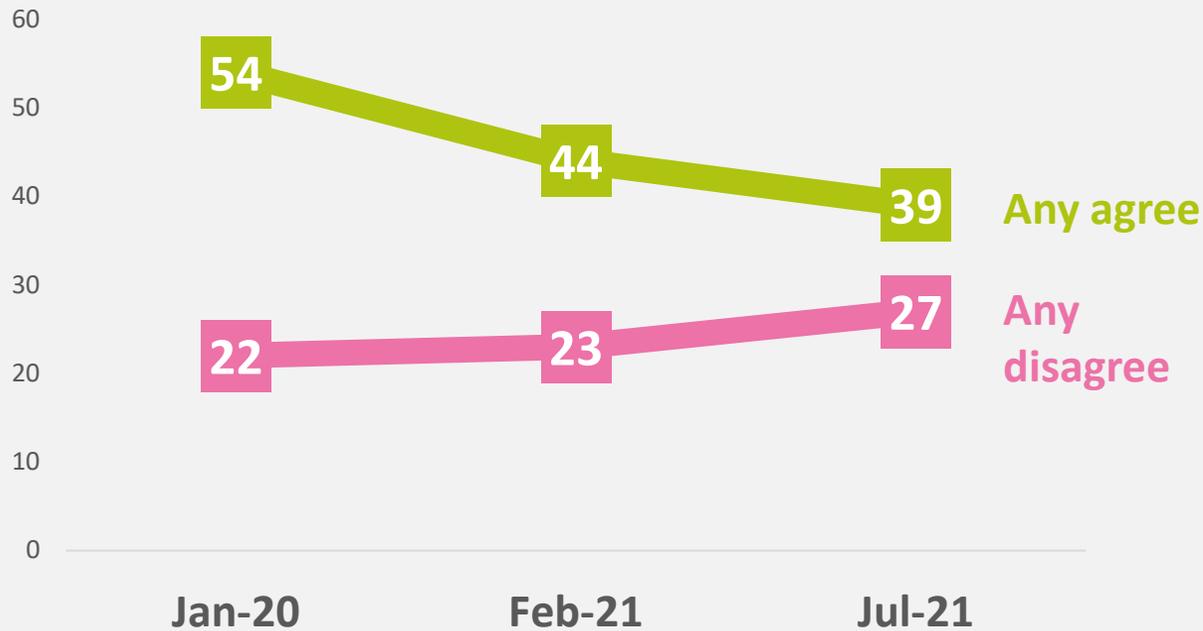
Only 1 in 10 (approx. 370,000 adults) adults are trying to buy more foods that are sustainable



Q.4 Looking at the statements below, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them.

# ...fewer Irish adults are giving consideration to sustainability when shopping for groceries in 2021

*I give a lot of consideration to sustainability when shopping for groceries*



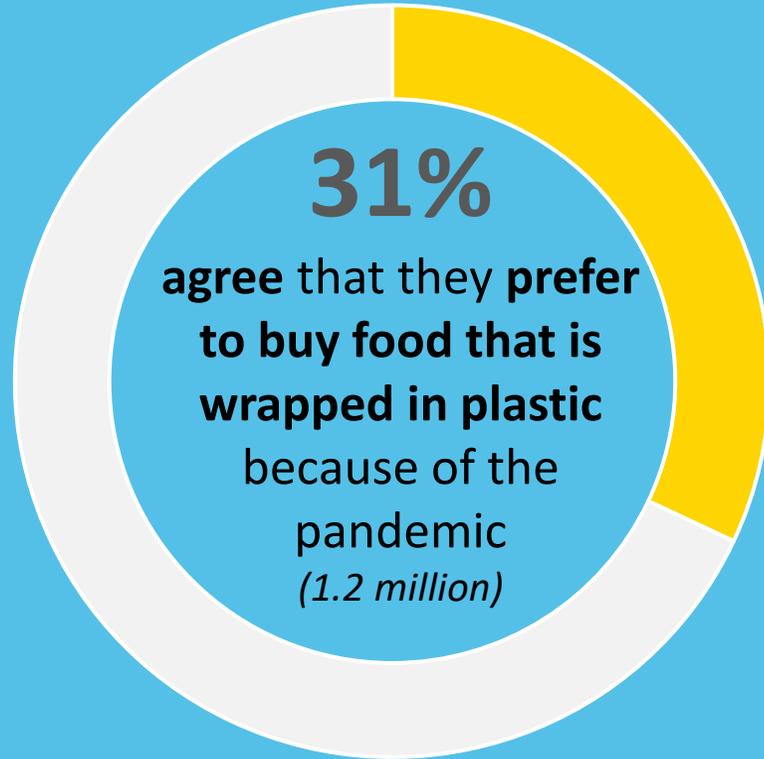
Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000

Q.6 We'd now like you to think about reasons for buying. For each of the statements below, please tell us how strongly or otherwise you agree or disagree with each of them.



# Opinion divided on the need for plastic wrapping due to COVID-19

Base: All adults: 1,029/3,839,000



Women	36%
25-34s	38%
Leinster dwellers	36%

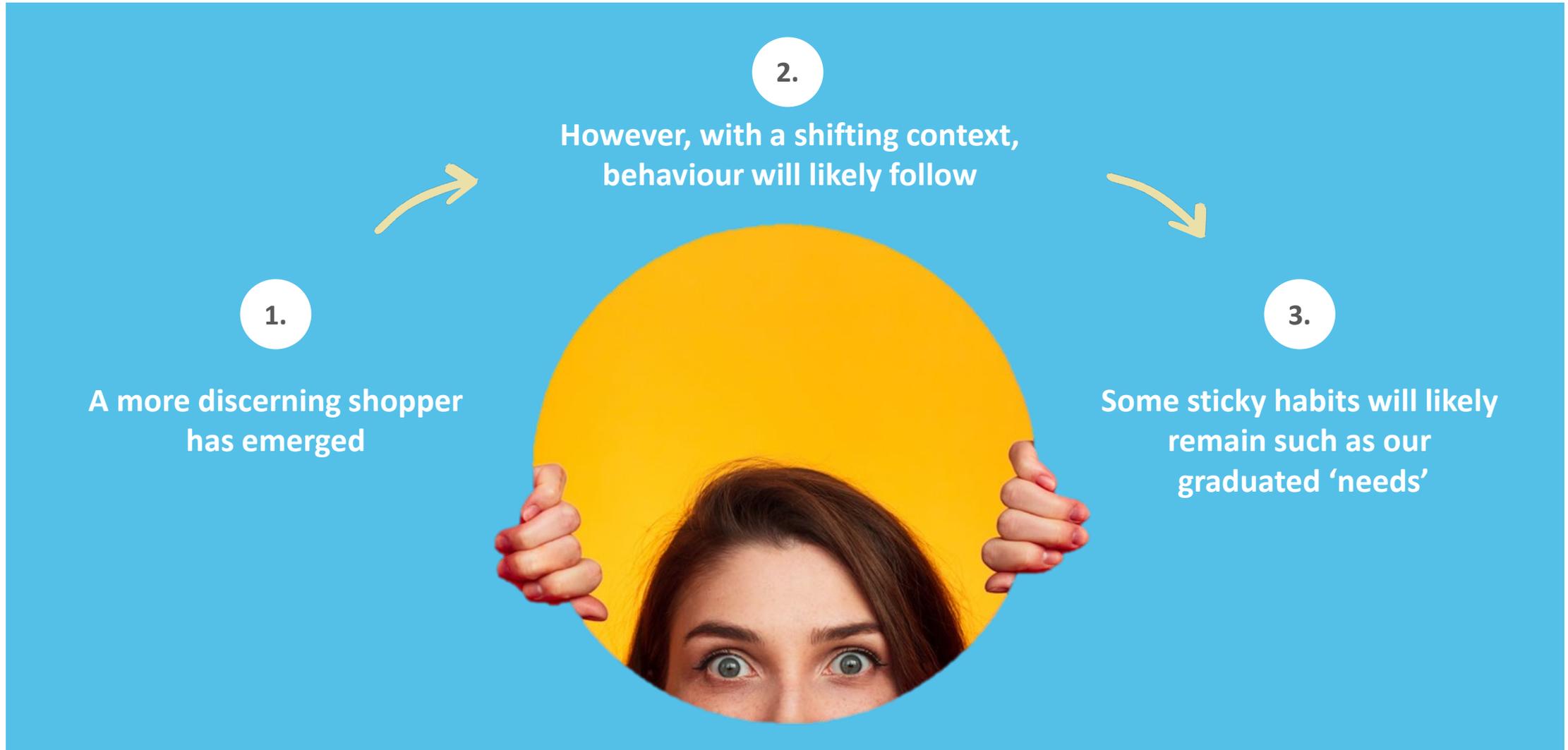


35-49s	42%
Middle Class	40%
Dubliners	40%





Where to from here?



# Thank you.



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# Delve Deeper