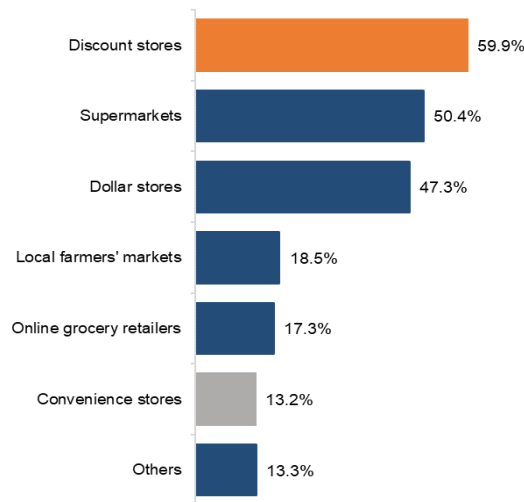


**Over 3 in 5 Canadians Concerned That Compromising on Nutrition Due to High Food Prices Could Have Long-term Health Consequences.**

**HALIFAX, October 4, 2023** – In an era characterized by dynamic shifts in economic landscapes and global challenges, the resilience and adaptability of individuals and communities have become paramount. Among the fundamental aspects of daily life, the cost of groceries has experienced significant fluctuations in recent times. The surge in food prices has not only raised concerns in Canada but also reverberated worldwide, impacting households and individuals in multifaceted ways.

To gain deeper insights into how Canadians are navigating the intricacies of higher food prices during their grocery shopping expeditions, the **Agri-Food Analytics Lab** at **Dalhousie University**, in collaboration with **Caddle**, embarked on an extensive survey in September. This concise report presents pivotal findings and analyses derived from the survey, illuminating the strategies, concerns, and sentiments of **over 5,000 Canadians** as they grapple with the challenges presented by an evolving food landscape. Understanding these dynamics holds paramount importance, not only for policymakers and industry stakeholders but also for gaining valuable insights into the daily lives and choices of Canadians as they endeavour to uphold their food security and overall well-being.

Which types of stores you have visited more frequently during the past 12 months? (Please select all that apply)



**Shifting Habits**

Survey results indicate that **64.1% of Canadians have substantially altered their grocery shopping habits**. An overwhelming 86.4% of Canadians now consider themselves **more price-conscious** compared to a year ago. Moreover, 55.1% of Canadians are currently **employing cost-saving mechanisms** more than they were using 12 months prior, encompassing the utilization of coupons, apps, loyalty programs, and referencing flyers. Notably, 79.2% of Canadians have

availed themselves of **loyalty programs** in the past 12 months, with **coupons** following closely at 74.8%. Additionally, 52.8% have explored **food-rescuing apps**, and 41.4% actively seek "**enjoy tonight**" deals. Furthermore, 49.7% of Canadians have contemplated **growing their own food** to counteract the impact of food inflation on their budgets.

### **Diverse Shopping Destinations**

The survey was initiated by examining the types of stores frequented by consumers. Many Canadians have chosen to increase the frequency of their store visits compared to the previous year in their quest to economize while grocery shopping. A noteworthy 59.3% of Canadians are now more inclined to **visit discount stores**, a notable rise from the past 12 months. Likewise, 47.0% have increased their visits to **dollar stores** compared to a year ago, reflecting their efforts to save on grocery expenses. Furthermore, 18.5% of Canadians are frequenting **farmers' markets** more often. In tandem with these trends, a substantial 17.0% of Canadians have embraced **online transactions** for food purchases for over a year.

### **Rise of Store Brands**

Store brands, also known as private labels, are gaining prominence in response to the market's heightened frugality. A significant 63.8% of Canadians are now more inclined to **opt for generic brands over national brands** as a cost-saving measure, particularly when compared to the previous year.

### **Altered Grocery Shopping Patterns**

Over the past 12 months, Canadians have modified how they visit grocery stores and manage their inventories. Approximately 41.2% of Canadians now **visit grocery stores less frequently** and are adopting more strategic stocking practices. Conversely, 26.5% **are increasing their visits** to grocery stores, capitalizing on deals, and purchasing only what is needed for two or three days. An intriguing aspect pertains to the issue of food waste, supported by evidence from another recent survey. A substantial 79.1% of Canadians assert that they have significantly **reduced food waste in the past year**, demonstrating a willingness to consume leftovers or repurpose ingredients. This trend may help elucidate the **observed decline in the volume of food sold by retailers** in recent months, as reported by NIQ (formerly known as NielsenIQ).

### **Nutritional Compromises**

Rising food prices have compelled Canadians to make challenging dietary choices. Nearly half of Canadians (49.2 percent) have reduced the **quantity of meat** or protein sources they purchase due to increased food costs, a greater number than the previous year. While 45.5 percent of Canadians **prioritize cost over nutritional value when grocery shopping**, a larger proportion than last year, 63.3 percent of Canadians are **apprehensive that compromising on nutrition due to high food prices may have adverse long-term effects on their health**.

The regional, age, and income breakdowns also shed light on how Canadians are grappling with the impact of elevated food prices.



<i>Province</i>	<i>I prioritize cost over nutritional value when shopping for groceries, more so than a year ago.</i>	<i>I am concerned that compromising on nutrition due to high food prices may negatively affect my health in the long run.</i>
<i>New Brunswick</i>	53.7%	55.8% (9)
<i>Alberta</i>	53.3%	70.0% (1)
<i>Quebec</i>	49.9%	57.6% (8)
<i>Newfoundland and Labrador</i>	49.2%	61.7% (5)
<i>Saskatchewan</i>	47.0%	55.3% (10)
<i>British Columbia</i>	46.6%	66.6% (2)
<i>Manitoba</i>	45.4%	60.6% (6)
<i>Ontario</i>	43.2%	62.7% (3)
<i>Prince Edward Island</i>	42.1%	61.8% (4)
<i>Nova Scotia</i>	40.4%	59.8% (7)

These results by province show variations in grocery shopping priorities and concerns across different provinces in Canada. It appears that people in **New Brunswick** and **Alberta** are more inclined to prioritize cost savings over nutritional value, while **Alberta** and **British Columbia** have greater concerns about the potential health implications of such choices.

<i>Generation</i>	<i>I prioritize cost over nutritional value when shopping for groceries, more so than a year ago.</i>	<i>I am concerned that compromising on nutrition due to high food prices may negatively affect my health in the long run.</i>
<i>Gen Z (1997-2005)</i>	52.5% (3)	58.0% (4)
<i>Millennials (1981-1996)</i>	52.7% (2)	68.7% (1)
<i>Gen X (1965-1980)</i>	46.0% (4)	64.8% (2)
<i>Boomers (1946-1964)</i>	34.6% (5)	58.0% (4)
<i>Greatest Gen (1900-1945)</i>	54.7% (1)	63.5% (3)

The **Greatest Generation** has the highest percentage (54.7%) of respondents prioritizing cost over nutritional value, ranking first in this preference. **Millennials** have the highest percentage (68.7%) of respondents expressing concern about compromising nutrition due to high food prices, making them the generation most concerned about the potential health impacts of prioritizing cost. **Boomers** have the lowest percentage (34.6%) prioritizing cost, suggesting they are the least likely to prioritize cost over nutritional value when shopping for groceries.

<i>Salary Range</i>	<i>I prioritize cost over nutritional value when shopping for groceries, more so than a year ago.</i>	<i>I am concerned that compromising on nutrition due to high food prices may negatively affect my health in the long run.</i>
<i>Less than \$49,999</i>	50.7% (1)	62.2% (2)
<i>\$50,000 to \$74,999</i>	49.1% (2)	67.4% (1)
<i>\$75,000 to \$99,999</i>	41.3% (3)	61.4% (3)
<i>\$100,000 to \$149,999</i>	39.5% (4)	54.8% (4)

Unsurprisingly, there appears to be a trend where income levels increase, the percentage of respondents who prioritize cost over nutritional value when shopping for groceries tends to decrease. In other words, **those with higher incomes** are less likely to prioritize cost. Similarly, there's a **correlation between higher income and a lower percentage of respondents who are concerned about compromising on nutrition due to high food prices**. This suggests that individuals with higher incomes are generally less concerned about the potential health impacts of prioritizing cost over nutritional value.

**Dr. Sylvain Charlebois**, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University: *"I believe that this survey sheds important light on the evolving challenges that Canadians face when it comes to their grocery shopping habits and their concerns about nutrition in the face of rising food prices. It's evident that these challenges are not just economic but also deeply tied to the daily lives and well-being of Canadians."*

**Janet Music**, Research Manager of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University: *"In an era marked by shifting economic landscapes and global uncertainties, understanding how individuals and communities adapt and cope with these changes becomes paramount. The data we've gathered reflects the resilience and adaptability of Canadians as they navigate the complexities of the higher food price landscape."*

For more information and access to the full report, please visit <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>.

**Methodology for the survey:** Caddle is one of the most credible active panels in the Canadian market. A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in September 2023, in partnership with Caddle. 5,521 Canadians participated in this survey. The margin of Error: +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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

### **About the Agri-Food Analytics Lab**

The Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University is a research unit dedicated to providing valuable insights into the food and agriculture sectors. Their interdisciplinary team of experts conducts research on various aspects of the food supply chain, offering data-driven solutions to inform industry stakeholders and policymakers.

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