

Baking Aisle Insider (Quarter 4 2024)

Connecting with the most active flour shoppers

A unique subset of shoppers is buying more flour, and retailers can capitalize on the trend

These days, consumers are looking to cut costs on food. That's resulted in a lot more at-home food occasions, and an increase in sales of food and ingredients to be cooked at home. Flour in particular has seen a notable extended rise in purchases.



Reasons some flour shoppers are purchasing more flour:

45% of flour shoppers say: "baking at home helps them manage the household food budget."

42% of flour shoppers also factored in: "eating fewer meals out/at restaurants."

The #1 reason shoppers are buying MORE flour



69% of flour shoppers also factored in: "baking at home is satisfying/rewarding."

There are specific flour shoppers that are helping drive growth. These shoppers are a little different from our standard flour shopper. Since they're more engaged with flour and they purchase more of it, we consider them **flour+ shoppers**.

Flour+ shoppers are young and value flour

What makes these consumers stand out? They fit a particular profile, and they generally have similar views about the value of flour.

What makes a flour+ shopper 'unique'

Age	Region	Ethnicity	Family
18-34 years old	Midwest	People of color	Household with kids

Notably: neither household income nor baking skill are differentiating factors for flour+ shoppers in comparison to the general flour shopper population.

The typical flour+ shopper sees flour a few ways:

- ◆ **A valued ingredient**
It's a dependable, versatile household essential.
- ◆ **A tool to manage their food budget**
Flour is generally a low-cost item, so it won't impact the rest of their grocery budget. And it enables them to bake items at home for less than they cost in the store.
- ◆ **A way to achieve new dietary goals**
Homemade food is a big part of their diet.



Flour+ shoppers have created momentum in the market

Flour+ shoppers are helping to drive increased flour engagement and investment. In the past 6 months, flour+ shoppers have increased their usage, and many more of them are looking to increase their usage in the future.

Typical flour shoppers who bought/used flour MORE often than 6 months ago
14%

It's this 14% of flour shoppers that we've defined as flour+ shoppers

Flour+ shoppers who plan to buy/use flour MORE often in the next 6 months
42%



What's driving this increased usage?

To flour+ shoppers, flour has moved beyond its commodity status. Baking and cooking with flour has become a hobby, a reward, and a helpful budget and dietary tool all in one.

Reasons for flour+ shopper purchase

Find baking at home to be satisfying/rewarding	69%
Eating more meals at home	58%
New eating/dietary goals are easier to meet with homemade food	47%
Baking at home helps manage the household food budget	45%
Eating fewer meals out/at restaurants	42%

Three ways retailers can capitalize on flour+ shoppers



1. Show flour as a valued asset.

Match the sentiment of your flour+ shoppers and position flours in your shelf set as a key part of home baking, not just a commodity ingredient. Highlight what they can make, and the deep sense of satisfaction they can get from it.



2. Target the specific benefits that flour shoppers 18-34 care about.

Flour+ shoppers skew young, and care about sustainability, application-specific uses, dietary benefits, and new, innovative packaging. They'll give consideration to products that have these qualities.



3. Communicate flour's role in food budget management.

Flour+ shoppers are value conscious. They're looking to manage household food budgets, and flour is a versatile ingredient that can help them achieve that — while bringing them enjoyment.

Corn flour: A versatile product that excites flour+ shoppers

What's old is new again. Corn flour is increasingly found in the pantry of many flour shoppers, and flour+ shoppers are starting to see its utility. It's versatile, performs well and taps into some current food purchasing trends.

Corn flour:

- ◆ Is a great gluten-free alternative
- ◆ Honors both global as well as local heritage
- ◆ Offers a way to experiment in the kitchen

All these factors have contributed to corn flour's positive growth in the baking aisle. And signs are pointing to sustained growth in the future.



Who is buying corn flour?

Total flour shoppers	18-34 year olds	Hispanic/Latino	South region	Flour+ shoppers
26%	44%	67%	38%	42%

42% of flour+ shoppers buy corn flour

For flour shoppers (as well as flour+ shoppers) corn flour is not a regular item on their grocery list, it's a periodic purchase. They see the versatility and the opportunity to experiment with new recipes and new cuisines — and as a means for achieving dietary goals or needs.

How flour+ shoppers see the versatility in corn flour

Factors for buying/using corn flour	Flour+ shoppers	Nationally
It performs well with my baking projects/like the outcome	87%	81%
I have favorable perceptions of corn	87%	64%
Experimentation with different cuisines/types of food	83%	78%
It's gluten-free and people in my household eat gluten-free	78%	51%
Experimentation with different flour types	74%	65%
It's gluten-free and I eat gluten-free out of choice	65%	45%
It's gluten-free and I have medical sensitivities to gluten	57%	40%

Three ways retailers can capitalize on corn flour



1. Leverage the gluten-free properties.

Shoppers are interested in gluten-free options — make sure it's apparent to them on shelf. Younger shoppers (18-34 years old) have become the most active bakers and are open to trying gluten-free options.



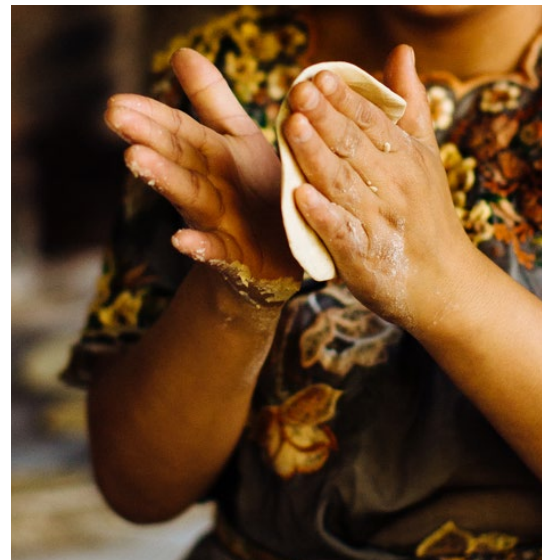
2. Honor cultural cuisine.

Consumers are interested in honoring their heritage and exploring different foods. There's an opportunity to promote Latin/Hispanic recipes as well as traditional Southern foods.



3. Offer up a chance for experimentation.

Corn flour in the shelf set taps into the desire of flour+ shoppers to try new things with their at-home bakes. Give them something to try out.



Private Label can rise to the occasion and capture more share of purchase

Over the last 6 months, flour consumption has grown — including Private Label. All flour shoppers seem open to trying Private Label if there was demonstrable evidence that it's just as good as Brand Flour. Private Label offers a good value for the price and flour shoppers — including flour+ shoppers — have noticed. In fact, the majority (52%) of flour+ shopper purchases are Private Label flours. There are ample opportunities to push Private Label even further.

When asked, flour shoppers said that Private Label flours beat Brand flours on 2 things:

- ◆ Value for the money
- ◆ Price



But they also said that Brand Flour beats Private Label in many more areas:

- ◆ Product quality
- ◆ Performance
- ◆ Sustainability
- ◆ Uniqueness
- ◆ Dietary goal compliance
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Packaging

If Private Label focused more on the characteristics that Brand Label dominates in, flour shoppers across the board would consider purchasing it.

Positive purchase intent for Private Label flour

Private Label flour characteristics	Total flour shoppers	Brand majority shoppers*	Private Label majority shoppers**	Flour+ shoppers***
Information that showed the flour quality was on par with Brand flours	72%	63%	81%	82%
Products with food safety packaging innovations (e.g. tamper-proof, food processing safety measures)	69%	63%	75%	73%
Information that shows the flour performance was on par with Brand Flours	69%	60%	78%	73%
Products with useability packaging innovation (e.g., easier to use in the kitchen, etc.)	68%	60%	76%	80%
Products with storage packaging innovation (e.g., increased effectiveness when storing at home)	67%	59%	77%	80%
Products aligned to sustainability principles (e.g., carbon-neutral, organic, etc.)	56%	50%	61%	71%
Products that align to dietary priorities (e.g., gluten-free, low-carb, etc.)	56%	51%	60%	80%
Products that are new/different/unique and “what’s next” in flour	53%	49%	57%	62%
Products made with new/unique base ingredients (e.g., ancient grains, beans, etc.)	51%	49%	53%	65%

*Brand majority shoppers: Flour shoppers who purchase Brand flours (any) more often than Private Label flours (51% to 100% of purchases).

**Private Label majority shoppers: Flour shoppers who purchase Private Label flours (any) more often than Brand flours (51% to 100% of purchases).

***Flour+ shoppers: Consumers who report buying/using flour MORE often versus six months ago.

Better connect with shoppers by focusing on these Private Label improvements

Performance

- ◆ Provide more flour quality assurance
- ◆ Confirmation of the performance

Packaging

- ◆ Tamper-proof and food processing safety measures
- ◆ Better kitchen functionality
- ◆ Improved storage capabilities

Product

- ◆ Sustainability claims like carbon-neutral, organic and regenerative agriculture
- ◆ Support dietary-goals: gluten-free, low-carb
- ◆ New and unique ingredients

Purposeful Innovation

- ◆ Offering “what’s next” in flour



Ardent Mills is transforming how the world is nourished. As the premier flour-milling and ingredient company with more than 40 locations focused on traditional wheat, quinoa, pulses, organic and gluten free products, we cultivate the future of food to help our customers and communities thrive.

The information provided in Baking Aisle Insider was collected during a recent large-scale survey of flour shoppers 18 years and older with insights regarding purchasing intent and baking behaviors specific to flours. We’ve boiled down the proprietary data to provide takeaways on flours to help you consider new opportunities and sharpen your focus on making customers happy.

Looking to take these insights into action in your baking aisle? Contact your Ardent Mills Account Manager or info@ardentmills.com to see how we can help.