

India Ready-to-Cook Food Market By Product Category (Instant Noodles & Pasta, Instant Soup, Ready-to-Mix, Snacks, Others), By Sales Channel (Supermarkets/Hypermarkets, Convenience Stores, Online, Others), By Region, Competition Forecast & Opportunities, 2020-2030F

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Abstracts

The India Ready-to-Cook Food Market was valued at USD 624.18 Million in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 1546.81 Million by 2030 with a CAGR of 16.41% during the forecast period. The India Ready-to-Mix Food Market is poised for substantial growth, fueled by the increasing number of working women, shifting food preferences, and rising disposable incomes. These factors are expected to drive the demand for ready-to-mix foods in the country. Additionally, growing urbanization and the rise of nuclear families have further amplified the need for convenient packaged food options like ready-to-mix foods and beverages in India.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, food-tech startups are at the forefront of this revolution, contributing to a USD 2 billion surge in innovation in Q1 FY24 alone. The quick-commerce sector in India is witnessing rapid growth, with its gross merchandise value (GMV) reaching USD 2.3 billion in 2023, marking a 70% increase compared to the previous year. This sector is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.9% from FY22 to FY27, as reported by IBEF.

Key Market Drivers

Changing Consumer Lifestyles and Time Constraints

One of the major drivers of the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market is the increasingly busy and fast-paced lifestyle of urban consumers. With more people working long hours, commuting, and managing other responsibilities, many individuals are seeking convenient food options that require minimal preparation time. Ready-to-cook food products offer an ideal solution by allowing consumers to enjoy homemade meals without the time commitment involved in traditional cooking. The growth of nuclear families and the rising number of working women also play a role in this trend, as these households often prefer ready-to-cook meals due to their time-saving benefits. Additionally, the younger generation, which is more inclined to try new and convenient food options, is contributing significantly to the demand for ready-to-cook products. These meals help cater to the need for quick, easy-to-prepare options without compromising on taste or nutritional value, making them a popular choice in urban and semi-urban areas. A 2022 report reveals that more than 70% of urban Indian households are now nuclear families, significantly influencing dining habits and culinary practices. Additionally, work hours have drastically changed, with the traditional 9-to-5 routine giving way to a 24/7 hustle, particularly in metropolitan cities. This shift has been further fueled by the rise of food delivery apps and ready-to-eat meals, as highlighted by Stove Kraft's CMO in a recent LinkedIn post.

Rising Disposable Incomes and Changing Consumer Preferences

As disposable incomes rise in India, especially in urban regions, consumers are becoming more willing to spend on premium and convenient food options. This shift in spending behavior, coupled with a growing middle class, has contributed to the increasing demand for ready-to-cook food. With greater financial flexibility, consumers are willing to pay a premium for convenience, quality, and taste. Additionally, changing consumer preferences are pushing the market toward more diverse and premium ready-to-cook products, which cater to different regional tastes, dietary needs, and health-conscious choices. The availability of a wide range of options such as ready-to-cook snacks, curries, soups, and health-conscious meal kits is appealing to consumers looking for variety and ease. Health-conscious consumers, in particular, are increasingly attracted to ready-to-cook meals that are marketed as nutritious, preservative-free, or containing organic ingredients. As people become more conscious of their dietary habits and the nutritional content of their food, the demand for healthy, ready-to-cook alternatives has surged. This combination of increased disposable income and changing consumer preferences is fueling the growth of the ready-to-cook food market in India.

Growth of E-commerce and Online Retail Platforms

The expansion of e-commerce and online retail platforms has significantly contributed to the growth of the Ready-to-Cook Food Market in India. The rise of online shopping has made it easier for consumers to access a wide variety of ready-to-cook products from both local and international brands. The convenience of ordering food online, coupled with doorstep delivery services, has made it possible for consumers to explore and purchase these products without having to visit physical stores. With the increasing penetration of smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital payment options, online grocery shopping has gained immense popularity, especially in tier 1 and tier 2 cities. Many e-commerce platforms now offer specialized sections for ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat foods, providing a broad range of options and enabling consumers to compare products and prices. Additionally, the rise of food delivery apps and platforms offering ready-to-cook meal kits has further boosted the market. This shift toward online shopping has made ready-to-cook food more accessible and appealing to a larger consumer base, making it one of the key drivers behind the market's rapid growth. The convenience, variety, and availability of ready-to-cook options online are expected to continue to drive demand in the coming years.

Key Market Challenges

Cultural Preference for Traditional Cooking

A significant challenge facing the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market is the deeply ingrained cultural preference for traditional cooking. Indian cuisine is known for its diverse and rich flavors, with each region having its own unique cooking styles and recipes. For many consumers, preparing meals from scratch is not just a daily routine but a deeply-rooted cultural practice. Cooking is often seen as a communal activity, with family members participating in meal preparation and bonding over food. This cultural attachment to home-cooked meals poses a challenge for ready-to-cook food brands, as many consumers remain hesitant to switch from traditional cooking methods to pre-packaged meal kits or ready-to-cook products. Despite the growing convenience factor, these products may not fully replicate the taste or authenticity of homemade dishes, which makes them less appealing to certain segments of the population. Overcoming this cultural barrier requires ready-to-cook food companies to offer products that are not only easy to prepare but also closely resemble the traditional flavors that consumers cherish.

Concerns About Nutritional Value and Food Safety

Another key challenge in the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market is consumer skepticism regarding the nutritional value and safety of ready-to-cook products. As consumers become more health-conscious and aware of the ingredients in their food, there is growing concern about preservatives, artificial additives, and the overall nutritional content of packaged meals. Many consumers worry that ready-to-cook meals may be less nutritious than freshly prepared dishes, and some may even perceive them as unhealthy due to high levels of sodium, sugar, or preservatives. Additionally, food safety concerns, including improper storage, contamination, and shelf-life issues, remain significant challenges. With a market that is still developing, the absence of stringent regulations and quality controls in some segments of the industry can lead to uncertainty about the safety and hygiene of ready-to-cook products. To address these concerns, manufacturers must focus on providing transparency about ingredients, nutritional information, and sourcing practices. Offering organic, preservative-free, and health-focused alternatives can help alleviate some of these doubts and attract more health-conscious consumers.

Key Market Trends

Shift Toward Health-Conscious and Nutrient-Rich Options

One of the most prominent trends in the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market is the growing demand for healthier and nutrient-rich food options. With an increasing focus on wellness and healthy living, more consumers are looking for ready-to-cook meals that align with their health goals. This trend is particularly driven by rising awareness about the importance of a balanced diet, the prevalence of lifestyle diseases like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, and a shift towards more nutritious eating habits. In response to this demand, brands are increasingly offering ready-to-cook meals made with organic ingredients, low-calorie options, gluten-free alternatives, and products with fewer preservatives or additives. Additionally, there is a significant rise in plant-based ready-to-cook products catering to the growing vegan and vegetarian populations. These products often feature high-protein ingredients like lentils, quinoa, and chickpeas, and are designed to provide essential vitamins and minerals while still being convenient and quick to prepare. This trend reflects a broader shift in consumer preferences toward healthier, more wholesome food choices, and ready-to-cook brands are evolving to meet these needs.

Technology Integration and Smart Meal Solutions

The integration of technology into the Ready-to-Cook Food Market is another important

trend shaping the industry. With the increasing adoption of smartphones and the rise of e-commerce, technology is becoming an integral part of how consumers purchase and prepare ready-to-cook meals. Many companies are now offering meal kits and food products that are connected to mobile applications, allowing users to track ingredients, control cooking times, and access recipe suggestions with ease. For example, some ready-to-cook meal kits come with QR codes or app-enabled features that provide detailed instructions, cooking tips, and nutritional information. This tech-driven approach not only enhances convenience but also appeals to tech-savvy consumers looking for an efficient, streamlined cooking experience. Furthermore, brands are increasingly using data analytics to understand consumer preferences, helping them develop personalized meal plans and product recommendations. The use of smart appliances, such as app-controlled ovens or pressure cookers, further complements this trend, making it even easier for consumers to prepare their meals without much effort.

Expansion of E-commerce and Online Sales Channels

The expansion of e-commerce and online sales channels is significantly influencing the growth of the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market. With the rapid digitization of retail and the increasing penetration of smartphones, more consumers are opting to purchase ready-to-cook meals online due to the convenience, variety, and competitive pricing it offers. Online platforms provide access to a wide range of products, from regional specialties to international cuisines, which may not always be available in local brick-and-mortar stores. The ease of comparing different brands, reading reviews, and scheduling home delivery has made online shopping an attractive option for many. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to online grocery shopping, with more consumers becoming accustomed to ordering food products through digital platforms. As internet connectivity improves in both urban and rural areas, even more consumers are gaining access to ready-to-cook food options online. E-commerce platforms like Amazon, BigBasket, and Grofers, as well as specialized food delivery services, are increasingly expanding their ready-to-cook product offerings. The convenience of doorstep delivery, coupled with discounts and promotions, is driving consumers toward online channels, especially in the post-pandemic world.

Segmental Insights

Product Category Insights

In the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market, the dominant product category was Instant Noodles & Pasta. This segment has long been popular due to its convenience,

affordability, and ease of preparation, making it a staple for busy consumers, especially in urban areas. Instant noodles and pasta offer quick meal solutions, often requiring only boiling water, which fits well with the fast-paced lifestyles of working professionals, students, and young families. Additionally, the variety of flavors and regional variations in instant noodles and pasta cater to diverse consumer preferences across India, contributing to its dominance in the market. The affordability of these products further strengthens their market position, making them an accessible choice for a wide range of income groups. While other segments like Instant Soup and Ready-to-Mix products are also growing, Instant Noodles & Pasta continue to hold the largest market share in India's ready-to-cook food industry.

Regional Insights

In the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market, the West region was the dominant market, driven by factors such as higher urbanization, greater disposable incomes, and a growing preference for convenience foods. Key cities like Mumbai, Pune, and Ahmedabad contribute significantly to the region's market share, as they have large working populations and a fast-paced lifestyle, which fuels the demand for ready-to-cook food products. The West region is home to a mix of working professionals, students, and nuclear families, all of whom are seeking time-saving meal solutions, making ready-to-cook foods increasingly popular. Additionally, the West has seen significant growth in e-commerce and online retail, which has further facilitated the availability and consumption of ready-to-cook products. The region's exposure to international cuisine and a diverse culinary culture also encourages a broad variety of ready-to-cook meal options, from instant noodles to health-focused meal kits. The rise in health awareness, coupled with higher disposable incomes, has led consumers in the West to opt for premium ready-to-cook food options that are both nutritious and convenient. This combination of factors makes the West region the leading market for ready-to-cook foods in India, and the trend is expected to continue as consumer lifestyles evolve further.

Key Market Players

Capital Foods Pvt. Ltd.

Desai Foods Pvt Ltd.

Hindustan Unilever Ltd.

IndianFarm Foods Pvt. Ltd.

Innovative Foods Ltd.

ITC Ltd.

Kohinoor Foods Ltd.

Maiyas Beverages and Foods Pvt. Ltd.

McCain Foods Ltd.

Nestle SA

Report Scope:

In this report, the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market has been segmented into the following categories, in addition to the industry trends which have also been detailed below:

India Ready-to-Cook Food Market, By Product Category:

Instant Noodles & Pasta

Instant Soup

Ready-to-Mix

Snacks

Others

India Ready-to-Cook Food Market, By Sales Channel:

Supermarkets/Hypermarkets

Convenience Stores

Online

Others

India Ready-to-Cook Food Market, By Region:

North

West

South

East

Competitive Landscape

Company Profiles: Detailed analysis of the major companies presents in the India Ready-to-Cook Food Market.

Available Customizations:

India Ready-to-Cook Food Market report with the given market data, TechSci Research offers customizations according to a company's specific needs. The following customization options are available for the report:

Company Information

Detailed analysis and profiling of additional market players (up to five).

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Market Overview
- 1.2. Key Highlights of the Report
- 1.3. Market Coverage
- 1.4. Market Segments Covered
- 1.5. Research Tenure Considered

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. Methodology Landscape
- 2.2. Objective of the Study
- 2.3. Baseline Methodology
- 2.4. Formulation of the Scope
- 2.5. Assumptions and Limitations
- 2.6. Approach for the Market Study
- 2.7. Assumptions and Limitations
- 2.8. Methodology Followed for Calculation of Market Size & Market Shares
- 2.9. Forecasting Methodology

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. Market Overview
- 3.2. Market Forecast
- 3.3. Key Regions
- 3.4. Key Segments

4. VOICE OF CUSTOMER

- 4.1. Factors Influencing Awaiting Decision
- 4.2. Challenges Faced
- 4.3. Brand Awareness

5. INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET OUTLOOK

- 5.1. Market Size & Forecast
 - 5.1.1. By Value

5.2. Market Size & Forecast

5.2.1. By Product Category Market Share Analysis (Instant Noodles & Pasta, Instant Soup, Ready-to-Mix, Snacks, Others)

5.2.2. By Sales Channel Market Share Analysis (Supermarkets/Hypermarkets, Convenience Stores, Online, Others)

5.2.3. By Region Market Share Analysis

5.2.3.1. North India Market Share Analysis

5.2.3.2. South India Market Share Analysis

5.2.3.3. East India Market Share Analysis

5.2.3.4. West India Market Share Analysis

5.2.4. By Top 5 Companies Market Share Analysis, Others (2024)

5.3. India Ready-to-Cook Food Market Mapping & Opportunity Assessment

5.3.1. By Product Category Market Mapping & Opportunity Assessment

5.3.2. By Sales Channel Market Mapping & Opportunity Assessment

5.3.3. By Region Market Mapping & Opportunity Assessment

6. NORTH INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET OUTLOOK

6.1. Market Size & Forecast

6.1.1. By Value

6.2. Market Size & Forecast

6.2.1. By Product Category Market Share Analysis

6.2.2. By Sales Channel Market Share Analysis

7. SOUTH INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET OUTLOOK

7.1. Market Size & Forecast

7.1.1. By Value

7.2. Market Size & Forecast

7.2.1. By Product Category Market Share Analysis

7.2.2. By Sales Channel Market Share Analysis

8. WEST INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET OUTLOOK

8.1. Market Size & Forecast

8.1.1. By Value

8.2. Market Size & Forecast

8.2.1. By Product Category Market Share Analysis

8.2.2. By Sales Channel Market Share Analysis

9. EAST INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET OUTLOOK

9.1. Market Size & Forecast

9.1.1. By Value

9.2. Market Size & Forecast

9.2.1. By Product Category Market Share Analysis

9.2.2. By Sales Channel Market Share Analysis

10. MARKET DYNAMICS

10.1. Drivers

10.2. Challenges

11. MARKET TRENDS & DEVELOPMENTS

12. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIA READY-TO-COOK FOOD MARKET

13. SWOT ANALYSIS

14. PORTER'S FIVE FORCES ANALYSIS

15. INDIA ECONOMIC PROFILE

16. POLICY AND REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

17. COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

17.1. Company Profiles

17.1.1. Capital Foods Pvt. Ltd.

17.1.1.1. Company Details

17.1.1.2. Products

17.1.1.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence

17.1.1.4. Recent Developments

17.1.1.5. Key Management Personnel

17.1.2. Desai Foods Pvt Ltd.

17.1.2.1. Company Details

17.1.2.2. Products

17.1.2.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence

- 17.1.2.4. Recent Developments
- 17.1.2.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.3. Hindustan Unilever Ltd.
 - 17.1.3.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.3.2. Products
 - 17.1.3.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.3.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.3.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.4. IndianFarm Foods Pvt. Ltd.
 - 17.1.4.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.4.2. Products
 - 17.1.4.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.4.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.4.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.5. Innovative Foods Ltd.
 - 17.1.5.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.5.2. Products
 - 17.1.5.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.5.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.5.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.6. ITC Ltd.
 - 17.1.6.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.6.2. Products
 - 17.1.6.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.6.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.6.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.7. Kohinoor Foods Ltd.
 - 17.1.7.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.7.2. Products
 - 17.1.7.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.7.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.7.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.8. Maiyas Beverages and Foods Pvt. Ltd.
 - 17.1.8.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.8.2. Products
 - 17.1.8.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.8.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.8.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.9. McCain Foods Ltd.

- 17.1.9.1. Company Details
- 17.1.9.2. Products
- 17.1.9.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
- 17.1.9.4. Recent Developments
- 17.1.9.5. Key Management Personnel
- 17.1.10. Nestle SA
 - 17.1.10.1. Company Details
 - 17.1.10.2. Products
 - 17.1.10.3. Key Market Focus & Geographical Presence
 - 17.1.10.4. Recent Developments
 - 17.1.10.5. Key Management Personnel

18. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- 18.1. Key Focus Areas
- 18.2. Target Product Category
- 18.3. Target Sales Channel

19. ABOUT US & DISCLAIMER

I would like to order

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