



AN ADVANTAGE PULSE SURVEY

SHOPPER INTEREST IN SAMPLING RUNS HIGH

As brands and retailers relaunch in-store product sampling with pandemic protocols in place, eight in 10 consumers — and nine in 10 club store members — are interested in these one-on-one in-store experiences, according to a July survey of more than 1,000 adult consumers by Advantage Customer Experience, a division of Advantage Solutions.

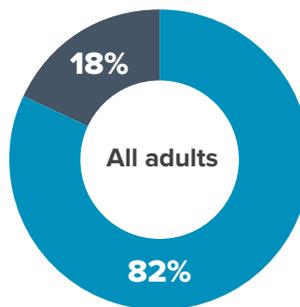
Indeed, 17 months into the pandemic, as some uncertainty surrounding the Delta variant looms, consumers' shopping attitudes and behavior reveal their fondness for the sampling experience and its influence on buying decisions — and support sampling's comeback.

Interest in Free, In-Store Samples

(% of respondents)

Interested — *"I usually/sometimes take samples when offered."*

Not interested — *"I never take part in sampling."*



Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 1,081 U.S. adults, including 670 who identified themselves as warehouse club members.

A majority of survey respondents (60%) describe themselves as “someone who likes to browse and try new items.” As a group, these shoppers are more interested in sampling than those who say they make and tend to stick to a shopping list — nearly six in 10 browsers are “very interested” in sampling, compared to 40% of list makers.

Types of Grocery Shoppers

(% of respondents)



Someone who likes to browse and try new items



Someone who tends to stick to a mental or written list.



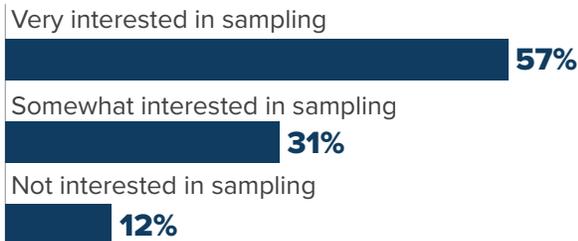
Neither

Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 1,031 U.S. adults.

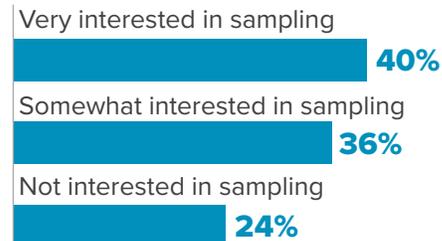
Browsers Vs. List Makers

(% of respondents)

Shoppers who like to browse and try new items



Shoppers who tend to stick to a mental or written list



Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 942 U.S. adults.

“Trying something before you buy it greatly influences buying behaviors.” — Female, 36

WOULD YOU LIKE A SAMPLE?

The current attitudes and behaviors of shoppers offer insights into why so many are embracing sampling's return.

Nearly half of adult shoppers (47%) say they're eager to try new products, something brands should keep in mind as they look to hold or increase their share of shelf as retailers reduce SKUs. (See "[Outlook June 2021: Grocery Manufacturers and Retailers](#)," an Advantage Sales report.)

The potential of sampling, though, goes beyond new-item trial. Nearly half (45%) of adults say they enjoy sampling items they've purchased previously (51% of club store members do). Nearly one-third (31%) of adults sometimes buy a different product made by the brand they've sampled (compared to 39% of club members who extend their post-sampling buying to a brand's other products).

Almost one-third (31%) of the shoppers surveyed say seeing an item sampled sometimes reminds them they wanted to buy it. Again, club store members (39%) were more likely to say sampling reminds them to buy an item.

In fact, club store members are especially engaged shoppers. While one-fourth (24%) of adults say they like discussing a product's attributes with someone before they buy it, 37% of club store members say they like this type of one-on-one interaction.

Shopping and sampling behavior

(% of adults surveyed)



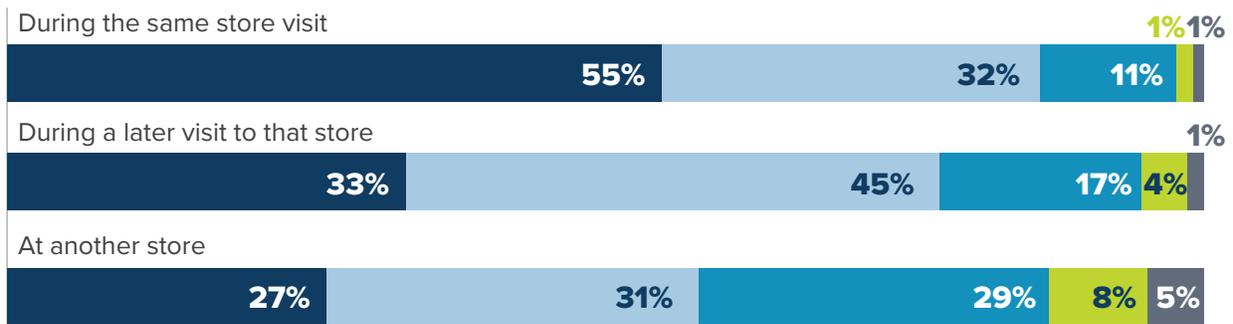
Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 1,035 U.S. adults.

TRY NOW, BUY NOW

Sampling's influence over shoppers who are fond of these experiences is undeniable. Among adults who say they are interested in sampling, nine in 10 (87%) are very or somewhat likely to buy a product if they enjoy a sample during a store visit. Nearly as many (78%) say they're likely to buy the product during a later visit to the store and six in 10 (58%) are likely to pick up the product at another store.

Likelihood of Buying Sampled Products

(Respondents who are interested in sampling)

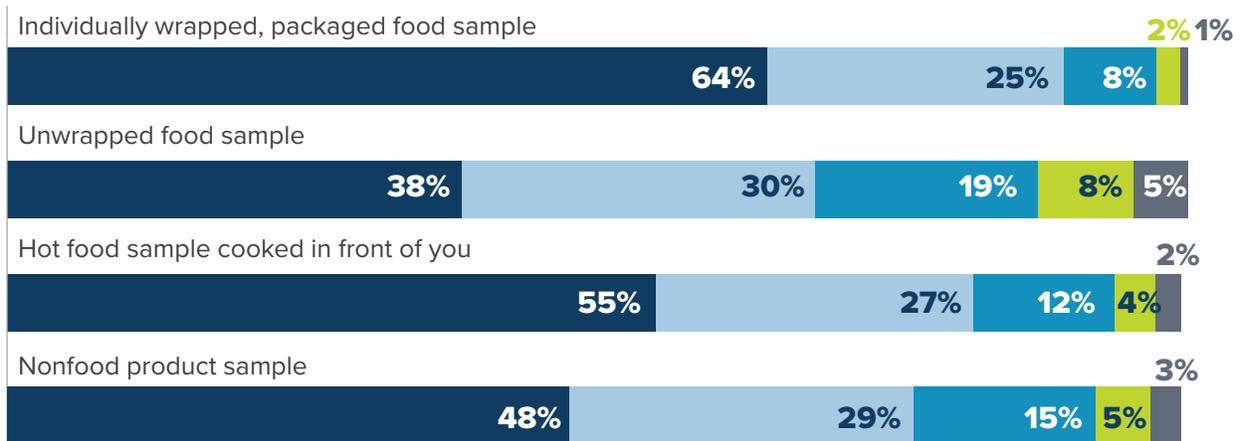


Very likely Somewhat likely Neither likely or unlikely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 840 U.S. adults who said they usually or sometimes took free samples in a store when offered.

Likelihood of Buying Sampled Products, by Type

(Respondents who are interested in sampling)



Very likely Somewhat likely Neither likely or unlikely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 846 U.S. adults who said they usually or sometimes took free samples in a store when offered.

“I’m excited about [sampling] because it introduces me to new products and I think it builds goodwill between the store and the customer.”

— Male, 58

As brands and retailers relaunch sampling, shoppers who are interested in food samples say they’re most likely to take a sample that is individually packaged (89%) or cooked in front of them (82%). Still, three-fourths (77%) are likely to try a nonfood product sample and two-thirds (68%) will sample an unwrapped food item.

Of these interested-in-sampling shoppers, nearly half (47%) say “the opportunity to try a product before buying it” is what they like best about these experiences. Four in 10 are most fond of “discovering new products” through sampling.

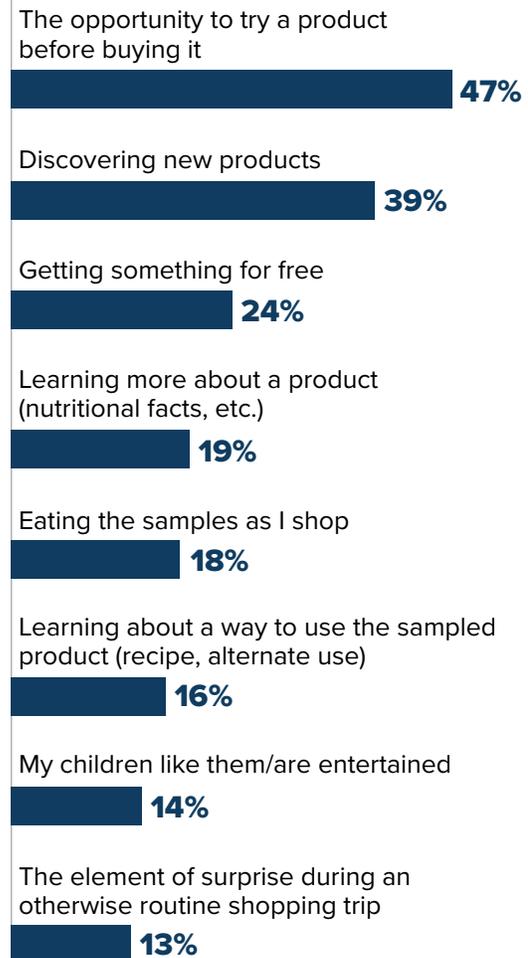
And don’t discount the power of “free.” Almost one-fourth of shoppers who usually or sometimes take a sample when offered said “getting something for free” is one of their favorite things about in-store sampling.

One-fifth of the shoppers who are interested in sampling pointed to “learning more about a product” or “eating the samples as I shop” as what they like best.

When asked if they sometimes buy a product they’ve sampled “to be polite or return the favor,” 17% of shoppers interested in sampling say reciprocity is a motivator to buy.

What Shoppers Like Best About In-Store Sampling

(Respondents selected up to 2 traits)



Advantage Customer Experience survey, July 22, 2021. Base: 846 U.S. adults who said they usually or sometimes took free samples in a store when offered.

“I miss sampling because I like to try new products all the time but I don’t always want to commit to a full-size product.” — Female, 52

Despite its pandemic-fueled hiatus, in-store sampling continues to appeal to shoppers — and its potential to engage and power to influence remain strong. ●



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