

The Tasmania Project

Share your experience during COVID-19.



Photo: Tourism Tasmania and ChrisCrerar.

Where are Tasmanians buying their food during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Respondents to The Tasmania Project's first survey sourced food from a variety of outlets during the COVID-19 pandemic, but relied heavily on supermarkets for grocery shopping.

Supermarket shopping at both major and independent stores has dominated the Tasmanian experience. On the other hand, only a minority of 1159 respondents reported buying food directly from the Tasmanian producer or at smaller outlets, like butchers. Around half of the survey respondents reported sourcing food from their own gardens, and some reported receiving food grown by others. Take-aways, home deliveries and fast food were not the norm, but were favoured by younger respondents and families with children.

Key findings

- The vast majority of respondents bought their food at major supermarkets, like Coles or Woolworths, and also at Tasmanian independent supermarkets, such as IGA.
- Half of the Tasmanian respondents ate food grown in their own garden, and around 20% received food grown in someone else's garden
- Families with children bought the most takeaway food, and younger Tasmanians most often used fast food outlets.
- Tasmanian autumn produce was not on the menu, with only a small minority of respondents reporting buying food direct from Tasmanian producers



Photo: Pexels

Survey results

A large majority of respondents (73%) reported shopping for food at major supermarkets in the week before they completed The Tasmania Project survey. Fewer residents in the North West and Western regions (67%) shopped at major supermarkets in comparison to those in the South (74%) and North regions (75%). Individuals living alone (60%) and couples without children (72%) were less likely to shop at supermarkets in comparison to single parents (85%) or couples with children (79%), highlighting the convenience of these food outlets for families. A further 9.3% of respondents reported receiving a supermarket delivery.

Tasmanian independent supermarkets were also a major source of food shopping, with 61% of respondents buying food in these outlets in the week of the survey. Independent supermarkets were favoured by those living in the South, with 70% of residents reporting shopping in these outlets, which is higher than in the North (39%) and North West and West (53%) regions. Respondents aged over 65 years were the most likely to shop at Independent supermarkets (62%), especially in comparison to younger respondents aged under 24 years (47%).

Northern Tasmanian respondents were the most likely to be harvesting food from their gardens (57%), with fewer green thumbs in the South (50%) and North West and West regions (44%). Gardening increased steadily with age, with only 23% of 18-24 year old respondents reporting eating from their garden, in comparison to 59% aged over 65 years. Interestingly, 20% reported receiving food from other people's gardens, highlighting that sharing surplus backyard produce may be an important way Tasmanians keep connected.

Despite COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, respondents also purchased take-away food (40%), and a smaller number got home delivery (17%) and food from fast food outlets (13%). Take-aways were favoured by families with children, with 51% of these respondents reporting buying a take-away in the week of the survey.

Around double the number of respondents aged under 44 years reported receiving a home delivery in comparison to those in older age brackets. Similarly, our youngest respondents bought the most fast food (35%), which was much higher than those aged over 45 years (11%) and 65 years (2%).

Only a small minority of Tasmanians reporting buying food direct from Tasmanian producers (22%). This highlights that social distancing restrictions may make it more difficult for Tasmanians to get access to these outlets. Further, only around a quarter (26%) of the Tasmanian respondents visited their butcher in the week of the survey.

Where next?

A more focused survey from The Tasmania Project is investigating how Tasmanians' access to food and produce has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to gather opinions on how Tasmania's food production and supply should be planned in the future.

While the Australian food supply is remarkably resilient, it is important for us to understand whether all Tasmanians have had access enough healthy food to meet their needs, and how the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed how Tasmanians from different walks of life have accessed their food.

The survey will explore perceptions of the Tasmanian food supply, including food imports and exports, to identify opportunities for Tasmanian producers, such as commercial fishers, who have been impacted by the loss of export markets. The survey will also identify the innovative ways that Tasmanian food businesses have responded to the restrictions enforced by COVID-19, so we may be able to understand opportunities to support Tasmanian food businesses in the future.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project's approach and method [here](#).