



PRESS RELEASE

The Grill Heats Up: Canadians Finding Renewed Passion for Barbeque

New Ipsos data reveals grilling has experienced renewed popularity in the last few months.

As consumers, we are often looking for new and fresh trends, products and services. This is especially true in the multi-billion-dollar food industry. But the Covid-19 pandemic has created such anxiety, stress and uncertainty, many Canadians are looking towards comfort instead of trendy. And a barbeque with family and friends is as comforting as it gets as we see the grilling numbers rise in Canada.

New Ipsos data reveals grilling has experienced renewed popularity in the last few months. Ipsos found a 5% increase in Canadians grilling when comparing May 2020 to May 2019. Of course, most of the country was in lockdown at the time and the weather was getting warmer. But this increase breaks a consistent pattern we have seen. Barbequing had been declining in Canada over the last four years (-20% vs 2016). That can be attributed to the fact that Canadians are entertaining less often at home, choosing to enjoy social occasions at restaurants more often (+4% vs. 2016) and, increasingly, opting for condominium/apartment living which does not always offer on-premise barbecuing amenities.

Ipsos' Kathy Perrotta, Vice-President of Market Strategy and Understanding, has been tracking the eating habits and trends of Canadians for close to two decades and predicts we will see a steady increase of grilling in the country.

“Our Ipsos Foodservice Monitor data confirms a fair degree of hesitancy and apprehension among Canadians as 68% report that they will be nervous leaving their homes even when restaurants re-open. Grilling, on the other hand, is a more controllable option that also provides a good way to socialize after months of social distancing. The Covid experience has changed our wants and needs – safety and company. So, look for the barbequing numbers to go up – especially as it gets warmer.”

The new Ipsos data reveals several trends in Canadian barbequing. For instance, the grilling rates are rising in British Columbia and Quebec versus the 2019 numbers (+3%), while Ontario is seeing a decline (-3%). Meanwhile, outdoor barbequing is more common in households with kids. We found 61% of food prepared on the grill was consumed by people living in a home with kids <18 years old. And, we see it is a social activity with over eight in ten items cooked on the grill consumed in social settings with more than one person.

The grilling experience is not for suburbanites alone. In fact, half of outdoor cooks (51%) reside in urban cityscapes with a population size over 1 million residents. Rising popularity can, in part, be attributed to new barbeque innovation which often features smaller and portable units targeted to urbanite use.



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Perrotta explains despite the rise of flexitarianism or lessetarianism (less meat consumption), the top items prepared on the barbeque are dominated by meat entrée options.

“Side dishes account for 21% of barbecued food items consumed led by potatoes and a variety of vegetables. Beyond meat and veggie preferences, it is interesting to see that Canadians are extending their use of the barbeque to grill non-traditional fare like pizza, tacos and sandwiches. Unconventional use now even includes dessert preparation like fruit.”

Top Meats Consumed and Prepared on the Barbeque	Change vs. 2018
Steak	-5.2%
Hamburger	2.7%
Chicken Breast	-1.4%
Hot Dogs	3.0%
Sausages	-0.7%
Pork Chops	2.0%
Pork Ribs	0.8%

Source: Ipsos FIVE R'12 ending May 2020; % Individuals

Although there will not be parades and large parties to commemorate the occasion, we can expect more Canadians to fire up the grill this Canada Day. Ipsos has been tracking behavioural habits and food trends on a daily basis through its FIVE study since 2013. We will continue to uncover new patterns and behaviors in the way Canadians eat, cook and dine-in, dine-out, or in this case, dine-outside.

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