

# Millions forced to skip meals or struggle to buy healthy food

Millions of households are skipping meals or struggling to put healthy goods on the table, according to a new poll, with many cutting back on food bills and luxury treats “to navigate the tough months ahead”.

Around 85% of people in the UK are spending less on food shopping as a result of the [cost of living](#) squeeze, most commonly by looking out for items on promotion, research by consumer group Which? suggests.

Half of respondents said they are trading down to cheaper products than they were buying previously.

Even among those who reported living comfortably, 47% said they are taking measures to save money on food.

Among the 9% who said they are finding it “very difficult” to get by, half said their household was skipping meals, as did a quarter of those who are finding the current situation quite difficult.

Almost half of all consumers (46%) said they are finding it harder to eat healthily compared with before the crisis, rising to 78% of those finding it very difficult financially.

The poll found 42% of households are less often splurging on expensive items, while 36% are shopping around in supermarkets, other stores or online.

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Almost one in five said they had bought more frozen food to

cut costs (18%), and 5% said that they are buying more ready or microwave meals.

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The findings come as [inflation](#) last month returned to the 40-year high it hit earlier this summer after food prices soared.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said Consumer Prices Index [inflation reached 10.1% in September](#), compared with 9.9% in August, driven by food prices increasing by 14.5% on last year.

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Sue Davies, Which? head of food policy, said: "Supermarkets have a crucial role to play in supporting their customers through this very difficult time.

"By making sure that everyone has easy access to budget food ranges that are also healthy, can easily compare the price of products to get the best value and that promotions are targeted at supporting people most in need, supermarkets can help their customers to navigate the tough months ahead."