



**“How Do We Eat? A Nutritional Perspective on Food and Drink Consumption
(2022–2024)”**

**SPANISH HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN HAVE THE POOREST
DIETARY PROFILE**

- **Time is a decisive factor in diet quality: households where the main grocery shopper is in employment tend to have a poorer diet (72.13% vs 74.88%), with less fresh produce and greater reliance on convenience foods.**
- **Across Spain, households still fall short of recommended dietary guidelines. Consumption of fruit, vegetables, fish, pulses and nuts remains below recommended levels.**
- **While diet quality generally improves with age, recent figures point to a concerning decline.**

Elorrio, 21 April 2026.- [Fundación EROSKI](#) has published the second instalment of its study “How Do We Eat? A Nutritional Perspective on Food and Drink Consumption”, drawing on data from the Consumer Panel of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA) for the period 2022–2024. The report explores how factors such as the presence of children, employment status, age, household size, family structure and socio-economic background shape dietary habits. Its findings confirm that Spain has yet to achieve a consistently healthy standard of nutrition.

In 2024, foods recommended for daily and regular consumption accounted for 73.45% of total intake, while those recommended only occasionally made up 26.55%. Of the healthier categories, daily consumption represented 43.01% and regular consumption 30.45%. However, the overall picture remains unbalanced. Progress towards recommended dietary patterns is still limited, and key nutritional targets are not being met.

Consumption stands at just 64.5% of recommended levels for fruit and vegetables, 44.9% for nuts, 26.9% for pulses and 60.8% for fish.

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Households with children: poorer nutritional quality, despite modest improvements

One of the clearest findings is the impact of children on dietary habits. Households without children show a stronger nutritional profile, with 74.18% of consumption coming from recommended food categories. This compares with 71.66% in households with children aged 0–6 and 70.46% in those with children aged 6–15. The gap is particularly evident in foods recommended for daily consumption, which drops from 44.55% in child-free households to 37.14% and 37.81%, respectively. There is also a noticeable drop in key staples, such as fruit (16.81% vs 13.16% and 12.77%), vegetables (13.84% vs 11.18% and 11.10%) and fish (4.00% vs 2.85% and 2.98%).

At the same time, the share of less healthy options increases, reaching 28.34% in households with younger children and 29.54% in those with older children, compared with 25.82% in households without children. This is particularly evident in the higher consumption of ready meals (3.08% and 3.23%) and sweet foods and drinks (15.93% and 16.25%). That said, the trend since 2022 is slightly encouraging: the proportion of more nutritious foods has risen by 1.47 percentage points in households with children aged 0–6 and by 1.43 points in those with children aged 6–15. However, both groups remain below the national average.

The availability: a key factor in diet quality

The study highlights a clear link between available time and the quality of people's diets. In households where the person responsible for grocery shopping is in employment, the share of healthier, recommended foods stands at 72.13%, compared with 74.88% in households where this person is not working.

This gap becomes more pronounced in everyday consumption patterns (40.77% vs 45.42%) and across key food groups, such as fruit (14.58% vs 17.42%), vegetables (12.82% vs 13.70%) and fish (3.54% vs 4.01%). By contrast, there is a higher reliance on convenience products, including ready meals (2.81% vs 1.91%) and sweet foods (14.55% vs 12.65%).

Although these households have shown some improvement since 2022 (+0.71 percentage points in recommended consumption), they still fall below the national average, underlining the impact of time constraints on eating habits.

Age improves diet quality, although signs of decline are emerging among older groups

The age of the person responsible for grocery shopping remains one of the most influential factors shaping dietary habits. The share of foods consumed daily in line with

recommendations rises from 37.11% among under-35s to 47.93% among those aged 65 and over – a gap of more than 10 percentage points.

Consumption of fruit (from 11.45% to 19.37%) and fish (from 2.58% to 4.31%) also increases with age, while the proportion of less healthy products declines (from 30.06% to 22.98%).

However, the study points to a slight recent downturn among older households, with a 0.90 percentage point drop in the share of recommended foods. This may signal a gradual weakening in adherence to the Mediterranean diet.

Household size and family structure also shape eating habits

Household size directly impacts diet quality. The larger the household, the lower the proportion of recommended foods – falling from 74.89% in single-person households to 71.63% in households with four or more members.

This trend becomes even clearer when looking at household profiles. Retired households display the healthiest patterns, with 77.33% of consumption coming from recommended categories and 48.25% from foods consumed daily in line with guidelines. By contrast, young independent households (69.59%) and single-parent families (71.41%) fall below the national average.

Single-parent households, in particular, combine below-average diet quality with a negative trend, placing them among the highest-risk groups.

Consumption trends and the challenge of achieving a more balanced diet

The study highlights a consistent trend across all segments: rising consumption of meat – including processed products – alongside a decline in fish intake. This imbalance reflects a gradual shift away from the traditional Mediterranean diet. At the same time, convenience foods are becoming increasingly prominent, particularly in urban settings. Driven by evolving lifestyles and limited time, this trend underscores the need to ensure that convenience options also meet appropriate nutritional standards.

*“The data clearly shows that there is still considerable room for improvement in dietary habits in Spain, particularly among households with children and young people. As a food distributor, we have a responsibility to make healthy, accessible choices available and to support families in improving their eating habits”, says **Alejandro Martínez, Director at Fundación EROSKI.***

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About FUNDACIÓN EROSKI

EROSKI established Fundación EROSKI in 1997 as a platform to deliver a wide range of social initiatives to society. Its work focuses on research, innovation, education and consumer protection, as well as environmental sustainability. Through its activities, the Foundation promotes healthy eating and lifestyle habits, contributing to the development of a fairer, more inclusive and cohesive society, with inter-cooperation at the heart of its approach.

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