



UK Consumer Survey Results Cooking

REPORT AUTHORED BY OPINIUM MAY 2023

PARTNER ORGANIZATION



What people think,
feel and do

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

Strategic communication efforts require a robust understanding of the target audience – allowing campaign practitioners to forge messages that align with group preferences and address shared concerns. To ensure the project's communication materials resonate with UK consumers, the team leveraged a data driven approach in building a public awareness strategy.

The project utilized a geographically representative survey to collect key information on consumer perceptions of gas and electric cooking. In October of 2022, the survey contractor, Opinium, implemented and analyzed a 17-question survey to 2000 households across the UK, gathering key insights on how to effectively communicate the dangers of gas cooking with the public.

The survey questions were carefully developed to gather objective information on participants' cooking practices, preferences, and willingness to deviate from legacy cooking methods. Results were analyzed and used to inform relevant communication activities.

RESULTS OF CONSUMER SURVEY IN THE UK

50% of UK consumers report that they cook with a gas hob in their home. Slightly less than half of respondents, 48%, denoted that they cook on an electric hob, including ceramic hobs (34%), induction hobs (31%) and resistive heated element use hobs (27%). With such a close split in the market, strategic information sharing will be critical in influencing a majority of consumers to support a gas hob phase-out.

Familiarity with the cooking method is a main driver of consumer preference.

Respondents overwhelmingly reported that they like to cook with the fuel they are used to. Of the people who cook with gas and those who cook with electric, 47% of each group cited familiarity as the reason they prefer that fuel method. The significance of this preference increases in relation to age brackets, with 62% of gas users over the age of 65 responding that they prefer gas because they are used to it – the highest percentage of any age group.

Consumers cite knowledge of health risks as a potential driver to transition to gas-free cooking methods.

61% of respondents reported that they would consider getting rid of a gas cooker if there was a negative health implication for those in the household. Less than half (41%) of overall UK respondents identified a link between gas appliance use and health issues, illustrating an opportunity for mass public information sharing in favour of an electric cooking transition.

The foremost concerns blocking consumers from making the switch to electric hobs are driven by cost. The biggest (43%) perceived barrier of switching from gas to electric is increased electricity bills, followed by high purchase cost (39%). Given the paramount financial concerns, it makes sense that about a third of gas cooking appliance users (32%) would be motivated to switch if there was a financial incentive.

When in search of a new hob, consumers are likely to turn to external sources like the internet and those in their community to inform their final purchasing decision.

Household decision-makers turn to “trusted” sources to guide their final appliance choice. According to the survey results, the most trusted sources are review sites (48%), followed by [Which?](#) (39%) and input from family and friends (34%). Respondents also overwhelmingly support the use of energy labels (81%) which can empower consumers to make informed purchases.

Consumers report that they would be more open to transitioning away from gas cooking if the electric options were comparable in usability and function.

22% of respondents denoted they would consider buying an electric hob if it were easier to control the appliance’s heat levels, and 20% would switch if the hob was quicker to heat up. These factors point to common misconceptions about the capabilities of electric cooking technologies that could be directly addressed in campaign materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by public perception of gas cooking in the UK, the following recommendations should be considered in efforts to adjust public support for a gas cooking appliance phase out. These proposed tactics should be aligned with country level data and national values.

- **Educate the public on the serious health risks gas cooking poses to those in the household, particularly children.** A majority of gas hob users reported that they are willing to consider swapping their cooking appliance for an electric

alternative if made aware of health implications, highlighting a clear information gap that could be filled by a robust consumer awareness campaign. Utilizing the peer reviewed evidence base offered by this report and future literature, relevant campaign activities should aim to provide compelling documentation of the health impacts connected to cooking with gas. This strategy of targeted information sharing should be informed by country-level data. Communicators should also amplify the observed effects of gas-related indoor air pollution on the most vulnerable populations, namely children, to forge strong affect among target audiences. These messages should be disseminated across various campaign materials, including reports, written content, social media, videos, etc.

- **Bust common myths about the shortcomings or risks of induction hobs using existing evidence.** A notable percentage of respondents indicated that their hesitation to make the switch from gas to electric was due to apprehension about the consumer experience; however, many of the concerns cited in the survey speak to common misconceptions about the functionality of induction hobs. Consumer awareness activities should leverage the wealth of existing knowledge of attractive induction features such as appliance heating speed and precise temperature control. Many pro-electric cooking communication resources already exist for public use, but it will be important to translate these lessons into a regional context. For example, a video demonstrating the usability of an

induction cooktop in the US could be remade to adhere to regional languages and cuisine. Additional information sharing resources, such as popular product review websites like [Which?](#) could also inform consumers' decisionmaking prior to purchase.

- **Highlight electric hobs as an efficient and healthy decarbonization solution in the face of rising fuel prices.**

Decarbonization efforts are being touted as a vital and cost-effective measure in protecting UK communities– offering a key moment for meaningful policy change. Consumers are notably concerned about all associated costs of electric cooking, including purchasing prices and running costs. With the ongoing energy and cost of living crises in mind, clean cooking advocates must carefully consider how to frame financial

impacts. Core economic messaging in gas cooking phase-out efforts should highlight the opportunity to reduce reliance on gas supply, as well as the potential for significant long term utility bill savings as the grid grows cleaner.

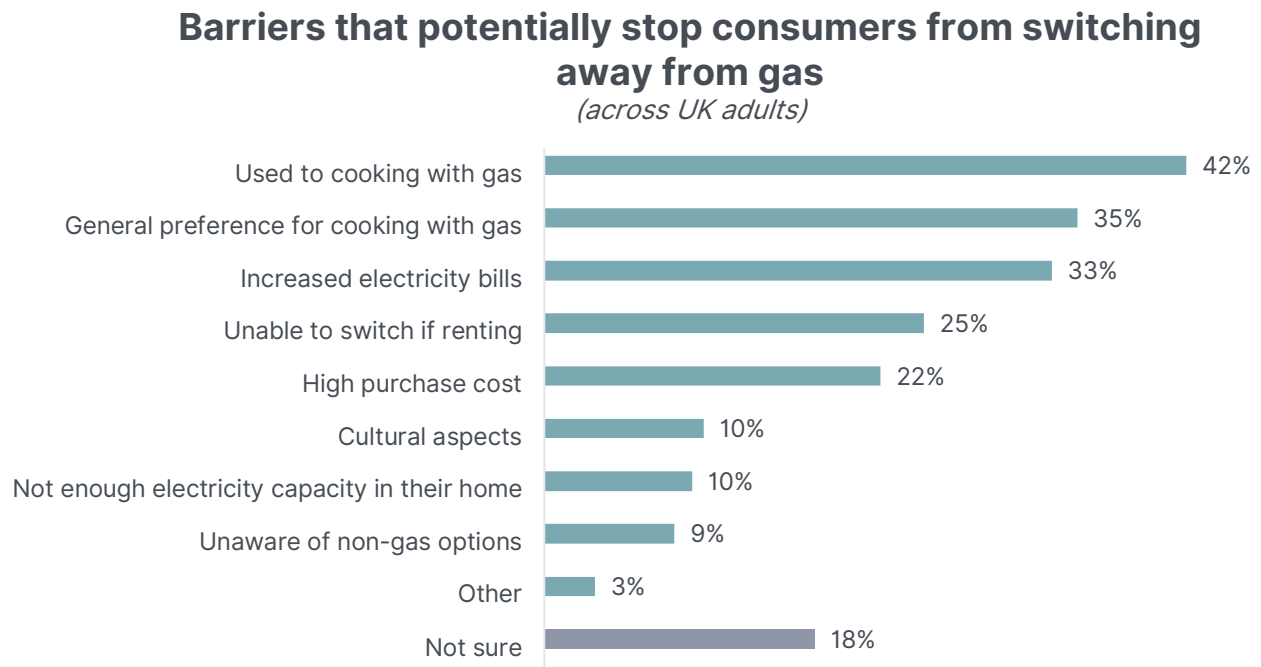
- **Motivate consumers to support relevant policymaking efforts through thoughtfully crafted and nationally relevant communication materials.**

There is a clear opportunity to influence change – both in consumer behavior and regional policies. Advocates can leverage the compelling evidence base and regionally specific messaging to motivate action through petitions, sign on letters, and participation in policy comment periods. Policies could garner even more support by including financial incentives that lessen initial purchase prices.

Switching From Gas to Electric Cooking

Nearly a quarter of gas appliance users feel nothing would motivate them to switch to electric.

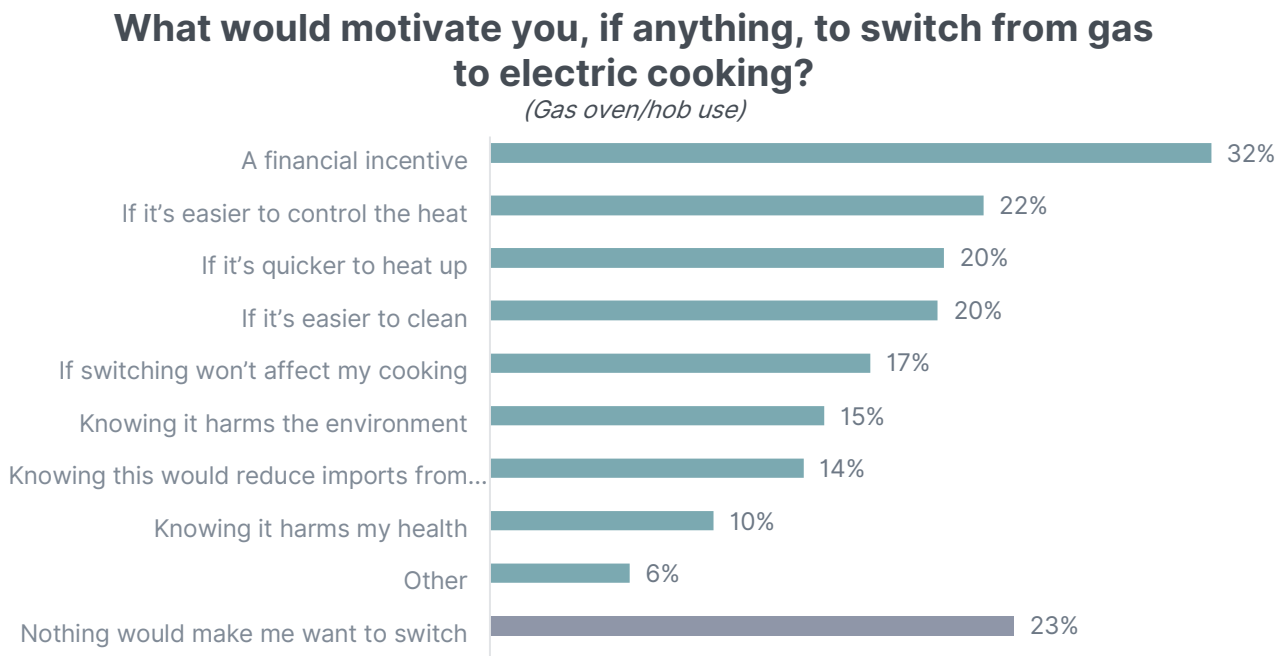
There are several barriers that stop consumers from switching to electric from a gas oven/hob. Two-fifths (42%) of UK adults think consumers would not switch because they are used to cooking with gas, while about a third (35%) feel a general preference for cooking with gas is stopping the switch to electric appliances. Other top barriers include increased electricity bills (33%) and the inability to switch if renting (25%):



About a third (34%) of UK adults also have concerns over cooking with gas appliances in their homes (whereas this drops to 28% for concerns over electric appliances). About three in five (61%) would consider getting rid of a gas cooker if there were health implications, which is no surprise, as about two in five (41%) link gas appliances with a health issue. About two-fifths (43%) would do the same due to environmental concerns and about a third (36%) would go a step further and approve measures to end the sale of gas cookers.

Looking at motivations to switch to electric cooking, about a third of gas cooking appliance users (32%) would be motivated to switch if there was a financial incentive and about a fifth (22%) if it's easier to control the heat using electric appliances. A fifth (20%) would switch if it's quicker to

heat up and the same percentage (20%) would switch if it's easier to clean. However, nearly a quarter of gas cooking appliance users (23%) feel nothing would make them want to switch.



Energy Efficiency

Four in five UK adults think it is important to have an energy efficiency label when buying a new oven.

Knowing about the energy efficiency of their cooking appliances is of obvious importance to UK adults: about four in five (81%) say the energy efficiency label would be important to them when buying a new oven. When asked about what information they would find useful on an energy label itself, energy efficiency was the top choice (65%). About four in five (81%) UK adults said this information would be useful for them.

When buying a new oven or hob, cost is an obvious factor for many (59% for ovens and 57% for hobs), however again energy consumption is a key consideration, where about two in five UK adults said this would be a top consideration for them (42% for ovens and 41% for hobs).

In terms of using trusted sources to help decide on the new purchase of an oven/hob, the most trusted sources are review sites (48%), [Which?](#) (39%) and family/friends (34%).

Preferred Cooking Methods

Hob / oven usage in the UK is split about 50/50, although more prefer using an electric oven.

Hob / oven usage in the UK is split, where half (50%) of UK adults use a gas hob most in their house and slightly fewer an electric hob (48%—this is split into ceramic use (34%), induction use (31%) and resistive heated element use (27%)).

When looking at ovens we see a clear preference for electric use, where about three in five (59%) say they prefer electric ovens and only about a third (29%) say the same for gas ovens.

Amongst those who said they prefer electric cooking, the top reason is that they are used to using it (47%), whilst about a quarter (24%) said because it's easier to control how much heat is being used.

Similarly, familiarity and ease are the top reasons for those who prefer gas cooking: almost half (47%) of those who prefer cooking with gas do so because they're used to it, whilst about two in five (40%) said it's easier to control how much heat is being used. One in three (33%) also prefer this method because they feel it heats up food quicker.

TOP REASONS WHY ELECTRIC COOKING IS PREFERRED		TOP REASONS WHY GAS COOKING IS PREFERRED	
I'm used to electric cooking	(47%)	I'm used to using gas	(47%)
It's easier to control how much heat is being used	(24%)	It's easier to control how much heat is being used	(40%)
It is cheaper to run	(14%)	It heats up food quicker	(33%)
It heats up food quicker	(13%)	I can see when it is heating up	(22%)
I don't have to use fossil fuels in my home to cook	(12%)	It is cheaper to run	(20%)

The majority of UK adults that cook use some form of ventilation.

Ventilation methods are widely used when cooking: the majority (85%) of UK adults that use an oven/hob use at least one form of ventilation method, including an exhaust hood (49%) or opening their windows (48%). Of those who use an exhaust hood, nine in ten (92%) use it often. Reasons for why ventilation methods are used include reducing the steam/smoke (60%) and eliminating cooking smells (52%).



About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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