

The best foods to eat while driving: Insure.com survey 2020

By Les Masterson | Updated on July 15, 2020

Energy bars fuel American drivers, beating out French fries, potato chips and candy bars as the go-to food for motorists.

Insure.com surveyed 1,000 drivers and asked them about their favorite meals on wheels and whether it's led to tickets and accidents.

Most drivers believe that eating while driving is a form of distracted driving. More than two-thirds of respondents (66%) agreed with that sentiment, which was similar to a 2019 Insure.com survey that found 70% of people said eating while driving is a type of distracted driving.

That said, respondents don't think it's as bad as texting, having children in the car or adjusting music, which respondents considered bigger distractions than eating while driving.

WHAT ARE DRIVERS EATING?



- Granola or energy bar – 17%
- French fries – 14%
- Potato chips – 11%
- Candy bars – 9%
- Hamburgers – 6%



Insure.com

Best Car Insurance Offers For You

📍 Zip

Age

▼

Current Insurer

▼

Homeowner?

Multiple Vehicles?

Good Driver?
(i)

Get Quotes

What are drivers eating? Here are the results:

- Granola or energy bar -- 17%
- French fries -- 14%
- Potato chips -- 11%
- Candy bars -- 9%
- Hamburgers -- 6%
- Chicken nuggets -- 5%

- Pizza -- 5%
- Doughnut -- 4%
- Fresh fruit -- 4%
- Breakfast sandwich -- 4%
- Sandwich or sub -- 3%
- Wrap -- 3%
- Hot dog --- 2%
- Burrito -- 2%
- Bagel -- 2%
- Muffin -- 1%
- Ice cream cone -- 1%
- Taco -- 1%
- Yogurt -- 1%

The top food in 2020 differs from last year's survey. In 2019, candy bars topped the list, followed by granola or energy bars, French fries and potato chips.

We found a difference depending on gender and age this year. Women preferred granola or energy bars (21%) more than any other snack. Only 12% of men chose that as their go-to food while driving. Instead, men preferred French fries (13%).

All age groups except one chose granola or energy bars as their favorite. Drivers 65 and over picked those bars more than any other age group as 25% from that age group preferred the snack. The only age group that didn't choose granola or energy was 18-to 24-year-olds. Their favorite food? French fries.

Why do drivers dine behind the wheel?

Drivers blamed long commutes for their dine and drive habits, mirroring 2019 results. Here are the 2020 figures:

- I have a long commute -- 24%
- I like to save time, so I have more time at my destination -- 20%
- I really don't enjoy it, but it's convenient, so I do it -- 19%
- I am always rushing and don't have time to eat at home or restaurant -- 18%
- I never drive and eat -- 17%
- I rarely cook -- 3%

Every age group blamed long commutes as the number one reason except for 18-24, which pointed to wanting to spend more time at their destination for a reason to snack while driving. That was also the number one reason for northeast drivers.

How often do drivers eat while driving?

Nearly half said they do it at least once a week. Only 14% of drivers said they never eat while driving.

- Only on trips that are an hour or more -- 42%
- Once or twice a week -- 28%
- Never -- 14%
- Once or twice a day -- 8%
- More than twice a week -- 8%

Men are more apt to eat and drive than women (16% of women say they never eat while driving compared to 10% of men).






Older drivers are less apt to say they eat and drive. Thirty-eight percent of drivers 65 and over said they never eat and drive. That's compared to just 8% of people 25-34 and 10% of drivers 18-24.

Drivers in the western part of the U.S. are also less apt to eat while driving. Twenty-percent of drivers in the west said they never do that. That's compared to just 8% in the northeast.

Eating foods that are easy to handle is key for drivers who munch while motoring.

- I will only eat foods that I like that are easy to handle while driving -- 48%
- I just get what's convenient that I like to eat -- 21%
- I take into account how hard it will be to handle the food while also driving, but generally still get whatever I feel like eating regardless -- 17%
- I never drive and eat -- 13%

Check our Car insurance offers for you

Company	Offer	Get Your Personalized Quote
	We've had our customers' back for over 75 years, because we're committed for the long haul	GET QUOTES
	Take advantage of E-sign, Safe Driver, Pay-in-full, Multi-Car and other Discounts	GET QUOTES
	Switch and see how State Farm could help you save 21%* on car insurance. *Average annual per household savings based on a 2019 national survey by State Farm of new policyholders who reported savings by switching to State Farm.	GET QUOTES
	Top Rated Insurance Companies	GET QUOTES
	Compare Quotes from several companies.	GET QUOTES

Tickets and accidents

More than two-thirds of drivers said they've never had an accident, a near-miss or received a ticket because of eating while driving.

- I've never had an incident, come close to one or received a ticket -- 70%
- Had a near miss -- 18%
- Got into a fender bender (damage under \$2,000) -- 11%
- Got into a major accident (damage over \$2,000) -- 6%
- Got pulled over by police for traffic violation -- 6%

However, men were more apt to have a food-related traffic incident:

- Near miss -- 24% men; 12% women

- Fender bender -- 16% men; 5% women
- Major accident -- 7% men; 4% women
- Pulled over -- 7% men; 5% women

Northeast drivers had the highest percentage of near-misses (23%) compared to just 15% of midwest drivers.

Most distracting eating while driving moments

Unwrapping food remains the biggest driving distraction for behind-the-wheeler chowers. That was number one last year, too.

- Unwrapping food -- 30%
- Wiping a spill or stain -- 24%
- Reaching for something -- a salt packet, napkin or stray fry -- in the bottom of a bag -- 22%
- Putting salt, ketchup, salsa or another condiment on food -- 14%
- Stashing the trash (food wrapping or containers/napkins) in the car somewhere -- 10%

Eating while driving and distracted driving laws

Distracted driving can be deadly. The Governor's Highway Safety Association said distracted driving led to 2,841 deaths or 7.8% of total traffic fatalities in 2018.

Nearly all states have laws against texting and talking on the cellphone while driving. Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have texting bans and 38 states don't allow drivers to use cell phones.

States don't have as many laws specifically against eating while driving. Washington is a state that made it illegal to drive while eating or applying makeup. Drivers caught eating behind the wheel face a \$136 ticket for the first offense and \$234 for the second offense. Police will also notify car insurance companies, which can lead to higher [auto insurance](#) rates.

Though many states don't explicitly target eating while driving, consuming a meal while motoring could be against distracted driving and reckless driving laws. In California, police can cite you for reckless driving if you're caught eating while behind the wheel. Georgia also tickets drivers for eating while driving.

How much does insurance rates increase from distracted driving tickets

Distracted driving doesn't just put you and other drivers at risk. It also can lead to higher auto insurance rates.

An Insure.com rate analysis shows that car insurance rates rise by an average of 22% for a distracted driving ticket. That result is similar to rate increases for texting or speeding tickets.

That means that if your annual car insurance rate is \$1,300, an increase of 22% would be \$286 a year. That breaks down to around an extra \$24 per month. You could also lose good or safe driver discounts, which are usually worth 10 to 25%.

If you wind up getting tickets that will increase your auto insurance rates, shop around and get quotes from multiple car insurance companies. Insurers vary in how they devise rates. Your insurer may raise rates, while another might give you a break.

[About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Partnership](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Site map](#) | [California - Do Not Sell My Info](#)

Copyright © 2020 Insure.com. All Rights Reserved.
All rights reserved