

Italians spend 23% of food on fruit and vegetables

Posted on April 26, 2026 by Robin Gale

RIMINI — Italian families are spending almost a quarter of their household expenditure on fruit and vegetables, with fresh data released on April 21 confirming *ortofrutta* (fresh produce) now accounts for 23 percent of all food and drink expenditure.

Total Italian fruit and vegetables shopping totalled almost 43 billion euro in 2025, according to new data presented at Macfrut 2026, the international fruit and vegetable trade fair held in Rimini. No comparable data was available for previous years.

The findings sit against longer-term shifts in Italian household structure. Italy now counts more than 26.6 million households, around four million more than 20 years ago, with single-person units making up a growing share of the total, according to national statistics office Istat. The country remains one of Europe's longevity leaders, with life expectancy of around 83 to 84 years, Istat data shows, a pattern often linked to the Mediterranean diet and a persistent preference for fresh, seasonal food cooked at home.

"Buying vegetables is one of the best returns on investment for your health. Eating a consistent weekly mix of two or three leafy greens such as spinach, two cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, and two or three colourful vegetables such as peppers measurably reduces cardiovascular risk factors," doctor and longevity expert Michelle Tempest said to Italy Now.

"And for those who struggle to afford fresh produce, frozen vegetables offer comparable nutritional value at a fraction of the cost," said Tempest, who is also the founder and CEO of the Founder and CEO of a brain longevity clinic.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/italians-spend-23-of-food-spend-on-fruit-veg-report/

In fact the baskets of families with children under 16, indicated by the report as a strategically important segment, show strong demand for convenience formats that include frozen vegetables, ready-prepared produce, canned legumes, and fruit juices. This even as fresh fruit and vegetables remain central to the family diet.



Italian farmer eating broadbeans (*Credits: Italy Now*)

Fruit, vegetables

Families in Italy spent some 193.7 billion euro on food and non-alcoholic drinks in 2025, up three percent year on year, with fresh produce claiming the largest single share of that basket, according to the Ismea-NIQ Observatory report.

Growth was broad-based across the category. Purchases of vegetables rose 3.3 percent, potatoes 5.3 percent, nuts 2.7 percent, kiwi 7.2 percent, and strawberries 8.9 percent. Frozen vegetables were up 0.8 percent, frozen potatoes 1.4 percent, canned vegetables and pulses 0.7 percent, and chestnuts 4.6 percent.

The strongest gains came from categories that were once considered niche. Blueberry sales surged 26 percent, blackberries 37 percent, mangoes 36 percent, and avocados 47 percent. Organic produce also performed strongly, with volumes up seven percent and values up 7.9 percent, pointing to sustained willingness among Italian consumers to pay for food perceived as healthier and higher quality.

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