

**S&P 500**

2,848.42  
-20.02 (-0.70%)



**Dow 30**

23,664.64  
-218.45 (-0.91%)



**Nasdaq**

8,854.39  
+45.27 (+0.51%)



**Russell 2000**

1,263.01  
-10.50 (-0.82%)



# 42 Goods That Are in Higher Demand Than Ever During the Coronavirus Crisis

Joel Anderson

GOBankingRates April 15, 2020



What products from the store do you feel you would absolutely need if you were required to hole up at home for a few weeks (or months)? Many people who hadn't given this a lot of thought found themselves rushing to grocery stores in mid-March only to discover that their thinking on the matter was tragically similar to their peers. One effect of the



coronavirus-induced binge of panic-buying was that it put a spotlight on the products that people view as essential.

GOBankingRates has gathered data from Nielsen to show precisely which goods were most sought after during people's major shopping sprees. These are the things that were seen as essential at a time when grocery store shelves were being gutted.

So, take a longer look at how coronavirus concerns have had an effect on what sort of [everyday products we find the most important](#).

*Last updated: April 15, 2020*

## 42. Papayas

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 2.8%

A 3% jump in sales doesn't exactly suggest this is coronavirus related, but stocking up on fresh fruit does make sense for a big grocery trip. Papayas are high in vitamins A and C as well as dietary fiber.

## 41. Bananas

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 16.6%

Bananas are the single most popular fresh fruit in America and a very nutritious snack. It's



entirely possible they were among the first targets of people looking to stock up on groceries.

## 40. Celery

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 18.7%

Celery is an important part of a wide variety of different recipes in various different forms of cuisine, on top of being a fast snack to eat with all sorts of different dips. That versatility might have played a role in its jump in sales.

## 39. Chocolate

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 19.0%

The shopping surge was a rising tide that raised all ships, but chocolate was among those products that did noticeably well. Part of what's driving sales is a spike in interest in home baking as more people are stuck at home.

***Related:** [What To Buy and Skip During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)*

## 38. Apples



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 19.8%

Few fruits are as quintessentially American as the apple, those beautiful sources of pectin and fiber. Between all sources, apples are the best-selling fruit in the country.

### 37. Ice Cream

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 23.1%

Dairy products were among those in highest demand as consumer spending ramped up, with sales spiking as people were hitting the stores. And ice cream, in particular, will keep longer in the freezer.

### 36. Pastries

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 23.6%

Sales of baked goods spiked over 60% for the week of March 15, putting them among some of the biggest climbers. With comfort foods at a premium, sweet baked goods were clearly what a lot of people were looking for.

### 35. Kombucha



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 25.9%

One possible explanation for the growth of kombucha sales in mid-March could be a renewed interest in health. Internet searches for “kombucha” for medicinal reasons spiked by 73% from February to March as part of the trend of rising interest in “functional” foods.

### 34. Soft Drinks

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 26.1%

That jump in soft drink sales at the grocery aisle doesn't appear like it's going to make up for the huge loss of sales that come from major events. Coca-Cola already had to revise its estimates for annual sales downward based on the coronavirus pandemic.

*Look: [Your Grocery Store Shopping Strategy During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)*

### 33. Potato Chips

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 29.6%

March 14 was National Potato Chip Day, which coincided pretty well with people's buying



habits this year. This surge in buying is clearly part of the trend toward comfort foods.

## 32. Milk

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 32.4%

While fresh milk was seriously outpaced by its powdered, nonperishable rival, people were still looking to stock up on fresh milk in spite of the fact that it has one of the shorter shelf lives of anything at the grocery store.

## 31. Chicken (Fully Cooked)

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 35.0%

An excellent source of lean protein, chicken was among the top sellers for people looking to buy all the essentials. It even has Perdue Farms moving resources to address the surge in buying for home consumption over other sources.

## 30. Eggs (Chicken)

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 44.0%



Eggs are an incredibly inexpensive source of lean protein that will last in the fridge for months, so it's no surprise that people saw them as among the most important buys during the shopping binge. Of course, just how cheap they are is in flux: The wholesale price of a dozen eggs more than tripled during the month of March.

## 29. Pretzels

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 46.7%

Pretzels are another snack food that saw a spike in purchases. Salty and able to last, they are one treat people are turning to in the crisis.

## 28. Popcorn

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 47.7%

Alongside pretzels is popcorn, another favorite snack food that can last on a pantry shelf. It's also possible that with so many people skipping the movie theater for Netflix, popcorn consumption is shifting to the home in a similar fashion as soft drinks and toilet paper.

## 27. Chicken (Fresh)



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 51.8%

Chicken is a versatile ingredient used in nearly every cuisine in the world. What's more, it's relatively easy to freeze and save for weeks or even months, so buying up chicken was clearly a priority for panic-shoppers.

## 26. Antibiotics

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 64.7%

Sales of antibiotics didn't immediately surge with other goods, but they started to spike at the end of February after the first suspected case in the United States. Sales jumped 15.4% that week after only increasing by 3.9% and 6.9% in the weeks prior.

## 25. Vitamins

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 93.2%

To be clear, there is no evidence that any sort of changes in your vitamin consumption will do much to keep you from getting sick — whether it be from the coronavirus or the common cold. In fact, multiple studies have repeatedly found no measurable benefit to taking multivitamins at all.





## 24. Water

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 99.4%

Bottled water was another late bloomer on this list, with the bulk of serious purchasing getting pushed until after the end of February when there was a double-digit increase. It was up just 1.4% through January.

## 23. Soup

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 126.6%

Canned soup was among the top-rising food products in terms of grocery sales for reasons that probably aren't a mystery to anyone. It checks the boxes for comfort food and food with an extra long shelf life.

## 22. Dish Soap

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 135.0%



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 135.0%

Clearly, Americans were expecting to be doing a lot more dishes at home when the severity and length of the lockdown started to come into focus. Sales of dish soap more than doubled, year over year.

## 21. Tuna

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 142.3%

Tuna sales saw a very mild 2.5% increase for the final week of 2019, and it saw a comparable decrease through the first month of 2020. However, things picked up markedly after the end of February when sales jumped by nearly 25%.

## 20. Black Beans

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 150.4%

Beans are among the most cost-effective, healthiest sources of protein and fiber out there, and they appear to be having their day in the sun as more and more people flocked to them during the recent crisis. While sales were ever-so-slightly down during early



## 19. Paper Towels

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 154.4%

While food stuffs were one part of people's stockpiling, it was actually paper goods and nonedibles that had one of the biggest spikes in sales. Paper towels are clearly among those as people spend more time at home.

**See:** [The 2020 Retail Apocalypse Will Claim More Than 100 of Your Favorite Stores — and It's Only Getting Worse](#)

## 18. Chickpeas

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 156.8%

Like black beans, chickpeas offer a wonderful combination of long shelf life, low cost and high nutrition. Once it became clear that things were going to get much worse, sales picked up significantly.

## 17. Cold and Flu Remedies



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 158.8%

Cold and flu remedies actually saw a double-digit increase in the final week of 2019, showing that people might have already had plenty on hand to deal with the cold and flu season even before the pandemic hit. However, sales spiked after the first suspected local transmission as well.

## 16. First-Aid Kits

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 163.3%

Many people rely on the first-aid kits at their office for most of the day. Pair that with the fact that heading to urgent care for a cut or strain while the healthcare system is overtaxed is clearly not ideal. As such, sales of first-aid kits have been on the rise all year — with a surge that starts with the first confirmed case in the U.S. at the start of February.

## 15. Rice

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 166.1%

Staples like rice are inexpensive and last on the shelf. Signs are that people's shopping



Staples like rice are inexpensive and last on the shelf. Signs are that people's shopping habits changed most profoundly in the final week of February when they popped by over 25%.

*Learn: [How Emergencies Like Coronavirus Expose Nonsense Business Practices](#)*

## 14. Bath and Shower Soap

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 183.3%

Frequent handwashing is a key bulwark against the spread of coronavirus, so it's unsurprising that soap was among the biggest sellers. Sales early in 2020 have been just short of triple what they were last year.

## 13. Tissues

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 195.0%

Facial tissues are always a must when you're sick, so people were likely stocking up in anticipation of that possibility. Not to mention, they're a possible toilet paper substitute in a pinch.

## 12. Antiseptic Products



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 196.4%

Sales of antiseptics were actually down slightly in the final week of 2019, but they were among the products where things picked up sooner than the rest. The week after the first confirmed case of coronavirus in the United States (the first week of February) saw a nearly 10% bump in sales.

## 11. Canned Meat

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 187.8%

Canned meat is another staple that can help stretch your pantry, however there's at least one sign that canned meat might be experiencing something of a boost in popularity that's not entirely coronavirus-related. Sales in the final week of 2019 jumped by almost 16%. And while the gains in the week after the first suspected local transmission in the U.S. were about double that, it does show that people were getting more Spam even before the concerns about the virus had really spread.

## 10. Hydrogen Peroxide

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 212.2%



No, this is probably not a sign that everyone in America is dealing with the crisis by going blonde. A valuable disinfectant that can be crucial in treating cuts and scrapes, hydrogen peroxide was among the goods that saw a significant jump in sales in the first week after the first case of COVID-19 in the United States. Sales were up 12.5% that week.

## 9. Toilet Paper

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 212.7%

Perhaps no item has gotten more press coverage for its buying search than good old TP. With people doing all of their going at home, sales have more than tripled year over year.

## 8. Bath and Shower Wipes

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 221.6%

Paper products were among the biggest gainers on this list, and bath wipes were among the things people started going for early. Sales spiked over 13% after the first confirmed case in the U.S. and then just shy of 60% in the week after the first suspected local transmission.

## 7. Dried Beans



- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 230.5%

Dried beans should be a staple in any pantry, and their considerable benefits — excellent nutrition, loads of lean protein, plenty of fiber, nearly indefinite shelf life, incredible low cost — have been on display during this crisis. While sales were down slightly in early February, people appear to have caught on quick in the last week of February when sales shot up by over 35%.

## 6. Multipurpose Cleaners

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 242.9%

Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces is one way people are trying to limit the spread of the virus, and they wanted to make sure they had the tools to do it. In the final week of February, sales suddenly jumped by almost a third over the week prior.

*Find Out: [How Much Emergency Cash You Need Stashed](#)*

## 5. Powdered Milk Products

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 245.0%





Powdered milk had one of the biggest jumps of any of the goods listed here in the final week of February. Sales spiked by nearly 85% as people were clearly thinking ahead about whether they would be able to get fresh milk in the coming months.

## 4. Rubbing Alcohol

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 277.0%

Rubbing alcohol was one the biggest gainers in that first week of February when the first confirmed case in the U.S. had just been announced. Sales were up almost 20%, making it one product that experienced a surge in buying earlier than most.

## 3. Hand Sanitizer

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 470.0%

The rush to buy hand sanitizer was well publicized, as people everywhere were clearing it out. As one way of potentially reducing the spread of the virus, it was at the top of shoppers' minds from early in the crisis to now.

**See:** [42% of People Plan To Spend Their Government Check on Groceries During the Coronavirus Scare](#)



## 2. Thermometers

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 497.7%

Temperature checks have become one of the most important ways for people to check for potential symptoms as many people are spreading the virus without feeling sick. A run on thermometers most likely shows people are looking to be able to check for a fever at home.

## 1. Aerosol Disinfectants

- **Year-over-year increase in sales:** 518.9%

Only one product showed a more-than sixfold increase in sales year over year and that was aerosol disinfectants. With the EPA announcing guidelines for which products can be counted on to be effective against the virus, shoppers should be sure the brand they're getting will meet the qualifications.

### *More From GOBankingRates*

- [24 Ways To Make This Week's Paycheck Go Further](#)
- [Here's How Much Cash You Need Stashed If an Emergency Happens](#)