

# The Grocer

Focus On: Jams and Spreads by Natalie Brown ([natalie\\_brown@live.co.uk](mailto:natalie_brown@live.co.uk))

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## The Story

Jam, marmalade and chocolate spreads were public enemy number one back in April, when Action on Sugar revealed just how much of the offending white stuff went on our toast for breakfast. The seemingly most innocuous product of all – the Women’s Institute’s Fine Cut English Breakfast Marmalade – turned out to be the most saccharine, with 14.3 grams of sugar per 20 gram serving. But Britain’s love for jams and spreads has not waned. Not only did the stats garner little in the way of supportive press coverage, but both volumes and values are up in the category. So at a time when sugar consumption is on its way down, what is behind our enduring love for sweetness on toast?

## Key themes:

**Not just toast:** Jams and spreads are no longer just a breakfast item. As IRI points out, diversification beyond toast is likely to be a driving factor behind the increase in volume. Today’s consumer is happy using spreads as a filler for pancakes, on porridge or other cereals, and in home baking. Which brands have been quick to cotton onto the idea of spreads being more central to meal occasions?

**Price increases:** However, most of the added value in the category has been driven by price increases. The increases that started last December have continued to filter through this year as the impact of the Brexit vote has truly set in. Flagship brands have conceded to price rises as all sub-categories increase their average price, with marmalade particularly hit.

**A tale of two halves:** With all this price pressure, it’s no surprise shoppers are turning to own brand alternatives, with own brand volume sales were up more than 10% over the past year. However, some shoppers have gone the other way: premium tiered products are growing at 53.5% across total spreads.

**Peanut butter:** One sub-category really punching above its weight is peanut butter. Its value shot up last year. But smaller brands are also growing strongly as people look for a more ‘natural’ peanut butter.

**Innovations:** We identify four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP, and a picture of each.

**Avocado spreads:** Once hailed as the next food fad, avocado spreads are now disappearing from the shelves. So why is this?

## Key questions the feature is likely to address:

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers’ strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What’s next for the category?