

## Video#1a (for Primary Respondent)

### Welcome to the 2025 USDA National Household Food Study

Welcome to the 2025 United States Department of Agriculture National Household Food Study! Thank you for reading our letter with the \$5 token of appreciation inside. We are offering you the chance to earn more money via gift cards for participating in this voluntary study. The information you provide about your household will help government agencies, universities, researchers, and policymakers learn how much money people spend on food so that USDA can design policies and programs to help meet the food needs of households in the United States.

To get an accurate picture of the food and drinks people purchase or get for free, we randomly selected households representing different neighborhoods all over the country to make sure that as many people as possible are represented. USDA and the Census Bureau, the agency responsible for conducting the survey for USDA, are legally bound to keep all survey responses confidential and can use your responses for statistical purposes only. Qualtrics, the online reporting tool used to collect your survey responses, is also legally bound to keep all information confidential.

This video will tell you about the different parts of the study, who should complete each part, and the gift card amounts that you can earn for completing each part. The parts of the study are the Household Survey, Profile & Income Survey, Food Log, and Closing Survey. As the person in your household who is at least 17 years old and either does most of the food shopping or most of the meal planning and preparation, you will complete the Household Survey. It can be done on a smart phone, tablet, or computer.

You will earn at least a \$40 gift card for this part of the study which will gather information about members of your household, their characteristics, and their contact information. There are also questions on health, work, income, and where your household gets their food and drinks. If you tell us during the Household Survey that you live with someone 14 years or older who will answer their own questions on health, work, and income, we will use their email address you provide on to ask them to create an account to fill out a Profile & Income Survey and a Food Log.

Each household member will earn a \$5 gift card for completing their Profile & Income Survey on a smart phone, tablet, or computer. If you choose to answer the health, work, and income questions for those you live with that are 14 years or older OR if you live with someone younger

than 14, we will ask you to answer those questions during your Household Survey. You will earn an additional \$5 gift card each time you answer questions for another household member in your Household Survey. You will not receive a separate Profile & Income Survey since you already answered those questions for yourself as part of the Household Survey.

Immediately after you submit the Household Survey, you will be sent an email asking you to create an account to access your daily Food Log. It will be quickest and easiest for you to do the Food Log on a smartphone. You will report the food and drinks you get on your assigned consecutive Food Log days beginning the day after you submit the Household Survey. If you do not get any food or drinks on an assigned day, you should tell us that too.

If you chose in the Household Survey to report the food and drinks for someone 14 years or older, then you will report their food and drinks, along with the food and drinks anyone in your household younger than 14 got, in the same Food Log where you report your food and drinks. Each household member that completes their own Food Log will earn at least a \$5 gift card per day. If you make daily Food Log entries for other household members or confirm that they did not get any food or drinks, you will earn at least an additional \$5 gift card per day per person. More information about how many days you need to fill out the food log and the gift card amounts you can earn are in the letter inviting you to complete the Household Survey and the email inviting you to complete the Food Log.

The final part of the study is the Closing Survey which asks you about your study experience. As the person doing the Household Survey, you will earn an additional \$15 gift card for completing the Closing Survey. The Closing Survey can be completed on a smart phone, tablet, or computer. Throughout all parts of the survey, please make sure the answers you enter are as accurate as they can be before you press the Next button since you may not be able use the Previous button to find and fix questions in a previous section.

There are additional videos to help you complete the Food Log. The videos are available both throughout the survey and on the study website at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) forward slash, - help, - forward slash, foodstudy. Also on the study website, you can find answers to Frequently Asked Questions, including the ways we protect your privacy, and the methods to contact us with any questions.

**Generic ending to all videos** -- Thank you for watching this video and participating in the National Household Food Study; more information can be found at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) forward slash, - help, - forward slash, foodstudy.

## Video#2 (for PRs and 14+ Household Members Reporting for Themselves)

### Food Log Overview

In this video, you will learn how to use the National Household Food Study Food Log to report the food and drinks you get. It will be easiest to complete the Food Log on your smartphone. To create your Food Log account, follow these steps.

1. Click the link in your invitation email and select “Create Account.”
2. Enter the email address found within the body of the invitation email as your username, then you will be sent a verification email.
3. Click the link in the verification email to create a password.
4. Log in to your account with your username and password to access your daily Food Log on the study dashboard.

Your dashboard shows one tile for each of the assigned Food Log days. While all tiles are initially marked as “Available,” please make sure to click on the correct day’s tile each time you report food and drinks starting with Day 1. In addition to the day, each tile will show the gift card amount for completing that day’s entries. If you are reporting food and drinks for others in your household, you will do so within your daily Food Log. Before you tell us the details about the food and drinks, we will ask if you are telling us about the food and drinks that you or someone else in your household got.

It is important that you fill out the Food Log for each study day. You will earn a gift card for each day you report, even if you report that you didn’t get any food or drinks that day. For ease of reporting your items, we recommend unpacking your groceries and scanning barcodes, entering Price Lookup Codes, or describing the items as you put things away rather than waiting until the end of the day when you would need to search for things that you’ve already put away.

You should report all food or drinks you get including items you purchase and those you get for free. When we say all food or drinks, we mean ALL food or drinks you get, even for other household members or for people outside your household. Always remember to include food you pay for, food you get for free, or food you get that was paid for by someone else. Depending on the type of food you get, you’ll get different options in the Food Log to enter food items. We’ll talk more about reporting where and what you get in Video#3.

In the Food Log, include grocery items you will use to prepare food and drinks at home, such as *chicken, milk, crackers, grapes, and coffee beans* you get from the supermarket, convenience store, wholesale club, dollar store, or pharmacy. Include any food or drinks you get that were not prepared at home, such as *a sandwich that you got from a deli, a meal at a neighbor's house, meal kits, and a child's school lunch*. Also include ingredients or prepared food or drink items that someone else buys for the household. For example, if a visitor brings a cake to celebrate an event or ingredients to bake a cake together, include these items in the Food Log and report them as free.

Report food and drink items that are ordered from online retailers on an assigned Food Log day. Record them on the purchase day not the delivery day. Report items purchased during the study period even if they will be delivered after the study ends. Do not report items ordered before the study began but were delivered during the study period. Do not report any non-food or non-drink items that you get, like toilet paper, medications, or pet food, even if you get them while you are getting food and drink items.

Do not include food or drinks that are already on hand at home since you got them before the start of this study. You should only add new items that you buy or get for free on each study day. Our goal is to find out what kinds of food and drinks you get and how you get them, *only* on your study days.

Let's walk through a day together and decide what should and should not be included in the Food Log. Say you start your day eating a bowl of cereal with milk. If you got the cereal and milk on a previous study day or prior to the study and you're *eating* them today, the cereal and milk should NOT be included in the Food Log. Now let's say you get a cup of coffee in the breakroom at work. Since this is a new item on this study day, report it in the Food Log, noting if it was free or if you had to pay for it. Even if you only drink half of the coffee, you should still report it the way you got it. Also include any other items that you get along with the coffee such as a blueberry muffin or piece of fruit and whether it was free, or you paid for it.

For lunch, let's say you bring leftovers from last night's dinner. These leftovers should not be reported in the Food Log since you did not buy or get them for free today. On your way home, you stop at the grocery store to buy a few items for dinner. These new food and drink items you get at the store should all be reported, even if you don't use them for tonight's dinner. In

summary, for this day you should report two different events – first, the coffee and snacks from the breakroom and, second, the items from the grocery store.

Before submitting the daily food log and earning that day's gift card amount, you will need to confirm that all the day's food and drinks have been added to the Food Log or that you did not get any food or drinks for the day. Please save any receipts you get from food and drink purchases, as we will ask that you upload photos of the receipts in the food log. These could be paper receipts that were printed out after you made a purchase or digital receipts that were emailed or texted to you after you made a purchase. For foods you get at a restaurant, please save the itemized receipt, rather than the credit card receipt. Video#6 will show you how to add your paper or digital receipts to the Food Log.

## Video#3 (for PRs and 14+ Household Members Reporting for Themselves)

### How to Report Your Food and Drinks

In this video, you will learn how to report food and drink items in the Food Log. You will report what you buy or get for free to prepare at home and also prepared items you buy or get for free to eat out, bring home, or have delivered. Record the food and drinks as you go about your day. Please remind others in your household that are reporting for themselves to do their Food Log every day.

Grocery store items, take-out meals, meals you eat at a restaurant, or free food from a food pantry are all examples of the types of items to report. You will need to report *all* food and drinks you purchase or get for free each day for all study days. The number of days you need to report can be found in your invitation email and on the Food Log dashboard.

Depending on the types of food you get and where you get them, you will use different options to enter food items into the Food Log. If you get food to prepare at home from a place like a grocery store or food pantry, there are three different ways to report the items in the Food Log. The first is by using your smart phone's camera to scan a package's barcode. The second is by entering the Price Lookup Code, or PLU, typically found on a fruit or vegetable sticker. The third way, which we suggest using only if the first two options do not work, is by typing the item name and description and selecting the correct item if it pops up on the drop-down list; otherwise, select "None of these" to use your own words to report the item. Video#5 will walk you through how to use these three options.

If you get already prepared food at a place like a restaurant, there are two different ways to add them to the Food Log. The first way is through the combo meal option. When several different food and drink items are sold together for one price, or even if you get them for free, they are considered a combo meal. Examples of a combo meal include a Happy Meal at McDonalds, items from a buffet, a steak dinner with a baked potato and salad, Kung Pao chicken with a side of rice, or a school meal of chicken tenders, corn, and milk.

The second way to report prepared food is by the individual item option. You should report items this way if you did not get a combo meal, but instead got individually prepared items that were each sold for their own price or were free. For these individually prepared items, you will type in the item name. Video #5 will also show you how to best use the type ahead feature, as we would like you to be as specific as possible when entering item names.

If you get prepared food in a combo meal and prepared individual items at the same time, we will ask you about the combo meals first and the individual items second. You will be able to report multiples of the same combo meal or multiples of the same individual item together. The combo meals need to be exactly the same if reporting more than one together. For example, if you get two Hamburger Kids Meals, but one with fries and one with apple slices, you need to report those separately because they are not exactly the same. Also, condiments only need to be added to the food log if they are not included in the cost of the already reported item/combo meal.

Sometimes you get both food and drinks to prepare at home and prepared food at the **same place**. An example of this is buying ingredients at a grocery store to bake a cake and also buying an already prepared sub sandwich at the grocery store's deli. Another example is visiting a coffee shop and buying coffee beans to use at home (which is considered the grocery item) and buying a cup of coffee (which is considered a prepared item). In these situations, we'll ask you about the groceries first and the prepared food next.



## Video#4 (for PRs and 14+ Household Members Reporting for Themselves)

### How to Effectively Search for Locations

In this video, you will learn how to search for the location where you got food or drinks while in the Food Log. It's important for us to know exactly where you got your food and drinks. For example, in addition to knowing you got a drink at Starbucks, we need to know which Starbucks location you got the drink from.

Let's get started. First, enter the store or restaurant name and at least one of the address details, such as street name, city, state, or ZIP code. This will display a list of store or restaurant locations, including a map view for you to select where you got food or drinks. Using the location search in the Household Survey will make location reporting in the Food Log easier, as the information provided on frequently shopped stores in the Household Survey creates pre-filled options in the Food Log. You can select one of these pre-filled locations in the Food Log when reporting where you got your food or drinks. If you got food or drinks at a different location, then you will use the search box to add the location.

Depending on your location and search results, a "Display more" box might be present. If necessary, select this box to see additional search results. If all results are displayed, you will see the message "All results displayed. If you still do not see the correct location and have confirmed that you have spelled the location correctly and that there are no other errors in your entry, select "None of these" and hit "Next." On the next screen, you will record the location name and address in separate fields.

How you type in the location information will influence the search results you see. For example, if you only enter the store or restaurant name and the city, dozens of results may show. However, if you enter the store or restaurant name, street name, city, and ZIP code, you may get a match or see fewer and more likely locations. Do not enter delivery services such as Grubhub, Uber Eats, or Instacart. They are only picking up and delivering food and drinks to you from a store or restaurant. We are asking where you got the food and drinks, not how they were brought to you.

Remember to only report an online order if you made it on one of the assigned daily Food Log days. Do not include any items ordered before your assigned days, even if the order arrives on an assigned day. Never enter your home address in the search box since you are only reporting items that were not already in the home.

## Video#5 (for PRs and 14+ Household Members Reporting for Themselves)

### Entering Food and Drink Items in the Food Log Using Barcode Scanning, the Price Lookup (PLU) Code, and Text Search

In this video, you will learn about the options available to enter your food and drinks into the Food Log. The first option is scanning the barcode on the package label of items you get to prepare at home from a place like a grocery store or food pantry. The second option is entering the Price Lookup Code, or PLU, for fresh fruits and vegetables. The third and final option is using the text search when the first two options are not available for the food or drink items. For already prepared items you get from a place like a restaurant, the only option for reporting the food and drinks is the text search.

First, let's talk about scanning the barcode. It will be easiest for you to scan a barcode using your smartphone. Most pre-packaged food and drinks in cans, bottles, cartons, jugs, jars, boxes, bags, and plastic wrap will have a barcode that is scanned at checkout in a store. If your food and drink items have a barcode, always try scanning it first to save time instead of manually entering the item information.

In the Food Log, using your smartphone camera or computer camera, you will scan the barcode when prompted. First, you will likely see a prompt to select "Request Camera Permissions" to allow the Food Log to access your camera, then select "Allow." When permissions are enabled, select "Start Scanning." If your smartphone has multiple camera lenses, you may need to select the lens you want to use for the barcode scan. When scanning, position your camera so that the entire barcode shows within the white rectangle's frame area. If scanning with your computer's camera, you may need to wait up to 10 seconds for the scan to be recorded.

If the barcode scan finds a match, the item name and corresponding photo will be displayed. If the correct item is displayed, select next to move to the next question. When a barcode match is found, you will automatically skip multiple follow-up questions about the item since the information is captured through the barcode scan. If an incorrect item is displayed, select "Return to item selection". Please note that some store-brand items may not result in successful scans.

If the camera is unable to read the barcode, you will receive an error message asking you to try again. If the scan is taking too long and not picking up the barcode, hit "Stop Scanning" to return to the "Start Scanning" screen. After a second unsuccessful scan, you should click on the button that says "Scan not working? Switch to text search" and then enter as much information as possible about the item, including the brand name. We recommend scanning packaged items

as you put them away at home after a shopping trip rather than at the end of the day when you would need to pull out items that you already put away.

Next, let's talk about Price Lookup Codes, or PLUs. For fresh fruits and vegetables, look for the PLU which is usually a 4- or 5-digit number found on a sticker or rubber band on the item or on the outside of the bag. Most PLUs are 4 digits for conventional items and 5 digits for organic items. You can see an example of a 4-digit PLU sticker on this non-organic lemon and a 5-digit PLU sticker on this organic banana. In the PLU search box, enter the PLU, then select the exact match in the drop-down list. The drop-down list will display both the PLU number and the corresponding item description.

If you enter a PLU number that does not match any of the options in the drop-down list or if you do not select an option from the drop-down list, an error message will be displayed on the next screen. At this point, you can either go back to the previous question to type the correct PLU code and select the match from the drop-down list or you can enter the name of the item on the next screen. When reporting items like fruit or other foods you buy loose in the store, please report those items as measured at purchase. For example, if they sold the apples by the pound, enter the price per pound. If they sold the apples at a per apple price, enter it that way in the food log.

The last option to enter items you get to prepare at home and the only option to enter already prepared items is to enter an item description in your own words in the text search box. For items you get to prepare at home, this is a fallback option that you can use to enter food and drinks that do not have a barcode or PLU, or where you did not find a match to the barcode or PLU. When you use the text search, please be very specific and use brands, flavors, and anything else that would help identify the exact food or drink you got. As you type the item's information into the search box, the drop-down list will update as you add specific details.

For example, rather than entering "vanilla ice cream" you should be more specific and enter "Breyer's vanilla bean ice cream." Multiple options will be displayed back to you for you to select the closest match. You may select "Breyers Fresh Cream and Real Vanilla Bean Ice Cream", or another appropriate match from the drop-down list. If your item is a generic or store brand item and is not listed in the drop-down list, please revise your text search to give as many details as you can such as "Frozen breaded chicken breast" instead of just "Chicken." It is important to accurately describe each item that you get. If you still cannot find the item, select "none of these" and your text entry will be saved as the item description.

Finally, let's talk about multi-pack items. A multi-pack item is a package that includes several individually wrapped items. For example, a box of individually wrapped granola bars is a multi-pack item, while a box of crackers that includes non-individually wrapped crackers is not a multi-pack item. If you report a multi-pack item, we'll ask how many individual wrapped items were in the package and the weight or size of the individual items.

## Video#6 (for PRs and 14+ Household Members Reporting for Themselves)

### How to Upload Receipts

In this video, you will learn how to add your paper receipts and electronic receipts to the Food Log. Please save all the receipts you get from food and drink purchases during your assigned Food Log days. When you report the food and drinks you get, we will ask you to either take a photo of your paper receipt or upload an existing photo of your paper or electronic receipts.

When asked “Do you have a receipt from the food and/or drink purchase,” if you select “Yes, I have a paper or digital/electronic receipt,” you will be asked to upload a picture (or more than one picture if necessary) of the entire receipt. It will be easiest for you to upload a receipt using your smartphone or tablet. If you have a paper receipt, you can either take a photo of the receipt after your shopping trip then upload the receipt into the Food Log, or you can take a photo of the receipt while in the Food Log. If you have an electronic receipt, please save an image, or take a screenshot of the receipt then upload it to the Food Log.

If you are on a desktop or laptop computer, you will see a box near the bottom of your screen with the text “Select a file or drag here”. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, you will see “Select a file”, and you will have the option to either access your photo library to upload an existing photo or use your camera to take a photo. From your computer, you only have the option to upload an existing file.

Regardless of the device you are using to upload the receipt image, if the receipt is too long to fit in one photo, you will be able to upload up to two receipt images in the Food Log. After adding the first image and selecting Next, you will be asked if you were able to upload the complete receipt or if you need to add a second photo to capture the part that was not included in the first image. Always check to make sure that the text on the receipt is easy to read once the picture is taken or uploaded.