

Shawarma dethrones burgers, but mici remain king: Wolt reveals Romania's shopping behavior in 2025

Seven months after its official launch in Romania, Wolt releases its first comprehensive deep-dive into the shopping habits of Romanians. Based on data from millions of items purchased across 34 cities, the statistics paint a vivid picture of a nation that embraces digital convenience while remaining fiercely loyal to local tastes.

From the dominance of garlic sauce to the rise of the "digital supermarket," 2025 marked the year when delivery apps transitioned from a simple food service to an essential utility for daily life.

"The keyword for Wolt's first seven months is evolution. We have registered significant growth, a clear signal that Romanians were ready for our platform. We are witnessing the rapid development of the one-stop shop concept. As we look towards 2026, our focus remains on becoming the essential infrastructure for local commerce, supporting our partners, and giving customers back their most valuable resource: time", said Alin Șerban, General Manager, Wolt Romania.

The year of the shawarma and the untouchable mici

While global fast-food chains maintained high ordering frequency, the volume battle had a clear winner. Data shows that shawarma was Romania's number 1 foreign food craving in 2025, accounting for 4 of the country's top 5 best-selling items.

However, when looking at the single most purchased item in the entire country, traditional cuisine reigned supreme. The "mici" outperformed every burger, wrap, or pizza, with almost 50,000 units sold by a single top venue alone.

The data obtained from the platform confirms that despite the wide variety of international options, Romania's local cuisine is untouchable in popularity. We are seeing a very interesting mix where American brands act as 'comfort food' with high reliability, but Turkish, Middle Eastern, and Romanian cuisines drive the massive volume spikes.

City Personalities: From the "shawarma capital" to the "sauce supremacy"

Wolt's analysis reveals that geography dictates appetite, with each major city displaying a distinct culinary personality:

- Bucharest - the melting pot: The Capital is the only city where all food categories - Romanian, American, Turkish, and Middle Eastern - appear in the top 10. It is a true microcosmos where people order traditional mici with the same enthusiasm as international fast food.
- Iași - the shawarma capital: If there were a national championship for shawarma, Iași would win. Turkish and Middle Eastern categories dominate here, with the "șaorma la lipie" totaling almost 30,000 products sold.
- Cluj-Napoca - the sauce supremacy: Data shows that Cluj-Napoca consumes more garlic sauce per capita than any other city. The ordering pattern here is heavily driven by customized, add-on-driven meals, with fries and sauces often outranking main dishes.
- Brașov - the city of hearty portions: Consumers in Brașov showed a clear preference for large-format meals, with the "large chicken shawarma" leading local preferences with over 23,000 products sold since June.

The Rise of the third retail channel and fastest growing categories

Beyond ready-to-eat meals, 2025 solidified delivery apps as Romania's third retail channel, alongside supermarkets and convenience stores. Romanians have embraced hybrid baskets, with household essentials items - like paper towels - frequently topping the list of best-selling items and even surpassing popular dishes such as burgers. This behavior spans from last-minute essentials, such as electronics chargers, to the consistent demand for beverages like water and caffeinated carbonated sodas.

A key driver of this habit is loyalty. The Genius subscription remains a favorite among Wolt customers, with 1 in 2 active users holding a subscription. This is even more pronounced in

the grocery category, where over 80% of customers are Genius members, proving the value consumers place on recurring, cost-effective delivery.

Furthermore, Wolt's data identifies the specific categories driving this retail expansion. For-home grocery essentials and personal care items took the top spots, showing impressive momentum, while even niche categories like electronics saw significant year-over-year growth.

Fun facts from 2025

- On a national level, Romanians bought more garlic sauce than cheeseburgers, proving that condiments are a cultural staple.
- Pitești is the only city in the list where traditional soup (ciorbă) entered the top sellers list.
- Cluj-Napoca orders more premium juices and healthy beverages than any other Romanian city, behaving similarly to Western European markets in terms of retail mix.

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