



Rural vs city representation report

Understanding the rural-city divide in America.

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Understanding the rural-city divide in America

Who are rural-based Americans, and how do they differ from city dwellers? Are assumptions about each group by media and advertisers leading to missed opportunities?

In this report, which combines **YouGov Profiles** with **YouGov Surveys** custom research, we explore the demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences of the two groups.

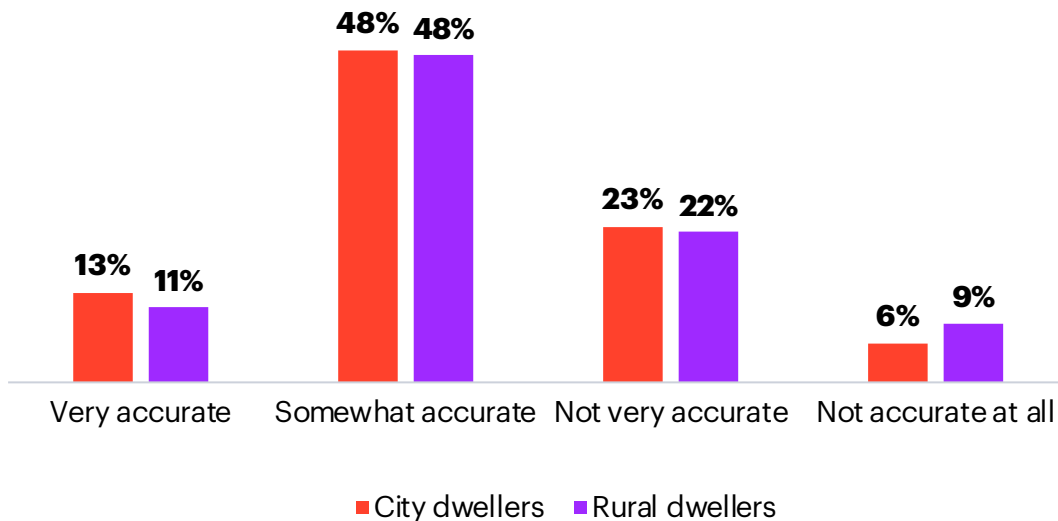
Among the many takeaways, the report reveals that nearly two thirds of rural dwellers feel misrepresented by mainstream media and misunderstood by advertisers, while city dwellers are significantly more likely to anticipate their household financial situation will worsen in the next 12 months.

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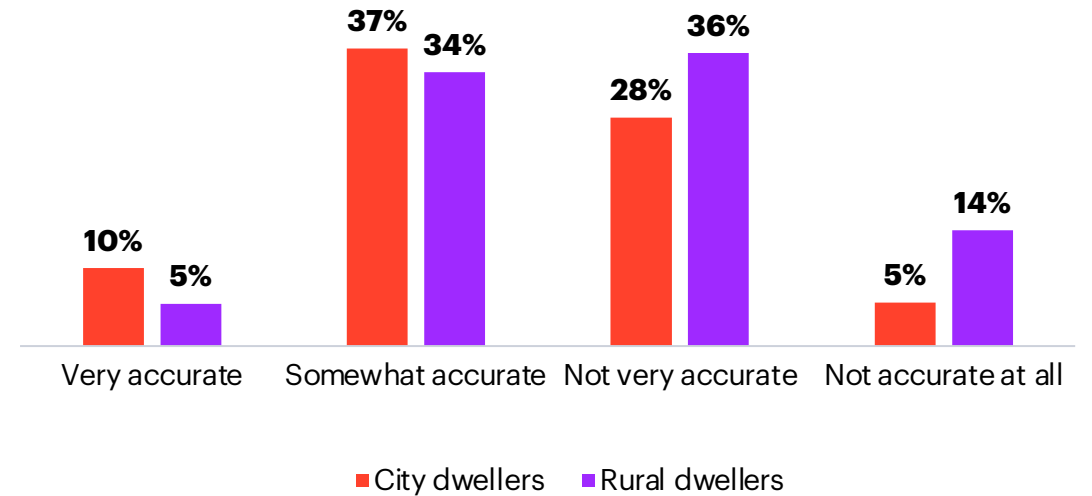
Half of rural dwellers (50%) think TV shows and movies do not represent them accurately

Conversely, 29% of city dwellers think TV shows and movies do not represent them accurately.

In general, how accurate do you think the depiction of **urban/city Americans** is in popular TV shows and movies?



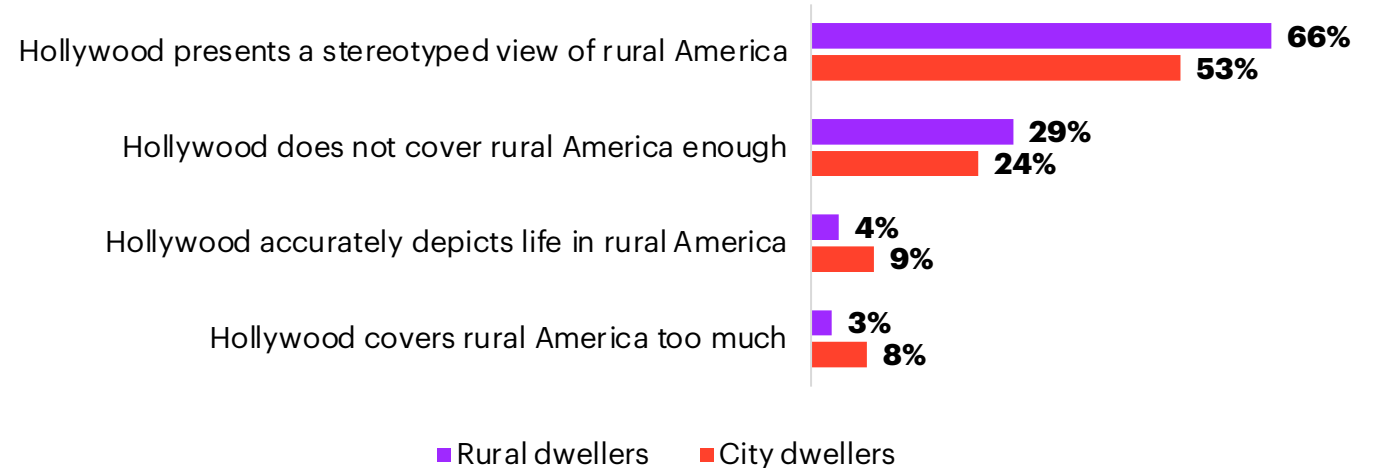
In general, how accurate do you think the depiction of **rural Americans** is in popular TV shows and movies?



Does Hollywood typecast rural America?

More than half of city dwellers (53%) and nearly two-thirds of rural dwellers (66%) think Hollywood presents a stereotyped view of rural America.

Which of the following statements do you agree with?

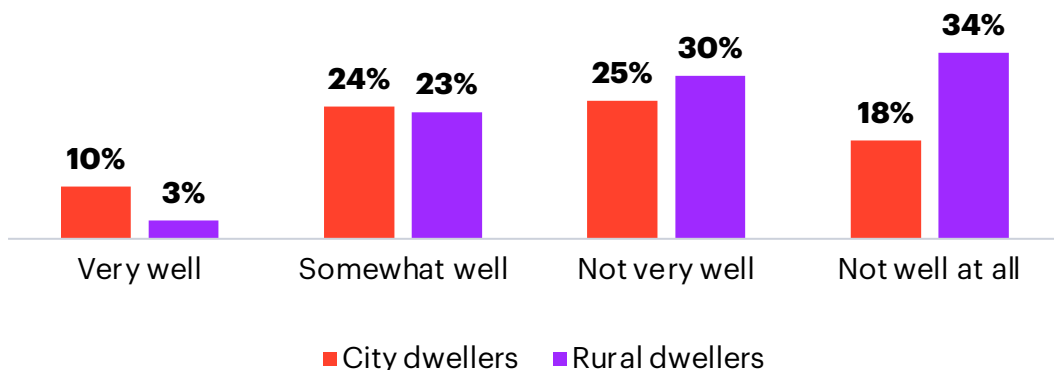


YouGov polled 666 US adults aged 18+ on February 16-17, 2024. The survey was carried out through YouGov Surveys: Self-serve. Data is weighted by age, gender, race, political affiliation, education level and region.

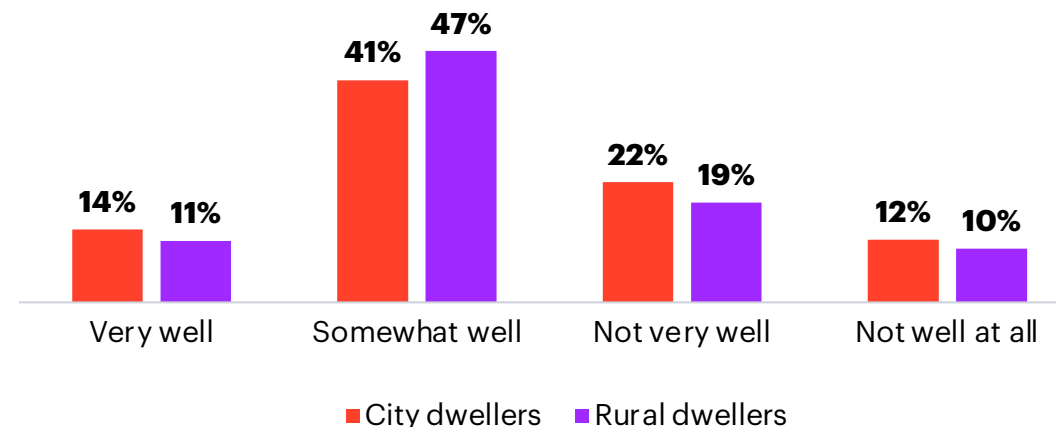
Almost 2 in 3 rural dwellers (64%) think advertisers do not understand them

Conversely, 34% of city dwellers think advertisers do not understand their values, interests, and opinions.

How well do you think advertisers understand the values, interests and opinions of rural Americans?



How well do you think advertisers understand the values, interests and opinions of urban/city Americans?



YouGov polled 666 US adults aged 18+ on February 16-17, 2024. The survey was carried out through YouGov Surveys: Self-serve. Data is weighted by age, gender, race, political affiliation, education level and region.

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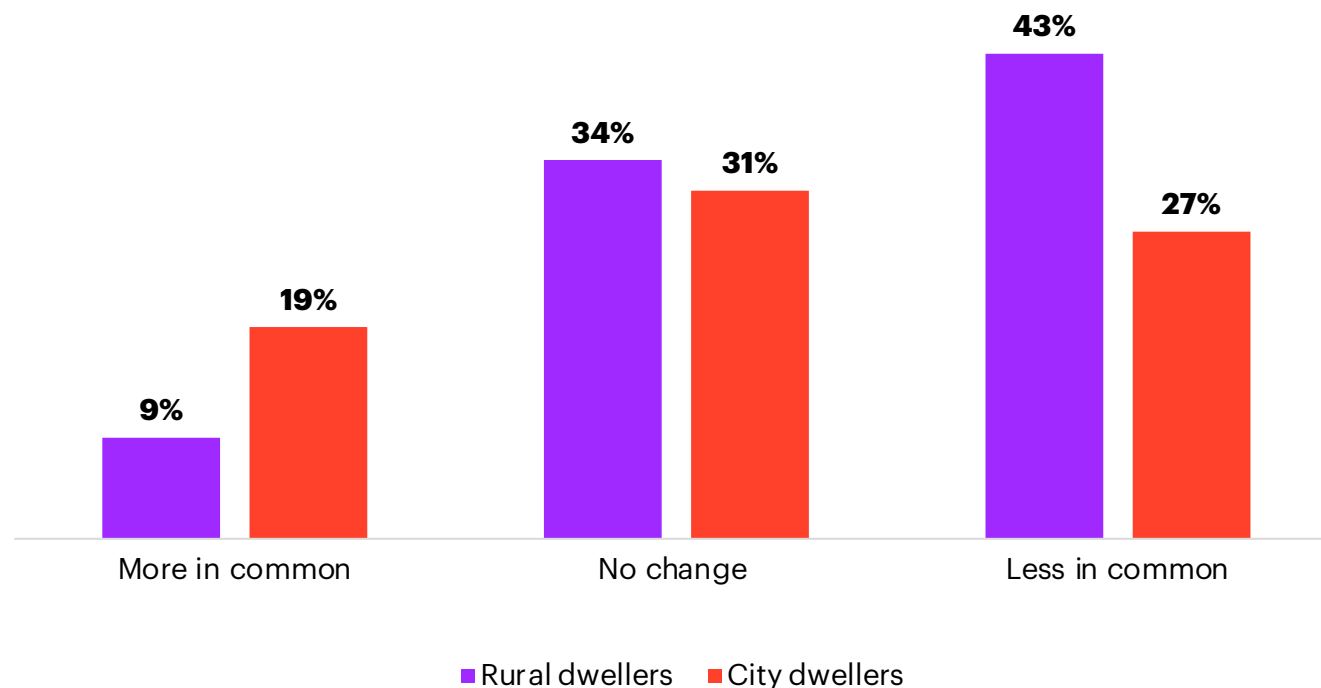
Rural dwellers more likely to anticipate increased polarization

43%

of rural dwellers believe urban and rural Americans will have less in common in five years than they do now.

YouGov polled 666 US adults aged 18+ on February 16-17, 2024. The survey was carried out through YouGov Surveys: Self-serve. Data is weighted by age, gender, race, political affiliation, education level and region.

Five years from now, do you think Americans who live in urban and rural America will have more or less in common than they do now?



Understanding rural and city-based Americans

To better understand the nuances between rural and city-based Americans, we leveraged YouGov Profiles to identify each group's unique demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences.

Based on surveys of more than 200,000 Americans over the past 12 months, the next section of this report specifically filters and analyzes:

- People who live in a city in the US
- People who live in rural areas in the US

36% of our US respondents categorized themselves as living in a city in 2024, while **18%** categorized themselves as living in a rural area.

City

93.3M



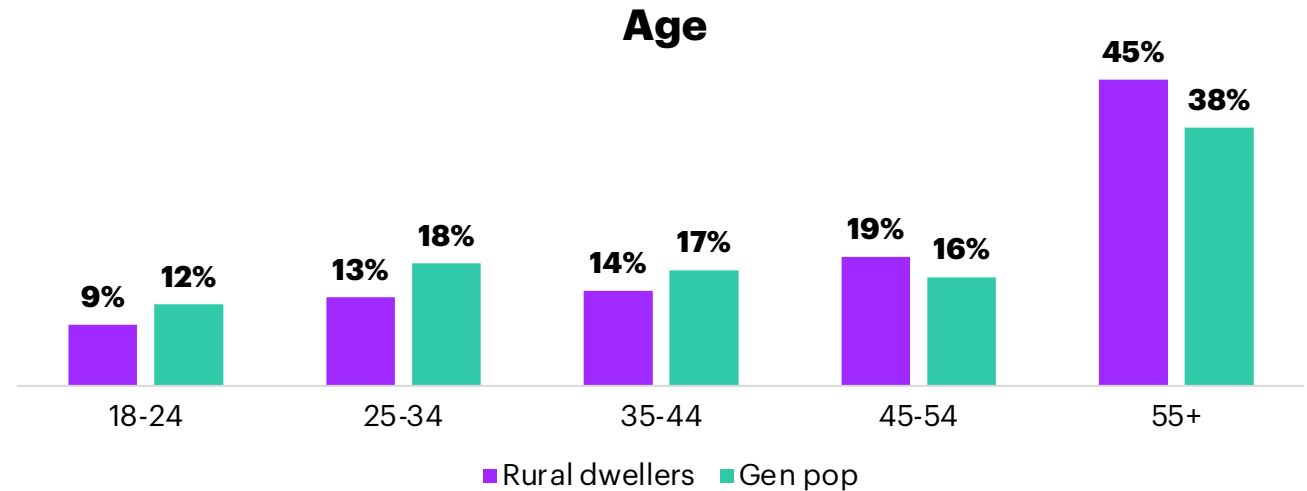
Rural

43.9M



Who are rural dwellers?

- Rural dwellers are more likely to be aged 55+ compared to the general population.
- Rural areas have more retirees and fewer full-time workers than the general population.



28%

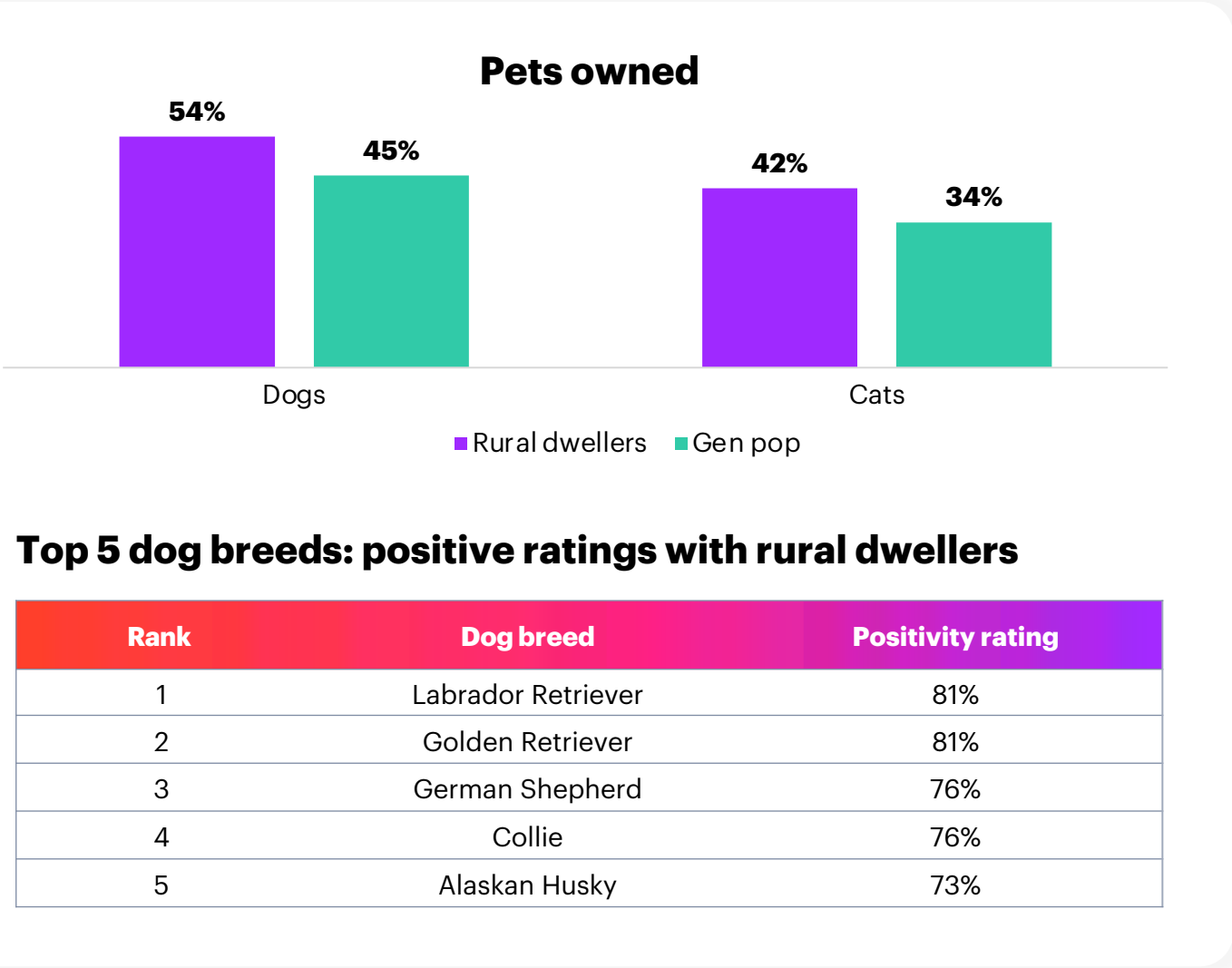
of rural dwellers work full time, compared to 36% of the general population.

22%

of rural dwellers are retired, compared to 17% of the general population.

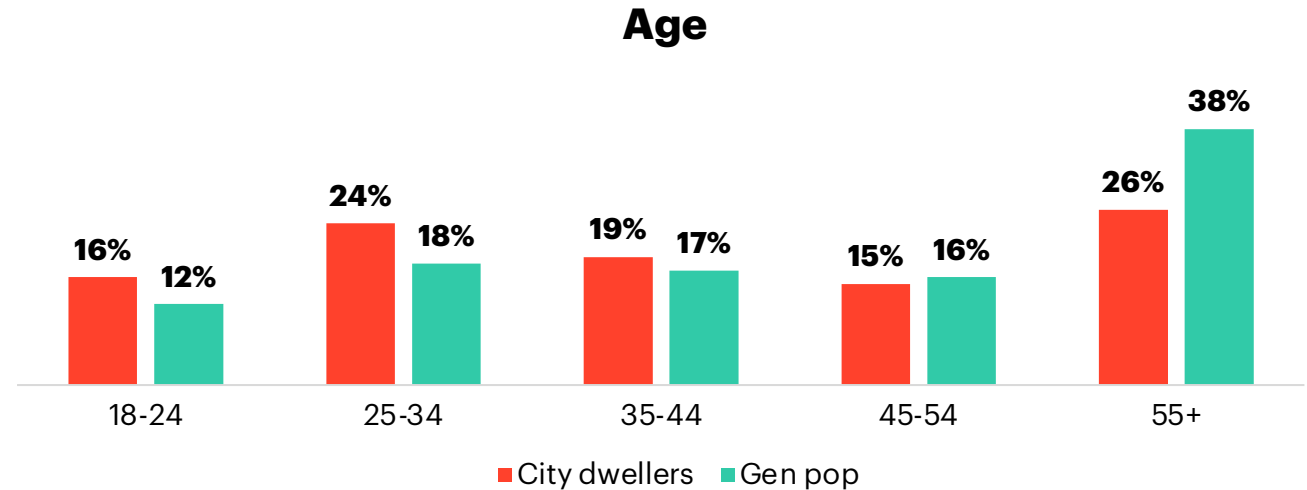
Rural dwellers have a penchant for pets

Rural dwellers are significantly more likely to have cats or dogs compared to general population.



Who are city dwellers?

- City dwellers are more likely to be aged 18-34 than the general population.
- City dwellers are more likely than the average American to work full-time and live with a child or children



40%

of city dwellers work full-time, compared to 36% of the general population.

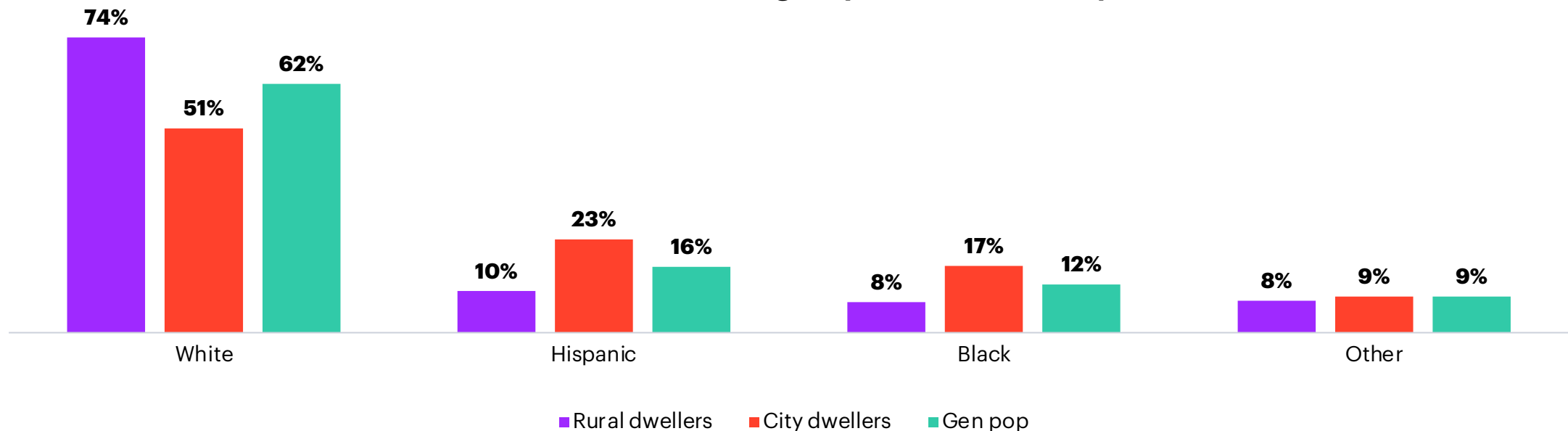
27%

live with a child or children under 18, compared to 22% of the general population.

Understanding the demographic divide

Rural dwellers are more likely to identify as white than the general population.
City dwellers are more likely to identify as Hispanic or Black.

“What racial or ethnic group best describes you?”



Financial outlook

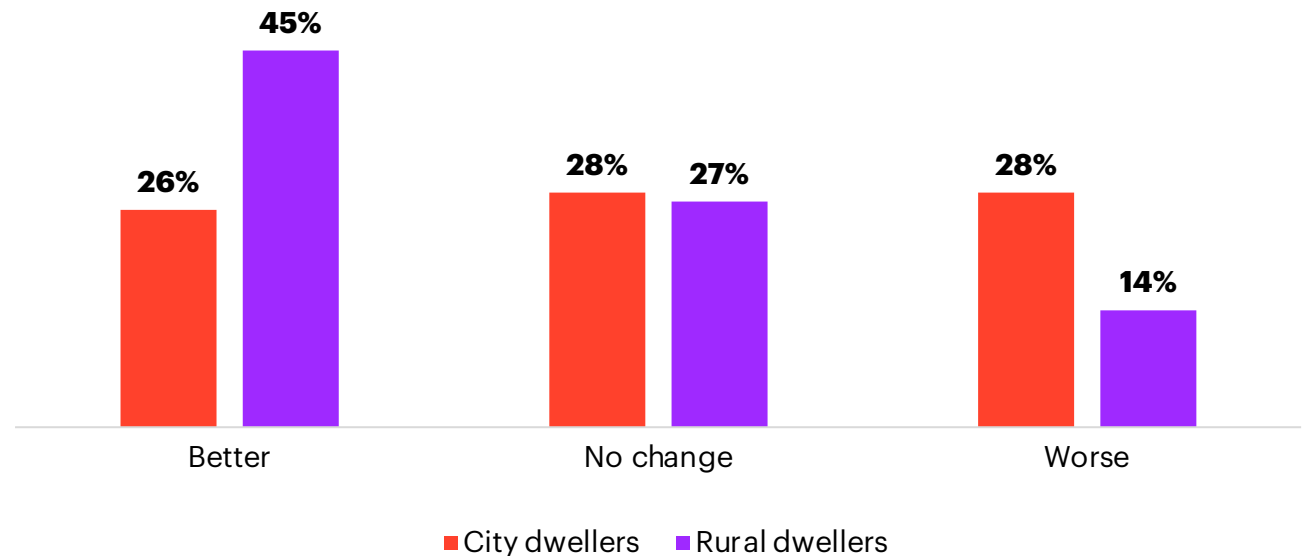
How are rural and city dwellers are responding to the current financial climate?



Finance forecasting

45% of rural dwellers anticipate their household financial situation will get better in the next 12 months, compared to 26% of city dwellers.

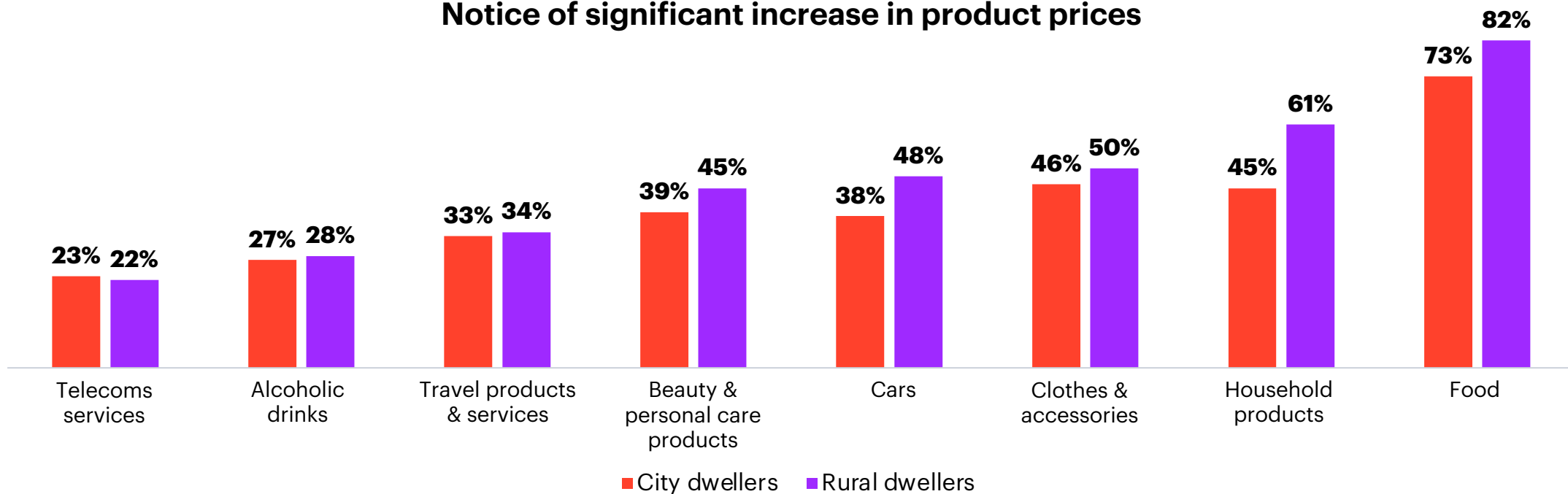
Expected change to household situation in the next 12 months



Who's noticing price hikes?

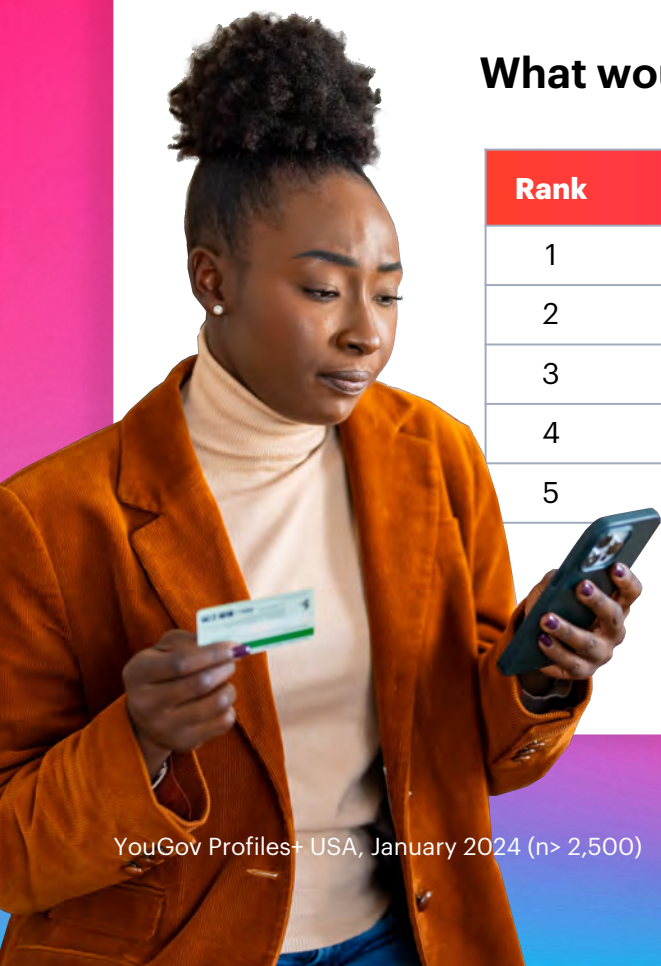
Rural dwellers are more likely to notice price increases across product categories, most notably for food and household products.

Notice of significant increase in product prices



Tightening the belt

Both rural and city dwellers would most likely cut back on eating out if they needed to reduce household spend.



What would you be most likely to cut back on if you needed to reduce household spend?

Rank	Rural dwellers
1	Eating out (60%)
2	Travel (holidays) (41%)
3	Clothing (39%)
4	Technology purchases (38%)
5	Media streaming service subscriptions (33%)

Rank	City dwellers
1	Eating out (53%)
2	Buying video games / video game subscriptions (32%)
3	Clothing (32%)
4	Travel (holidays) (32%)
5	Attending sports events (30%)

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How rural and city dwellers shop

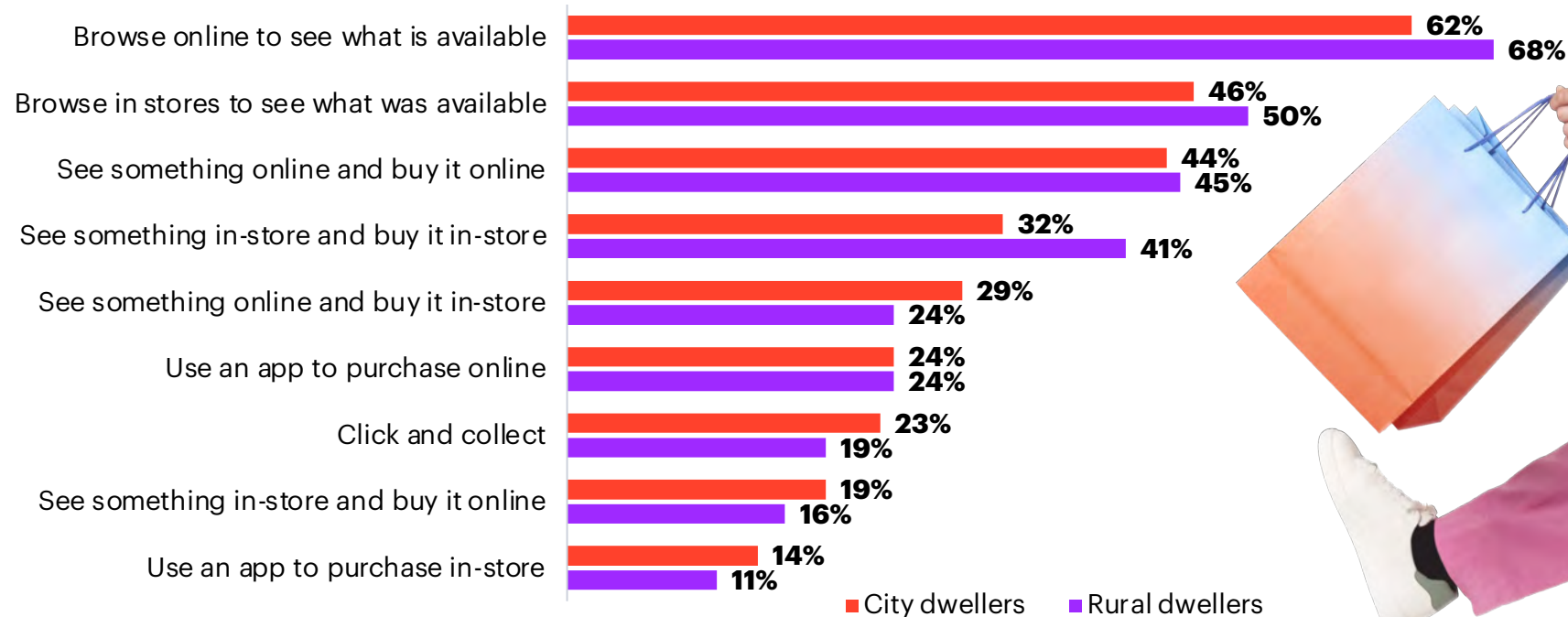
Understanding the purchase journey and retail preferences of rural and city dwellers.



Exploring the purchase journey

Rural dwellers are more likely to see something in-store and buy it there than city dwellers, whereas city dwellers are more likely to browse online before buying it in-store.

Purchase journey



Retail preferences

City dwellers are significantly more likely to be willing to pay more for luxury brands (+24 percentage-points), while rural dwellers are more likely to opt for products made in the US.

Statements agreed with about retail



Media trends

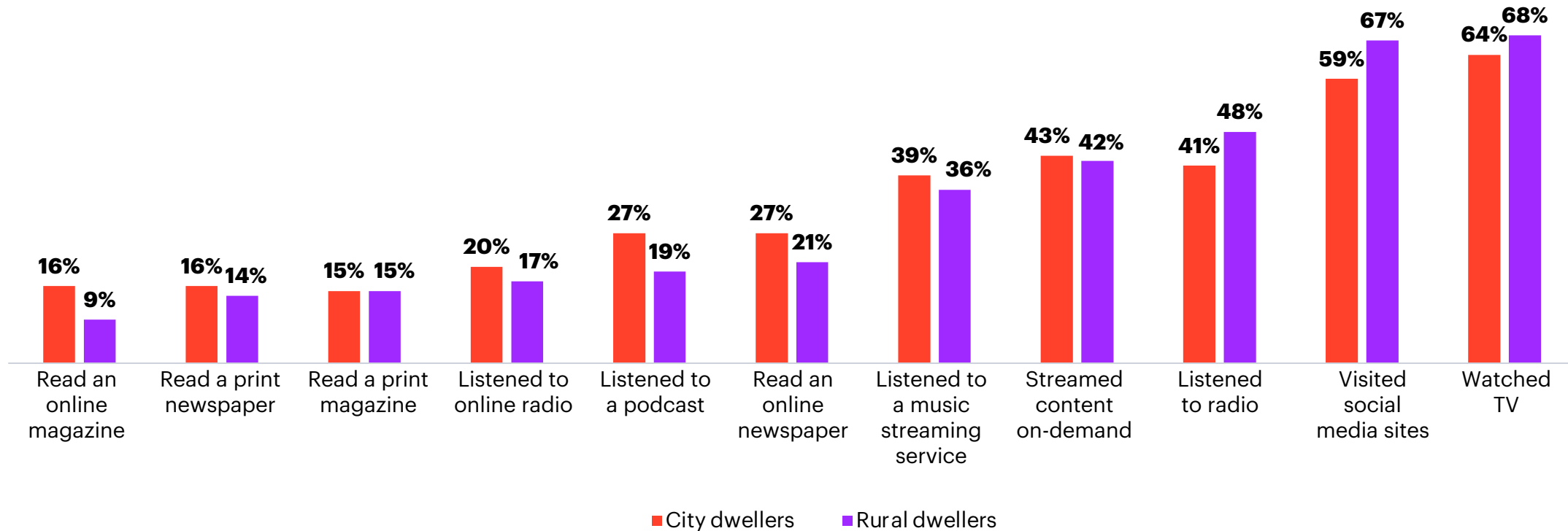
How do rural and city dwellers consume media and respond to advertising?



Consuming media

City dwellers are 7 percentage-points more likely to have read an online magazine, while rural dwellers are 8 percentage-points more likely to visit social media sites weekly.

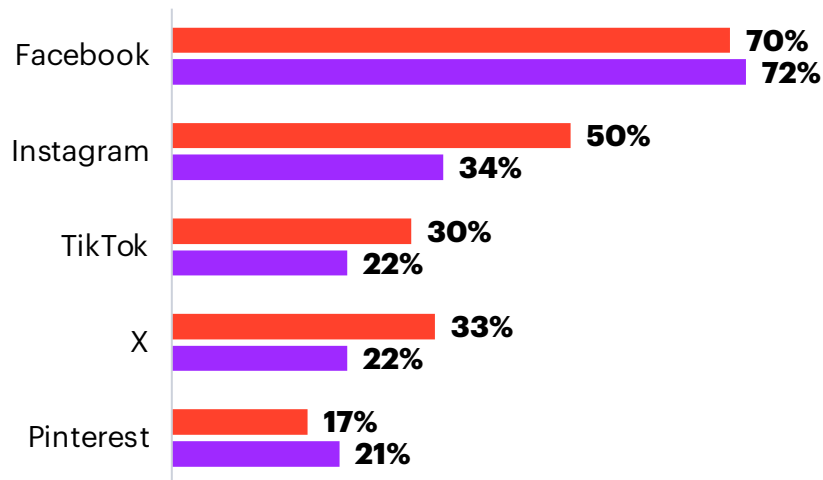
Media channels consumed last week



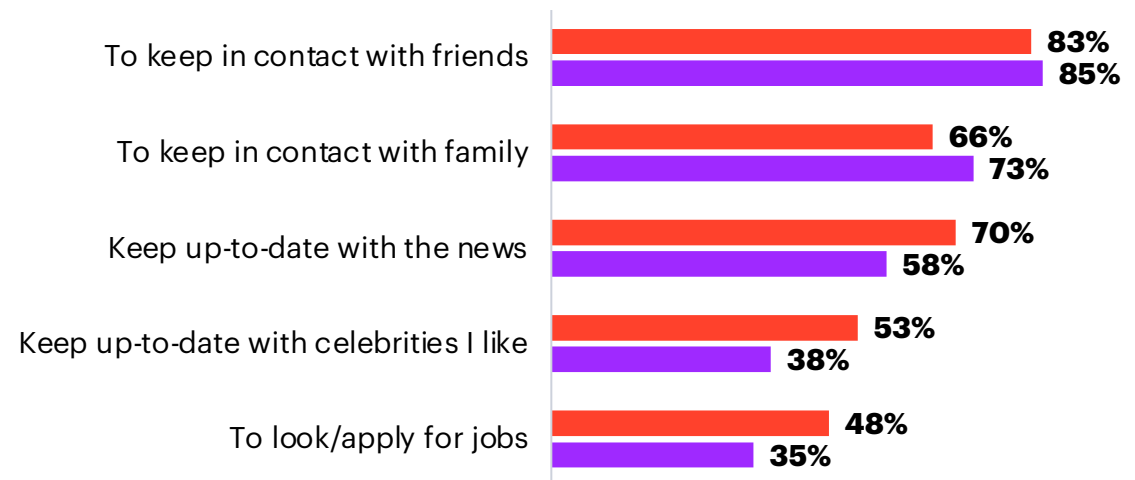
Social media spotlight

Facebook is favored by rural dwellers, with 72% using the platform. City dwellers are more likely to use Instagram, with 50% using the platform versus 34% of rural dwellers.

Social networks used last month



Reasons for using social media

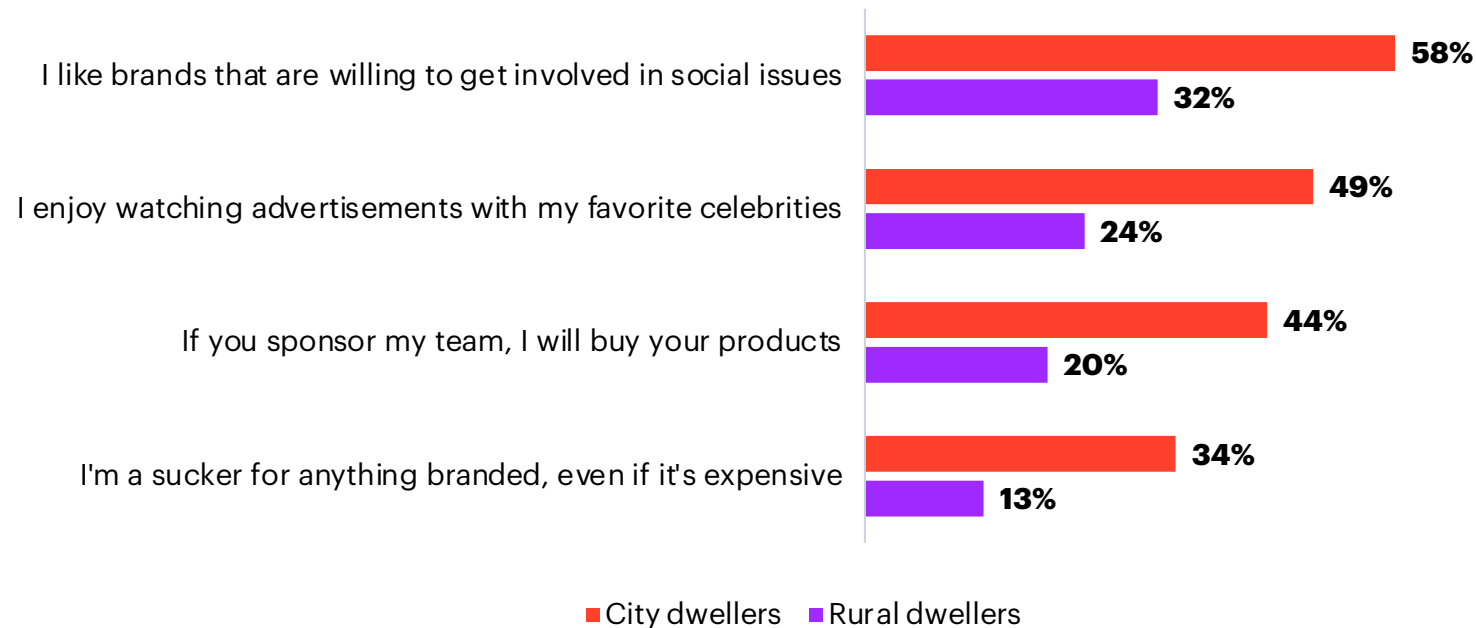


City dwellers Rural dwellers

City dwellers are more receptive to advertising

Compared to rural dwellers, 2.5x more city dwellers agree they're a sucker for anything branded, even if it's expensive.

Statements agreed with about advertising



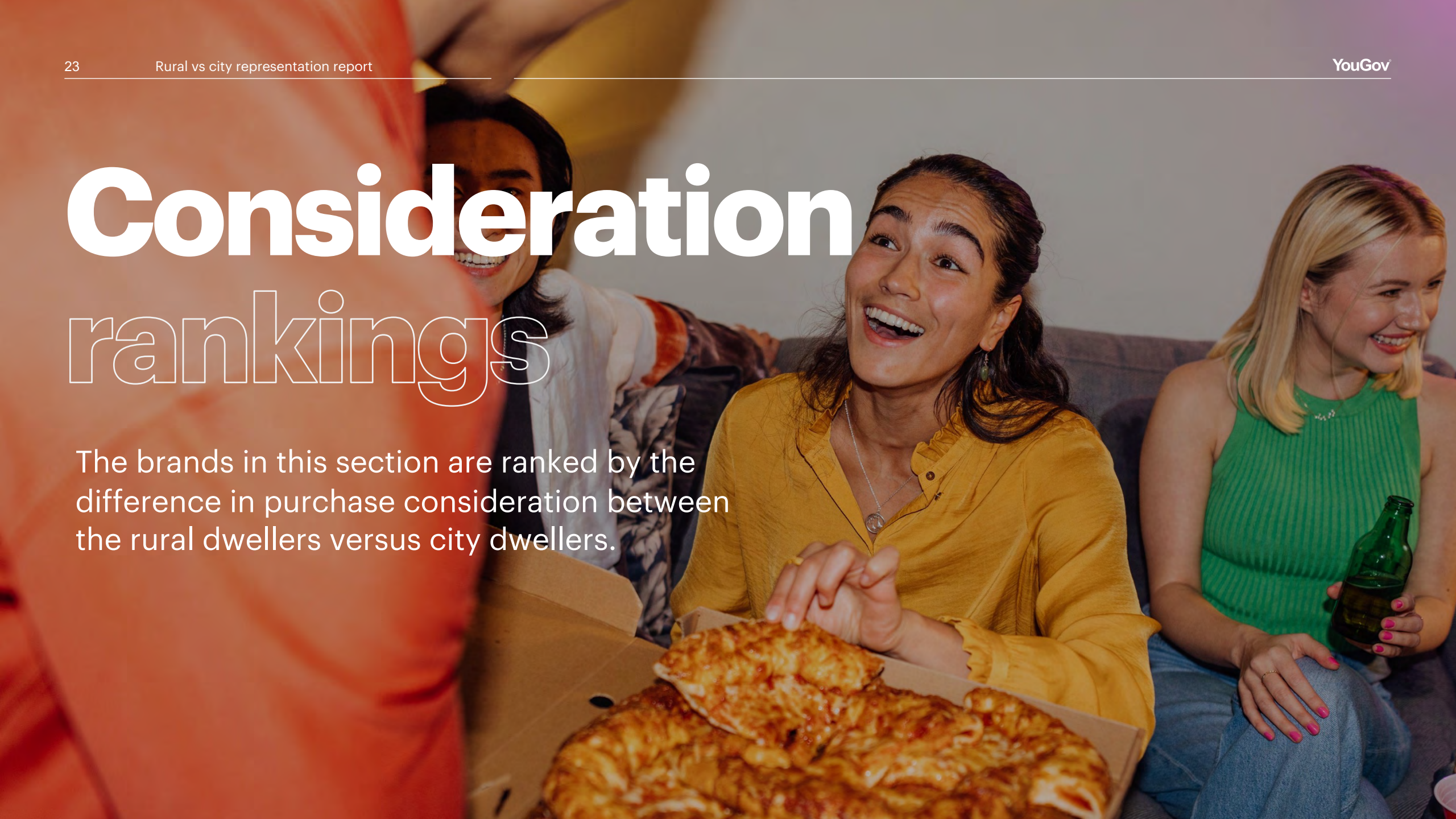
71%

of rural dwellers feel
bombarded by advertising,
compared to 67%
of city dwellers.



Consideration rankings

The brands in this section are ranked by the difference in purchase consideration between the rural dwellers versus city dwellers.



Methodology

Looking at hundreds of thousands of YouGov panel surveys, we compared brand purchase consideration of rural dwellers versus city dwellers in America.

The brands in this section are ranked by the difference in consideration between the two groups. For instance, 40.7% of rural dwellers would consider purchasing Betty Crocker, but just 26.5% of city dwellers feel the same. This 14.2 percentage-point difference places Betty Crocker higher in our ranking than Campbell's, despite the latter having an overall higher percentage of rural dwellers (49.9%) who would consider purchasing it. Consideration scores are rounded to the nearest decimal point, and differences are determined from those rounded scores.

This data in this analysis comes from connecting YouGov BrandIndex and YouGov Profiles. Brands must have been tracked for 365 days to qualify for the ranking, which measures consideration sentiment between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023.

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Which beer brands do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Yuengling	11.7%	7.5%	4.2
Coors Light	12.1%	10.3%	1.9
Michelob ULTRA	9.4%	8.4%	1.0
Miller Lite	10.6%	9.9%	0.7
Keystone Light	2.7%	2.6%	0.1

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Heineken	19.8%	10.6%	9.2
Corona	20.7%	14.0%	6.7
Budweiser	14.2%	9.7%	4.5
Modelo	13.9%	9.8%	4.1
Amstel	6.4%	2.5%	3.9

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Which **spirit brands** do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Fireball	8.9%	7.1%	1.8
Crown Royal	14.9%	13.3%	1.6
Southern Comfort	7.2%	5.8%	1.4
Captain Morgan	13.8%	12.8%	1.0
Wild Turkey	5.6%	5.3%	0.3

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Hennessy	12.2%	5.1%	7.1
Johnnie Walker	11.4%	5.1%	6.3
1800 Tequila	9.7%	5.4%	4.3
Grey Goose	13.8%	9.5%	4.3
J&B	5.3%	1.1%	4.2

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Which **soft beverage brands** do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Folgers	31.5%	21.5%	10.0
Maxwell House	21.7%	14.2%	7.5
Welch's	30.3%	23.3%	7.0
A&W	21.7%	15.8%	5.9
Ocean Spray	31.9%	27.0%	4.9

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Red Bull	14.2%	5.0%	9.2
Coca-Cola	35.6%	28.5%	7.1
Naked Juice	14.7%	7.7%	7.0
Vitaminwater	17.9%	11.5%	6.4
Starbucks Doubleshot Energy+Coffee	11.0%	5.0%	6.0

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Which food brands do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Betty Crocker	40.7%	26.5%	14.2
Bisquick	34.7%	20.7%	14.0
Campbell's	49.9%	36.4%	13.5
Pillsbury	47.1%	33.8%	13.3
Ore-Ida	38.9%	25.9%	13.0

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
KitKat	43.1%	33.2%	9.9
Ben & Jerry's	28.8%	20.7%	8.1
Beyond Meat	11.4%	5.3%	6.1
Impossible Foods	10.5%	4.7%	5.8
Organic Valley	13.6%	8.8%	4.8

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Which fast food & fast casual brands do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Arby's	30.3%	20.7%	9.6
Subway	36.2%	30.6%	5.6
Hardee's	12.1%	7.4%	4.7
Sonic	25.6%	21.3%	4.3
Waffle House	16.9%	12.9%	4.0

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Chipotle	26.1%	16.5%	9.6
Panda Express	21.9%	15.5%	6.4
Popeyes	21.2%	15.5%	5.7
In-N-Out Burger	14.0%	8.4%	5.6
El Pollo Loco	8.5%	3.3%	5.2

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Which **fashion brands** do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Wrangler	32.5%	19.2%	13.3
Hanes	36.5%	27.5%	9.0
Skechers	36.7%	28.4%	8.3
Fruit of the Loom	33.4%	25.6%	7.8
Duluth Trading Company	15.7%	9.9%	5.8

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Nike	40.8%	23.5%	17.3
Adidas	33.7%	20.0%	13.7
H&M	17.5%	6.3%	11.2
Zara	12.9%	1.8%	11.1
Gucci	15.5%	4.7%	10.8

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Which **consumer tech brands** do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Vizio	18.6%	12.8%	5.8
Bose	22.7%	19.4%	3.3
Roku	19.6%	16.5%	3.1
HP	27.4%	24.5%	2.9
Canon	17.3%	14.7%	2.6

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
iPhone	38.7%	28.8%	9.9
Apple	37.0%	27.1%	9.9
Mac	17.3%	10.5%	6.8
PlayStation	16.4%	10.2%	6.2
Apple Watch	16.9%	10.8%	6.1

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Which media networks do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
History Channel	46.7%	33.4%	13.3
HGTV	29.0%	20.9%	8.1
Newsmax	16.3%	9.2%	7.1
The Weather Channel	34.3%	27.4%	6.9
Discovery Channel	42.0%	35.2%	6.8

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
CNN	31.1%	16.9%	14.2
HBO	38.5%	25.3%	13.2
ESPN	27.0%	18.7%	8.3
MTV	18.4%	10.2%	8.2
Nickelodeon	17.5%	10.9%	6.6

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Which **online brands** do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
eBay	40.3%	33.5%	6.8
Amazon	79.1%	73.1%	6.0
Pinterest	32.0%	26.4%	5.6
GoodRx	18.5%	13.5%	5.0
Ancestry	18.1%	13.2%	4.9

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
WhatsApp	26.7%	8.9%	17.8
Instagram	41.7%	27.1%	14.6
Uber Eats	19.2%	5.7%	13.5
Spotify	31.8%	19.1%	12.7
DoorDash	20.7%	10.3%	10.4

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Which car brands do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Chevrolet	29.4%	21.3%	8.1
Ford	28.3%	22.5%	5.8
Ram	10.0%	5.4%	4.6
GMC	15.5%	10.9%	4.6
General Motors	13.9%	10.1%	3.8

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Mercedes-Benz	11.8%	4.7%	7.1
Tesla	10.5%	4.3%	6.2
Audi	10.4%	4.8%	5.6
Lexus	12.1%	6.7%	5.4
Porsche	5.8%	2.4%	3.4

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Which charities & non-profits do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Wounded Warrior Project	29.4%	18.7%	10.7
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital	42.5%	33.8%	8.7
NRA	15.6%	7.0%	8.6
Salvation Army	21.4%	18.1%	3.3
Association of Mature American Citizens	4.4%	3.5%	0.9

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Planned Parenthood	23.4%	14.3%	9.1
Human Rights Campaign	12.0%	4.7%	7.3
NAACP	12.9%	5.7%	7.2
ACLU	14.3%	7.5%	6.8
Southern Poverty Law Center	10.8%	5.7%	5.1

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Which mass retail, club & drug stores do rural and city dwellers prefer?

Rural dwellers

Brand	Rural dwellers	City dwellers	Difference
Dollar General	35.5%	16.3%	19.2
Walmart	70.2%	55.6%	14.6
Dollar Tree	27.9%	21.0%	6.9
Sam’s Club	26.1%	19.7%	6.4
Big Lots	16.2%	12.2%	4.0

City dwellers

Brand	City dwellers	Rural dwellers	Difference
Target	44.9%	26.1%	18.8
CVS	31.2%	20.9%	10.3
Costco	29.4%	20.7%	8.7
Walgreens	30.4%	24.3%	6.1
Burlington	11.8%	7.7%	4.1

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Get to know your audience

With **YouGov Profiles**, you can dig deeper into the media consumption habits and attitudes of virtually any target audience including:

- Customers of a particular brand
- Category considerers
- Affinity audiences

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With **YouGov Surveys**, you can get quick answers from a targeted audience to inform your strategy:

- Self-serve and serviced surveys
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