

12

CULINARY TRENDS

12.1 Overview

The National Restaurant Association (NRA, www.restaurant.org) annually surveys over 1,200 member chefs of the American Culinary Federation (ACF, www.acfchefs.org) asking them to rank culinary items. *What's Hot 2022 Culinary Forecast* presents culinary trends.

12.2 Top Macro Trends

The top overall trends influencing the restaurant, food & beverage industry are as follows:

1. Zero waste/sustainability
2. Menu streamlining (e.g., fewer menu items, cutting SKUs)
3. Immunity-boosting/functional ingredients

12.3 Culinary Trends

ACF chefs identified the following culinary trends for 2022:

1. Sustainability
2. Plant-based foods
3. Comfort foods
4. Healthy and immunity-boosting foods
5. Global fare and flavors

12.4 Trends By Daypart

2022 trends by daypart are as follows:

Breakfast

1. Non-traditional breakfast proteins (e.g., chorizo, vegan bacon)
2. Plant-based breakfast sandwiches
3. Egg-based breakfast bowls

Lunch

1. Plant-based sandwiches
2. Globally inspired salads
3. Grain-based bowls

Dinner

1. Less-expensive chicken cuts (e.g., thighs vs. wings)
2. Plant-based burgers
3. Less-expensive beef cuts (e.g., beef chuck vs. loin)

12.5 Trends By Mealpart

2022 trends by mealpart are as follows:

Appetizers and Sides

1. Upscale potato chips (e.g., new preparations, flavored with unexpected ingredients)
2. New appetizer wings (e.g., flavor-fusion sauces, global accents, plant-based protein vs. chicken)
3. Globally spiced fries (e.g., with furikake, za'atar)

Desserts

1. Alternative natural sweeteners (e.g., maple sugar, coconut sugar)
2. Alcohol infusions
3. CBD desserts

Snacks

1. Immunity-boosting snacks
2. CBD infused snacks
3. Reduced-sugar snacks

12.6 Beverage Trends

Top beverage trends for 2022 are as follows:

Alcoholic Beverages

1. Hard seltzer
2. Uniquely spiced cocktail rims (e.g., Tajin, togarashi)
3. At-home cocktail kits

Non-Alcoholic Beverages

1. Nut milks (e.g., cashew, pistachio)
2. Non-alcohol seltzers/sparkling water
3. CBD-infused beverages

12.7 Trends In Condiments, Sauces, Spices, And Seasonings

Trends for 2022 are as follows:

1. Gochujang
2. Tajin
3. Harissa

12.8 Packaging And Off-Premises Trends

Meal packaging and off-premises trends are as follows:

1. Sustainable (i.e., reusable, recyclable)
2. Food quality (i.e., travels well)
3. Retaining temperature

12.9 Global Influences

The top global regions influencing menus in 2022 are as follows:

1. Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Singaporean, Philippine)
2. South American (e.g., Argentinian, Brazilian, Chilean)
3. Caribbean (e.g., Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican)
4. North African (e.g., Moroccan, Algerian, Libyan)
5. Western African (e.g., Nigerian, Ghanaian, Western Saharan)

12.10 Market Resources

What's Hot 2022 Culinary Forecast, National Restaurant Association, November 2021.
(<https://restaurant.org/research-and-media/research/research-reports/whats-hot-food-beverage-trends/>)

CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

23.1 Overview

Surveys by SMG (www.smg.com) assess consumers' preferences related to various aspects of dining out. The surveys query customers based on their most recent restaurant visit and compare various factors that relate to their satisfaction with that experience.

23.2 Factors Contributing To High Customer Satisfaction

The following are findings based on SMG surveys:

Age Demographic

By age, the percentages of customers highly satisfied with their most recent dining experience are as follows:

	Under 18	18-to-24	25-to-34	35-to-49	50 and Older
• Fine-dining:	n/a	76%	70%	72%	78%
• Casual-dining:	78%	77%	70%	71%	77%
• Fast-casual:	76%	71%	65%	67%	74%
• Fast-food:	63%	65%	58%	58%	67%

“Customers over 50 years old are more satisfied than the average customer across all restaurant segments. Meanwhile, guests between the ages of 25 and 49 are the least satisfied.”

SMG

Alcoholic Beverage Consumption While Dining

Customer satisfaction between patrons who consume alcoholic beverages and those who do not compares as follows:

	Satisfied Overall	Likely To Recommend
• Ordered alcoholic beverage:	74%	75%
• Did not order alcohol:	70%	71%

“When diners order drinks they perceive heightened levels of service and tend to spend more.”

SMG

Corporate Headquarters Markets

SMG research found chain restaurants don't have an advantage with locations in the same city as corporate headquarters. Customers rated their satisfaction at restaurant chain locations as follows:

	Overall Satisfaction	Likely To Return
• Corporate headquarters market:	71%	73%
• All other markets:	71%	73%

“Diners in other markets are just as satisfied and likely to return as diners in the corporate headquarters market. Delivering on customer service is still the key to having satisfied customers.”

SMG

Corporate-Owned vs. Franchise-Owned Locations

Customers rated satisfaction with their most recent experience at corporate-owned and franchise-owned chain restaurants as follows:

	Overall Satisfaction	Temperature of Food	Cleanliness
• Corporate-owned locations:	66%	67%	61%
• Franchise-owned locations:	68%	70%	63%

“Customers visiting franchised quick-service restaurants are slightly more satisfied than customers visiting corporate-owned locations. It seems as though franchisees are better at delivering on metrics that make a difference to customers.”

SMG

Day-Of-Week

By the day of the week, the percentages of customers highly satisfied with their dining experiences are as follows:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
• Full menu:	67%	68%	70%	70%	68%	68%	67%
• Pizza:	63%	68%	67%	67%	66%	67%	67%
• Fast-casual:	63%	67%	66%	67%	66%	66%	64%
• Fast-food:	61%	63%	63%	64%	63%	63%	61%

“On weekends, higher volumes and higher expectations for ‘destination’ trips can raise the bar for service excellence, resulting in less satisfied customers.”

SMG

Dining Room vs. Bar Area Dining

Restaurant patrons compare their table service as follows:

	Satisfied Overall	Taste of Food	Pace of Meal
• Dining room:	70%	72%	64%
• Bar area:	75%	72%	70%

“Guests in the bar area are more satisfied overall than those in the dining room. While diners are equally happy with the food regardless of seating choice, those in the dining room are less satisfied with the pace of their meals than bar patrons.”

SMG

Dining With Children

Customers dining with children rate their dining experience as follows:

	Highly Satisfied	Likely To Return
• Diners with children under age 12:	62%	68%
• Diners without children under age 12:	63%	64%

“Across all loyalty measures, restaurant customers who visit with children are less satisfied than those who visit without children.”

SMG

Drive-Thru Dine-In

By type of service, the following percentages of customers rated their most recent restaurant experience as highly satisfactory:

- Dine-In: 69%
- Drive-Thru: 65%

“Many fast-food patrons choose to use drive-thrus for convenience and accessibility, but they don’t receive the same quality of dining experience as those who dine in.”

SMG

First-Time vs. Returning Customers

The percentages of first-time and returning customers highly satisfied with their dining experience and those likely to return are as follows:

	Highly Satisfied	Likely To Return
• First-time customers:	67%	57%
• Returning customers:	70%	73%

Gift Card Use

Customer satisfaction among restaurant customers using and not using a gift card is as follows:

	Experienced A Problem	Likely To Return
• Gift card user:	24%	28%
• No use of gift card:	12%	40%

“Gift card users are twice as likely to experience a problem during their visits, often related to gift card use.”

SMG

Guest Experience and Tipping

Not surprisingly, as the guest experience increases, so does the tip. The following are average tip percentages based on customers’ dining experience:

- Highly satisfied: 19.7%
- Neutral: 17.3%
- Highly dissatisfied: 16.2%

Healthful Fare By Daypart

Across the following three segments, the same percentage of diners have resolved to eat healthier:

- Casual-dining: 18%
- Fast-Casual: 18%
- Fast-Food: 18%

“The desire to eat more healthfully is the same across all restaurant segments.”

SMG

Highly Satisfying Restaurant Experiences

The difference in highly satisfied customers making a return visit to a restaurant within 30 days compared with all other customers is as follows:

- Casual-dining: 28%
- Fast-casual: 25%
- Quick-service: 12%

“Restaurant guests who said they were highly satisfied with an experience were more likely than all other customers to return to a concept within 30 days.”

SMG

Indoor vs. Outdoor Dining

Based on seating location, restaurant guest satisfaction is as follows:

	Pace of Experience	Overall Satisfaction
• Dining room:	74%	69%
• Outdoors:	71%	63%

“Guests who dine outside give lower pacing scores than do guests who eat inside. As a result, outdoor diners have a less satisfying overall experience.”

SMG

Loyalty Club Membership

Diners who are members of a restaurant’s loyalty club are least likely to give the restaurant a second chance after experiencing a problem during service. Compared with non-loyalty club members, the percentage of patrons who would not return to a restaurant after an issue is as follows:

- Loyalty Club Members: 12%
- Non-loyalty Club Members: 23%

Loyalty Patrons’ Preferences

Among loyal restaurant patrons who are likely to return to an establishment, positive mentions are made based on the following criteria:

	Fast-Casual	Quick-Service	Casual-Dining
• Friendliness:	88%	87%	87%
• Taste:	86%	83%	87%
• Speed:	73%	75%	61%
• Accuracy:	59%	60%	53%

“Loyalty customers talk positively about all aspects of the dining experience, but friendliness is the clear winner, showing that a smile and a positive attitude are key.”

SMG

Manager Presence

Customer satisfaction with and without a manager on duty is as follows:

	Overall Satisfaction	Likely To Return
• Manager visible:	84%	81%
• Manager not visible:	65%	55%

“When a manager interacts with or serves customers, guests indicate they have a better overall experience.”

SMG

Morning Meals

By daypart, the percentage of visits to QSRs that were return trips to a single brand were as follows:

- Breakfast: 69%
- Lunch: 49%
- Dinner: 50%

“Customers at the top 50 QSRs based on domestic unit count concentrated 69% of their breakfast visits with one brand, versus roughly half of lunch and dinner visits that were repeat trips to a single brand.”

SMG

Newer vs. Older Restaurants

Based on the age of the restaurant, the following percentages of customers said they likely would recommend a restaurant:

- Restaurant under five years old: 69%
- Restaurant 5-to-10 years old: 67%
- Restaurant more than 10 years old: 65%

“Guests visiting restaurants that have been operating for fewer than five years are slightly more likely to recommend the restaurant to friends. This helps make the case that investing in store updates can help drive customer loyalty.”

SMG

Ordering Takeout

Customer satisfaction for takeout from a restaurant when ordering in person, by phone, and via fax or online is as follows:

	Overall Satisfaction	Experienced A Problem
• In person:	71%	12%
• Telephone:	69%	15%
• Online or fax:	61%	22%

“Diners who order takeout in person at the restaurant are the most satisfied of all to-go orderers and experience fewer problems overall.”

SMG

Party Size

By party size, the following percentages of customers rated their most recent restaurant experience as highly satisfactory:

- Single person: 68%
- Party of two: 67%
- Three or four: 64%
- Five or more: 62%

“Diners in groups of three or more report lower overall satisfaction than smaller parties. This is likely related to timing, and operators can combat this tendency toward lower satisfaction by focusing on speed of service for larger parties.”

SMG

Perceived Restaurant Cleanliness

Restaurant patrons say they are highly satisfied with the cleanliness of the restaurant they are visiting 65% of the time. By time since remodeling, responses are as follows:

- 3 years or less: 70%
- 4 years to 6 years: 67%
- 7 years to 9 years: 66%
- 10 years or more: 61%

“The older a restaurant, the less likely its guests are to say they were highly satisfied with its cleanliness.”

SMG

Problem Resolution

Following resolution of a dining-related problem, these percentages of diners rated their overall dining experience as highly satisfactory:

- Fine-dining: 37%
- Casual-dining: 36%
- Fast-casual: 32%
- Fast-food: 30%

“Fine- and casual-dining operators resolve problems better than their fast-casual and fast-food counterparts because they have more interaction with guests.”

SMG

Problem With Promotional Item

The following percentage of restaurant patrons had problems with promotional items they ordered:

- Speed/Pacing: 27%
- Price: 16%
- Taste: 11%
- Accuracy: 6%

Reasons For Return Visits

When asked why they returned to the restaurant of their most recent visit, customers responded as follows:

- Previous positive experience: 79%
- Recommendation from friend or family, advertisement, type of cuisine, variety of menu selections: 64%
- Convenient location: 58%

“A superior previous experience trumps convenience and other reasons for visit. Give them great food and great service and watch them come back.”

SMG

Restaurant Choice

Customers say they chose the restaurant they most recently visited for the following reason:

- Previous positive experience: 79%
- Convenient location: 58%
- Other reason: 64%

“Nothing guarantees a return visit like a great dining experience.”

SMG

Rural vs. Urban Locations

Based on market population, the following percentages of customers said they likely would recommend a restaurant based on their most recent dining experience:

- Population less than 10,000: 67%
- Population 10,000-to-50,000: 64%
- Population more than 50,000: 61%

“Fast-food diners in rural areas are more satisfied than fast-food diners in urban areas. Rural diners gave higher scores for friendliness, speed of service, and taste of food and were more satisfied overall.”

SMG

Special Occasions

Satisfaction of restaurant guests celebrating a special occasion compared with normal dining visits is as follows:

	Satisfied Overall	Likely To Return
• Special occasion:	75%	72%
• Normal dining:	76%	79%

“Guests celebrating a special occasion at fine-dining restaurants are slightly less satisfied than other fine-dining guests and far less likely to return in the future. Expectations are likely high for celebrating guests, so service must be extra special to impress these diners.”

SMG

Steakhouse Customer Satisfaction

Steak preparation at steakhouse restaurants is reflected in customer satisfaction as follows:

	Overall Satisfaction	Likely To Return	Reported A Problem
• Steak prepared correctly:	74%	74%	6%
• Steak prepared incorrectly:	43%	50%	26%

“At steakhouses, correct preparation is everything.”

SMG

Sub Shop Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction at sub shops compared with other quick-service restaurants is as follows:

	Taste of Food	Likely To Return
• Sub shop:	73%	67%
• QSR:	67%	57%

“Sub shops enjoy more customer loyalty than other QSRs.”

SMG

Suggestive Selling

The influence of menu suggestions by waitstaff on customer satisfaction is as follows:

	Satisfied Overall	Likely To Recommend
• With suggestive selling:	80%	76%
• Without suggestive selling:	58%	54%

“Upselling makes customers feel they’re getting special service, boosts ticket prices, and strengthens the likelihood that guests will recommend a restaurant.”

SMG

Trying New Restaurant Brands

The percentage of restaurant guests who visited a brand they haven't been to before in the past 90 days is as follows:

	<25 miles from home	>100 miles from home
• Casual-dining:	31%	57%
• Fast-casual:	29%	55%
• Quick-service:	11%	23%

“Consumers are more likely to try a new restaurant brand when they are 100 miles or more from home.”

SMG

Type Of Service

By restaurant segment, the percentage of customers experiencing a problem is as follows:

• Fine-dining:	10.0%
• Fast-casual:	9.1%
• Casual-dining:	8.7%
• Quick-service:	7.7%

“The expectations of fine-dining customers are much higher, and raised expectations mean customers are more likely to perceive problems with their experience.”

SMG

23.3 Market Resources

SMG, 1737 McGee Street, Kansas City, MO 64108. (800) 764-0439. (www.smg.com)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

24.1 Overview

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI, www.theacsi.org) is a national economic indicator of satisfaction with the quality of products and services available to U.S. household consumers. Established in 1994, the ACSI produces indices of customer satisfaction on a 0-100 scale.

The ACSI is based on about 70,000 interviews conducted annually, with 250 to 260 interviews completed per company/agency. Industry sample sizes vary from 750 to 10,000, depending on the number of measured companies in each industry.

The ACSI is produced by the Stephen M. Ross Business School at the University of Michigan (www.bus.umich.edu), in partnership with the American Society for Quality (www.asq.org) and the international consulting firm CFI Group (www.cfigroup.com). ForeSee (www.foresee.com) sponsors the e-commerce and e-business measurements.

24.2 ACSI Scores

The ACSI scores for restaurant sectors have been as follows:

	Full-Service	Limited-Service
• 2007:	81	77
• 2008:	80	78
• 2009:	84	78
• 2010:	81	75
• 2011:	82	79
• 2012:	80	80
• 2013:	81	80
• 2014:	82	80
• 2015:	82	77
• 2016:	81	79
• 2017:	78	79
• 2018:	81	80
• 2019:	80	79
• 2020:	79	78
• 2021:	80	78

24.3 Customer Satisfaction Scores

ASCI scores from 2021 surveys for restaurant chains and change from the previous year are as follows:

Full-Service Restaurants

- LongHorn Steakhouse: 80 (-1.2%)
- Texas Roadhouse: 80 (no change)
- Olive Garden: 80 (1.3%)
- Outback Steakhouse: 78 (no change)
- Red Robin: 78 (2.6%)
- Cracker Barrel: 78 (-1.3%)
- Chili's: 77 (2.7%)
- Applebee's: 77 (no change)
- Red Lobster: 77 (-2.5%)
- TGI Fridays: 77 (-1.3%)
- The Cheesecake Factory: 77 (n/a)
- Denny's: 76 (no change)
- Buffalo Wild Wings: 76 (n/a)
- IHOP: 74 (n/a)
- All others: 81 (1.3%)
- Sector average: 80 (1.3%)

Limited-Service Restaurants

- Chick-fil-A: 83 (-1.2%)
- Domino's: 80 (1.3%)
- KFC: 79 (no change)
- Starbucks: 79 (1.3%)
- Five Guys: 78 (n/a)
- Panera Bread: 78 (-1.3%)
- Pizza Hut: 78 (1.3%)
- Chipotle Mexican Grill: 77 (-3.8%)
- Arby's: 77 (-2.5%)
- Dunkin': 77 (-2.5%)
- Papa John's: 77 (-1.3%)
- Panda Express: 76 (n/a)
- Burger King: 76 (no change)
- Little Caesars: 76 (no change)
- Subway: 75 (-5.1%)
- Dairy Queen: 74 (n/a)
- Taco Bell: 74 (no change)
- Sonic: 73 (-1.4%)
- Popeyes: 73 (-1.4%)
- Wendy's: 73 (-3.9%)
- Jack in the Box: 73 (no change)
- McDonald's: 70 (no change)

- All others: 80 (no change)
- Sector average: 78 (no change)

24.4 Market Resources

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), 625 Avis Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.
(734) 913-0788. (www.theacsi.org)

Foresee, 2500 Green Road, Suite 400, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. (800) 621-2850.
(www.foresee.com)