

SIGEP
VISION

FOODSERVICE
TRENDS
IN USA

Introduction

A New Perspective on Value

The US foodservice industry is **evolving rapidly in response to changing consumer expectations, lifestyle shifts, and economic pressures.**

Dining out today encompasses much more than eating, it's about discovery, convenience, self-reward, and even wellness. From indulgent weekend brunches to fast, functional weekday meals, **foodservice operators must balance creativity and value** while keeping pace with generational **change** and **digital** habits.

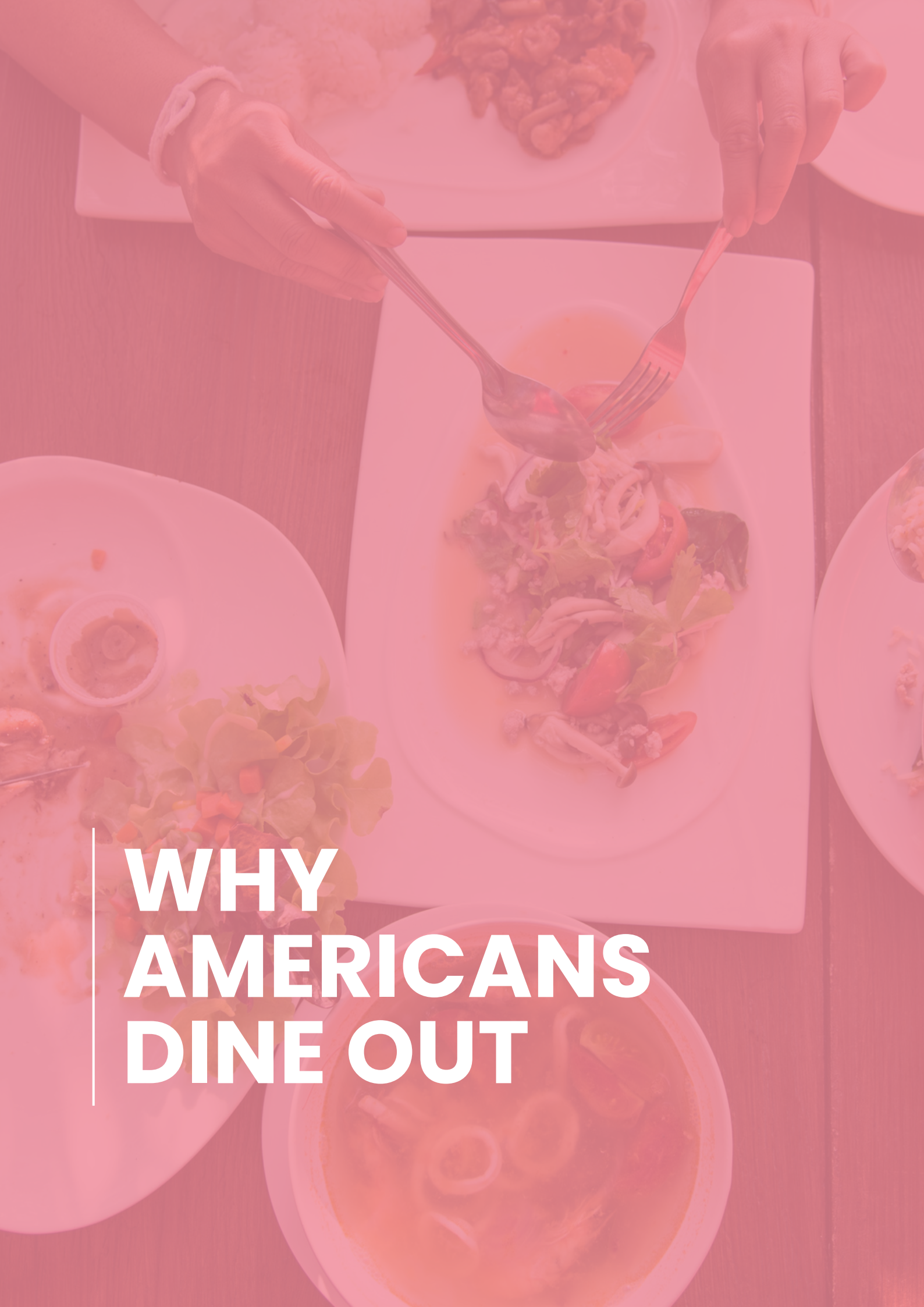
This whitepaper is based on Mintel's latest consumer and market research, with insights presented during the talk *"Foodservice Consumer and Market Trends: Focus on the US"*, held at SIGEP 2025.

The **data** comes from multiple Mintel reports, including:

- Restaurant Breakfast and Brunch Trends – US, 2024
- Snacking in Foodservice – US, 2024
- Healthy Dining Trends – US, 2024
- Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer Menu Trends – US, 2024
- Marketing to Millennials – US, 2024
- Black Consumers and the Restaurant Decision-Making Process – US, 2024
- Fast Casual Restaurants – US, 2024

These reports collectively provide a comprehensive view of evolving behaviors across age groups, occasions, and dining formats, revealing the complex interplay between indulgence, convenience, and perceived value in the current US market.



A top-down view of a person's hands using a spoon and fork to eat from a white plate. The plate contains a salad with green lettuce, red tomatoes, and white onions. To the left is another plate with a salad and a small container of dressing. Below is a bowl of soup with noodles and vegetables. The background shows a wooden table and other plates of food. The entire image has a pinkish-red tint.

WHY AMERICANS DINE OUT

1 Indulgence

A moment to enjoy

Half of US consumers say they **plan to order more from restaurants in 2025** primarily to treat themselves.*

This sense of indulgence is not limited to high-end dining; **even everyday occasions** like breakfast or snacking can feel **special** when thoughtfully designed.

Whether it's trying a trending item from TikTok or enjoying a comforting seasonal latte, Americans are increasingly **seeking emotional value from their meals out**.



2 Convenience

Save time, stay social

Convenience is a close second, with **38% of consumers** saying they dine out more often to **save time** on cooking, and another **38%** citing it as a way to **socialize** more easily with friends and family.*

The ability to combine **nourishment** with **time-efficiency** and social interaction makes foodservice a compelling **alternative** to home-cooked meals.



*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2024 – US internet users aged 18+ who plan to order from restaurants more often in 2025.



3 Value

Smart spending in a shifting economy

Rising costs continue to influence consumer behavior, pushing value to the forefront.

31% of consumers say they are motivated to eat out to take advantage of restaurant **deals**, while another **31%** point to an **improved financial** situation as a reason for doing so.*

The perception of value is increasingly tied to not just price, but also to portion flexibility, ingredient quality, and loyalty benefits.

The most relevant dining occasions

Breakfast and **brunch** have become increasingly **strategic meal occasions**.

They **balance indulgence with functionality** and have seen a surge in popularity, particularly among younger consumers looking for trendy or comforting morning experiences. Additionally, the growing **snackification of foodservice**—where consumers seek **smaller, more flexible eating moments** throughout the day—is shaping new formats and menu opportunities.

Casual and fast food formats continue to dominate both dine-in and takeout, reflecting the enduring appeal of fast, familiar, and affordable options. However, innovation and novelty are essential even within these formats, as consumers—especially Gen Z and millennials—expect both speed and surprise.

*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2024 – US internet users aged 18+ who plan to order from restaurants more often in 2025.



TREND #1

**INDULGENCE
AND
EXPLORATION**

Indulgence and Exploration

The search for a “treat” and the need for novelty

For many Americans, dining out is a reward—an experience that goes beyond satisfying hunger. **In 2024, 62% of foodservice consumers in the US reported frequently trying new items on restaurant menus.***

This desire for discovery is especially strong among younger generations: 34% of Gen Z and **30% of millennials say they usually order trendy or innovative breakfast items** such as fusion pastries or unique creations.**

The impact of social media: TikTok, food flights, and flat croissants

Social media is fueling the appetite for novelty. **TikTok has become a key driver** of culinary trends, influencing not only what consumers expect, but also how they discover it.

One notable example is **the rise of food flights**: inspired by beverage tastings, these sample-style plates present a base item (like a bagel or baked potato) **with multiple flavor variations**. H&H Bagels in New York, for instance, introduced a lox flight featuring different salmon toppings.

Another viral trend is the **flat croissant**, a pressed and crisped version of the classic pastry that behaves more like a cookie or toast. Bakery chains like Tous Les Jours have brought this idea to life, **appealing to younger consumers’ desire for something new, visual, and shareable**.

*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, 2024

**Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, August 2024 – US internet users aged 18+ who order breakfast/brunch at restaurants

Indulgence and Exploration

Fusion and creativity: reinterpretations across cultures

Cultural mash-ups are reshaping brunch menus across the US.

Restaurants are reinterpreting familiar dishes with unexpected regional influences, creating items that are both comforting and surprising. For example:

Duck Duck Goat

A Chinese-inspired restaurant, offers Hong Kong-style French toast with peanut butter, kumquats, maple syrup, and spiced pecans.



Ph: duckduckgoatchicago.com



Ph: minyolichicago.com

Minyoli

A Taiwanese eatery, reimagines chicken and waffles with wheelcake-style waffles, sour plum powder, and five-spice syrup.

Daisies

An Italian café, serves a savory croissant sandwich filled with mortadella, pistachio, and peach mustard.



Ph: daisieschicago.com

Indulgence and Exploration

Seasonality and fall/winter flavors

Seasonal ingredients are increasingly shaping menu innovation, especially during colder months. **43% of consumers say they look for warm, comforting, seasonal flavors in fall and winter.*** While pumpkin spice still holds nostalgic appeal, new ingredients are rising in popularity. **Pecans**, for example, have inspired beverages like Starbucks' pecan crunch **oatmilk latte** or HTeaO's **iced mocha butter** pecan latte.

Operators are also spotlighting **savory seasonal produce**.

Sweetgreen's harvest bowl, featuring maple-glazed Brussels sprouts, apples, and walnuts, reflects how fall ingredients can be used in fresh, nutritious formats.

Fruit-forward beverages are evolving too: **pears and pomegranates** are increasingly featured in **lattes, mocktails, and cocktails**, offering an alternative to classic apple or pumpkin flavors.

However, younger consumers tend to be less familiar with seasonal produce like chestnuts or figs. There's an opportunity here for foodservice brands to introduce these ingredients through education, familiar formats, and creative pairings.

Sauces and condiments: an entry point to bold flavors

Condiments are emerging as a key tool for personalization and flavor exploration.

33% of US consumers want a broader variety of dipping sauces when eating out, while **24% are seeking spicier dishes and 23% are drawn to fusion items.*** Sauces can help ease consumers into new flavor territories while enhancing familiar items.

Fast food chains are already using sauces to refresh their core offerings, like Wendy's Saucy Nuggs or McDonald's Mambo and Sweet & Spicy Jam sauces.

Meanwhile, the growing popularity of **chili crisp**, a blend of crispy garlic, chili, and oil originally from Chinese cuisine is introducing **complexity and crunch** to everything from ricotta toast to chicken sandwiches. It's being **hailed as the new hot honey**, offering layered heat and texture with a global flair.

*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, 2024

**Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, August 2024 – US internet users aged 18+ who order breakfast/brunch at restaurants



TREND #2

**CONVENIENCE
AS A DECISIVE
DRIVER**

2 Convenience as a decisive driver

Balancing experience and practicality

American diners are increasingly looking for **flexibility** in how they engage with restaurants. While some still **crave the traditional sit-down experience**, others prioritize **speed, accessibility, and ease of ordering**.

This **duality** is reflected in the numbers: **60% of consumers order takeout** or delivery from fast food restaurants, while **33% do the same from casual dining venues**.^{*} At the same time, many still enjoy dining in, showing that convenience today doesn't necessarily mean sacrificing experience.

This dynamic is reshaping how foodservice formats operate. Brands must offer solutions that serve **both** those who want a moment of **calm** and those who need a fast, **functional bite**, sometimes for the same customer at different moments of their week.

The fast casual challenge: meeting Gen Z and millennials where they are

Younger consumers, especially **Gen Z and millennials**, are leading the demand for **frictionless food experiences**. Yet, these generations also report lower satisfaction with fast casual restaurants when it comes to on-the-go options and mobile ordering. For example, **only 53% of Gen Z perceive fast casual as a good option for food on the go, compared to 62% of baby boomers**.^{*}

What matters most to these younger consumers?

Seamless **digital** ordering, fast pickup, and **customizable** experiences. In fact, when evaluating satisfaction with fast casual restaurants, Gen Z places the highest importance on **online/mobile ordering, speed of service, and delivery options**, more than dining atmosphere or in-person interaction.^{**}

Operators are responding: Panera's "Crunch Time Ordering" feature, for example, allows users to **pre-program their favorite meals and order them with a single swipe**. Similarly, loyalty apps like Sweetgreen's Sweetpass and Naf Naf's revamped program aim to reduce ordering friction while boosting retention.

^{*}Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2024 – US internet users aged 18+

^{**}Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, April 2024 – Fast casual restaurant satisfaction by generation

2 Convenience as a decisive driver

The return of grab & go and evolved snacking

Convenience is also reshaping what people eat and how they structure their meals. The rise of “snackification” in foodservice reflects a shift toward smaller, more flexible eating moments that fit into busy lifestyles.

According to Mintel, almost **40% of consumers say they are more likely to purchase snacks from foodservice locations if they come in convenient packaging.***

Grab & go is making a comeback, especially for breakfast and mid-morning snacks. Whether it’s a warm wrap, a protein bar, or a chilled coffee drink, consumers are looking for options that are not only fast to order, but also **easy to eat on the move**. For operators, this means investing in **smart packaging, clear labeling, and streamlined menus tailored to portability**.

As workplace habits shift and hybrid lifestyles take hold, convenience will remain a powerful lever, not just in how food is delivered, but in how it is designed.



*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2024 – US internet users aged 18+

**Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, April 2024 – Fast casual restaurant satisfaction by generation



TREND #3

**PERCEIVED
VALUE AND
ACCESSIBILITY**

3 Perceived value and accessibility

The impact of inflation and the role of promotions

With the cost of dining out remaining high, **value has become a central concern for American consumers**. Even as post-election optimism has slightly improved financial sentiment, **53% of consumers expect their personal wealth to grow** in the next four years*, **price sensitivity continues** to shape foodservice choices.

Promotions and value menus play a key role in this context. Nearly **49% of consumers say they visit fast food restaurants because of value menu options, and 46% are driven by daily deals**. Loyalty programs further support perceived value, **with 62% of fast food diners*** indicating they would be **more likely to visit a location if they were members of a rewards scheme.***

In this climate, foodservice brands must go beyond simple price reductions and find creative ways to deliver value through experience, quality, and flexibility.

Loyalty programs, portion control, and dynamic offers

One way to **demonstrate value is through personalization**.

Loyalty programs like Naf Naf's app or Sweetgreen's Sweetpass are helping consumers save while enhancing the user experience.

Beyond discounts, these platforms offer early access to new dishes, delivery perks, and curated recommendations, building a sense of **exclusivity and customer care**.

Portion flexibility also reflects evolving definitions of value. **42% of US consumers** would like to see more **half-size portions** when dining out, and **40% express interest in tasting menus.*** Smaller servings allow consumers to try new things without overspending or overcommitting, while also reducing food waste and improving perception of price fairness.

*Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2024 – US internet users aged 18+

**Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, April 2024 – Fast casual restaurant satisfaction by generation

3 Perceived value and accessibility

Value through health: natural ingredients and protein

While indulgence still drives many foodservice choices, health is becoming a form of value for a growing segment of diners. **56% of consumers** are willing to pay more for “**better-for-you” ingredients**, and **53% would do so for healthier menu options**.^{*} Two attributes stand out: naturalness and high protein content.

For many, naturalness means recipes made from scratch using **minimally processed ingredients, something 46% of consumers actively look for**.^{*} These preferences align with a broader movement toward transparency and whole foods, which can justify a higher price when clearly communicated.

Protein, in particular, is seen as functional value. It’s associated with satiety and longer-lasting satisfaction, making it an **attractive** element in meal design.

Low-carb trends and price transparency

With rising health awareness, many diners are seeking **alternatives to carb-heavy meals**, especially those looking to manage weight or follow specific diets. **Bunless burgers, protein bowls, and salad-forward meals** cater to these needs while allowing operators to highlight freshness and ingredient quality.

But value also requires **transparency**.

As the price of high-quality proteins continues to rise, consumers want to know why they’re paying more. Communicating sourcing (e.g. grass-fed, pasture-raised), cooking techniques, and nutritional benefits helps shift the conversation from cost to quality.

In a time when budgets are tight, **perceived value isn’t just about price, it’s about what consumers get for the price they pay.**

^{*}Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, 2024 – Multiple reports: Quick Service Restaurants, Healthy Dining Trends, Post-Election Sentiment, Portion Sizes



GENERATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSIGHTS

GEN Z

MILLENNIALS

KEY TRAITS

Digital-native
Highly trend-driven

Experience-focused
Convenience-oriented

PREFERENCES

Prioritize mobile ordering and speed

Value personalization and visual appeal

Lower brand loyalty

Seek balance between indulgence and wellness

Respond to social media buzz

Engage in loyalty schemes

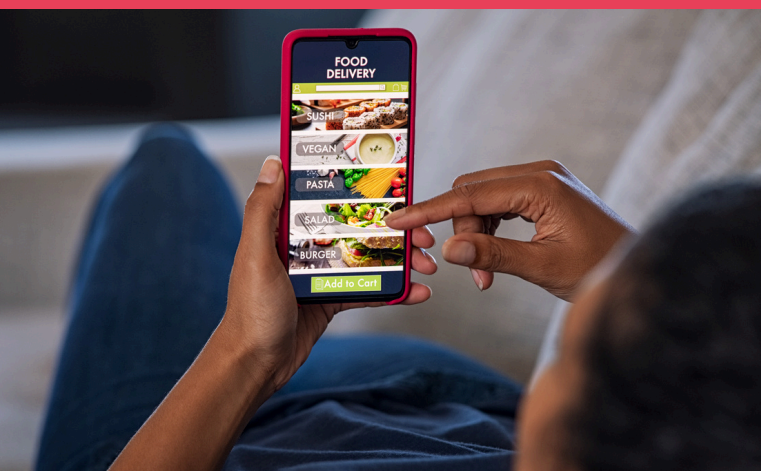
OPPORTUNITIES

Invest in seamless tech experiences

Tap into TikTok-style trends

Create value-driven innovation

Promote health plus flavor



GEN X

BABY BOOMERS

KEY TRAITS

Practical
Quality-conscious

Value tradition
High service expectations

PREFERENCES

Prefer sit-down dining

Loyal to known brands

Sensitive to portion sizes and pricing

Food choices shaped by family traditions

Face economic and access-related barriers

OPPORTUNITIES

Acknowledge cultural influences

Improve access and inclusivity

Maintain menu clarity

Highlight comfort foods and value offers





CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

Indulgence drives engagement

Dining out is still seen as a treat, especially by younger consumers. Novelty, seasonal flavors, and visually appealing dishes—often inspired by social media—are essential to keeping menus exciting and relevant.

Convenience must be fluid and flexible

Consumers expect a seamless experience whether dining in, ordering out, or grabbing food on the go. Digital tools, loyalty programs, and clear packaging are all part of delivering convenience on their terms.

Value is more than just price

In a context of inflation, consumers look for portion control, reward schemes, and transparency to justify their spending. Smaller sizes, dynamic offers, and perceived quality help define real value.

Health adds perceived worth

Ingredients matter. Natural, less processed components and protein-rich meals are seen as healthier and more satisfying—especially when they're visibly fresh and explained clearly on the menu.

Personalization is generational—and cultural

Gen Z and millennials respond to innovation, speed, and digital interfaces, while older generations prioritize quality and comfort. Cultural relevance, especially among Black consumers, offers additional room for connection and differentiation.



Follow SIGEP Vision

SIGEP Vision offers a fundamental opportunity to explore **what is trending in the Foodservice Industry**. Expressed across a rich program of initiatives, SIGEP Vision is both a concept and a physical space that provides participants with a privileged insight into the future of the entire sector.

Through collaboration with research institutes, SIGEP VISION serves as a **global observatory** of the Out-of-Home industry, providing **trends** and updated **data** throughout the year. SIGEP thus confirms itself as a true melting pot of know-how, technologies and innovation. What happens here is the key to tomorrow's winning concepts.

FOLLOW SIGEP VISION AND STAY AHEAD IN THE INDUSTRY.



We hope this whitepaper has provided valuable insights and inspiration for your business in the evolving foodservice world.

To explore these trends firsthand and connect with industry leaders, we warmly invite you to join us at SIGEP 2026.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience cutting-edge innovations, attend expert-led workshops, and network with professionals from around the globe. Mark your calendar and be part of the future of the sweet and coffee foodservice industry.

[DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE TICKET](#)

ABOUT MINTEL:

Mintel Marketing Intelligence agency based in London and specialised in the analysis of global trends in consumer behaviour.

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