Cooking Enthusiasts - US - October 2012

Scope and Themes

"Cooking at home is an activity that many Americans have accepted as a part of their weekly routines. However, despite being interested in taking an experimental approach to cooking, most are likely to stick to what they know. The key to increasing overall enthusiasm for cooking is likely to lie in grocers' and retailers' ability to help consumers improve their cooking skills through exposure to a wider variety of cooking techniques and ethnic cuisines. They should also do more to increase the ease and appeal of cooking for one."

– Gretchen Grabowski, Travel & Leisure Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- **Can grocers and retailers do more to increase consumers' cooking skills?**
- **What can be done to make cooking more appealing to smaller households?**
- **How can cooks be encouraged to prepare a wider variety of cuisines?**

As the U.S. economy continues to recover from recession, Americans are slowly finding that they have more disposable income available for discretionary purchases. Cooking at home continues to be seen as a cheaper alternative to dining out, and enthusiasm for the activity does not appear to be waning. As such, consumers may be more inclined to invest in kitchen appliances, cookware, and other related products that could support greater involvement in home cooking. In addition to its economic benefits, cooking at home is often seen as a way to bond with family and friends, try new cuisines, and learn about other cultures.

This report identifies the frequency with which consumers are cooking at home, their level of enjoyment in doing so, and their self-rated cooking skills. It also discusses common foods prepared and cooking methods used at home, as well as issues

DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market.

that may prevent consumers from cooking at home more often. Attitudes about cooking at home and important considerations made when doing so are also included. Grocery and cooking product retailers can use the information in this report to understand consumers' attitudes toward cooking at home and their cooking habits in developing innovative merchandise and marketing campaigns geared toward increasing enthusiasm for food preparation.

This report builds on the analysis presented in Mintel's *Cooking Enthusiasts—U.S., October 2011* as well as the October 2010, June 2008, and May 2006 reports of the same title. Other related reports that may be of interest include *Outdoor Barbecue—U.S., April 2012, Small Kitchen Appliances—U.S., December 2011*, *Cookware—U.S., August 2011*, and *Cooking Sauces and Marinades—U.S., April 2011*.

Market size and forecast data included in this report are limited to retail sales of cookware and small kitchen appliances, both of which are thought to be indicators of consumers' enthusiasm for cooking at home. Cookware includes nonstick, stainless steel, anodized, cast aluminum, and cast iron cookware, as well as metal bakeware and cutlery. Appliances include items related to food preparation, cooking, and beverages, as follows:

- **Food preparation:** Blenders, stand mixers, food processors, and electric knife sharpeners;
- **Cooking:** Toaster ovens, deep fryers, tabletop convection ovens, toasters, slow cookers, popcorn makers, waffle makers, rice cookers, electric pressure cookers, and roaster ovens;
- **Beverages:** Single-serve coffee makers, drip coffee makers, espresso machines, electric kettles, juice extractors, and citrus juicers.

Food preparation equipment outside of small kitchen appliances and cookware segments that indicates an enthusiasm for cooking—as well as attitudes about and motivations for cooking at home—are covered in the consumer and other sections of this report.

In discussing consumers' various levels of overall cooking enthusiasm, Mintel defined six consumer cooking segments based on time spent cooking, enjoyment, and skill levels. These segments—further described in *Behaviors and Attitudes Define Six Types of Cooks*—include:

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- **Non-cooker/Infrequent Cook:** None of these respondents love cooking, their skills are—at most—at the intermediate level, and they either "never" cook or cook less than once per week. Non-cookers/Infrequent Cooks are not a focus of the consumer research presented in this report as they do not represent cooking enthusiasts.
- **Reluctant Cook:** These respondents either dislike cooking or say they don't mind cooking, but are preparing meals at least 1-2 times per week. These cooks have intermediate, basic, or no cooking skills, and may be targeted with products that simplify cooking and make it more fun.
- **Semi-enthused Cook:** All of these respondents say that they like cooking and are cooking at least 1-2 times per week—most are cooking three or more times per week. However, their cooking skill level varies from basic to very advanced. Semi-enthused Cooks would likely benefit from cookbooks and other tools that can teach them more about cooking methods.
- **Enthusiastic Cook:** All Enthusiastic Cooks say they love cooking. These respondents are more likely than Semi-enthused Cooks to cook three or more times per week, although some do so just 1-2 times or less than once per week. While nearly nine in 10 have intermediate cooking skills, the rest have just basic skills. Like the Semi-enthused Cooks, this group would benefit from tools that teach them more cooking methods. However, given the degree to which they enjoy cooking, this group may also be receptive to interactive ways to improve their cooking skills such as attending a group cooking class or watching online or TV cooking tutorials.
- **Super-enthusiastic Cook:** All Super-enthusiastic Cooks love cooking, more than eight in 10 cook three or more times per week, and all have either advanced or very advanced cooking skills. They are a likely target for more intricate cookware and appliances, as well as elaborate recipes.
- **Conflicted Cook:** These respondents' feelings toward cooking run the gamut. Most are ambivalent about cooking—saying that they just don't mind it—but some also dislike, like, or love it. More than half of these respondents cook 1-2 times per week or more and more than nine in 10 have advanced or very advanced cooking skills. However, there are a few Conflicted Cooks who have basic or no cooking skills. Conflicted Cooks should not be a primary target for retailers and manufacturers, as varied cooking skills and enjoyment make it difficult to determine how best to market to this group.

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