American diners have access to a range of flavors, dishes, and cuisines, reflective of the diverse foodservice market. However, the majority stick with familiar fare. Opportunity will lie in how restaurants position themselves, either by focusing on more narrowly defined consumers, or by maximizing their appeal by finding a balance of innovation and continuity of new and traditional flavors."

- Amanda Topper, Associate Director - Foodservice

This report looks at the following areas:

- One third of diners are adventurous, but the majority still stick to what they know
- Range of barriers limit trial of new tastes and foods
- Adventurous eaters tend to be younger, more diverse, and affluent
- Adventurous eaters seek out a wide variety of flavors
- Many factors and tools can propel diners to try new ingredients
- New spins on comfort food classics can appeal to diners

DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market.
Flavor Innovation on the Menu - US - October 2018

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Younger generations are engaged, open to variety and innovation

Affluent and aging boomers will also drive demand, especially for traditional and healthy food

Multicultural diversity shapes consumer base

Adventurous parents drive demand for innovative family-friendly fare

Health and weight concerns drive interest in quality, healthful food

Key Players – What You Need to Know

- Global flavor profiles and fresh, healthy ingredients drive demand
- Refreshed American fare, comfort food, and meats draw consumers
- Select chains and casual family restaurants struggle to adapt
- Technology may give access to more varied, customized menus
- Trucks, food halls, and new store concepts bring new options to foodies

What’s Working?

- Global flavor profiles and bold use of spice
- International foods bring new flavors and spices to menus
- Healthy living drives demand for clean, organic, and vegetarian fare
- Regional American favorites and new takes on comfort food
- Bowls offer healthy, fresh ingredients in customizable forms
- Mocktails on the rise, while kombucha emerges as popular healthful drink
- Meats and “meaty” flavors dominate for mains and are likely to grow
- Grilling draws out “meaty” flavors and adds “smoky” and other savory notes
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- Struggles of sandwich chains show pitfalls of overexpansion and stagnant menus lacking innovation

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- New concepts support food sampling, customization, and new fare

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- Almost three quarters either like or love spicy foods
- Fear they won’t like the taste is a main barrier for diners trying new food
- Recommendations of friends/family often motivates trial
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