

# Trending Asian Cuisine Flavors - US - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and flavors and ingredients in Asian cuisine
- Asian cuisine varieties and dishes consumed
- Attitudes toward and perceptions of Asian cuisine
- Interest and experience with Asian cuisine flavors and ingredients

The majority of US consumers eat Asian cuisine; nearly half do so only on occasion, and just over a quarter do so regularly, indicating growth potential. There are two concurrent paths to growth for operators and brands: increase consumption frequency and diversify the cuisines, ingredients and flavors available.

Over the course of the pandemic, a quarter of consumers improved their Asian cooking skills; however, limited availability of ingredients and a desire for greater eating adventures, along with cooking fatigue, will likely serve to boost restaurant traffic. Cooking-weary diners are returning to restaurants, but the economy threatens to keep spending in check overall. Operators and brands that can deliver on quality, value and adventure will best sustain consumer attention.

Chinese cuisine is by far the most widely eaten Asian cuisine and has near universal appeal. However, there is enough interest in emerging and regional options to warrant attention. Cuisines that are relative newcomers on the US dining scene have some catching up to do and will be bolstered by the growth of Asian populations in the US. A better understanding of the flavor and ingredient nuances of lesser-known dishes and products will help to encourage trial.

Rice and noodle main dishes are the most often eaten, but consumers' shifting consumption habits warrant added focus on food types farther down on the preference list. Handheld sandwiches and buns will come back into favor as



"The long history of Chinese food in the US and its resulting ubiquity ensures its role as the most consumed Asian cuisine. Trends have come and gone, but there continues to be room for additional uptake of lesser-known types of Asian food including regional and emerging cuisines."

- Amanda Topper, Director – US Research

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more people venture out of the home. There is also opportunity for mixing up dayparts to encourage broader Asian cuisine adoption, such as Asian-inspired breakfast sandwiches as well as desserts and beverages, which are ideal canvasses for flavor introduction.

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