

What/How America Eats - US - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- American dietary preferences
- Meal and snack frequency
- Meal and snack motivations
- Preparation method by daypart
- Factors important to food and drink choice
- Attitudes toward cooking and eating

As the COVID-19 dust settles, consumers are settling back into some old routines and some new ones. The pandemic provided an inadvertent impetus for responsible choices around food, including home cooking, healthy eating and environmentally conscious habits, but 2022 also appears to be a year that embraces some indulgence, with consumers seeking to regain pleasure, enjoyment, ease and fun in their lives and their food.

Even with a proclivity toward indulgence acceptance, consumers want to be eating healthier. So, while brands will do well to help consumers find joy through their products, going too far into misbehavior will push past pleasure onto guilt and disappointment. Promoting small treats and occasional delights, which include nourishing healthful options, will provide the balance consumers are looking for.

Balance appears to be the way forward near-term, with consumers pointing to natural ingredients and whole foods as the strongest components of a healthy diet (as opposed to restrictive cues, such as low calories, low fat). The trend of meat-free eating slowed a bit in 2022, with half of consumers indicating a balanced diet includes a mix of animal and plant proteins. Brands will do well to provide meat alternatives as options within a diet that also includes meat, and not primarily as meat replacements.

Rising food prices are a limitation to healthy eating for all, and regular eating for some. Consumers who identify as struggling financially exhibit a degree of



“Two plus years into pandemic disruption, consumers are looking to reclaim pleasure and enjoyment. Food is a natural go-to for this, especially as price hikes temper spend in other categories. While 2022 is shaping up to be a year of some dietary indulgence, consumers continue to count healthy eating as a top priority.”

- Mimi Bonnett, Senior Director – US Food and Drink

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food insecurity that brands must work to rectify, with fewer than half eating breakfast and/or lunch daily, and only three quarters eating dinner daily.

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