

Eating in Lower Tier Cities - China - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- **Food and drink: consumers' demand for trying and exploring new products**
- **Foodservice consumption: the opportunity to attract traffic online and improve offline experiences**
- **Health concepts: light diet and precise supplement concept comes first**
- **Drink occasions: segmented functions and consumer demands**

Lower tier city consumers are becoming more rational about their food and drink consumption and have their own standards for product selection. Their needs tend to be more simplistic and clearer. They are starting to simplify their needs and focus on crucial needs instead of blindly trusting professionals or 'internet celebrities'. Nevertheless, it does not mean they are reluctant to try new things. In fact, if new products are fun, functional or can meet consumers' emotional demands and they can trust the new products, they are willing to pay for them to satisfy their curiosity.

Although some consumption behaviours have been held back by the COVID-19 pandemic, lower tier city consumers still expect consumption to provide them with sufficient psychological satisfaction. This inspires brands to create 'a sense of preciousness' in consumption through innovations to trigger lower tier city consumers' consumption desire, even on dining out occasions, which have been severely affected by the pandemic. Online marketing is a vital channel for reaching lower tier city consumers and attracting traffic. However, it is worth noting that it is not always possible to resonate with consumers through price wars alone. The key things for brands to grasp are how to utilise short video platforms, livestreaming platforms or social media flexibly and wisely to tap into consumer tribes, how to bake consumption content into usage occasions and how to cater to consumers' core demands and earn long-term trust from consumers.

With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, health has become a key topic that lower tier city consumers pay attention to. 'Low burden' and 'more precise'



"With the pandemic's impact, lower tier city consumers are becoming more rational and sophisticated about eating and diet. They look for products and content that cater to their own flavour preferences and that resonate with what they believe in."

– Frank Zhang, Research Analyst

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products can gain traction. As today's lower tier city consumers become more sophisticated and information is easier to acquire, trendy health concepts can quickly become popular among the general public. This requires brands to notice consumers' health perceptions more swiftly and respond to consumers' pain points accordingly.

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