

Menu Trends - UK - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on eating out, with a focus on menu trends
- Changes in consumers' preferences when eating out or ordering takeaway
- Ways that foodservice operators can encourage consumers to visit/use them over others
- Opportunities to cater to three different types of eaters – the most adventurous, somewhat adventurous and least adventurous

The UK foodservice market caters to both nostalgic and adventure-seeking consumers. 78% of consumers agree that eating familiar dishes is comforting. At the same time, 77% of consumers agree that trying flavours from all over the world is fun. On the one hand, they crave foodservices to go back to their roots and focus on tried-and-tested recipes with a sense of nostalgia. On the other hand, consumers still have a taste for new cuisines, unlocking opportunities for operators to tempt them with a diverse and innovative menu.

The rising cost of living has the potential to significantly impact consumers eating out behaviours, as nine in 10 diners would consider some form of cost-saving measure to save money if they had to. Whereas over-55s would consider dining out less often (60% vs 53% of total), younger consumers would cut back on takeaways and/or trade down to value items and/or cheaper foodservices. While some of the negative impact of inflation on market value will be offset by the rise in average order value, sales will become hard-earned, as operators will have to enhance their range of premium options in order to demonstrate added value and justify the extra cost of better dishes.

However, cost-conscious consumers will inevitably rein in spending on foodservices in response to rising costs, and therefore some will gravitate towards cheaper meal solutions, such as easy, quick-to-prepare ready-meals from supermarkets.



“The UK foodservice market caters to both nostalgic and adventure-seeking consumers. On the one hand, they crave for foodservices to go back to their roots and focus on tried-and-tested recipes with a sense of nostalgia. On the other hand, consumers still have a taste for new cuisines, unlocking opportunities for operators to tempt them with a diverse and innovative menu.”

- Trish Caddy

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Meanwhile, the normalisation of flexitarian diets continues to underpin consumers' decision-making process, pushing more operators to offer a greater range of meat-free options. However, flexitarians are not going full-on vegan. In fact, they are more likely to drive demand for vegetarian options (including eggs and dairy) while still allowing themselves to indulge in comfort food. As a result, many will be tempted out by classic British meat-centric foods such as meat pies and Sunday roasts.

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