

FLAVOR

& THE MENU

ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF FLAVOR

FAVORITES FIRST

Even though more than half of those surveyed by Olson would try Asian, Mediterranean or Latin dishes, they are unlikely to prefer ethnic pizza or burgers over standard American versions.

"I think we've probably always known this, but the survey brought it home in a startling way," said Sharon Olson, company president.

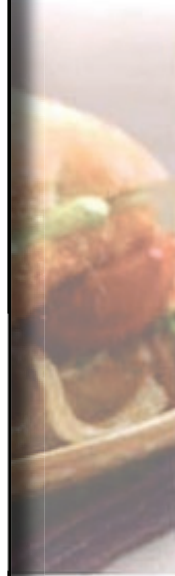
"People like the classic American burger and pizza, and while they might eagerly try new ethnic versions of them, they most likely won't replace their old standbys."

So where are global influences most appreciated? To examine consumers' level of acceptability for new flavors and dishes, Olson created written descriptions of globally flavored versions of classic American fare, such as banh-mi-inspired burgers, Brazilian shrimp pizza or a side dish of Sicilian chickpeas and spinach.

In Olson's surveys, respondents who labeled themselves foodies who "always" or "usually" like trying new flavors were most likely to choose ethnic dishes. Of all respondents, men were 10 percent more adventurous than women, a finding Technomic data also supports.

KATHY HAYDEN is Senior Editor of *Flavor & The Menu*.

Shayna Snyder contributed to this feature.



FLAVOR TRENDS, STRATEGIES *and* SOLUTIONS
for Menu Development