

Millennials want ethical snacks—to go

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According to a new report, [Ethics on the Go, from Culinary Vision Panel's Mindful Dining Initiative](#), millennials' expectations for snacks and grab-and-go foods are sky high. From sustainable seafood to free-range eggs to fair-trade coffee, this generation "does not want their dining choices to have unintended negative consequences," says Sharon Olson, executive director of Chicago-based Culinary Visions Panel.



"We found that whether it's rewarding a company's fair-trade labor practices or their zero-waste policies, millennials are the most serious about ethically sourced grab-and-go foods," Olson says.

While ethical grab-and-go foods may seem like a bit of niche, it's just a fact when it comes to those great expectations of millennials. The study, which surveyed 1,500 US consumers, found that [82 percent wish establishments would use more environmentally friendly business practices](#). "Foodservice operators need to start considering how to introduce and communicate ethically sourced ingredients, menu concepts and business practices," the report concludes.

Here are five data-supported ways to look at this complex issue, identified by the Culinary Visions Panel.

Use your ethical practices as a shortcut to connecting with younger customers

In the report, the 18 to 34 demographic values ethical eating choices much higher than any other demographic. While 50 percent of general consumers agreed organic foods tasted better, [60 percent of consumers under 35 equated organic foods with better flavor](#). When foodservice operators establish connections with farms and ethical manufacturers, they can also connect with their guests more fully.

Communicate your efforts

But you can't connect if you don't first communicate. Marketing makes a big difference in letting the millennial market know you're on trend. "From vegan food options to composting onsite, ethical efforts are the new cool 'it' factor for millennial consumers who have to navigate more dining options," according to the report. [76 percent of consumers studied said ethical efforts made by restaurants are trendy](#).

Focus on grab and go

Don't make millennials choose between their love of quick, easy, on-the-go eats and making a statement and taking a stand for social justice. Millennials see a deficiency in ethical snacks, the study found: Compared to 57 percent of the general public, [64 percent of millennial consumers said there's a shortage of ethical grab-and-go options](#).

It's worth it to them

Consumers under 35 are willing to pay extra to eat more ethically while they're on the go, according to the study. **67 percent said they'd be willing to pay more for ethically produced food they can grab on the go**, compared to 55 percent of general consumers. "This fact creates an exciting opportunity for foodservice operators to expand their menu offerings and tap into young consumers' desire for ethical snacks and grab-and-go foods."

Go plant-based

Consumers do still love meat, but many are also looking to get more plants into their diets. This study found that **88 percent of millennials were making plant-based foods a priority in their lives**. This means eating better while feeling better about ethically sourced snacks can go hand in hand.