

Refrigerated & Frozen Foods

Consumer study reveals insights into weeknight dining habits

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A new study to be released by **Culinary Visions Panel**, Chicago, takes an in-depth look at the dining habits, challenges and interests of consumers on weeknights.

The study reveals that **consumers enjoy new experiences when dining at home**, with 84% of respondents stating they sometimes, usually or always like trying new dishes and flavors. The study looks at over 2,100 participants and explores their attitudes toward cooking at home with a focus on Sunday through Thursday dinners.

Most consumers (80%) are dining in at least four out of five nights during the week, and 92% of consumers state that they are cooking at home as much as or more often than they were the year before. Overall, cooking at home is an enjoyable activity for 64% of consumers who declare "I love to cook" or "cooking is my therapy." **Americans are also adventurous when cooking at home**, as nearly half (48%) of those surveyed always or usually like to try new dishes and flavors, and 36% like to try new flavors or dishes some of the time.

The study also highlights challenges consumers face when cooking at home. Thirty-eight percent of respondents state that cooking at home takes too long, while 36% of respondents say that if grocery shopping were easier, they would cook at home more often. Those surveyed express frustration at having to shop at several stores to buy all the necessary ingredients for a recipe.

The study exposes a **high interest in seeing meal kits at retail locations** such as a local grocery store. Nearly eight out of 10 (79%) of those surveyed are interested in purchasing meal kits at a local grocery store. Broken down by age, 92% of respondents ages 39 and younger express an interest in purchasing meal kits at a retail operation, which is 25% more than those ages 40 and older. The greatest appeal of meal kits is the time users save.

"Innovative startup ventures like the emerging delivery meal kit programs are really enabling consumers to create their own fresh, upscale dining experience at home while saving time," says **Sharon Olson, executive director**. "Our research shows that consumers want these fresh, new experiences at home, but time, convenience and cost are high priorities. These meal kits present a real opportunity for retail operations such as convenience stores, gourmet retailers and grocery stores to offer a high-end, hassle-free product to consumers."

Additional facts from the survey include:

- 73% of consumers state that the right cost would encourage an actual purchase of a meal kit at retail locations such as a local grocery store.
- 26% of respondents say they would cook at home more often if a local retail store offered meal kits, compared to 14% if meal kits were delivered to the home.
- 77% of consumers define cooking as “cooking from a recipe with raw ingredients,” and 61% also consider “assembling ingredients that include a convenient item like a fully prepared sauce or seasoning mix” as cooking.
- When asked to select all that apply on the appeal of meal kits at a retail store, 63% selected “saves me time,” 60% selected “hassle-free,” 35% selected “helps me cook like a chef,” 32% selected “it’s a great value” and 27% selected “there is no waste.”



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