

Refrigerated & Frozen Foods

New consumer survey explores competing preferences for healthful vs indulgent foods

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“Healthfully delicious” and “luxuriously indulgent” may have been rival trends in the past, but today, they both equally dominate consumers’ food decisions while dining outside the home, according to the latest trend report from **Culinary Visions Panel, Chicago**.



The study, “**OxyModern: Cultural Contradictions Driving the Trends**,” shows ample opportunities for operators to build menu concepts around two competing consumer dining trends.

“It is important to recognize that we live in an ‘on-demand’ dining culture where those that provide healthy food can be just as successful with those delivering indulgent, over-the-top delights to the same consumer, depending upon their desire of the moment,” **says Sharon Olson, executive director**. “Our study reveals that today’s foodservice businesses are in a unique position to tap into multiple, **competing consumer-driven foodservice trends**, such as healthful vs. indulgent foods.”

An astounding **80%** of the 2,000 consumers surveyed agreed that they expect food at restaurants to be **both healthy and delicious**. Consumers don’t want to diet, but more than half (56%) of the consumers surveyed want to limit certain ingredients such as sugar, dairy or gluten in order to eat healthier while dining out.

This means that operators have an **opportunity to build a repertoire of healthy foods** where consumers gravitate on a regular basis. This prospect seems especially relevant in light of one-third (30%) of consumers surveyed agreeing that restaurants had greater expertise to make healthier meals than they could make themselves at home.

Despite the desire to eat healthier, more than half of the survey respondents love restaurants with indulgent, “over-the-top” menu items. In fact, **64% of consumers were willing to splurge** on foods when these meals were truly extraordinary. This means that if restaurants can really wow patrons, consumers will put aside health concerns for an indulgent meal.

Most consumers surveyed agreed that they **wouldn’t trade taste for healthiness** and more than two-thirds (78%) of them admitted that they loved large meal servings.