

New study explores dessert dining differences among American and European consumers

Stereotypes about the dining tastes of Americans versus Europeans abound. But how many of the differences are true? A new consumer study from **Culinary Visions** explores the differences between American and European consumers when it comes to dining on dessert. The study, called the Global Indulgence Study, assessed the behaviors and attitudes of 2,000 consumers from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy.

"It's no secret that consumers across the globe have a desire to indulge. But the study reveals that what makes American consumers unique are their contradictory attitudes on dessert," said Sharon Olson, executive director of Culinary Visions. "While European consumers aren't afraid to make dessert an everyday occasion, American consumers express more anxiety about incorporating dessert into a meal. American consumers simultaneously love dessert and regard it with a sense of apprehension."

Here are the key takeaways from the **Global Indulgence Study**:

Defining dessert time

Interestingly enough, the study did not immediately expose the American consumer's sweet tooth. In fact, American consumers were one of the least likely surveyed groups to state that they like to order dessert when dining out at restaurants. Sixty-four percent of the American consumers surveyed said that they like to order dessert when they eat out, compared to 82 percent of Italian consumers, 78 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom, 75 percent of French consumers, and 60 percent of German consumers.

However, when it came to snacking on sweets, American consumers surpassed their European counterparts. Fifty-nine percent of Americans surveyed stated that they enjoy dessert as a snack between meals, compared to 48 percent of Italian consumers, 47 percent of German consumers, 44 percent of French consumers and 39 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom. American consumers may be less likely to order dessert at the end of the meal, but they love to partake in unstructured snack time.

A cause for celebration

For the most part, global consumers associate sweet eats with celebration. Seventy-eight percent of American consumers stated that they like to eat dessert when they are in a celebratory mood, compared to 84 percent of Italian consumers, 75 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom and 71 percent of French consumers. German consumers remained pragmatic, with 50 percent of those surveyed agreeing with the same statement.

Nonetheless, consumers across the globe generally agreed that a cause for celebration isn't required to indulge. Only among American consumers did a slight majority express hesitation in ordering dessert outside of special occasions. Fifty-three percent of the American consumers surveyed stated that they only order dessert for special occasions, compared to 40 percent of British consumers, 36 percent of German consumers, 34 percent of Italian consumers and 29 percent of French consumers.

Emotional eaters

When examining the way their emotions impact their indulgence, Italian consumers again answered unabashedly. Sixty-three percent of Italian consumers stated that they like to eat dessert when they feel stressed, compared to 55 percent of both American and French consumers, 53 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom and 40 percent of German consumers.

Similar results emerged when asked about turning to dessert to cope with unhappiness. Sixty-three percent of Italian consumers stated that they like to eat dessert when they feel unhappy, compared to 54 percent of American consumers, 53 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom, 51 percent of French consumers and 35 percent of German consumers.

Can I try a bite of that?

The study identified one group dining habit that fell primarily into the American camp. Sixty-one percent of American consumers surveyed stated that if someone else at the table orders dessert, then they will have a taste. In comparison, 53 percent of consumers from the United Kingdom agreed with the same statement. In continental Europe, on the other hand, consumers were more likely than not to feel reluctant about swiping a bite from their fellow diners' plates. Forty-three percent of German consumers, 43 percent of French consumers and 41 percent of Italian consumers agreed that they will sample a taste if someone else at their table orders dessert.

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