

PRESS RELEASE

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CANNY DINERS FIND WAYS TO EAT OUT FOR LESS

Consumers are becoming increasingly cost-conscious when dining out by cutting back on starters, desserts and alcohol consumption and ordering dishes they can share.

QuickBite, the eating out quarterly tracker conducted on behalf of market analyst Horizons, has found encouraging signs that consumers are prepared to spend their money again with 68% of respondents to the survey saying they intended to eat out as often in the coming 12 months as they had in the past.

But the survey demonstrates how consumers are increasingly price-conscious when it comes to eating out. More than half of respondents (54%) take price into consideration more often than they did six months ago as they seek better value dishes and look to reduce their overall meal spend. Females are particularly cost conscious (57%) compared with men (50%) when choosing their meal.

Spending on alcohol is an early casualty of this more frugal era, with 51% saying they now spend less on alcohol when eating out, with women (54%) more likely than men (49%) to reduce their spending in this way. Some 28% of respondents say they are ordering wine by the glass rather than the bottle to reduce costs, with women (32%) reporting this at a much higher level than males (24%).

"The results of the latest QuickBite survey show the changing nature of consumer spending. While it seems people are continuing to eat out, they are looking for ways to reduce the cost, taking advantage of money-off vouchers and the heavy discounting going on amongst restaurant operators. They have also changed the things they are ordering in restaurants – sharing more, drinking wine by the glass and cutting out starters and desserts," commented Paul Backman, Horizons' development executive.

The survey results also show that 39% of consumers are ordering fewer starters and desserts and more are sharing dishes. "It is difficult to attribute this shift to healthier eating habits and is more likely a result of consumers trying to reduce their meal spend," added Backman.

Sharing dishes is an increasingly popular way to save money, with 29% opting for this more often. Women (31%) lead the way compared with men (27%), while Northerners (33%) report a higher incidence of dish-sharing than those living in the South (26%).

The survey also found:

- The top five favourite places to buy a meal outside the home are Chinese restaurants, pub/pub restaurant, fast food outlet, Indian restaurant, fish & chip shop.
- **For a sit-down meal our favourite is a pub restaurant (21%), followed by fast food outlets (15%), coffee shops/cafés (11%), and hotel restaurants (10%).**
- Meal spend per head is highest in French restaurants (£20.66), Italian (£18.78), Indian (£18.71) and hotel restaurants (£17.11) and lowest in coffee shops/cafés (£5), in-store eating/supermarkets (£4.52) and work/education (£4.27) locations.
- **Spend per head increases with age. 16-24 year olds spend an average of £9.35, while 55-64 year olds spend £12.86. This figure drops off for those of pensionable age (£9.88).**
- A sliding scale in eating out frequency exists from ABs (managerial workers, professionals) to C1s (supervisors, administrators) to C2s (skilled manual workers) with respondents falling into those categories reporting frequencies of 4.1, 3.1 and 3 times in the past two weeks respectively. Market volumes and spends per head follow a similar pattern.
- **There is a definite North/South divide with 56% of Northerners (compared to 51% of Southerners) being influenced by price.**
- 16-24 year olds and skilled manual workers reported reducing their alcohol consumption more often than other age groups and socio-economic groups.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

About QuickBite Quarterly Tracker

Base: 1035 adults aged 16+ demographically representative of the UK population. Fieldwork was conducted by Mori between 13-14 June 2009

About Horizons

Horizons is an analyst and specialist information consultancy for the foodservice and hospitality sector. It's managing director, Peter Backman, is an expert on the structure and dynamics of the foodservice sector, and its supply chain, in the UK and across Europe.

Horizons helps its clients make better business decisions by providing accurate and detailed information about the foodservice market, its trends, and opportunities. The company provides consultancy services, workshops and statistical information based on its model of the sector and database of key accounts across Europe. The company recently acquired the QuickBite (consumer research) and Menurama (menu tracking) services, adding further depth to its statistical knowledge of the sector.

The company's clients includes Compass and Whitbread, suppliers such as 3663, Brakes, Cadbury, Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble and Electrolux, investors JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs and trade associations such as the British Hospitality Association and the Food and Drink Federation. Horizons' views have been sought by organisations such as the Bank of England, the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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