

Study: Young Consumers Are Ordering Out Less, Cooking More

Y-Pulse survey shows they are cooking new recipes and enjoying culinary experiences at home.

CHICAGO — A cooking renaissance may be taking place for pandemic-conscious young adults. These consumers are cooking new recipes and enjoying culinary experiences at home, according to the latest Y-Pulse survey, which explores pandemic-inspired behaviors that have the potential to become long-term lifestyle habits for consumers ages 34 and under.

“Young consumers have traditionally been the food adventurers when dining out, and we are seeing that their desires for culinary exploration are taking hold at home as well,” said Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse. “As the pandemic wears on, we are seeing greater numbers of young consumers who say they like to cook.”

The latest round of the survey shows that just 32 percent of those surveyed said they did not like to cook, down from the 39 percent who said the same in this summer 2020. Additionally, in the latest survey, 48 percent agreed that “Ordering prepared food from a restaurant has become my new normal,” down from 52 percent this past summer.

The evolving new normal has moved beyond preparing the same thing every day for 41 percent. Y-Pulse found that young consumers are exercising a sense of adventure when they cook, with 78 percent saying they have found opportunities to explore cooking new recipes during stay-at-home periods and 80 percent have been inspired to learn more cooking techniques while cooking at home.

Supermarkets, delis and other foodservice retailers can meet young consumers’ evolving needs by managing an online



as well as in-store product mix, which is key to customer satisfaction. Forty-four percent of young consumers said they are disappointed with the lack of variety available to them when they shop for groceries online.

Meal kits that make it easier for home cooks to enjoy variety have been a game changer for 46 percent of young adult consumers, but 71 percent say the kits are too expensive to be a regular choice, indicating that providing affordable options that appeal to the tastes of younger households has strong potential, according to the research firm.

The opportunity to capture the loyalty of next-generation shoppers has substantial momentum, as 62 percent say they are gaining a new appreciation for the supermarket deli as a meal resource, it added.

Y-Pulse is a research and consulting practice. It is a division of Olson Communications Inc., headquartered in Chicago.