

Kids dining study: Data from Gen Z's crystal ball

March 29, 2018

Today's tech-savvy, food-loving kids hold the answers to what—and how—we'll be eating. Here are some interesting facts from a new study by **Y-Pulse** for a sneak peek into the future.



More than 900 K-12 consumers in the U.S. took part in the study for Y-Pulse's new **2018 Kids Dining study**, which became the report "**Understanding Tomorrow's Tastemakers Today**," a look into the culture, attitude and behavior around food of consumers between the ages of 8 and 18. Check out these data points for an emerging picture of what tomorrow's tastemakers will value.

Having it both ways

To this generation, it's not weird to simultaneously crave comfort food like lasagna and adventurous food like fried crickets all within the same day. The study found "equal zeal" for loving both the mild and the wild ends of the food spectrum. 71 percent of kids surveyed like trying new dishes and flavors at restaurants while 91 percent of kids like ordering their favorite foods again and again.

Gen Z socializes—in person (over meals)

While some suggest younger generations might be socially isolated due to smartphones, their need for community is still strong, at least when it comes to mealtimes: 66 percent said they like restaurants that offer shareable food and 76 percent like to hang out with their friends at a restaurant.

Food media makes its mark

Young consumers have an appetite for food media, with 56 percent surveyed reporting that they like to watch the Food Network and 52 percent say they enjoy watching "Tasty"-style videos on Facebook and Instagram.

Perceptions of healthy food matter

Just like previous generations, Gen Z consumers are very concerned about eating healthy food, and they're influenced by messages about healthy eating. Just 40 percent of those surveyed thought there were healthy options available in school vending machines.

In search of independence

Gen Z-ers can't wait to grow up—at least when it comes to making their own food choices. 58 percent of kids surveyed said they'd like to cook for themselves and 50 percent said they like to get snacks on their own from convenience stores.