

# Study examines consumer expectations at QSR, full-service restaurants

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A new report from **Y-Pulse**, Chicago, examines the reactions of 900 kids and 1,020 adults to menu concepts in a quick-service (QSR) and full-service restaurant setting. The study finds that while kids and adults have similar tastes, **the two groups have varying expectations about QSR and full-service venues.**

"The inspiration for this study was the growing number of kids who prefer ordering from the regular menu than the kids' menu when dining out," says Sharon Olson, executive director. "Both kids and adults favor fresh and simple menu concepts that are familiar to them. The real differences between the two groups aren't their basic tastes in food, but how and where they want to consume it."

Study participants were presented with **10 new foodservice menu concepts for their evaluation.** The meal concepts that kids rated the highest were the Banana Berry Smoothie (77%), Mexican Tostada (71%), Overnight Oatmeal (64%) and Tex-Mex Breakfast Bowl (61%). Surprisingly, adult consumers had the same Top 4 favorites, albeit in a slightly different order. Adults' highest-rated selections were the Banana Berry Smoothie (71%), Mexican Tostada (70%), Tex-Mex Breakfast Bowl (62%) and Overnight Oatmeal (55%).

## Kids look to QSR for fast morning fuel

The study reveals that the menu items that kids rated as their favorites were also the ones they most expect to find at QSRs. And, what's more, three of the Top 4 of those concepts were breakfast foods, suggesting that kids look to QSRs as their breakfast destination. The four concepts that kids said they would most expect to find at a fast food restaurant were:

- 1.) Banana Berry Smoothie, **75%**
- 2.) Overnight Oatmeal, **67%**
- 3.) Mexican Tostada, **41%**
- 4.) Tex-Mex Breakfast Bowl, **37%**

In contrast, only 26% of kids said that they would expect to find the Apple Kale Salad at a fast food restaurant, despite the fact that many QSR chains now tout the fresh salads on their menus.

## Kids and adults diverge on full-service

When it came to evaluating their expectations for full-service restaurants, kids' and adults' opinions began to branch out. The study found that **kids were more skeptical that their favorite foods could be found at full-service restaurants, in comparison to QSRs.** In fact, 46% of kids said they would expect to find the Banana Berry Smoothie at a restaurant with table service, compared with 56% of adults. And, 36% of kids expected to find the Overnight Oatmeal in restaurants with table service, compared with 48% of adults.

Even when the majority of kids did expect to be able to find their favorites in a full-service restaurant, the gap persisted. For example, 66% of kids answered that they would expect to find the Mexican Tostada in a restaurant with table service, compared to 75% of adults.

## **Full-service means more adventure**

Kid and adult consumers' opinions converged once again when evaluating bold, global flavors. **Both groups associated menu concepts that contained international ingredients with full-service restaurants.** Nearly 84% of kids said would expect to find Spaghetti with Korean Meatballs in a restaurant, and 80% of adults agreed. And, 77% percent of kids said the Buddha Bowl would be found in a restaurant with table service, compared with 76% of adults.

## **About the study**

Y-Pulse surveyed 900 K-12 students and 1,020 adults about their perceptions on menu options and where they would expect to find them. All the menu concepts were professionally photographed and shown to the survey participants for evaluation. The surveys were conducted online with parent/guardian permission for the student surveys. The study participants evaluated the meals based on photographs and menu descriptions.