

Baby Boomers & Gen Z Find Common Ground With Food Experiences

Eighty-five percent or more say they prefer sharing meals with other people rather than dining alone.

CHICAGO — Baby boomers and Generation Z are finding common ground when it comes to their preferences for sharing meal experiences and food traditions.

A new nationwide survey of more than 2,000 consumers from research and consulting practice Y-Pulse found that shared experiences, food traditions and local ingredients are finding favor with modern consumers of all ages.

“So often we see significant differences in the dining habits and preferences among consumers in different generations, yet the findings in this recent study confirm that food really does bring people together,” said Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse. “It was encouraging to hear study participants of all ages saying that they enjoy creating their own food traditions when they cook with friends and family.”

When it comes to food and dining, the three areas of agreement among baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) and Gen Zers (those born between 1997 and 2012) are:

The Importance of Shared Food Experiences

Approximately 85 percent of baby boomers and 86 percent of Gen Z study participants said they prefer sharing meals with other people rather than dining alone. When a restaurant visit includes a sit-down dinner rather than a fast fuel stop, 83 percent of baby boomers and 86 percent of Gen Z consumers reported that they prefer to share a dining experience with others.

Members of both cohorts enjoy food market venues that facilitate sharing food with a group of diverse tastes and preferences. Eighty percent of baby boomers and 87 percent Gen Zers agreed that takeout from different stands at a food market makes it easy to share a meal with others when not everyone in the party wants the same type of food.

Embracing Food Traditions is Meaningful

Nostalgic foods and family traditions are important and appealing to boomers and zoomers. Not only do they appreciate old family recipes, but they also enjoy creating



new traditions. A whopping 88 percent of baby boomers and 84 percent of Gen Zers said old family recipes were among their favorite meals. There was also strong interest in creating their own food traditions when cooking for friends and family, according to 76 percent of baby boomers and 82 percent of Gen Z participants.

The Appeal of Local

Members of the baby boomer (74 percent) and Gen Z (72 percent) cohorts agreed that they prefer to order menu items with locally sourced ingredients. Although the premium price of local goods is a cause for concern among many consumers, the majority of those surveyed said they value locally produced goods enough to pay a premium price. Seventy-one percent of baby boomers and 68 percent of Gen Z said they do not understand why local food items cost so much more than foods that have to be shipped from a distance. However, 70 percent of boomers and 77 percent of zoomers are willing to pay a little bit more for food that comes from local producers.

Founded in 2004, Chicago-based Y-Pulse is a division of Olson Communications Inc.