



DINNER PLATE DIGEST

A Profile of the Everyday Home Cook





DEAR FOOD ENTHUSIAST:

Welcome to the "Dinner Plate Digest," a culmination of information from an extensive survey of more than 2,000 primary meal preparers conducted for the Pork Information Bureau by Impulse Research Corporation. Through this survey, we have delved into some of the challenges facing today's home cook, from recipe reliance (or lack thereof) to perceived cooking ability and preferred sources of cooking information.

The goal of this study was to gain insight into everyday meal-planning decisions, uncover what inspires home cooks, identify the obstacles to cooking better meals and understand the home cook's aspirations. The survey respondents represented a cross-section of the national population: most were female (63%), between the ages of 25 to 44 (61%) and from all areas of the country.

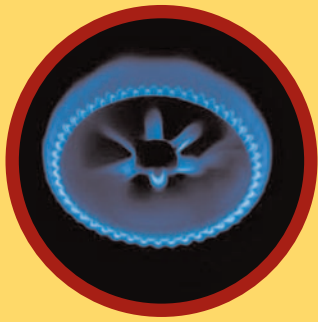
So what was learned? Taste, ease and convenience continue to be top priorities for today's home cooks, but cooking and family mealtime are nearly equal in importance. Even in today's high-speed world, dinner is prepared inside the home an average of 4.6 times per week, with 65 percent of families enjoying dinner together at least four times a week.

For a further glimpse of today's home cooks and what influences their mealtime decisions, look through this report for more detailed findings.

Happy Cooking (and eating!).

Pork Information Bureau





A PROFILE OF THE EVERYDAY HOME COOK

A NATION OF COOKS

Americans enjoy cooking and preparing meals for family and guests. More than 80 percent said they either love to cook (39%) or “don’t mind” cooking (47%); just 14 percent said they find cooking a chore or boring. And, the majority of home cooks (74%) said they’re good or excellent at preparing meals. However, nearly eight out of 10 meal preparers want to be better cooks.

WHAT DOES “WANT TO BE BETTER” COOK MEAN?

- I need **INSPIRATION** for quick and simple meal ideas (53%)
 - Cookbooks are the top resource (39%) with family, friends and the Internet also a popular resources (17%)
- I seek **VARIETY** in my **RECIPE ROUTINE**
 - Americans make the same meal an average of 3.4 times each month
 - Cooks want a regular repertoire of “mental recipes” but also want concepts they can keep fresh
- I would rather spend **LESS TIME IN THE KITCHEN** and **MORE TIME WITH FAMILY**
 - Recipes requiring little prep time would help the most (45%), along with the family helping with mealtime preparation (16%) and simple ingredients (15%)
 - Home cooks spend more time cooking on weekends than weekdays
- I want **MENU OPTIONS** that will feed the **ENTIRE FAMILY**
 - Recipes that the whole family can enjoy are important (27%)
 - Nearly half of American families (49%) eat dinner at the same time, so dishes that please even the pickiest of eaters would help

ASPIRATIONS OF THE HOME COOK: I WANT...

Quick mealtime ideas...Yet delicious, unique and satisfying meals for my family

Nutritious meals...Yet enjoyment of food is more important

Convenience products...But also fresh, healthy meals

An arsenal of ideas...But inspiration, ease and simple ingredients

Dinnertime with family...And time-saving ideas for the kitchen

Pride in my cooking...But I want to be even better



THE RECIPE REPERTOIRE

Nearly 40 percent of home cooks try new recipes and cook a wide variety of dishes on a regular basis.

I'M LOOKING FOR RECIPES THAT ARE:

- **Quick:** Recipes that can be prepared and cooked quickly (77%)
- **Part of a Mental Menu:** Recipes to use again and again (73%)
- **Healthy:** Healthful, nutritious recipes (59%)
- **A Twist on Tradition:** New ways to make traditional favorites (50%)
- **Low on Ingredients:** Recipes that use just a few ingredients (48%)
- **Family-friendly:** Recipes that serve more than one person (57%)
- **Call for Unique Ingredients:** Challenging recipes with interesting and unexpected ingredients (20%)

RECIPE RELIANCE

The majority of Americans (87%) prepare the same recipe **more** than once a month.

- More than half (52%) said they don't have time to try new recipes
- Nearly half (47%) said they don't have the right ingredients
- About a third (31%) fear their efforts won't turn out well
- A quarter (24%) said they don't think about new recipes
- Two out of 10 people said they aren't familiar with the cooking method needed

Women are slightly more likely (59%) than men (54%) to stray from an original recipe...but men (10% vs. 4%) are more likely than women to not use recipes at all.

"NO RECIPE" RECIPES

Americans rely upon their top-of-mind, "no recipe" dishes, with 99 percent of home cooks saying that their mental recipes always or sometimes taste delicious or good. Nearly 90 percent said they create dishes without a recipe at least once a week, and 30 percent said they cook without a recipe as many as five times a week.



RECIPE PRO OR PART-TIME PREPARER?

How Closely Do Home Cooks Follow Recipe Instructions?



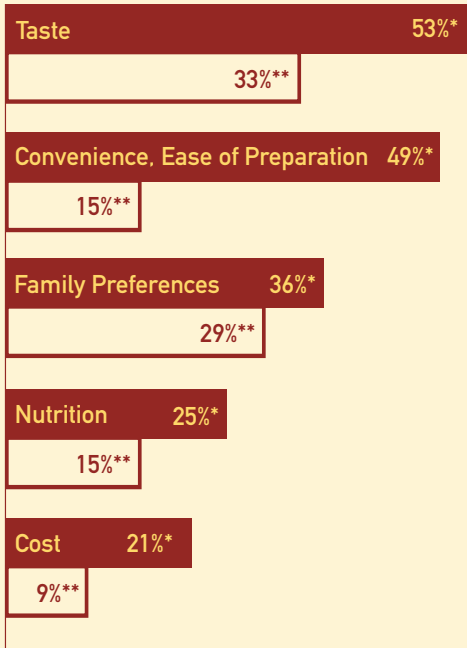
EVERYDAY TRADITIONS

FOCUS ON FAMILY

American families dine together more than four times a week, with dinner prepared inside the home an average of 4.6 times per week.

- Most family members spend less than 25 minutes at the dinner table; dinner preparation takes an average of 34 minutes
- Nearly half of home cooks said their families rarely (13%) or never (36%) have separate mealtimes, although another 43 percent say they sometimes eat separately. Just seven percent said that family members always eat at separate times
- 18- to 24-year-olds are the most likely to eat and run (less than 10 minutes at the table)

The primary meal preparer (48%) is most likely to decide what is served for dinner, followed by the spouse (28%) and children (19%). In addition, the meal planner's schedule usually dictates when dinner is served (41%).



TODAY'S MEALS MUST-HAVES

Important Meal-Planning Considerations Today vs. Five Years Ago

* Dinner Plate Digest, 2005

** Kitchen Report, 2000



MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Nearly seven out of 10 home cooks (68%) said part of their cooking ability was learned from their mothers, and 58 percent said they were self-taught cooks. Other key influencers include grandmothers, fathers and friends.

NOW VS. THEN...CHILDHOOD

- Most Americans (60%) prepare different foods from those they ate in childhood
- Almost half (45%) spend less time cooking than those who prepared meals in their childhood households
- 41 percent said they use different techniques than in their childhood
- 36 percent said they choose healthier foods now from what they were served during childhood

SCRATCH ARTISTS

- Nearly half (40%) of home cooks said they prepare meals from scratch at least four times a week

CONVENIENCE IS KING...SOMETIMES

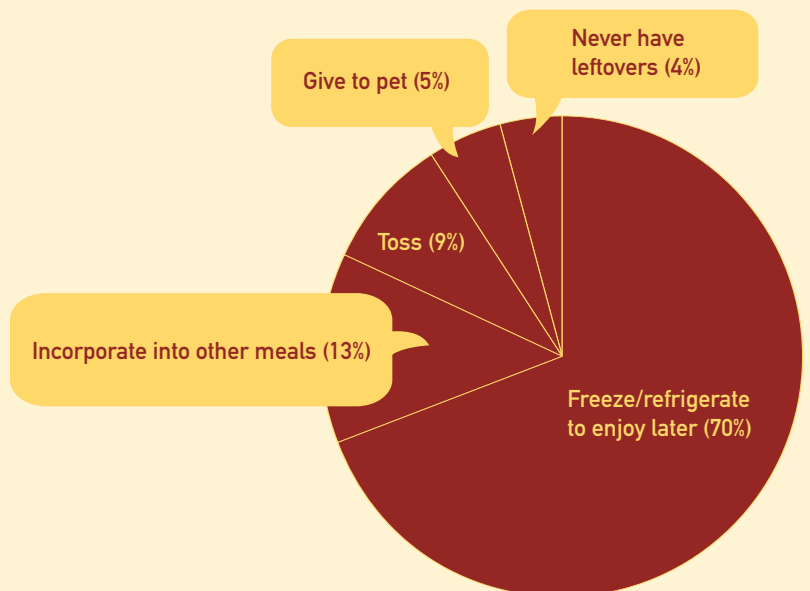
- 65 percent of home cooks rely on convenience products an average of 3.4 times per week as part of meal preparation
- American families eat a frozen dinner an average of 1.1 times per week
- Most home cooks opt to always marinate their own meat (59%) rather than always purchase pre-marinated meat (5%)

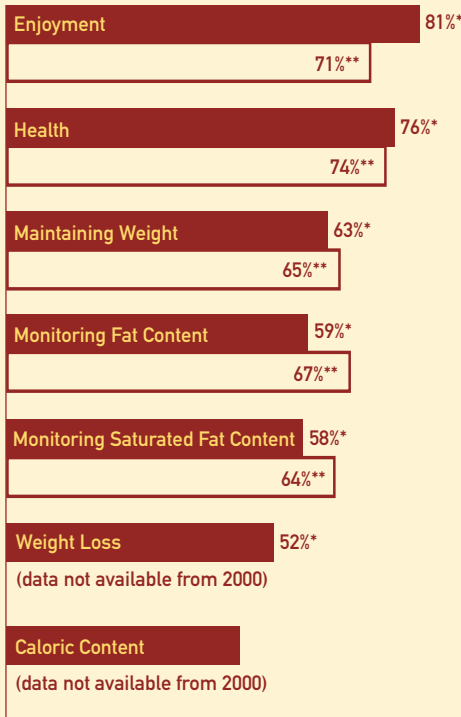
RESTAURANT DINING

American families order take-out or delivery an average of 1.4 times per week and eat in a restaurant an average of 1.1 times per week.

WHAT ABOUT LEFTOVERS?

Use of Leftovers





COOKING FOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION

IMPORTANT DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Dietary Considerations Today vs. Five Years Ago

* Dinner Plate Digest, 2005

** Kitchen Report, 2000

WHOM DO YOU TRUST?

When it comes to health information, Americans prefer trained professionals to other resources, including mass media. Medical doctors (85%) and dietitians (82%) are the most trusted resources for health information, followed by books (65%) and the Internet (44%). Other relied-upon sources include friends/family (38%), magazines/newspapers (37%) and television (32%).

INFORMED CONSUMERS

Almost 50 percent of home cooks read the nutrition label before purchasing meat at the grocery store, while just 10 percent claim to never read the nutrition label when selecting meat.

DIET? WHAT DIET?

The majority of meal planners (55%) are not currently following a diet plan, while nearly 30 percent follow an unspecified diet. Low-carb diets, such as The Atkins Diet™, The Zone™ and The South Beach Diet™, are popular with just 13 percent of home cooks, while another 12 percent choose other structured diet plans, including Weight Watchers® and Slim•Fast®.

COOKING, EATING AND TELEVISION

- Cooking and food shows are popular with meal planners, with nearly two-thirds tuning in regularly
- Most home cooks (73%) tune into a cooking show once or twice a week, while nearly 20 percent watch three or five shows every week
- Emeril Lagasse is the hands-down favorite cooking show personality, but Alton Brown, Rachael Ray, Jamie Oliver (The Naked Chef) and Martha Stewart also are very popular experts
- Meal planners watch cooking shows for new recipe ideas (83%), entertainment (63%) and cooking instruction (52%)
- Six out of 10 home chefs said they haven't prepared a meal seen on a cooking show, mostly because recipes are too complicated (37%) or they don't have the right tools (28%)



GATHERING FOR DINNER

More than 40 percent of families eat dinner in front of the television, but the majority (56%) eat meals at the dinner table.

COOKING AND ENTERTAINING

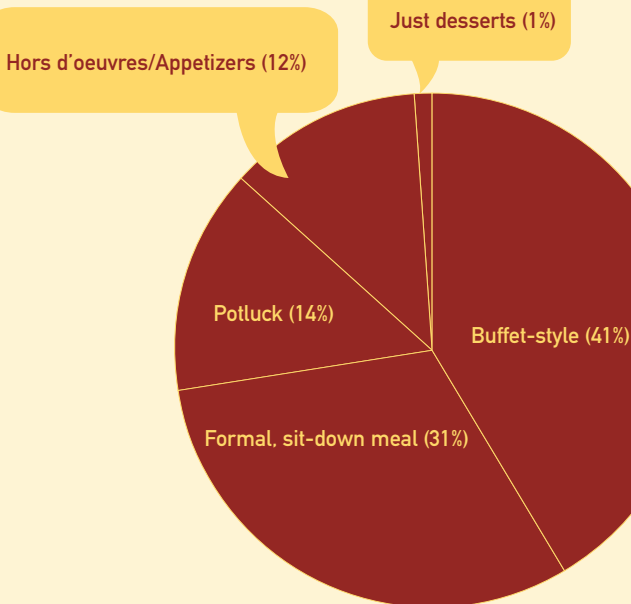
C'MON IN!

Americans love to entertain in their home; nearly seven out of 10 home cooks entertain guests. Fifty percent said they entertain at least once a month or more. The average number of guests welcomed into the host's home is eight guests.

Home cooks who said they don't welcome guests cite being too busy (35%) and preferring to be with family only (33%) as the main reasons why they choose not to entertain. Entertaining also can be too expensive (24%) or stressful (22%).

ENTERTAINING STYLE

Preferred Entertaining Styles



PORK AND THE FAMILY MEAL

WHY PORK?

The most important reason home cooks serve pork to their family is its great taste (72%), followed by family preference (69%), pork's leanness (47%) and versatility (43%). Nearly 40 percent said that pork's cost fits into the family budget.

CHOPS ARE TOPS

The pork chop is the most popular cut of pork to prepare (39%) and eat (33%).



Popular Pork Cuts to Prepare and Enjoy

- People who like to prepare this cut
- People who like to eat this cut



PERFECTLY PREPARED PORK

When cooking pork, most home cooks rely on the cooking time (60%) to tell when their pork is done. Meal preparers also rely on the internal color (59%), the exterior color (44%) and the internal temperature (30%). Juice color (28%) and firmness (22%) are other methods that home cooks use to know when their pork is finished cooking.

DINNER PLATE DIGEST

The Dinner Plate Digest survey was conducted in order to gain insight into the psychology behind meal planning decisions.

The survey was conducted online with a random sample of over 2,000 men and women. The survey respondents represented a cross-section of the national population; most were female (63%), between the ages of 25 to 44 (61%) and from all areas of the country. Research was conducted in September of 2004.

The overall sampling error for this survey is +/- 2.5 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence.



Don't be blah.™



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