

## Hot dogs hit the big time, says Horizons? Menurama research

**Hot dogs** have nudged scampi and chips from their top 20 ranking of the most popular dishes in eating out establishments, as the nation's love of all-things-American continues to influence British menus.

New research from hospitality consultancy Horizons reveals that hot dogs, albeit with a gourmet twist, are now featured on 85% more menus than they were last year. Pulled pork dishes, chicken wings, and ribs have also seen significant growth on menus, as has the use of American descriptions such as 'black & blue steak', 'cobb salad' and 'slaw'.

The most frequently listed main course on British menus remains beef burgers, with an impressive 13% growth this year.

Steak is also becoming more popular, with rib eye, rump and sirloin steak all showing year-on-year growth.

Traditional favourites such as mixed grills, beef lasagne, Sunday lunch and chicken curry show the greatest decline

'We have been surprised by these Menurama results, which show a significant growth of meat-based, American-style dishes across the menus of a broad selection of eating out establishments,' commented Horizons' director of services Nicola Knight. 'Since last year we have also seen a decline in the use of healthy eating descriptions, perhaps as operators steer their menus towards indulgence.'

Previous Horizons research has shown that cash-strapped consumers are eating out more as a treat or a celebration than as an every-day occurrence.

The research also reveals that consumers are getting less meat in their meals than they did previously. Beef burgers are at their lowest average weight since the survey began 6.35 oz vs. 7.69 oz. in Summer 2010, a decline of 17%.

Likewise, sirloin steak, fillet steak and gammon steak are being served in smaller weights than last season (-8%, -7% and -4% respectively).

The average price of a main course burger in pubs, restaurants and hotels is £9.27, with a hot dog averaging £6.12.

'Against a backdrop of rising food costs and squeezed consumer spend, the reduction in weight of key meat dishes demonstrates that operators are having to become more savvy with regard to menu and price engineering. This could explain the huge growth in hot dogs on menus - they are relatively cheap to produce and operators can easily add value to them enabling them to charge more,' said Knight.

Menurama analyses the menus of 115 chains including pubs, restaurants, quick service outlets and hotels. Tracking the changes taking place on menus offers a unique insight into food trends and customer preferences.

Other findings of Menurama (summer 2013) include:

'The top 10 main course dishes most frequently listed on menus are: beef burger; pizza; chicken burger; fish & chips; rump steak; roast chicken; roast chicken; rib eye steak; chicken curry; sirloin steak and Sunday lunch.

'Another US export, the food reality TV show Man vs Food, where Adam Richman eats his way across America, is now influencing menus in the UK with examples including (Wo)Man Vs Burrito Your Way at Hungry Horse.

'Gourmet-style hot dogs include a Chilli Dog from pub chain Hungry Horse, with beef chilli, diced jalapenos and mustard mayo; Marston's menu features a Mac N' Cheese Hot Dog, with macaroni and cheddar cheese; while Wetherspoon's has a Gourmet Hot Dog with chilli con carne, cheese, onion rings and chips.

? Menurama reveals the use of a wide range of terms referring to ethical sourcing, responsible production and food quality with homemade and free range the most widely used terms. Usage of many others is decreasing, with the terms MSC-certified, dolphin-friendly and hormone-free completely disappearing from usage.

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#### Editor's Note

Horizons helps its clients make better business decisions by providing accurate and detailed information about the foodservice market, its trend, and opportunities. The company provides consultancy services, workshops and statistical information based on its model of the sector and database of key accounts across Europe.

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