

## Eating out sees unexpected dip as squeezed middle divert their spending, says Horizons? survey

The recovery of the Britain's eating out sector appears to have faltered, with the penetration, frequency and spend on eating out seeing a slight year-on-year dip, according to Horizons latest Eating Out-Look survey, conducted by YouGov\*.

Following a slow but steady increase in the number of people eating out since the economic downturn in 2008 the latest Eating Out-Look shows a year-on-year decline of two percentage points with 69% of respondents saying they had eaten out in the previous two weeks of the survey, compared with 71% doing so a year ago.

In line with this, the frequency of which consumers had eaten out also fell from an average of 2.21 times to 1.92 times year-on-year. Both figures are still below pre-recession levels when consumers ate out over three times in the previous two weeks, according to Horizons' data.

Amongst those who had eaten out average spend had also fallen, from £12.72 (including drinks) in June 2014 to £12.54 this June, both below the figure reached in June 2013 of £13.30.

The decline in eating out was particularly marked amongst the 35-44 year age group. Last summer 72% of respondents to the survey in this age group had eaten out in the previous two weeks, this year only 62% had.

?The 35-44 age group are those most likely to have the biggest financial ties ? often having dependent children, house moves to pay for and foreign holidays to save for,? commented Horizons' foodservice analyst Nicola Knight.

?If this age group is once again starting to spend on higher ticket items like these, or perhaps new cars, fridges or DIY, it might be that eating out becomes one of those expenses they are prepared to forego temporarily.?

Horizons' Eating Out-Look survey shows that 18-34 year olds are the most likely age group to be eating out, with 77% of respondents in this age group saying they had eaten out in the previous two weeks. This age group also eat out the most frequently, with an average of 2.25 times in the previous two weeks.

Eating out amongst over 55 year-olds is also becoming increasingly common, with 67% of respondents of this age eating out in the previous two weeks, compared with 65% this time last year.

Almost a third (30%) of respondents reported that they had not eaten out in the past two weeks with expense, lack of time and healthy eating and hygiene concerns being the commonly cited reasons.

Pub restaurants and takeaway/delivery outlets are the favourite eating out destinations amongst respondents with 19% of those having eaten out choosing pub restaurants, with the same number choosing takeaway/delivery outlets.

Dinner and lunch are the predominant periods for eating out with 46% of respondents who had eaten out in the previous two weeks eating lunch out (down from 47% last year), while 63% had eaten dinner out in the previous two weeks (up from 62% last year).

Snacking showed a slight dip with 10% of those who had eaten out saying they had snacked, compared with 12% last year. Eating breakfast out also showed a slight dip with 10% of respondents having breakfast out compared with nearly 12% at the same time last year.

?The slight dips that we are seeing in pockets of the eating out market suggests that some consumers, particularly the squeezed middle, are choosing to spend their money elsewhere. We are comparing this year's figures with those of 2014, which was a particularly strong year for eating out - it's important to remember that the overall trend is positive and the market is stronger than it was three years ago,? added Knight.

(ends)

\*Eating Out-Look survey, conducted by YouGov plc

2015 June survey: Total sample size was 2,024 adults. Fieldwork was conducted 19-21 June 2015.

2014 June survey: Total sample size was 2,366 adults. Fieldwork was conducted 20-23 June 2014.

2013 June survey: Total sample size was 2,003 adults. Fieldwork was conducted 21-23 June 2013.

The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

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#### Editor's Note

Eating Out-Look is a collaboration between foodservice expert Horizons and JRA Research. Eating Out-Look brings together research from consumers and operators to give a rounded view of the eating out market. By looking at the market from the perspectives of both consumers and operators, Eating Out-Look provides invaluable insights into what is driving eating out trends.

Eating Out-Look builds on data from what was formerly known as Horizons' QuickBite consumer eating out survey and findings from JRA's panel research of catering professionals. The quarterly report will analyse key eating out trends from both a consumer and operator perspective.

Between them Horizons and JRA Research have more than 50 years' experience in the foodservice sector. Horizons offers an integrated portfolio of services to businesses and other organisations with an interest in foodservice. These services range from Menu Trends, a twice yearly review of high street menus, to industry-leading market statistics and trends, and Ones to Watch, the survey of the fastest growing eating out brands. [www.hrzns.com](http://www.hrzns.com).

JRA runs a panel for catering professionals with chefs and other professionals throughout the foodservice sector. It has a national field force of 750 interviewers who carry out research covering a wide spectrum of issues, from overall attitudes and behaviour within the sector to new product development, product and brand usage within catering kitchens, testing of new product formulations. [www.jraresearch.com](http://www.jraresearch.com)