

## Menu Trends report reveals new focus on snacks and side orders

- Main course prices fairly constant year-on-year
- Cost of starters and desserts rises across most sectors
- 60% increase in snacks and nibbles on menus

Eating out operators in the UK are holding down the cost of main courses on their menus but boosting customer spend by increasing the price of starters and desserts and focusing on more side dishes, snacks and nibbles, according to recent research from foodservice consultancy Horizons.

Horizons' bi-annual Menu Trends survey [summer 2016], which tracks the trends and changes on the menus of 121 restaurants, pubs, quick service outlets and hotels, reveals that the proportion of side orders offered is now 18.2%, compared with 17.1% this time last year. There has also been a 60% increase in the number of new snacks dishes on menus since last year.

'This partly reflects the more flexible nature of dining out, driven by consumers who want to eat what they want, when they want. But it also shows that operators are up-selling additional side dishes and snacks to customers rather than increasing the price of their main courses,' said Horizons' analyst Nicola Knight.

The average price of a main course across all types of outlet went down 2.1% year-on-year to £10.71 in summer 2016, while starters went down 3.2% and dessert prices rose by 1.1%.

Price reductions varied according to the type of outlet, although hotel prices for a non-meal deal main course fell by the largest amount at 4.1% to £14.67 this year.

Pubs increased their main courses prices slightly this year (1.4%) with the average price of a main course now at £9.81, while restaurant main courses prices dropped 1.2% year-on-year to £11.15. Quick service outlets charged 2.5% less for a main course, with a new average price of £5.87.

With the exception of pubs, many eating out establishments raised the price of starters. In hotels the average price of a starter rose 15.6% to £7.57, while restaurants raised starter prices 8.1% to £5.09. In contrast pub starters became 12.5% cheaper this year at £4.74.

The cost of desserts increased across most sectors. Hotels raised their dessert prices 10.6% year-on-year to £6.35. Restaurants saw a more modest increase at 1.8% to £4.96, while pubs kept prices broadly the same at £4.40 (up 0.6%).

The higher cost of starters and desserts had the overall effect of raising the price of an average three-course meal across most sectors. The average price for a non-meal deal three-course meal [excluding drinks] in a hotel was £28.59 (up 3.7%). In a pub a three-course meal cost £18.94 (up 1.1%) and in a restaurant it was 1.5% cheaper than last summer at £21.22.

'Overall the cost of eating out has risen at a slower rate than inflation over the past year so it seems that operators do not seem able to increase their prices to reflect additional costs such as the National Living Wage and the possibility of supply costs increasing post-Brexit,' said Nicola Knight. **[ends]**

**\*Horizons' Menu Trends Report** [Summer 2016] contains data from 800 menus collected and fully coded twice a year - summer and winter - from 121 brands including pubs, restaurants, quick service and hotels. The service offers the analysis of over 300,000 dishes with historical data back to 2003.

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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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