Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

Food Team Update

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B&A RESEARCH & INSIGHT

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

B&A Research – CPI
What does the Irish consumer want?

January 2021

IT CAN BE CHALLENGING FOR CONSUMERS TO PREDICT THEIR FUTURE BEHAVIOUR…

Particularly in a situation as uncertain as the Covid-19 pandemic

However, the research work supports the view that:

New behaviours with regards to eating out/dining in have been adopted since March 2020

Some of these behaviours offer obvious benefits to the consumer so there is a good chance that at least some of them will stick in the longer term (vaccination)

- *Qualitative: 3 focus groups, 2 consumer and 1 industry*
- *Quantitative: Sample of 1034 consumers*

INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage sector has been greatly impacted by lockdowns and restrictions imposed due to Covid-19. The creativity and ability of businesses to pivot and adapt during this time has been crucial to the survival of many to date.

TAKE AWAY/CLICK & COLLECT

OUTSIDE DINING

TIMINGS & TECHNOLOGY

TAKE AWAY/CLICK & COLLECT

Basic pattern of Pre & Post Covid motivations is largely consistent; albeit stronger Post Covid emphasis on *different experience* (*break from enforced routine*)

Pre Covid motivation –

ANY TOP 3

Motivation	Post Covid motivation – All adults
To enjoy nice / tasty food	46% (-5%)
To relax and unwind	33% (-4%)
To bond or reconnect with family or friends	27% (-2%)
Did not want to cook / do not feel like cooking / don't like cooking	28% (=)
To enjoy a celebration e.g. birthday, christening etc	24% (-4%)
To have fun	20% (+1%)
Wanted an experience to look forward to	19% (+4%)
To take my children to a place they will enjoy	12% (-2%)
To enjoy a food / drink in a scenic beauty spot	9% (-4%)
A food venue I really wanted to visit	9% (-2%)
To go somewhere that is familiar	12% (+1%)
To enjoy entertainment	9% (-1%)

Base: All Irish adults who ate out or ordered in during 2019 n- 1032
Question text: Q.12 Since the Covid-19 pandemic which of the following are the five most important motivations for eating out or ordering in?

PRE-COVID BEHAVIOURS

- **Pre-Covid more than 30% of Irish consumers were weekly users of takeaways and cafes**
- **The big four eateries being takeaways, cafes, restaurants & pubs.**
- **Pre-Covid Takeaway accounted for 27% of 'eating out venues' now 37%**
- **15% new market share is in restaurant takeaways (favourite/local restaurant)**
- **There is strong pent-up demand for restaurant/café/gastro pub experiences due to lock down.**

(Consumer segment detail available)

DURING THE LOCKDOWN AND RE-OPENING STAGE, CONSUMERS STATED USING FAVOURITE ESTABLISHMENTS IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- **Getting takeaway/meal kits from restaurants where they used to 'sit in'.**
- **Frequenting food trucks for new meal occasions and in different locations.**
- **Shopping for food in local cafes that have turned themselves into farmer's markets.**
- **Getting takeaway pints/cocktails from bars rather than sitting in.**
- **Going for food and drink in the pub rather than just drinks.**
- **Buying nicer food in supermarkets and delis for picnics and eating at home.**

If these behaviours continue to fulfil needs, then there is a good chance they will be maintained. Some are obvious stop gap solutions (takeaway pints in December), others may not have longevity for the wider population but there will be opportunities with more niche groups. So, meal kits may not prevail long term for those in their 20's, but parents of young children are more open

SUPPORTING LOCAL

A new resurgence for supporting local.

- Desire to support local business
- Desire to avoid taxis/public transport.
- Feeling a stronger connection with your neighbourhood during lockdown

OUTSIDE DINING

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- Almost half of consumers have eaten outside since March: evaluation is fairly positive.

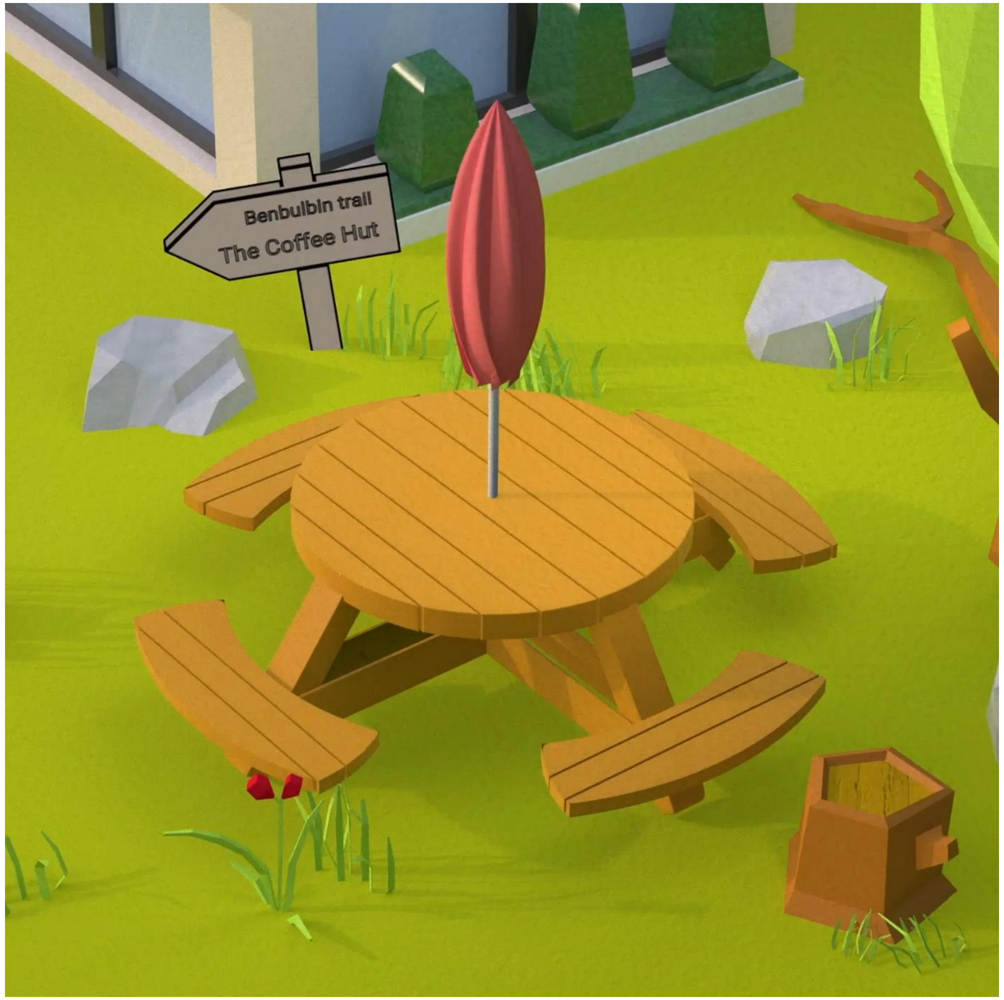
- Rationale for being more comfortable eating outside

  51% feel safer

  31% want more fresh air/ventilation

  16% want more space for social distancing

  Weather protection



WILLINGNESS TO EAT OUTSIDE

- Willingness to eat outside does vary by season

  91% willing in Spring

  97% willing in Summer

  87% willing in Autumn

  55% willing in Winter

- Outside Dining - there is a cross season preference for casual dining, light bites & drinks /cocktails
- Opportunities for food/coffee trucks on outdoor trails and outdoor areas e.g. picnics
- Variance in industry view and customer appeal

PROTECTION FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

- **Consumer tend to feel safer outside**
- **Key trade off - safety vs Irish weather, keeping warm a big factor**
- **We're a cool country, so need to have appropriate solutions – (industry guidance)**
- **68% mention covered areas (ie. wind & rain protection)**
- **59% mention availability of heaters/heated seating as important criteria.**

TECHNOLOGY & NEW BEHAVIOURS

RETURN TO EATING OUT

New behaviours…

- Consumer now used to having to book 90 minute slots
- This hasn't improved the eating out experience for most & not something that they want to continue long term.
- It has however given rise to more complex restaurant 'journeys' (referenced by some) which could be something that has legs in the future.

Meal out	➡	Drinks somewhere else
Main course in one restaurant	➡	Dessert in another establishment
Main course in one restaurant	➡	Take away cocktails for home

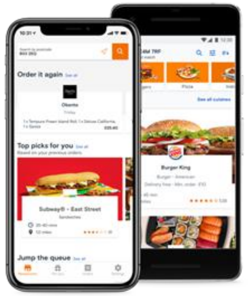
CLICK AND COLLECT A NEW NORMAL

Consumers have made more use of tech across all stages of the experience.

- **Ordering (from home)**
- **Delivering**
- **'Checking in' to a restaurant**
- **Ordering (in a restaurant).**

- **73% likely to continue using click and collect after the pandemic**
- **73% likely to continue using food ordering apps/menus when in a pub or restaurant after the pandemic**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH TECHNOLOGY CAN ADD WILL DEPEND ON THE EXPERIENCE SOUGHT



Takeaway/Delivery options

Openness to whole process being technologically driven.

Casual dining

Interest in ordering via app or utilising QR codes, potentially even before reaching the establishment, but some level of personal service expected when inside.

Ideally this delivers an actual benefit beyond 'safety' (i.e. more efficient service).

High end dining

Resistance to this kind of experience becoming technologically driven. Personal service will still be key, start to finish. Some creative thinking may be required around menus (little interest in these being digital).

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

Even as vaccines get rolled out and the situation becomes more manageable, Covid-related measures, like **outdoor eating** and **distancing** will be important to customers to help them feel more 'safe'

Establishments should be prepared to cater for this for the foreseeable.

2.

Many of the Covid-related innovations in this sector **have clear benefits** for the consumer and may be here to stay.

The sector has been very flexible and innovative thus far, and this spirit will continue to be vital as core business models may look very different again, this time next year.

3.

City centre establishments have had it tougher than most and a return of growth here might be further impacted by longer term WFH.

More support for this sub-sector would be appreciated by the trade.

4.

There was much enthusiasm this summer for **more casual dining out options**, during domestic holidays like fish and chips vans/food trucks/picnics.

There are opportunities to build on this as part of our summer campaigns next year.

5.

Technology has flourished within the sector as a result of Covid-related restrictions.

Long term, it is welcomed where it improves the eating out/dining in experience (greater efficiency for example).

However, it is important that we recognise where tech doesn't enhance – where human contact is a key part of the experience.

6.

No 'one size fits all' solution exists for the sector in managing post-Covid impact.

So much depends on space, clientele, location, ambience, investment potential to some degree, advice to establishment needs to be tailored.


THANK YOU
OPEN