

AMERICANS LIKE HAMBURGERS, LOCALLY GROWN AND CONVENIENCE FOODS: POLL

Meating Place, Janie Gabbett, Nov. 8, 2007

<http://www.meatingplace.com/MembersOnly/webNews/details.aspx?item=19219>

According to PARADE magazine's biennial "What America Eats" survey, 21 percent of Americans would choose a hamburger as their only food on a deserted island.

Respondents to the survey of 2001 Americans over 18 years of age were given a choice of seven foods. Pizza was the top choice at 37 percent, followed by hamburger (21 percent), fruit (17 percent), veggies (12 percent), chocolate (8 percent), apple pie (3 percent) and French fries (2 percent).

The survey also found that 82 percent of Americans use convenience foods (pre-made fresh, frozen, refrigerated, canned or packaged) and 22 percent are using more of such foods than a year ago. While 46 percent believe these foods are more expensive, 71 percent said the cost is worth it for the time saved.

Local, natural and green

The movement towards eating foods grown locally is "one of the hottest culinary trends to come along in years," according to the survey, which cited recent E. coli scares and tainted food from China as factors driving Americans to think about where their food comes from and how it is grown.

When shopping for groceries, 38 percent of respondents said that all-natural claims are important, while 34 percent said recyclable packaging is a big factor and 32 percent said "environmentally friendly" labels are an important purchasing consideration. And 70 percent said they are at least somewhat likely to buy products that won't harm the environment, even if they cost more.

Where we eat

87 percent said they eat home-cooked food for dinner, 5 percent chose restaurant take-out and only 1 percent eat supermarket-prepared meals

81 percent said they eat breakfast at home, but 59 percent admit they skip it and 4 percent eat it in a restaurant

60 percent eat lunch at home, with 36 percent skipping it and 10 percent in a restaurant

25 percent of family dinners are at a restaurant and only 5 percent don't eat dinner

More men in the kitchen

Men are doing more grocery shopping and cooking more meals than 20 years ago. The survey said 71 percent of women now do the grocery shopping versus 93 percent 20 years ago, and 68 percent of women said they prep and cook food for their household versus 94 percent two decades ago.

Fantasy meals

If a TV family could join them for dinner, 29 percent of respondents picked the cast of "Friends", while 24 percent preferred "The Brady Bunch" and 15 percent want to eat with "The Simpsons." Only 7 percent want to eat with The Costanzas from "Seinfeld".

Rachael Ray was the pick (38 percent) for the chef Americans want to cook their dinner, followed by (30 percent) Emeril Lagasse.

And if calories and nutrition were no object, 26 percent of Americans would most often eat pizza, 20 percent Chinese food, 14 percent fried chicken, 10 percent fast-food hamburgers and 9 percent deli sandwiches or wraps. A hot dog with the works was the choice of 3 percent of those polled.

The survey was sponsored in part by Sara Lee Food and Beverage and conducted by Mark Clements Research Inc.