

Exploring the Diversity of American Foodways



As the “American consumer” evolves to represent an ever more ethnically diverse and globally connected population, American food culture and trends both reflect and are driven by this diversity.

HARTMAN GROUP NATIONAL SYNDICATED RESEARCH

As the U.S. grows ever more diverse, it has never been more important to understand how changing demographics affect our food culture and marketplace. Using immigration, racial, and ethnic diversity as a lens to explore how Americans eat today, ***Exploring the Diversity of American Foodways*** illuminates what we have in common and what is distinctive in our attitudes and approaches to food, eating, cuisine, health and wellness, sustainability, and food sourcing.

The Hartman Group has been studying the dynamic food culture of the U.S. for decades. ***Exploring the Diversity of American Foodways*** focuses on groups that are often underreported and understudied, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/ Latin Americans, and first- and second-generation immigrants.

Normally represented as small portions of the general population, this study shines a light on groups whose attitudes and approaches to food often end up in the margins but whose contributions to American food culture punch far above their weight.

While many consumers have similar ways in which they eat, their cultural background has an impact on *what* they eat (in terms of flavors and actual dishes), and food is an important way that people maintain a connection to their cultural background.

Exploring the Diversity of American Foodways builds a more complete picture of what “American food” looks like now and will look like in the future by exploring the values, attitudes, and approaches to cooking, eating, and shopping behaviors of specific, typically underreported demographic groups.



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Methodology

- Integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies
- **Quantitative:** nationally representative online survey of 2,294 English-proficient U.S. adults (aged 18-73), with oversamples of African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latin Americans, and first/second-generation immigrants. Readable samples of World of Health + Wellness segments and other standard demographics (e.g., gender, household income levels, generational cohorts).
- **Qualitative:** mobile ethnographic engagements with consumers representing key demographics and segments.

What You Get

General report (PowerPoint and PDF) including executive summary and demographic data tables (Excel).

Report Price

Before April 30, 2020: \$12,500 After April 30, 2020: \$15,000

Release Date: December 2019 Report Length: 120 pages Market Coverage: U.S. market

The order form to purchase the report can be found on the last page.

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Executive Summary

- The U.S. is growing increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, with ramifications for our food and beverage culture.
- Race and ethnicity are cultural constructs with very real social implications.
- The history of race in America is fraught with injustice. We are experiencing a moment of reckoning today around identity and who has the right to profit from the innovations of historically marginalized groups. In this environment, it is critical to approach diversity with an abundance of both caution and respect.

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- While American food is not one cuisine, there are central food values – convenience, choice, and incorporation – that are firmly entrenched in American culture more broadly and tend to shape consumers’ basic routines and habits regardless of background.
- While many consumers have similar ways in which they eat, their cultural background has an impact on *what* they eat (in terms of flavors and actual dishes), and food is an important way that people maintain a connection to their cultural background.
- People of color are more engaged with many food-related behaviors and are more likely to be early food adopters. They also tend to be more likely to eat a variety of foods, both at home and at restaurants, and shop a wider variety of categories.
- People of color and immigrants are also more engaged shoppers, spending more time shopping and doing so across more retailers and channels. Retailers and restaurants are important gatekeepers that can serve as bridges or barriers to cultural connection.
- International retailers and restaurants in particular are important to consumers beyond the products they offer.
- Consumers are open to innovations, but they need to know more. The best road to appealing to a diverse audience may not lie in trying to be “authentic” per se but in engaging with and aiding in the experimentation and adaptation that consumers of diverse backgrounds are already doing.
- Currently, 1 in 4 U.S. residents is either a 1st- or 2nd-generation immigrant; that is, either born elsewhere or with at least one parent born elsewhere.
- While recent immigrants are varied in *what* they eat (both from the general population and from each other depending on their national origin), they appear to quickly adopt American food values in *how* they eat.
- Recent immigrants have different shopping habits than the general population, visiting more retailers on average, in particular international markets.
- Recent immigrants are a major source of culinary innovation beyond their own homes.

1. Diversity in Context

- Racial and ethnicity composition of U.S. 6- to 21-year-olds by generation (%).
- An immigrant nation from its founding, the U.S. has always been diverse, but what that diversity looks like has changed over time.
- How we understand diversity in the U.S. has evolved due to both changing patterns of immigration and changing definitions of race and ethnicity.
- Race and ethnicity can be useful measures of diversity, but they are often used interchangeably with other related terms.
- Importance of demographic elements to one’s personal sense of identity.
- Connection to cultural heritage and traditions.
- Activities done to maintain connection to cultural background.
- Food connects to emotionally rich personal stories, creating ties that bind to the past and future.
- American food is characterized by our history of immigration, assimilation, and industrial innovation, with 5 staple cuisines rather than a single one.
- America has many distinct culinary traditions, but its common food values are defined by convenience, choice, and incorporation.
- Key takeaways.

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2. Diversity in Numbers: Demographics, Worldview, Health + Wellness

- White consumers continue to make up the majority, although racial and ethnic diversity differs quite dramatically by geographic region.
- Consumer profile: Non-Hispanic White
- Consumer profile: Hispanic
- Consumer profile: African American
- Consumer profile: Asian/Pacific Islander
- White and Hispanic consumers hold companies more responsible for sustainability than African American or Asian consumers do.
- When it comes to health and wellness (H+W), Whites have the highest number of Periphery consumers; Asians have the highest number of Core.
- While most consumers see themselves positively relative to other U.S. adults, Whites believe they are a bit less healthy.
- Approaches to health and wellness.
- Barriers to improving health and wellness.
- Key takeaways.

3. Culture, Cooking, and Cuisine

- Convenience, choice, and incorporation are entrenched food values that shape most consumers' habits, even when flavors and cuisines differ.
- Typical eating approaches.
- Perceptions of dietary habits relative to average American household.
- Cooking attitudes, aspirations, and realities.
- Despite being more logistically constrained, everyday cooking is often where consumers experiment most.
- Influences of cultural background on eating.
- Frequency of eating different cuisines.
- Cuisines by occasion: What type of food are you most likely to choose?
- In practice, everyday cooking and eating are very flexible, while the most traditional foods are often reserved for special occasions.
- Feeling connected to one's culture does not necessarily translate into eating one's culturally traditional foods more often.
- Sources of information and inspiration.
- Online and streaming services tap into core American values of convenience, choice, and incorporation to appeal to a diverse audience.
- Key takeaways.

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4. Food Shopping and Selection

- Influences of cultural background on purchasing behaviors.
- Purchase criteria: I look for foods and beverages that...
- Frequency of considering sustainability in purchasing / Time spent planning and doing the shopping.
- Finding the right combinations of selection, prices, quality, and quantity often means a complicated shopping routine.
- Channels shopped for groceries (by ethnicity).
- Top retailers: At which of the following retailers have you shopped for groceries?
- Brand type perceptions.
- Biggest grocery shopping challenges.
- International grocery store shopping.
- Although international aisles have their drawbacks, a good one can make a conventional retailer a destination by solving needs related to selection.
- Key takeaways.

5. The Role of Restaurants

- When dining out, what kinds of things do you do to maintain your connection to your cultural heritage and traditions?
- Restaurants play a key role in Americans' perceptions and explorations of culinary diversity.
- Consumer profile: A snapshot of how PH (22, Asian, Vietnam) dines out.
- Frequency of dining out at restaurants / Frequency of ordering delivery or take-out food.
- Which of the following restaurants have you eaten at or gotten food from? (Past 3 months)
- Restaurant visitation: International/regional cuisines.
- A word about cultural appropriation.
- Acceptability of culture-based innovations.
- True, authentic credibility / Inspired by tradition.
- Key takeaways.

6. Special Focus on Recent Immigrants

- 1 in 4 current U.S. residents is either a 1st- or 2nd-generation immigrant – that is, they or at least one parent was born outside of the U.S.
- Consumer profile: 1st-generation immigrants
- Consumer profile: 2nd-generation immigrants
- Percentage extremely/very connected to cultural heritage and traditions / Top activities done to maintain connection to cultural background.

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- Recent immigrants often share common experiences around having to hide, modify, and come to terms with their different food traditions.
- When it comes to trying new foods, drinks, flavors, and cuisines, which of the following best describes you?
- Thinking about your typical, daily eating habits, how often do you do each of the following?
- Cooking attitudes, aspirations, and realities.
- Although basic approaches to eating are similar, recent immigrants differ from the general population in *what* they choose to eat.
- Perceptions of dietary habits relative to average American household.
- There are multiple factors driving immigrants' greater propensity to cook, but in the end, cooking one's native foods usually means cooking fresh.
- Influences of cultural background on eating.
- The combinations, ingredient swaps, and resourceful experiments that characterize immigrant foodways are a key source of innovation.
- Sources of information and inspiration.
- Today's food media landscape offers access to a more representative set of culinary influencers who draw inspiration from the immigrant experience.
- Frequency of eating different cuisines (1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants compared to general population).
- The American emphasis on convenience, abundance, choice, freedom, and flexibility is both attractive and hard to resist, and our food culture is an inextricable part of American culture more broadly.
- Restaurant visitation: By 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants.
- Restaurant visitation – International/U.S. regional cuisines: By 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants.
- Purchase criteria: I look for food and beverages that...
- Health and wellness needs, adaptive strategies, and examples.
- Brand type perceptions: By 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants.
- Channels shopped for groceries: By 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants.
- Key takeaways.

Implications and Recommendations

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Syndicated Report Order Form

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