

DINER INSIGHTS

What diners expect during the holidays and into 2021

Get insights to deliver the best guest
experience heading into the new year



What diners expect this holiday season

In October 2020, OpenTable surveyed over 47,000 diners in the U.S. and Canada as part of our quarterly Diner Insights series. Get the inside scoop on how people feel about dining out again, what they're planning for the holidays, and how they feel about eating out in 2021.

Diners are eager to return to your table in 2021

People expect to dine out more in 2021 than they do today.



52%

say they plan to dine out at a restaurant with table service once a week or more in 2021 - up 24% from October.

They feel more thankful for restaurants than they did before.



60%

say they have more appreciation for restaurants and their staff than they did prior to the pandemic.

But, it's going to take time to return to their normal dining routines.



28%

say they don't expect to get back to their normal eating out behavior until April 2021 or later in the year.

Celebrations will be bright and homey



Some plan to dine out this holiday season.

20%

of diners say they plan to dine out at a restaurant to celebrate the holidays.



Those heading out expect to do so often.

94%

of those who plan to dine out expect to visit a restaurant two times or more during the season.



While others expect to stay in with family and friends.

71%

of those who don't plan to dine out expect to spend time at home with family and friends eating a home cooked meal or ordering takeout or delivery.



And they're hungry for more—outdoors, indoors, and takeout



Dining out is up.

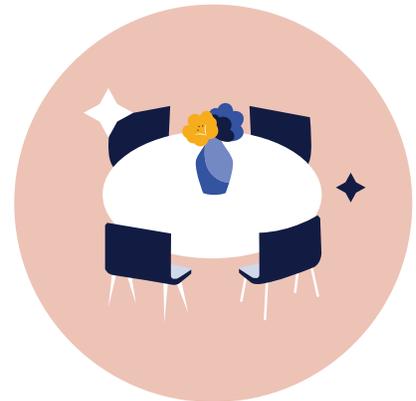
68%

more diners say they're eating out at a restaurant once a week or more compared to July 2020.

People feel slightly more comfortable with indoor dining.

32%

more diners consider eating indoors low to somewhat low risk compared to July 2020.



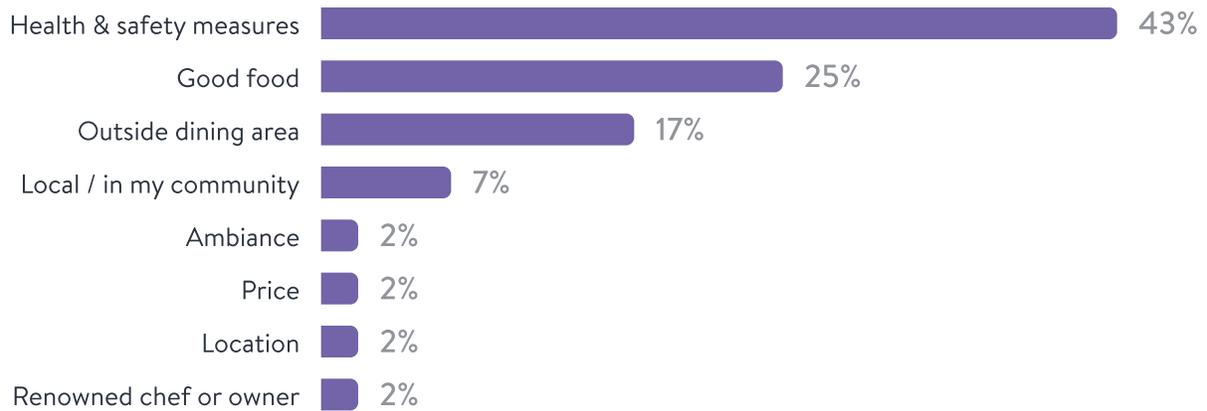
They're still ordering takeout.

42%

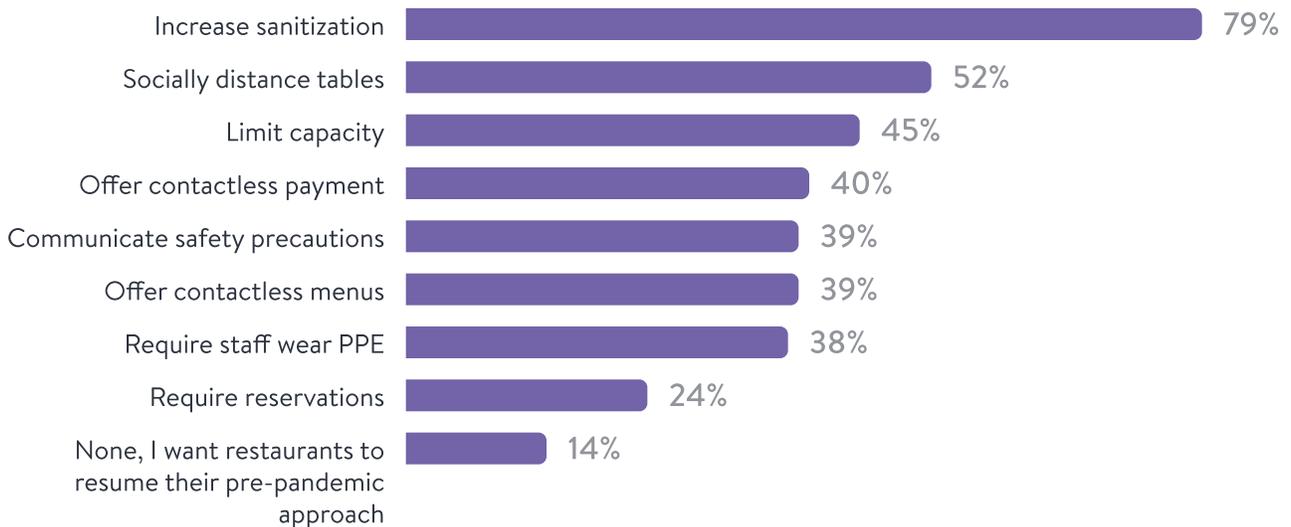
of diners say they order takeout from a restaurant for dinner once a week or more and they continue to feel takeout is low to somewhat low risk.

How diners feel about safety in 2021

Looking ahead to 2021, 43% of diners say a restaurant's health and safety measures will be the most important factor, followed by good food, when choosing a restaurant.



Even when the pandemic ends, diners say they'll still want restaurants to take safety measures, with the majority (79%) saying they'll want increased sanitization.



Tips: What you can do

Maximize your holiday revenue

- ✦ Make it easy for people to bring your restaurant home and drive more revenue for your business by offering online and in-app [takeout ordering](#) on OpenTable. Bonus: pay zero service fees on takeout orders through 2020.
- ✦ Once you're set up with takeout, promote your takeout options and share your unique order link on your website and across your marketing channels so people can quickly book.
- ✦ Consider prepaid [Experiences](#) to bring in engaged guests looking for a special event, have certainty of your shifts, and earn revenue up front.
- ✦ Keep track of your revenue performance by connecting [your POS system](#) with OpenTable, at no additional cost.
- ✦ Add your holiday [delivery options](#) on your OpenTable profile.
- ✦ Showcase your [gift cards](#) on OpenTable to motivate guests to give the gift of your restaurant to others.

Get creative with the holidays

- ✦ Consider festive and [unique experiences](#), such as set menus and ticketed holiday events, to celebrate the holidays with guests.
- ✦ Create DIY kits for guests to bring home that reflect your brand and the holidays, such as a New Year's Eve cocktail kit or festive-themed prime rib meal.
- ✦ Decorate your exterior and outdoor space to get guests in the festive spirit.
- ✦ Find creative ways to offer intimate gatherings by reimagining your private dining space. You can also [promote your private dining space on OpenTable](#) and your website to generate new holiday leads and bookings.
- ✦ Get more tips and best practices on the creative things you can do this holiday season in OpenTable's [new holiday guide](#).

Get more guests heading into 2021

- ✦ Open up your [online availability](#) so people can discover your restaurant when they're searching for a specific date, time, and party size.
- ✦ Offer your [waitlist online](#) to make it easy for diners to get on the list before heading out to your restaurant and to relieve congestion at your front door.
- ✦ Reach out to your previous holiday regulars and VIPs through [targeted and automated email campaigns](#) to invite them to join you again during the holiday season.
- ✦ Target same-day bookers or fill last-minute cancellations by starting a [targeted digital marketing campaign or by using Bonus Points](#).

Keep sharing your safety measures in the new year

- ✦ Highlight the [safety precautions](#) you're taking on your OpenTable profile, website, and social channels.
- ✦ Post behind-the-scenes photos and videos to show how you're going above and beyond to keep employees and guests safe.
- ✦ Reinforce your safety measures on interior and exterior signs at your location and arm staff with talking points to respond to commonly asked safety questions.
- ✦ Give guests more choice by categorizing your [table types](#).
- ✦ Show your outdoor dining space and the safety measures you're taking on your OpenTable profile using [gallery photos](#).



For more insights from our quarterly Diner Insights series, see our results from our [July 2020](#) and [April 2020](#) surveys.

Chart the future of your restaurant heading into 2021 using country, state, and city-level data and insights on [OpenTable's state of the industry hub](#).

Join the most reliable, easy-to-use restaurant management platform. Manage your operations in one place and get guests when you need them most.

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*Source: 47,720 people on the OpenTable network in the US and Canada responded to this diner survey between October 6, 2020 to October 8, 2020.