

DINER INSIGHTS

Summer is here, dining is back

See what people want—and don't want—as they return to restaurants



As markets continue to reopen, dining in the U.S. has returned—in the beginning of June, seated diners from online, phone, and walk-in reservations are only down 2% to 16% where they were in 2019, according to [OpenTable's State of the Industry](#). People are eager to eat out at restaurants and return to bars. We wanted to find out just how eager they are across the U.S. and Canada.

More than a year into the pandemic, OpenTable conducted our fifth diner survey, designed to take the pulse of diners—what they want and what they're planning when dining out. In May 2021, over 17,000 diners across the U.S. and Canada shared how they feel about dining out. We hope these insights give you the data and takeaways you need to thrive and make up for lost times.

Dining demand is surging



Tables are full

72%

say they'll have resumed their dining behavior from pre-COVID by summer—as of now 55% already have

People are traveling

18%

of people say they are not yet comfortable traveling for vacation, but most are traveling again. 53% are taking weekend trips by car, and 48% are back to flying for vacation



And travelers are dining out

72%

of people say they're dining out for every meal when traveling, both outdoor dining and inside the restaurant—and only 18% of people are not comfortable traveling yet

Get in front of more diners with boost campaigns and Bonus Points.

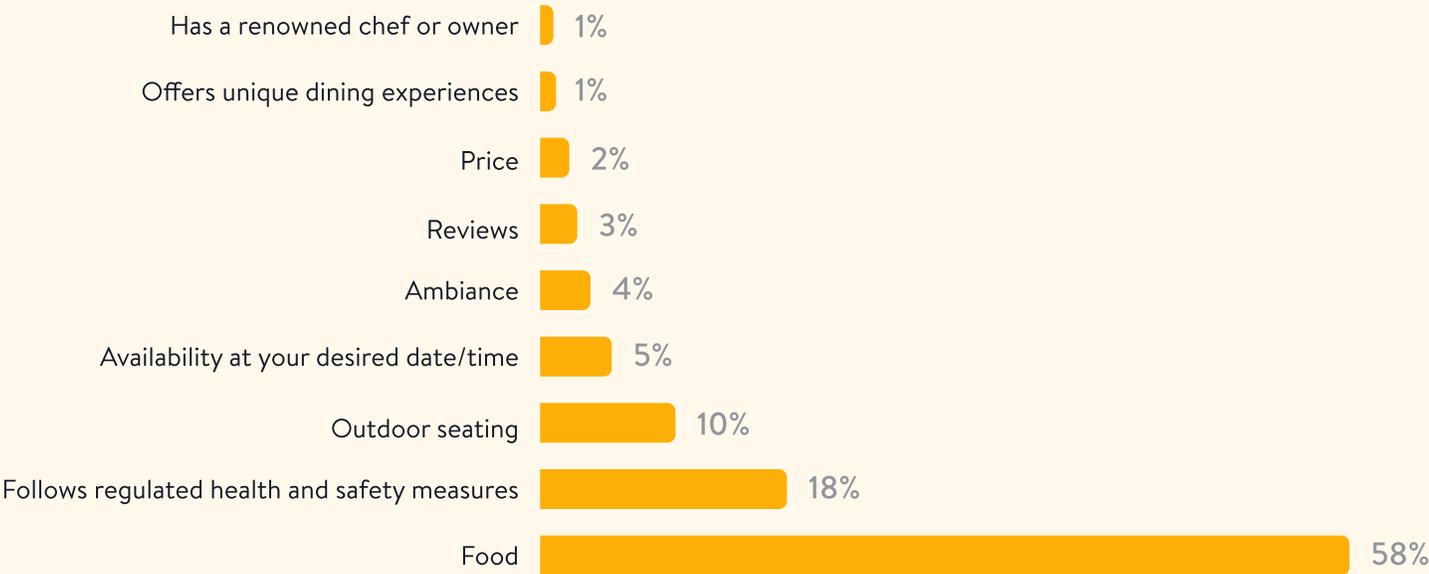


Food takes the cake when choosing where to dine



60%

rank food as the most important factor in choosing a restaurant



People turn to online sources for information about where to dine



Diners have their eyes on your website and profile

67%

turn to the restaurant website to find the latest information

Keep your website and profile up to date



And they find restaurants on OpenTable

41%

look to OpenTable or other reservation platforms to find the latest information on restaurants

Make sure your availability on OpenTable is accurate



Not at the restaurant

Surprisingly, only **17%** find the latest information about restaurants via signage at the location

Maximize your online presence to get in front of diners

Diners still care about safety precautions, but how much they care is shifting



Health and safety still matter

18%

say when choosing a restaurant, the most important thing is that a restaurant follows regulated health and safety measures—a 16% decrease from last quarter and a 25% decrease from last year

Vaccines are important

30%

say requiring staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine is the most important thing restaurants can do to make them feel comfortable dining out



And diners are less concerned about the number of people seated

15%

say limiting the number of people they seat is extremely important—a 29% decreased compared to last quarter



Canada is slower to open and still quite cautious, compared to the U.S.



Canadians want limited seatings

68%

of Canadians feel it's extremely or highly important to limit the number of people seated, compared to 36% of U.S. diners

Continue to space tables and maintain social distance

And they care about cleaning policies

77%

of Canadians feel communicating strict cleaning policies is extremely or highly important to feeling comfortable going out to eat, compared to 58% of U.S. diners

Post what you're doing to keep people safe on your website and profile



Trends that will become the norm and those you should say goodbye to

Of all the ways restaurants have pivoted in the last year, which of the following do you want restaurants to either keep doing or stop doing in 2021?

What restaurants are offering	I want restaurants to keep doing	I want restaurants to stop doing	I don't know
Offer contactless pay, ordering, or menus	56%	20%	24%
Offer delivery and/or takeout	86%	2%	13%
Require a deposit or prepayment for meal	4%	67%	28%
Require reservations only and eliminate walk-ins	23%	51%	26%
Offer increased outdoor seating	80%	4%	16%

People are clear about what they want to stick around



Contactless is making moves

56%

say they want restaurants to continue offering contactless pay, ordering, or menus. Only half of people who said contactless pay was extremely important last quarter say the same this quarter



Takeout is here for good

86%

say they want restaurant to keep offering delivery and/or takeout. In fact, 38% say they order takeout once a week or more for dinner



And diners are eager to scrap deposits

67%

say they want restaurants to stop requiring deposits or prepayments for a meal. Consider special offers and experiences instead: 69% say they're mostly likely to book a reservation at restaurants offering happy hours and specials—and 41% say so for restaurants offering wine or beer tastings

Chart the future of your restaurant in 2021 using country, state, and city-level data and insights on [OpenTable's state of the industry hub](#) and [get additional tools and tips](#) to get back in action.

For more insights from OpenTable's quarterly Diner Insights series, [see results](#) from the October 2020, July 2020, April 2020, and February 2021 surveys.

About the surveys

OpenTable surveyed over 17,000 diners in the U.S. and Canada on the OpenTable network between May 13, 2021 and May 20, 2021.

