

## **Viva Italia and Rule Britannia!**

### **New research provides food for thought on nation's eating habits**

Industry analysts Allegra Strategies release the How Britain Eats™ 2011 Report, the definitive annual study into how UK adults shop, cook and eat food.

UK consumers rank Italian as the nation's favourite cuisine when dining out. But when it comes to cooking at home, traditional British food is still the nation's favourite

Allegra's research of over 2,000 UK consumers show that they are influenced by the breadth of Italian focused eating out chains, a sector that's seen healthy growth of 4% in outlets during 2011, through a renaissance led by Jamie Oliver, Carluccios and PizzaExpress.

But when it comes to eating at home, British cuisine is still the first choice, with roast dinners and stews in the Top 10 most frequently cooked dishes. British grub also fares well when dining out and is the second most popular dishes on the menu, thanks to a greater food focus by pub groups and carvery chains driving a growing appreciation of British food.

76% of British adults claim to either be passionate about or love food and cooking. However, time pressures often lead to consumers skipping around three meals a week on average in attempts to save time and money.

Grazing and eating on-the-go are growing, as convenience and value for money are the major motivators behind consumer behaviour in shopping for food, cooking and eating out.

Time pressures continue to impact the British approach to cooking from scratch at home with a fall to 45% in everyday cooking in 2011, compared to 52% in 2010.

22% of the British public choose 'meals for two' deals over eating out or a take-away due to the convenience of quality and good value offers. However, the frequency of eating out for dinner has

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remained the same as 2010, as consumers still appreciate the social aspects, while lunch has seen an increase in 2011.

As consumers stick to well known produce in attempts to curb their grocery spending, there is less need to check labels, with 49% almost always checking this information compared to 60% in 2010. However, 66% of consumers would like to see similar nutritional information available in eating out establishments as on grocery products.

From the research, Allegra has identified four consumer types relating to how Britain eats:

**'Pragmatic Foodies'** make up the majority of the population (50%) and love food but are time pressured and tend to rely on well know recipes, though they will experiment occasionally.

**'Aspirational Gourmets'** account for 26% of the population and are adventurous, passionate and creative about food. They aspire to restaurant level quality wherever possible. This group eats out less than the others, but when they do, they look for a superior experience and will pay more.

**'Functional Providers'** (20%) like food but prefer to cook within safe parameters of dishes they know well. Their eating out habits are similar to the **'Disinterested Refuellers'** (4%) who have no interest in food and view it simply as an energy source. However, this group will regularly eat out in establishments offering good value and uncomplicated food.

The majority of British public claim to be adventurous in their eating out habits, with 68% trying food they would not eat at home while eating out. In addition 42% are keen to experiment at home in an attempt to replicate their eating out experience. Although 46% are influenced by recipes books, only as few as 8% of consumers actually purchase restaurant cookbooks.

**Anya Gascoine-Marco, Director of Insight, Allegra Strategies,** explains: "It's apparent that consumer anxiety over rising costs and governmental austerity measures are having an effect on how Britain eats. Additionally, the growth in use of technology from a communication, awareness and education perspective means that consumers are more aware of changes and pressures in food shopping, cooking and eating. As a foodie nation, consumers are building their experiences in food

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“ and seeking to push the boundaries more, and this is leading to the key trends that we see.

In response to the worrying economic factors, consumers are seeking counter austerity treats. Consumers still want to indulge themselves on the odd occasion, and this involves eating out and buying treats, dubbed the ‘cupcake factor’. We are also observing the growth in Street Food concepts, as consumers want to broaden their experiences, but doing so whilst expecting good value for money. Street Food delivers all that.”

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For further information and comment, please contact Anya Gascoine Marco – Director of Insight, Allegra Strategies on 020 7691 8830 or [agascoine@allegra.co.uk](mailto:agascoine@allegra.co.uk).

#### **Notes to editors**

Allegra Strategies is a London-based management consultancy and has accurately predicted trends in the UK branded coffee shop market since 1999. Allegra is recognised as one of the global leaders in coffee sector and foodservice research.

- *How Britain Eats™* is an independent study carried out by Allegra Strategies for members of its Food Strategy Forum
- Researchers conducted over 2,000 in-depth online surveys with UK consumers during July – August 2011

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