

DINING GUIDE | THE FUTURE

Next Generation of Diners

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are evolving. Traditional dining from what's on the menu to what it costs is changing. Nowadays diners want fresher food, value for their money and customer service.

A BrandKeys study looked at food preferences among a total of 3,000 people, 1,000 in each of three groups: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. The results?

Boomers also want great service and say they pay extra for it. Gen X can be practical and wants value for their money, not necessarily the cheapest price. Millennials, who tend to have sophisticated tastes and aren't necessarily loyal to restaurant brands, want healthy food in a casual setting.

COURTING YOUNG DINERS

Restaurants are changing to meet the needs of diners, especially millennials, who were born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. A key dining demographic, there are approximately 80 million Millennials in the U.S.

"We've found that creating moments in the dining experience that are personal, sharable and what we call 'friction-free' lead to satisfaction and repeat visits," says Adam Pierno, director of brand strategy and planning at Santy. The brand strategy company recently polled Millennials to identify what makes them dine out or stay home for dinner.

Pierno says Millennials value being able to split checks easily

and like paying the bill on their phones or tablets, as well as apps. They also enjoy knowing an eatery's "hidden" menu and appreciate restaurants that are flexible with substitutions.

"Good service is still in style, as well," says Pierno, noting 57 percent of diners say it's an important factor in deciding where to eat.

COMPETITION

Millennials don't dine out as often as you think. Pierno says the generation's dining occasions are down by as much as 20 percent since 2007. Many millennials would rather eat dinner at home while enjoying entertainment like streaming movies and video games.

While 71 percent of Millennials say they're budget-minded, they're not very interested in eating fast food. They like fast-casual eateries and will splurge for big occasions. Still the recession taught them to be wise with their money.

"They don't like to risk dining out at a place they aren't quite sure will deliver a great meal or experience," says Pierno.

With the restaurant industry worth \$632 billion, restaurants will be competing for the attention and spending power of this new generation of diners.

