



CHEF'STORE INDUSTRY REPORT:

Generation Overview: Restaurant Expectations By Age Group from Baby Boomers to Gen Z



**BABY
BOOMERS**



GEN X



MILLENNIALS



GEN Z

It's no surprise that each generation has differing restaurant expectations from their dining experiences to how they seek out new establishments. To reach a larger population and bring customers to your door, it's essential to know more about your target consumer base.

This industry report takes a deep dive into customers' habits based on their generations so that you can tailor your restaurant marketing and dining strategies appropriately.

INTRODUCING THE BABY BOOMERS

Baby boomers were born from 1946 to 1964 and make up around **68.5 million people**¹ in the United States. They control **\$2.6 trillion dollars**² in purchasing power, which gives them the highest amount of any generation.



Boomers Employment, Finance, and Spending Facts

- Baby boomers are driving consumerism. There are currently **11 million more consumers**³ over 60 than in 2015.
- By **2030**⁴, each baby boomer member will be over the age of 65.
- Their total net worth is close to **\$70 trillion**⁵, and they spend an average of **\$63,325 a year**⁶.
- In 2020, there were roughly **28 million**⁷ retired baby boomers.
- Baby boomers' pensions total more than **\$15 trillion**⁸.



Boomer Restaurant Consumer Habits

- **80 percent**⁹ of baby boomers are likely to choose a restaurant that offers traditional, table-side service.
- **50 percent**¹⁰ of baby boomers foresee ordering more takeaway than before the pandemic.
- **44 percent**¹¹ would likely order more food for delivery than before 2020.



Baby Boomers and Technology

- 95 percent¹² of baby boomers own a smartphone.
- 55 percent¹³ spend time online to browse and shop weekly.
- 40 percent¹⁴ consider social media an important part of their lives.
- 37 percent¹⁵ have increased their social media usage over the past year.



Baby boomers control **51%** of all wealth in the U.S.

The baby boomer generation is unique in that they inhabit both the workforce and the retirement spheres allowing restaurants to target marketing campaigns to both the leisure class and the working crowd. With baby boomers controlling 51 percent¹⁶ of all wealth in the U.S., that's a large, profitable audience to connect with.

It's also important to realize that baby boomers use various technologies—from web surfing to social media. A website and social media presence can be a multi-pronged approach to capturing their attention.



GET TO KNOW GEN X

The Generation X population makes up close to **20 percent**¹⁷ of the population, with 65 million people in the U.S. Gen Xers were born between 1965 and 1980 and are the children born from boomers. They have **\$2.4 trillion**¹⁸ in purchasing power and outspend other generations in terms of necessities and eating out/entertainment. **In 2021, they spent \$83,357**¹⁹ on average per person.



Gen X Finances and Spending Facts

- Generation X have higher incomes, on average, than their parent's generation; however, they only make up **1/3 of the wealth**²⁰ due to larger debt expenses.
- **72 percent**²¹ of Gen X consider loyalty program offers an important factor in their brand selection.



Gen X Restaurant Consumer Habits

- Since they are often taking care of their families and are looking for easy meal options, it's more common for **Gen X to order food delivery**²² than other generations.
- When it does come to dining in, **71 percent**²³ of Gen X prefer more traditional service as opposed to tech-driven experiences.
- However, **3 of 4 Gen Xers**²⁴ will use a digital wallet payment option.



Gen X and Technology

- **52 percent²⁵** have increased their social media usage over the past year.
- **29 percent²⁶** believe their usage will continue to increase over the next three years.
- **56 percent²⁷** of the Gen X population discover new brands from social media and expect content to be educational and exciting.



92% of Gen Xers have used email in the past month.

Restaurants that use video-based social media marketing that highlight informative pieces like cooking tutorials and in-depth food discussions are likely to reach Gen X. Facebook and YouTube are their overall **platforms of choice²⁸**. However, **92 percent²⁹** have stated they've used email in the past month, so don't forget to reach them via an email newsletter or marketing campaign.



MEET THE MILLENNIALS (AKA GEN Y)

Born from 1981 to 1996, millennials were the first generation to grow up with technology. They are currently the largest generation, with **72.24 million**³⁰ members. Millennials' purchasing power comes in at a little over **\$65 billion**³¹.



Millennials Spending Statistics

- Millennials spent an average of **\$9,249 on food in 2021**³².
- Overall, they **spent \$69,061**³³, making them the second-highest spenders of all generations.



Millennials Restaurant Consumer Habits

- **64 percent**³⁴ of millennials are likely to get food delivery more now than before the pandemic.
- **70 percent**³⁵ are more likely to order takeout now.
- **75 percent**³⁶ of millennials would use a digital wallet to pay for food
- **Two-thirds**³⁷ of millennials are interested in more non-traditional dining, such as chef tables and tasting experiences.



Millennials and Technology

- **72 percent³⁸** of millennials state social media is essential to their everyday lives.
- **61 percent³⁹** engage with social media to communicate with friends and family members.
- **47 percent⁴⁰** use social media to keep up with new trends.



72% of millennials state social media is essential to their everyday lives.

The majority of millennials are comfortable with high-tech trends and engages with social media regularly. Restaurants that can offer some aspect of tech-based service and social media presence are likely to target this generation.

WELCOME GEN Z

The youngest generation, Gen Z, makes up **68.6 million**⁴¹ of the population. Born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z is in the early stages of consumerism. Some members of the generation are just entering primary school, while others are graduating college, moving on to careers, and starting families. The older members of Gen Z hold **\$360 million**⁴² in spendable income.



Gen Z Spending Data

- The average Gen Z member spent **\$41,363**⁴³ in 2021.
- **\$5,529**⁴⁴ of that went toward food purchases.



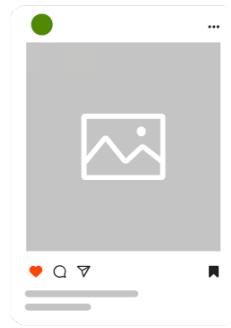
Gen Z Restaurant Consumer Habits

- **70 percent**⁴⁵ of Gen Z is more likely to order now than pre-2020.
- Only **60 percent**⁴⁶ are going for food delivery more so now than in the past.
- **82 percent**⁴⁷ would pay using a digital wallet.
- When it comes to dining experiences, two-thirds of Gen Z members are into non-traditional options.
- They also gravitate towards restaurants with sustainability practices.



Gen Z and Technology

- **64 percent**⁴⁸ of Gen Z interact with Instagram at least once daily.
- They **make up 1/3**⁴⁹ of social media influencers.
- **57 percent**⁵⁰ of Gen Z prefers brands to communicate via email.
- **44 percent**⁵¹ prefer social media.



64% of Gen Z interact with Instagram at least once daily.

For Gen Z, technology rules. They gravitate towards Instagram and prefer stylized branding. In fact, **60 percent**⁵² believe that how something looks online is more important than how it looks in real life. Gorgeous, short-form videos and impressive websites are ways for restaurants to wow Gen Z.

Also, consider offering exclusive dining options—like pop-ups, community events, and tasting menus—to give Gen Z unique dining experiences.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS' RESTAURANT EXPECTATIONS

The diverse landscape of dining preferences and expectations across generations is clear. Each age group brings its own unique set of values, priorities, and experiences to the table when it comes to the restaurant industry and establishments need to plan accordingly depending on who your target market is.

It's also important to understand the fluid nature of these expectations and be prepared to adapt as consumer demands change. Embracing innovation, sustainability, and technology is a great place to start so your business can continue to thrive in an ever-changing landscape.

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