



Dining In and Out in 2021

US and UK Consumer Trends

Restaurants are still in the aftershock of widespread disruption caused by COVID-19. Following months of stay-at-home orders and forced closures, many businesses are now looking ahead to 2021.

Data collected by Oracle from consumers across the US and the UK shows that people are tentative but eager to get back to eating out and to a sense of normality. However, expectations have shifted, concerns are heightened, and consumer behavior has become less predictable than ever before.

A renewed sense of loyalty and connection

While businesses continue to feel the reverberations of an extended period of closures, the situation offers opportunity as well as challenge. 2021 will be about settling into a new rhythm, catering to the needs of diners in new and innovative ways, and delivering seamless experiences that promote familiarity, trust and ease in a safe and secure environment. As customers return to enjoy the experiences they have missed, brands have the opportunity to set a new standard through greater transparency, ease, and convenience, enabled by technology.

Stay-at-home orders brought along a renewed sense of connection to the local community and to others, but also towards local businesses and brand favorites. People rallied behind their communities, became more loyal and supported local independent restaurants. Brands that can build on this connection will gain a following of engaged and loyal customers.

Consumers told us:

“It’s nicer to support local businesses during a crisis. Feel better about it than just using a large chain.”

“I wanted to give local small businesses the chance to keep working. I also feel the quality was better.”

% who said they became more loyal to restaurants during stay-at-home orders

Diners overall

32%

18-39 year-olds

36%

Families with kids under 12

46%

% who ordered more frequently from local/independent restaurants during stay-at-home orders

 United States

39%

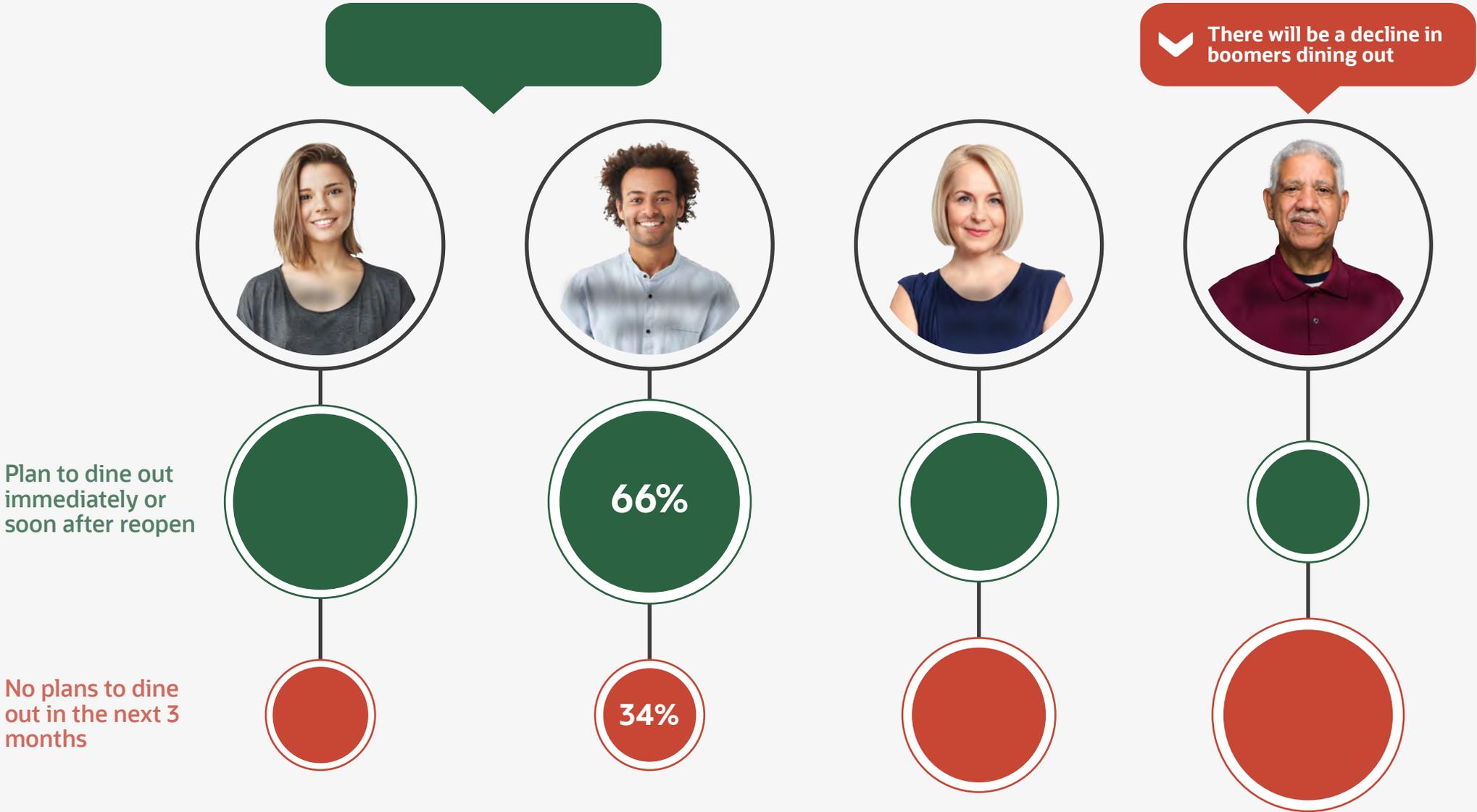
 United Kingdom

36%



Millennials will lead the comeback

Customers' intention to return varies by generation, with millennials leading the comeback and Boomers the most tentative to return to restaurants in the short-term.



Streamlining the take-out experience

As dine-in restaurants had to close their doors, more than 3 out of 4 consumers enjoyed take-out instead as a break from home-cooked meals.

Around 1 in 3 consumers said they stopped ordering take-out from a specific place because of a bad experience, and many were frustrated that the take-out menu was different to the restaurant menu.

However, with more pressure on the take-out experience to deliver not just food but a break from routine, it can be hard to consistently deliver a flawless experience.

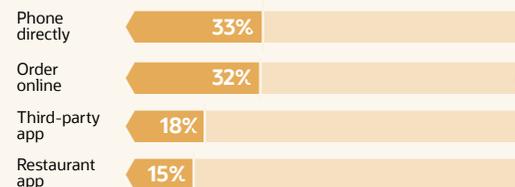
With the majority of customers preferring to order directly from the restaurant, businesses have a major opportunity to create a seamless and pleasant experience with every customer interaction, whether online or over the phone.

Avoiding a negative takeout experience will be essential to drive loyalty

Top three reasons for a negative takeout experience:

- 1 30% Menu options different to dine-in
- 27% Collection not available
- 27% Poor customer service

Preferred option for ordering take-out



Quick Tip

Whether you have supply chain issues or need to create better profit margins, paring down a menu for whatever reason is tricky. See our top 3 recommendations for menu simplification.

[Read the article](#)

In the US, curbside will bounce back

Preferred take-out method



During stay-at-home orders, consumers opted for home delivery more often when ordering take-out, but many, particularly Boomers, will gladly return to order collection/curbside in the US now that restrictions have been relaxed. The curbside trend is not matched in the UK, where home delivery remains the preferred method by a wide margin.



Must Read

Off-premises fulfilment options will inevitably keep expanding. For more thoughts on monitoring and measuring business performance by channel.

[Read the article](#)



Personal devices and the restaurant experience

After months of online grocery shopping, curbside pick-ups and dining in, consumers who go back to dining out are eager to navigate their experience using their personal devices - from table reservations to viewing menus, ordering, and even paying online.

The aim is to make the entire process contactless, so consumers can feel safer and enjoy a convenient, hassle-free experience.

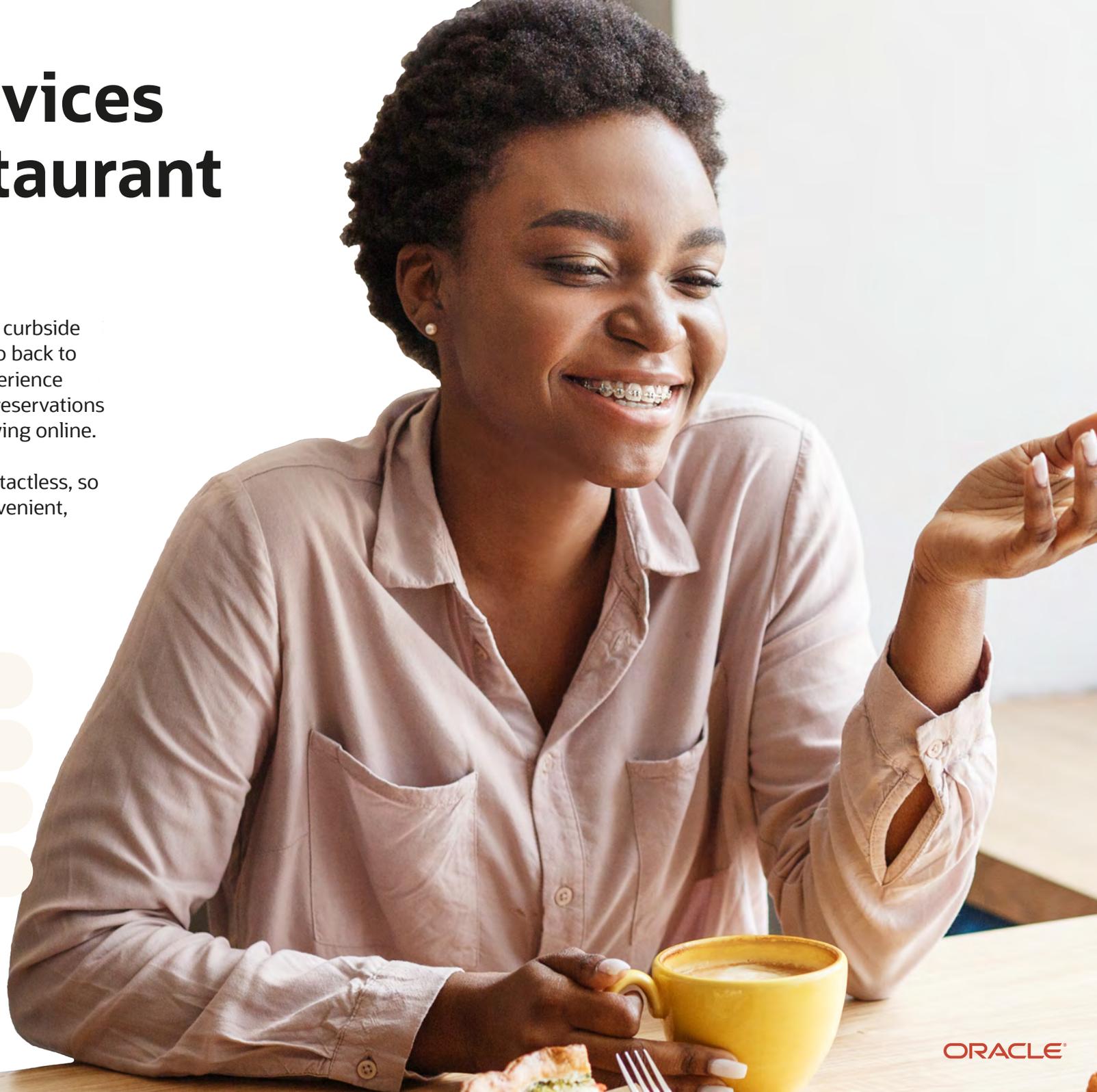
Top 4 things that make people feel safer in restaurants

1 40% View the menu and order on personal device

2 36% Reserve a table in advance on personal device

3 33% Contactless payment from kiosk or tablet

4 33% Pay on personal device



Give your customers a reason to keep coming back

Consumers' dining intentions indicate that many are planning to eat out less frequently than they did before the pandemic.

However, there remains a willingness to support businesses by dining in and out and enjoying the experiences that are on offer. It's all about giving customers a reason to keep coming back, and catering to their new expectations for what these experiences should look and feel like.

The study, commissioned by Oracle and fielded by Untold Insights, examines the dining preferences and behaviors of 2,000 consumers in the US and UK prior to and during stay-at-home orders.



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