



2024:

IS FAST FOOD THE NEW STATUS SYMBOL? MEET THE "FAST FOOD HIGH ROLLERS."



A lot of us are **back at the office**. As our work days have shifted, so have our food attitudes.



Fast food (FF) has become our new guilty **(or as we learned, not-so-guilty)** pleasure.



And the **higher our incomes**, the more of it we're enjoying.

80%

OF PEOPLE WE SPOKE TO MAKING \$100K+ HHI HIT FAST FOOD AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.

WHO ARE THESE 7.95M REAL-WORLD PEOPLE, AND WHAT'S DRIVING THEM?



They're educated millennials and Gen-Xers, male, female, work full time, and mostly married. Half have kids at home



They frequent food festivals, microbreweries, wineries, and farmers markets and follow the trending bloggers and chefs



They're culture vultures and world travelers. 51.8% enjoy visiting new places and 28% hit a different country every year



They don't hesitate to treat themselves. They hit spa retreats, stay at Marriotts and Hiltons, fly United, American and Delta



They're health enthusiasts who frequent health and fitness sites and don the latest wearables and trackers



They follow trendsetters and fashionistas and live and dress to impress themselves and others



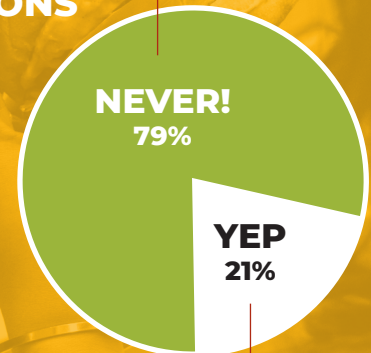
They collect experiences, and fast food is a sensory one that easily fits into the day

HAVE YOU EVER

HIDDEN THE FACT THAT YOU'VE EATEN FAST FOOD

FROM FRIENDS/FAMILY/COWORKERS?

PROUD PATRONS



LOW KEY EATERS

“I THINK YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT I ENJOY VISITING MCDONALD’S MORE THAN MY CHILDREN.”

FEMALE, 41, WHITE

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IS PROUD. WHAT’S FEEDING INTO THAT:

“I don’t think anyone will be surprised about where I eat, because I have never hidden anything about it. On the contrary, I always like to give recommendations to where I have gone.”

FEMALE, 33, WHITE

“I just don’t mention it, but they might be surprised to see me in a Taco Bell eating my favorite spicy food.”

FEMALE, 35, WHITE

“I really like trying new food, since it is important to have an opinion on everything you can.”

MALE, 31, BLACK

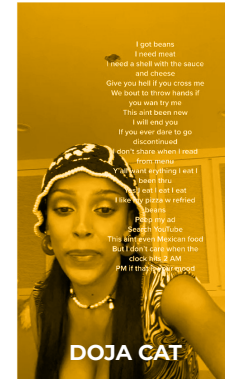
“It could be a surprise for them to witness me savoring the delightful taste of KFC’s chicken.”

MALE, 36, WHITE

“I think people would be surprised to know that I enjoy eating at Chipotle. I know it’s a popular chain, but I think people often associate it with unhealthy options.”

FEMALE, 45, HISPANIC

THEY WEAR THEIR PASSION LOUD AND PROUD. THEN AGAIN, NOT SURPRISING. LOOK WHO’S BROADCASTING THEIR FAST FOOD LOVE IN A VERY FOODIE WAY:



KEY DRIVER: IT’S AN ANTIDOTE TO MONOTONY

74%

like to treat themselves on days they’re in the office

61%

eat out when working from home just to get out of the house

SECONDARY DRIVER: FORMAL AND FANCY IS OVERRATED, OVERDONE, AND NOT AS FILLING

79% say, “While I can afford better food, I still love indulging in fast food”

61% would much rather grab fast casual than have a formal business lunch

44% are still hungry after they leave a business lunch/dinner or networking event

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR FOOD & BEVERAGE BRANDS:

- 1 Fast food is a break from monotony and a quick indulgence in the work day. It functions well beyond a fast, functional fuel-up.
- 2 Consider viewing/communicating menu items in terms of flavor appeal and novelty. Fast food is a way to mix it up and reward oneself during the work day.
- 3 Craving for regularly indulgent experiences drives how often, the association with work drives when. It’s not about the money with this audience. It’s about regularly seeking new experiences.
- 4 Fast food satisfies on a deep level, opening a door to less rational, more emotional, and culturally relevant messaging. Don’t be afraid to celebrate the love or get in on the conversations.

SOURCES: Partners + Napier, 2024