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Talk of the Table, U.K. Edition

Dining Out Trends for 2024

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Restaurants As We Know Them Are Changing

In the last few years, the industry has had to rewrite the rulebook of what's expected from a restaurant.

Successful nomadic brands - TĀ TĀ Eatery and Native, for example – have risen to popularity through residencies. Industry leaders expect the next twelve months will see a continued shift in restaurant formats and the utilisation of spaces within existing venues for creative collaborations.

“We wouldn't have had a site if it wasn't for Browns and their open, collaborative approach to dining. I think the next twelve months will see a number of new nomadic ventures, as chefs get more creative and experiential in their offerings and existing venues look to diversify their spaces to help keep the industry alive.”

- Ivan Tisdall-Downes, formerly of Native

This is corroborated by the launch of Countertalk Spaces, from Ravneet Gill's popular Countertalk hospitality platform, which matches aspiring and established chefs and concepts with underutilised spaces in venues across London.

Reactive Menus

As climate change continues to have an impact on agriculture and the availability of local produce it begs the question, how will warmer temperatures across the U.K. affect how we eat? And how will chefs and restaurants adapt their menus?

“First and foremost these changes are going to have the largest impact on menus and menu writing. We saw an abundance of red tomatoes and summer staples in the October heatwave after releasing our Autumn menu.”

“The lines between the four seasons will continue to blur and become more fluid as time goes by. As a result, I expect we'll see daily menus become more prominent across the capital - they just need astute chefs and astute managers to create them!”

- Jeremy Lee, Chef Proprietor, Quo Vadis

Will Mains Remain?

Small plates continued to dominate menus through 2023 – and the trend shows no sign of slowing down as restaurants continue to re-think their menus in a way that makes sharing food more commonplace.

“We have such a broad range of customers with varying budgets, our smaller plates mean we can cater to everybody's needs - whether they order a couple for lunch or several to share for dinner.”

- Antonio Gonzalez Milla, Executive Chef, Barrafinna

But what does it mean for mains?

“Diners' desire for family style dining is expected to drive further changes in the format of dish types. We've increased the number of medium sized plates at Mangal 2, and I think the number of mains on menus will continue to reduce to make space for the sharing revolution.”

- Sertaç Dirik, Head Chef, Mangal 2

In a survey* of consumers in the U.K.:

39% of diners surveyed expressed they are more adventurous with dining choices when they choose small plates instead of one larger main meal

34% of diners surveyed want to share food with other people at a restaurant so they can try more dishes

37% of diners surveyed in London prefer to order small plates over main dishes

*The research was conducted by Censuswide with a sample of 2,001 nationally representative respondents. The survey fieldwork took place between 25.10.2023 - 27.10.2023.

Resy Fun Facts

Saturday was the most popular day of the week for dining comprising 23% of all completed reservations at Resy U.K. restaurants – then Friday, Thursday, Sunday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Monday.

Of all the Notifies set, nearly 1 in 5 (19.4%) ended up in a reservation.

Based on bookings at Resy U.K. restaurants between 01.01.2023 - 30.09.2023

Educated Eaters

So many of today's diners have discerning palates and they look for quality, transparency and uniqueness in every meal. Shows like *The Bear* and *Boiling Point* have taken diners behind the pass and brought them closer to the mind of a chef, raising intrigue... and expectations. As a result, compounded by the high costs of running a restaurant business, it's less passable to operate at average capacity in 2024.

Restaurants have to break the mould to stand out from the crowd and that often includes obscure and eye-popping menu items, from offal at F.K.A Black Axe Mangal to Ox Tongue at Quo Vadis (a wildly popular dish, according to Chef-Proprietor Jeremy Lee) or wild foods like Native's Woodfire Pigeon Kebab.

The latest buzzed-about bird in London is at the newly opened Fowl by Fallow. The 'beak to feet' experience includes Le Grand Coq pie, made using all parts of the bird. Diners are encouraged to pull the cooked head out before they dig in.

In a survey* of consumers in the U.K.:

1 in 3 diners surveyed (32%)

are more interested in how restaurant ingredients are sourced than they were last year.

1 in 4 diners

want to try more obscure, unusual menu items

*The research was conducted by Censuswide with a sample of 2,001 nationally representative respondents. The survey fieldwork took place between 25.10.2023 - 27.10.2023.

Food Is the New Fashion

Diners are increasingly obsessed with restaurants and food has hit peak fashion in the U.K.'s capital. Restaurateurs and chefs are gaining deserved recognition as creatives and diners look to them for inspiration and aspiration.

Whether a brand partnership, residency, collab or pop-up, food experiences will remain a priority for 2024.

Diners booked **143 hours in advance**, or about six days, compared to 135 hours, or about five and a half days.

2023 saw a jump in diners during the **12 o'clock hour**, likely an effect of many Brits returning to the office.

Based on bookings at Resy U.K. restaurants between 01.01.2023 - 30.09.2023

Re-gen Dining

Sustainability is out, and regenerative dining is in. Younger generations and consumers are seeking out more consciously farmed menu items. As a result, it's expected that with continued creativity and resourcefulness, restaurants across the city will place more emphasis on positively contributing to the UK's biodiversity – by working with small suppliers to foraging herbs, vegetables and seaweeds from shores across the country.



Whilst the sustainable efforts of the industry are recognised and appreciated, it's not enough to fix the food chain. The next step is helping to re-wild our planet by re-imagining our plates and giving more back to the earth than we take."

- Imogen Davis, formerly of Native

Resy Fun Facts

The most popular party size was a table for two, making up 59% of all bookings.

Parties of three made up 14% of the total and parties of four made up 12% of the total.

However...

Solo diners saw the biggest jump from 2022.

The number of solo diners jumped 25%!

Based on bookings at Resy U.K. restaurants between 01.01.2023 - 30.09.2023



As a recognised creative sector and inherent part of diner's DNA, it's no surprise we are seeing more brands than ever connect with restaurants across the country, as they attach themselves to something physical, tangible and... cool."

"From fashion to footwear, there's no denying 2023 was the year for restaurant partnerships. Next year, I think things will elevate and we'll see more unexpected, special events than ever before... using restaurants as venues to bring the immersive experience."

- Sertaç Dirik, Head Chef, Mangal 2

Ingredients Barometer

What's hot, what's not.

What's heating up?

Roast Chicken

The capital's love of the large format roast chicken shows no sign of abating, making appearances as Peruvian pollo a la brasa, flanked by regional French accoutrements, and playing a starring role in a swathe of upscale rotisseries.

- David Paw, Resy International Editor

Mushrooms

The resurgence of this superfood isn't slowing down, they're even being grown on site in some of your favourite dining establishments like Fallow. Expect to see them taking the main character role in savoury desserts like Native's apricot and mushroom ice cream sandwich and dedicated tasting menus like the one at Parilla.

- Ivan Tisdall-Downes, formerly of Native

British Seafood

A post-Brexit rule change to fisheries has some top restaurants proudly serving bluefin tuna caught in British waters. Meanwhile, rising sea temperatures means spider crab may become more common on menus.

- David Paw, Resy International Editor

Chilled Natural Reds

There's always room for red in your fridge and if there's not, it's time for a re-jig. Now that natural wine has hit the mainstream and nights are warmer than ever, expect to see a lot more diners enjoying chilled reds - even outside of the summer months - to enhance those fresh, fruity flavours.

- Brodie Meah, Founder, Top Cuvée

Sourdough

Could 2024 mark the end of the sourdough boom? Don't be surprised if yeast based or heritage grain breads start to replace the go-to millennial loaf on menus next year.

- Sertaç Dirik and Ivan Tisdall-Downes

Burrata

More than one hot take has predicted the demise of the popular starter. Its peak has been long and celebrated but its ubiquity may affect its status as chefs move to more creative options.

- David Paw, Resy International Editor

What's cooling down?



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