

RESY

# The 2023 Resy Retrospective

The year in dining and what's in store for 2024

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*Right this way*

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**In 2023, restaurants shifted from making a comeback to being the main event. Diners were willing to eat earlier, eat solo, and try new cuisines and formats. From elevated wine bars to meals with a side of theatrics, it was a year that confirmed dining out is a priority<sup>1</sup> for many and that restaurants are at the center of pop culture.**



Viral TikTok videos made some restaurants overnight famous and “The Swift Effect” had an impact on restaurants, too: Resy booking data in seven of The Eras Tour’s stops – Houston, Atlanta, Nashville, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles – showed a nearly 16% increase in the number of diners at Resy restaurants in those cities when the tour was in town, compared to the same day of the week over the prior three months.

There were a lot of bright spots for the industry, but running a restaurant continued to be an incredibly challenging business proposition made more difficult when compounded with high food cost and labor challenges.

To wrap up the year and reflect on how we collectively dined, Resy looked at reservation data, surveyed diners across the country, and asked chefs what surprised, delighted, and inspired them in 2023 and what they anticipate, predict, and hope for in 2024.

<sup>1</sup>According to the Amex Trendex released on September 28, 2023, 79% of consumers surveyed reported they are dining out more often or about the same this year compared to last year. According to the Amex Trendex Summer Spotlight released on June 1, 2023, 61% of Millennial and Gen-Z respondents said they would rather treat themselves to a special experience over a material possession (32%)

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## Dinner is the main event

The days of ‘dinner and a movie’ have evolved to dinner as the main event, whether that meant a meal that felt like a theatrical performance or a wine bar that felt like home. In fact, sometimes one dinner wasn’t enough – in a recent survey<sup>2</sup>, 76% of millennials say they have done a “double dinner,” going to two spots for dinner in one night.

Maximalist dining looked like a night at Torrissi in New York, La Dolce Vita in Los Angeles, or Sexy Fish in Miami. These restaurants put razzle dazzle on the menu alongside creative food and drink. On the other end of the spectrum were neighborhood spots that served comfort and conviviality, stalwarts so good they expanded to other cities, and newcomers with big ideas. Resy diners loved Laser Wolf and Libertine in New York, Pijja Palace in L.A., Pastis in Miami, My Loup in Philadelphia, and more.

“I think we’ve seen a bit of a return to fine dining, which is particularly exciting after coming out of a period where so many of us felt unsure about the future of the restaurant industry. **Seeing new restaurants swing for the fences and go all out is inspiring, as is the Michelin Guide recognition that has come along with it.**”

- Chef Michael Williams, Culinary Director of  
IB Hospitality (Juliet, Norah, Margot), Los Angeles

## Restaurant owners are superheroes without capes

2023 had its share of unforeseen events – a historic strike in Los Angeles, a downtown in San Francisco that has yet to fully recover from the pandemic, weather events that impacted outdoor dining – that hit some restaurants where it hurt: their bottom line. Despite it all, restaurant operators proved yet again to be some of the hardest-working small business owners around. They keep the magic alive within the four walls of their restaurants and find time to give back to the community, too. Resy was on the ground at the Annual Southern Smoke Festival (Houston, TX), L.A. Loves Alex's Lemonade (Los Angeles, CA), and other industry gatherings where their ingenuity was evident.

“I've seen more and more restaurants implement a 5-day work week, so that all team members can have 2 days off in a row. I'm happy that it's becoming a more standard practice as the industry prioritizes the wellbeing of its workers.”

- Michael Rafidi, Chef and Owner of Albi and YELLOW, Washington D.C.

## Restaurants are matchmakers

Yes, we're glued to our phones, but maybe not at restaurants? In a recent survey<sup>2</sup>, more than half of those surveyed said they have talked with strangers at a restaurant's bar (53% of all adults, 59% of Millennials, 44% of GenZers) and 29% said they have exchanged numbers with people they met at a bar or restaurant. It may seem untraditional these days, meeting a stranger and striking up a conversation during a drink or a meal, but restaurants can be great matchmakers.

“An increase in communal dining, dinner parties and supper clubs in the city has made me feel super hopeful about the industry and hospitality as a whole leaning toward being more engaging, inviting and community-based.”

- Asia Howell, GM at Alta Adams in Los Angeles

**56%** of Notices set were for Friday and Saturdays... so dine out on a Monday or Tuesday!

Only **5%** of Notices set were made for Mondays and **8%** for Tuesdays.

Based on Notices set for reservations at Resy restaurants in the U.S. between January 1, 2023 and November 14, 2023

## Dine solo, you won't be alone

If you're taking yourself out to dinner, you're not alone. The number of solo diners at Resy restaurants jumped in 2023. If you can grab a seat at the bar of your favorite restaurant, maybe you'll end up in conversation, or you'll have the alone time you were seeking. In a recent survey<sup>2</sup>, “much-needed alone time” was cited as the top motivator for dining out solo.

### Resy Fun Facts

The number of solo diners is increasing, up 21% from 2022 to 2023\*.

**54%**

of all completed reservations were for parties of 2

**~29%**

of reservations were groups of 3 (14.5%) or 4 (14%)

**11%**

of reservations accounted for groups of 5 or more

\*Based on number of diners at Resy U.S. restaurants between January and end of September, 2022 versus 2023

## Early bird dinner is in

It's true: people are dining earlier. Early dinner is as popular as it's been in the last five years while late-night dining saw a slowdown. In 2019, the number of diners between 4 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. accounted for about 12% of all diners, and in 2023, that time frame accounted for about 15% of diners\*. This might not seem like a big shift, but it accounts for hundreds of thousands of diners.

\*Based on number of diners at Resy restaurants in the U.S. between January 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023

## As seen on TikTok

About one in three Gen Z and Millennial diners said they want to see restaurant recommendations from influencers on social media, according to a recent survey<sup>2</sup>. It showed: TikTok was often the culprit of driving demand to new restaurants. That spot you walked by with a line? There's a good chance TikTok made it so. That's where Resy came in. Resy Notify became an essential tool for getting into restaurants, especially on Friday and Saturdays, which made up 41% of all reservations\*.

\*Based on completed reservations at Resy restaurants in the U.S. between January 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023

## Experts are the original influencers

Despite TikTok's emerging role in restaurant discovery, when asked about sourcing restaurant recommendations, 64% of adults surveyed<sup>2</sup> said they want recommendations from a food critic or someone who works in the food and beverage industry, while only 20% said they want to see recs from influencers on social media.

### Resy Fun Facts

Resy users nationally made reservations about **4 days in advance** (91 hours). When looking at five U.S. cities, some booked further in advance than others. In Miami, reservations were booked about **6 days in advance**, on average, while in Los Angeles reservations were booked less than **3 days in advance**, on average.

Here's how far in advance each city made reservations:

- Miami: about 6 days (139 hours)
- Chicago: about 4.5 days (105 hours)
- New York City: about 4 days (99 hours)
- Washington, D.C.: about 3 days (73 hours)
- Los Angeles: about 3 days (70 hours)

## Restaurants continue to sell more than just food

Restaurants are branching out to create a broader community and sell more than just food. While merch has become increasingly popular, wine clubs (from spots like LaLou in New York or Macchialina in Miami) or meal kits (from restaurants like Rubirosa in New York) have stuck around post-pandemic.



## Chefs and restaurant operators across the country have thoughts on the trends, ingredients and dishes that are heating up and cooling down.

On the trends they're ready to see fizzle out, and trends on the up-and-up.



"I love to see new concepts featuring high-quality seafood in casual, fun, well-designed environments, like Gift Horse (Providence, RI) and Fish & Whistle (Biddeford, ME)."

- Alyssa Mikiko DiPasquale,  
Owner at The Koji Club, Boston



"I think a lot of people are cooking the food that they always wanted to cook, not being defined as Asian or Latino, but simply the food of Los Angeles, where we all grew up eating great diversity of great ethnic food from all the immigrants that choose to come to L.A."

- David Kuo,  
Chef and Owner at Little Fatty, Los Angeles



"Community-centered events. The desire to meet new people is a common thread I have noticed among our guests. We may have returned to going out to restaurants and bars, but I think the pandemic really impacted our ability to strike up conversation with a stranger and it's a level of human connection that we actually do crave. Creative pop-ups and intimate, dinner party-esque events provide the safe spaces to comfortably engage with other guests and maybe make a new friend. One of the biggest highlights of my year was not The Koji Club Italo Disco pop up at Tonino - though that was one for the books! - but the fact that six guests who attended now regularly dine out together as the 'Tonino Bambinos.' Whether you are the one serving or the one being served, the energy during these dinner parties is always so electric."

- Claire Makley, General Manager/Owner at  
Toninos + Founding Member at The Koji Club, Boston



"Food videos on social media platforms that are designed to be reactionary are wasteful and far from the progress we need in the food world."

- Rob Rubba,  
Chef/Partner, Oyster Oyster, Washington D.C.



"I really hope the QR codes go away in restaurants. For me, it takes away the hospitality and relationship you build with the restaurant."

- Jeff Michaud,  
Chef and Owner at Osteria, Philadelphia



"Espresso Martinis"

- Luis Aguilar, Director of Hospitality  
& Operations, Eat Well Hospitality, Chicago

# Ingredients Barometer

What's hot, what's not.

What's heating up?

## Charred or Grilled Cabbage

"Definitely a favorite, and I hope to see it more. It's so underappreciated."

- Matt Conroy, Chef and Partner of The Popal Group's Lutèce & Pascual, Washington D.C.

## Toum

"I never get tired of toum. It's a condiment we make at all our restaurants with labne, garlic, salt and lemon juice. So punchy and perfect with breads, roasted vegetables and grilled meat."

- Michael Rafidi, Chef and Owner of Albi & Yellow, Washington DC

## Zolfini Beans from Italy

"Probably the creamiest bean you'll ever eat."

- Jeff Michaud, Chef/Owner at Osteria Philadelphia

## Truffle Fries

"I love truffles (and fries), but I'm ready to say goodbye to every restaurant having truffle fries on the menu."

- Asia Howell, General Manager at Alta Adams, Los Angeles

## Fake Meat

"Just cook vegetables well!"

- Rob Rubba, Chef and Partner at Oyster Oyster, Washington D.C.

## Branzino

"I would never say 'goodbye' to branzino but am happy that we are able to serve other beautiful, sustainable and delicious fish that customers are learning to request and enjoy. It took a long time for branzino to become as popular as it is, and I love witnessing other lesser-known fish grow in popularity."

- Fabio Trabocchi, Chef and Restaurateur at Fabio Trabocchi Restaurants, Washington D.C.

What's cooling down?

