

Food Facts Fancies

What America Eats Survey Is Food For Thought

(NAPSA)—A new survey serves up some interesting statistics on what America eats—and the results contain some surprising morsels.

PARADE magazine's annual What America Eats survey has found that Americans crave meal options that are convenient, great-tasting and good for them. Most say they try to eat a more well-balanced diet (84 percent) and only 25 percent are on a diet to lose weight, despite a well-publicized obesity crisis in the U.S. At the same time, the nation as a whole seems to have something of a sweet tooth, with 87 percent eating dessert at least once a week.

As to homemade food, most prefer it, but fewer people have the time to prepare it and, when they do, few start completely from scratch.

At least 51 percent of Americans now define "homemade" as a combination of fresh and convenience foods, such as making pasta sauce with bottled chopped garlic or making chili with canned beans.

When asked to compare themselves to one of the Desperate Housewives of the popular TV show, 37 percent said they most resemble the impulsive, artistic character Susan in that they are somewhat clumsy in the kitchen and only make a few things well.

Twenty-three percent compared themselves to the perfectionist Bree, saying they make everything from scratch and serve it on fine china.

Lunch today is less formal, with 44 percent of the respondents brown-bagging it and 53 percent eating a typical lunch of sandwiches or wraps.



Most Americans try to eat a well-balanced diet, says one recent survey.

Snacking is a whole lot healthier than it used to be, with nutrient-rich fruit being described as the number one snack in the nation, and popcorn—a natural whole-grain food—running a close second.

"Americans are looking to make smart food decisions. People will make good day-to-day food choices if they have good information and good options, such as choosing lighter, more nutritious snacks that also taste great," said Susan Waltman, a nutrition expert at Con Agra Foods, cosponsor of the survey. "Popcorn is an excellent snacking choice, with natural whole-grain nutrition, fiber, and many varieties low in overall fat."

More Americans are making nutritional choices on their own, but most still have a ways to go in getting all the information they need.

A majority admitted they don't follow the Food Pyramid recommendations for healthier eating, and only 26 percent said they were even aware of the new guidelines announced earlier this year.