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Give a Warm *Welcome* to the Solo Diner

For many years, eating alone has been stigmatized as a social offense. But there has been a monumental shift happening not only in our demographics but also in our attitudes toward singles. And they both favor the solo diner. The fact is about 50 percent of all eating and drinking occasions are done alone.* An Operator who is interested in appealing to the single diner should understand these patrons and what makes them feel comfortable dining alone to encourage their patronage.

Singlehood

Dining alone can transpire for many reasons such as with a business traveler, a widowed senior or even a parent looking for some quiet time. However, the greatest factor contributing to the increase in single diners is the rise in singles overall. The population is moving toward a more single centric society due to the combination of increased divorces and decreased marriages. Approximately 50.2 percent of Americans are single — the highest level in U.S. history, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics.

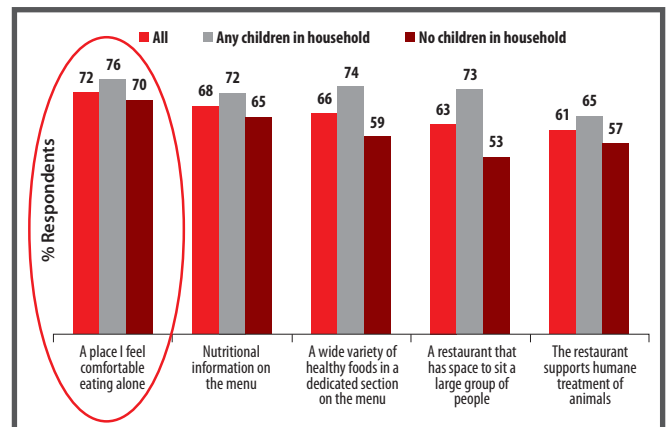
This “single” trend is predicted to grow especially with the younger generations fully embracing single lifestyles and independent seniors living longer. Understanding this trend is important to restaurant Operators because single people have different requirements than couples or groups.

Creature Comforts

One of the nuisances about living alone is cooking for one. It’s only natural that the single population would gravitate more toward restaurants. Luckily, welcoming single diners doesn’t

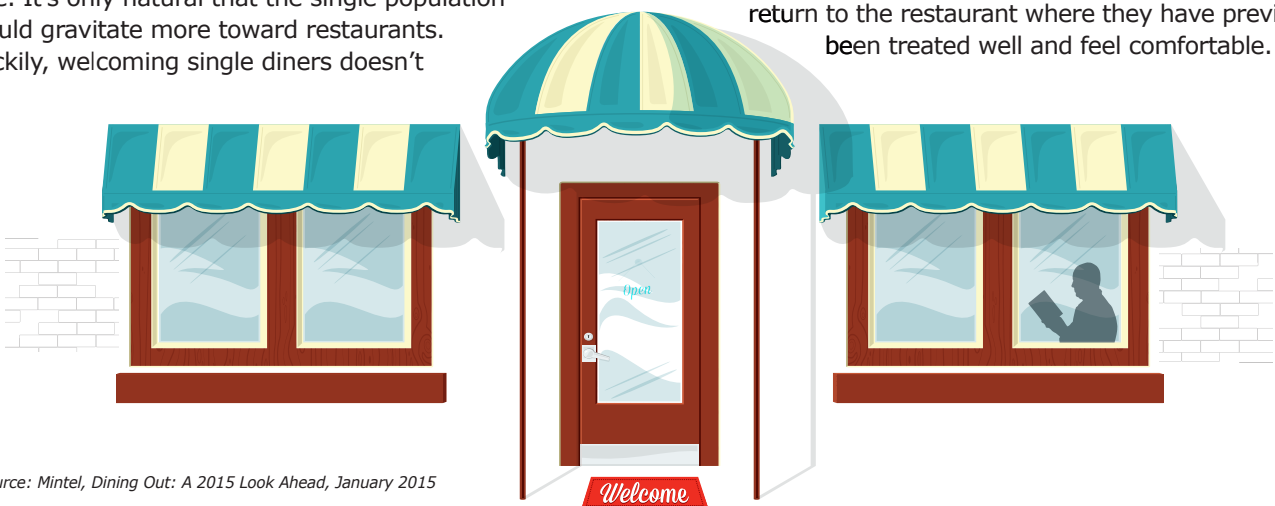
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have to be complicated. In fact, in a recent Mintel survey, 72% of respondents stated all they want is to feel comfortable when dining alone.



Source: Mintel, *The Power of One*, April 2015

Patrons define comfort differently so it is going to be imperative that the restaurant’s host or server understand exactly what diners are looking for such as a social interaction at the bar, a Wi-Fi connection for a working lunch or a quiet table out of the way. Solo diners prefer to return to the restaurant where they have previously been treated well and feel comfortable.



*Source: Mintel, *Dining Out: A 2015 Look Ahead*, January 2015

Key P.A.T.R.O.N.® Segment

Social Butterflies – Millennials and Boomers

- Ages: 21-34 and 55+
- Single with a moderate income and living in large metropolitan areas
- Love a lively atmosphere and want to have a good time
- Less health-conscious, desiring more adventurous, trendy and craveable foods
- Restaurants can be like a second home

Source: ConAgra Foodservice Proprietary
Food Away From Home Study, 2009

SIDEDISH

Patron Key Insights

Eating alone is no longer considered a faux pas. Many single customers choose to dine alone because of the flexibility and freedom it gives. Operators can easily make their solo patrons feel welcome and comfortable to ensure return visits.

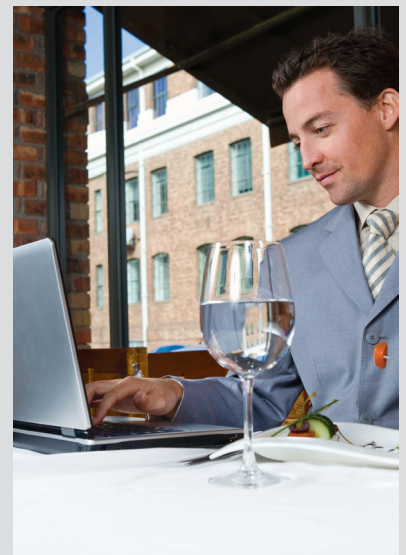


For more targeted recommendations to grow your business, ask your ConAgra Foodservice representative for a customized P.A.T.R.O.N. profile report.

THE P.A.T.R.O.N.®
Personalized Analysis Targeting Restaurant Operator Needs

Top 5 Actions

1. Ensure you have Wi-Fi available and complimentary if possible. Singles want to stay connected on their mobile devices or laptops. An available charging station can make a difference in a patron's ability to stay and ring up a higher check.
2. Introduce more bar seating or tables for one to help reduce wait times and make seating singles a faster process. Or conversely, try establishing communal tables. This option is a great way to encourage singles to interact with one another.
3. Train your staff to recognize the signs of whether a solo diner wants to engage in conversation or simply be left alone. Subtle cues like a lack of eye contact and quick responses are clues that a diner does not want to engage.
4. Craft a part of your menu to be inclusive of smaller plates with lower prices for solo diners.
5. Host a wine, beer or menu tasting. These types of events encourage socializing with like-minded individuals, and your patron will value the experience.



to go...

Source: Restaurant Business, In the Know – 10 Trends That Matter, December 2014

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