

Ethnic Restaurants and Takeaways - UK - March 2013

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"Operators looking to leverage consumers' interest in niche cuisine types should ensure they are offering advice to consumers on what the cuisine type is, how they should order and when they should visit: a quarter of ethnic restaurant diners state they would try different ethnic venues if they knew more about the cuisine."

– Helena Spicer – Senior Foodservice Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can ethnic restaurants/takeaways lessen their vulnerability to consumer cutbacks?
- What can ethnic restaurants/takeaways learn from retail innovation?
- How can new flavour trends be effectively brought to market?
- How can non-specialist foodservice operators capitalise on the growth in interest in ethnic cuisine?

The overall ethnic restaurants/takeaway market recorded a 5.9% increase in sales between 2007 and 2012 to reach £4.09 billion, which was largely driven by inflation. The market remains highly vulnerable to cut backs in consumer spending, with a quarter of ethnic diners stating that they buy supermarket alternatives instead. This is reflected in the retail ethnic foods market recording a 24% increase in value sales between 2007 and 2011 in comparison, as reported in Mintel's *Ethnic Foods – UK, September 2012*.

In addition to the competition from the retail channel, challenges in the ethnic restaurants/takeaway market include the skills gap making it challenging to ensure availability of knowledgeable staff, lack of modernisation and its highly fragmented nature. However, there are sections of the market gaining traction and indicating development potential for the wider market. For example, street food is tapping into the demand for innovative and fresh food. Meanwhile, tailored concepts such as lifestyle venues seen at some Mexican restaurants are known as much for their drinking and late night culture attracting the youth market as they are for their menus.

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