



SEVENROOMS

TURNING A MEAL INTO AN EXPERIENCE

2018 RESTAURANT INDUSTRY REPORT

FOREWORD



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In recent years, Americans have experienced a major shift in priorities when it comes to what they expect out of a restaurant experience. Their dining preferences have taken a sharp turn to focus not just on food, but on the overall experience with the restaurant – from making a reservation, to leaving at the end of the night and beyond. With this shift in expectations, the restaurant industry can no longer succeed without understanding guests' preferences and implementing a fully customized experience for each diner every time they visit the restaurant.

What does this mean looking ahead? With guest data taking center stage, it is essential that restaurants are able to gather the necessary information to personalize each diner's experience from food and drink suggestions to a convenient reservation experience and a personalized greeting at the door. Understanding their perspective will allow restaurants to better accommodate the modern diner and implement the specific details and technology that can convert a one-time guest into a regular for years to come.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A guest's first time at a restaurant has a large impact on whether or not they will choose to return for another meal. From lack of personalization to long wait times, consumers are not willing to compromise and will gladly take their business elsewhere if their expectations are not met.

In fact, here's what matters most on the first interaction:

33% 

One in three of Americans wouldn't return if they felt the waiter or waitress didn't pay attention to their preferences.



A quarter (24%) of Americans would avoid returning to a restaurant if their dining **experience wasn't memorable or special**



One in five (21%) Americans would not return to a restaurant if the waiter or waitress **didn't take their food allergy into account** when providing food recommendations



25% wouldn't return to a restaurant if they **had to wait 10 minutes** past their reservation time before being seated

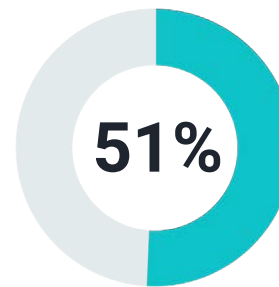


56% wouldn't return if the **food wasn't cooked** the way they asked

THE EXPERIENCE

Sometimes it is easy for restaurants to overlook the simple things, but these are the details that guests care about the most. Customers want to feel special and small actions can have a larger impact on guests' experiences than restaurants think.

Here's what Americans feel would make their dining experience stand out:



Americans say that a waiter or waitress simply remembering them from a previous visit would make their dining out experience stand out.



35% of Americans say that it is a **complimentary glass of wine** with their meal



29% of Americans think that it is a waiter or waitress remembering them from a previous visit and **taking their food allergy into account**



35% of Americans claim it's being **greeted by name** by a host



50% of Americans say that a **complimentary birthday dessert** would do it



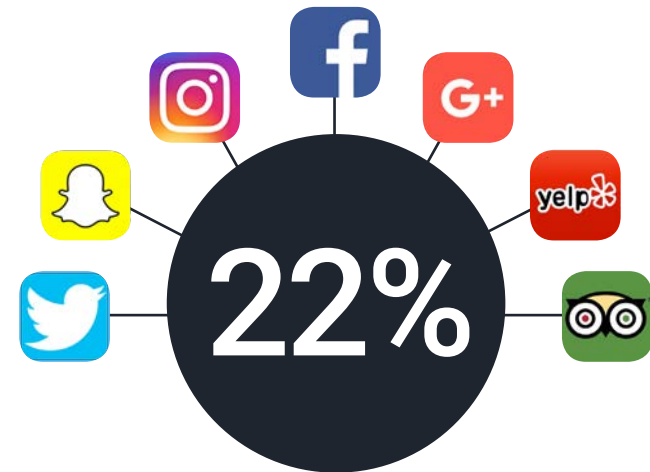
STANDING OUT FROM THE COMPETITION

Consumers have millions of restaurants to choose from, so it is important to understand what makes them pick that one specific spot to make a reservation.

Consumers rank these elements as deciding factors when choosing where to make a reservation.



However, we cannot forget that recommendations from guests' friends and family also rank high when choosing a restaurant, and today, that often comes in the form of a social media post.



Americans who have gone to a restaurant based on what the food or atmosphere looked like on social media.



BOOKING RESERVATIONS

In today's market, there are a multitude of reservation platforms available to the consumer, and each diner has their own personal preference.

In the past year:



40% of guests called the restaurant directly to book a reservation

2x

Guests who fall into the baby boomer generation are **twice as likely to call** a restaurant to book a reservation than millennials



23% booked a reservation through the **restaurant's website**



29% of diners have booked a restaurant **reservation in person** (e.g. walk-in)



14% of Americans will book a restaurant **reservation online** in the next month

It's clear that diners in the U.S. want to have an experience that makes them feel special, like being greeted by name, receiving personalized food recommendations and even social media worthy décor. But a good, solid foundation of quality food and convenient location have proven to still be a large deciding factor when choosing where to dine.

Although the experience at the restaurant is essential, it's proven that the true first interaction, reservations, is where the make or break decision happens.

For more information, reach out to press@sevenrooms.com
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