

Pork losing out in rise of international cuisines

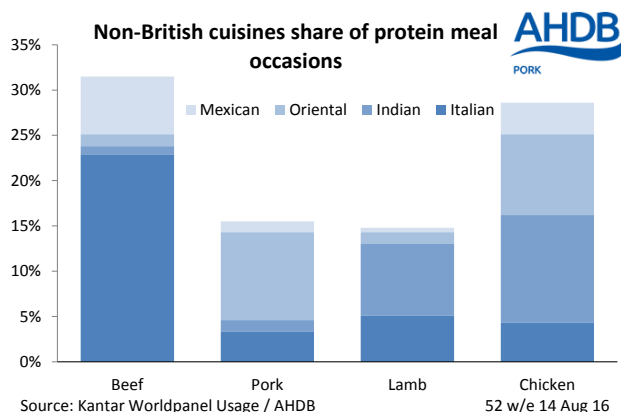
Global travel and population diversification has influenced the types of foods British consumers eat. It's a long-term trend that continues to affect our industries. With more and more choice, consumers need inspiration to keep industry products relevant.

British consumers are still most likely to opt for traditional British meals or protein-centered dishes (like meat, potatoes and vegetables) over ethnic/world cuisines. But the lines are blurring and there are new traditions. The Italian roots of meals such as pizza and Spaghetti Bolognese are often forgotten about as they become part of the standard meal repertoire. Indian and Chinese cuisines are also staples; according to Mintel, 78% of consumers ate Indian food in the past three months, and 73% ate Chinese.

The trends continue to move in this way; compared to two years ago 'Meat and two veg' type options are down over 2% while ethnic and continental dishes are up almost 5%. This long-term shift has come from increased population diversification and travel. The non-UK born population has not only grown, to around 13 per cent of the total population according to the ONS, but it has also diversified.

Beef has no doubt benefited from both long-term and more recent changes in cuisine preference. Italian cuisine alone accounts for almost a quarter of all meal occasions featuring beef, with the majority of this being Spaghetti Bolognese (even though the original dish would have used pork mince). Mexican meal options also give a boost to beef consumption, accounting for 6% of meal occasions.

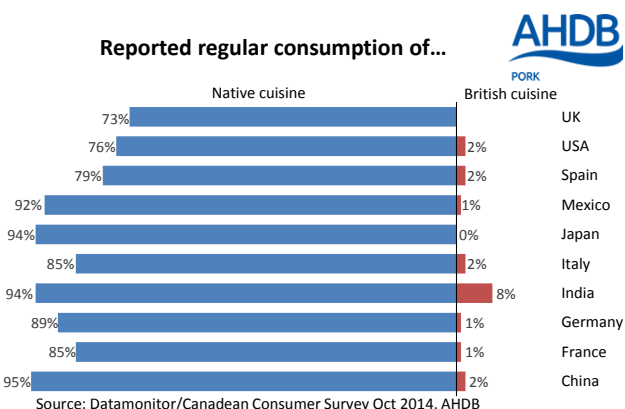
Beef's strong association with these types of dishes isn't replicated for pork (or lamb) but it is for chicken. Almost half of all Indian dishes feature chicken and the taste perception of chicken is, no doubt, boosted by its association with dishes such as this, rather than the actual flavor of the meat. This dish association, particularly for pork, is something the sector ought to strive for, positioning it as a direct alternative to chicken.



Food trends often start out in the foodservice sector, the rise of street vendors now means consumers are increasingly being exposed to new cuisines from around the world. Research from Mintel shows that trying a particular type of cuisine at a restaurant is cited as a reason for trying it at home by 425 of consumers who have eaten emerging international cuisines at home or would like to.

When it comes to trying it in-home, any experimentation needs to be low risk for consumers, so they don't feel like time, effort or money have been wasted. For manufacturers, there is interest in meal kits. For retailers, Mintel indicates that greater in-store cooking guidance would appeal to well over half of consumers who have eaten, or are interested in trying, ethnic food. As for what's new next, Korean and South American foods have enjoyed growing visibility in foodservice in recent years, with high interest among consumers in trying them also at home.

The interest in ethnic cuisines is not unique to the UK but it does differ globally. Chinese and Italian cuisines have the strongest global appeal, whereas British cuisine is not eaten frequently outside the UK. When comparing consumption of native cuisines, British consumers are some of the least likely to eat their native food on a regular basis. The UK and USA's regular consumption of other cuisines (particularly Chinese and Italian) is greater than other countries.



This highlights how vulnerable the British cuisine is on a global scale, given that it's not favored in other countries. Even at home, we are more likely to choose other cuisines than consumers in other countries are. It's important that the red meat industry continues to highlight the versatility of its products, to provide inspiration and innovation for them to be used in a range of modern, contemporary dishes.

Developments in consumer markets, both at home and abroad, are key drivers of demand for pig meat. A range of articles about trends can be found on the Consumer Insight section of AHDB's website. The site, which can be accessed by [clicking here](#), also provides links to key market data and copies of AHDB's Consumer Insight newsletter.