

Your Downtown, Your Food Survey

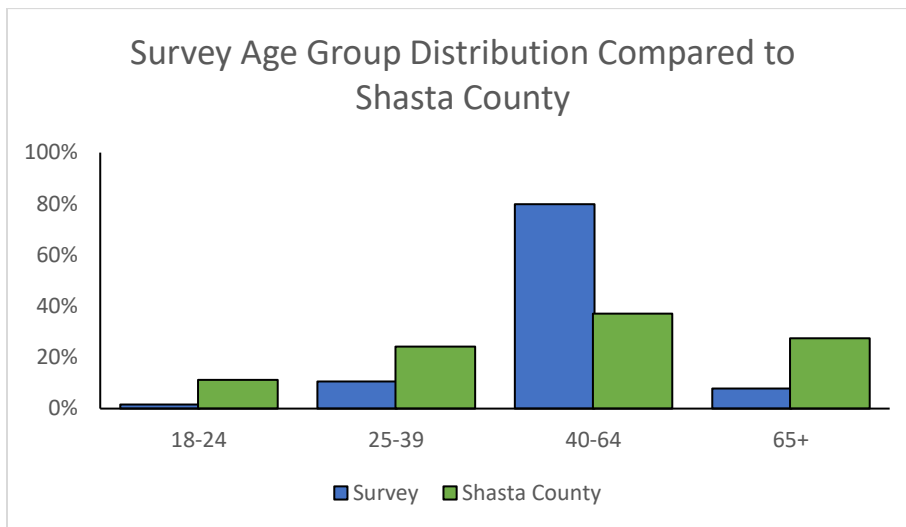
Report Date: 08/18/2021

Background Information

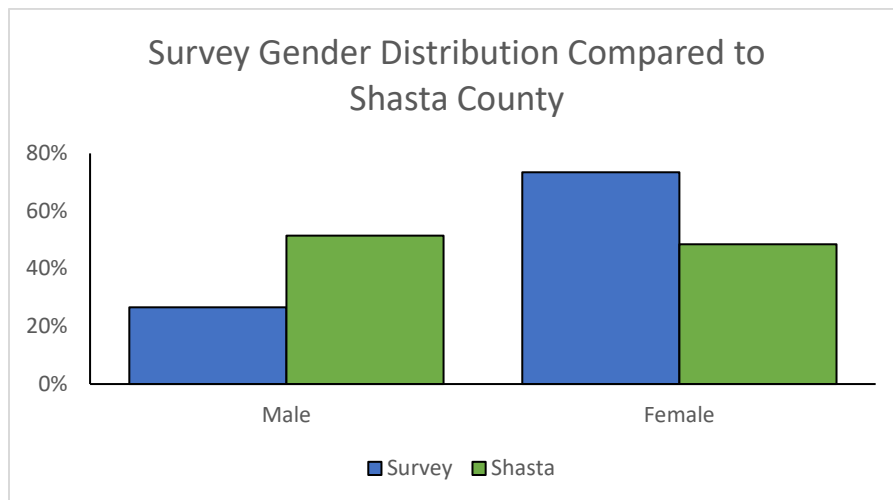
The “Your Downtown, Your Food” Survey was provided to Shasta residents for two months from May to June 2021. Respondents were initially limited to Downtown Redding residents, but later included all residents as the survey was distributed at farmers’ markets and other local events.

Survey respondents did not differ from the Shasta County adult population in race/ethnicity, sexuality, or income. However, there was a significant difference in the distribution of age groups and gender.

80% of survey respondents were in the 40-64 age group, 11% were in the 25-39 age group, 8% were 65+, and 2% were ages 18-24. This sample represents a significant oversampling of the 40-64-year-old age group, who only make up 37% of the Shasta County 18+ population. This will likely create some bias in the data presented as a result.



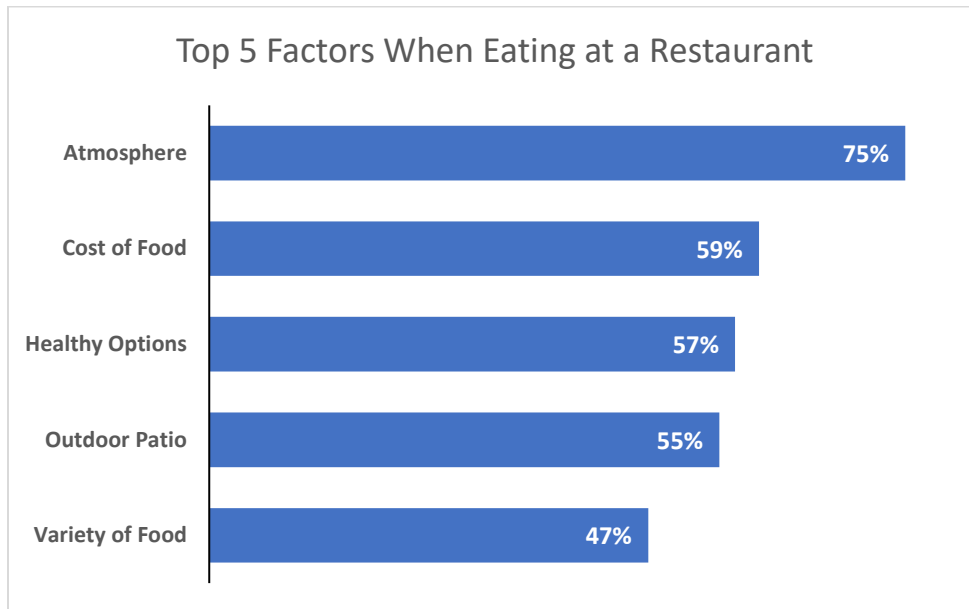
Lastly, 73% of survey respondents identify as female, while males account for 27%. In the general population, the gender distribution of females to males is 48% and 52% respectively.



Restaurant Habits

84% of respondents frequently eat out anywhere from 1-3 times a month to 1-3 times a week. When deciding where to eat, respondents were asked about several factors that were important to them including restaurant reviews, parking, bar availability, variety of food, healthy options, and others. The graph below shows the top five considerations provided by respondents. Briefly:

- 75% of respondents noted restaurant atmosphere
- 59% of respondents noted cost of food
- 57% of respondents noted healthy food options
- 55% of respondents noted outdoor patio and seating options
- 47% of respondents noted food variety



Not shown in the graph are the lowest scoring items on the list. Special dietary considerations (16%) and play areas for children (6%) ranked at the two lowest items marginal support for each.

83% of respondents replied that they would walk to food options that were located within a half-mile of their home/workplace. The most cited reasons for walking include saving time on driving and parking, exercising, fun, convenience, and safety when drinking alcohol, several comments are provided below.

“A bit of exercise with a meal is always enjoyable. If it's dinner, nice to walk after a glass of wine rather than drive.”

“A half mile is well worth not trying to park a car.”

“All fried foods and bars, we have to walk how the choices are.”

“Bar hopping!”

“It's a great break from work.”

17% of respondent stated they were not sure or would not walk to restaurants citing weather and safety as key concerns. Several comments are provided below.

“Safety, lack of safe walking areas after dark.”

“Too hot to walk anywhere in the summertime, and too rainy in the winter. I might walk in the 3 weeks in between those extremes.”

Current Downtown Offerings

When asked to rate the variety of food currently offered in Downtown Redding restaurants (Excellent, Good, Below Average, Poor), 60% of respondents rated variety as “Good” and 30% rated it as “Below Average.”

Further, when asked about healthy options currently offered in existing restaurants, only 27% of survey respondents agree that Downtown Redding currently offers enough healthy options to choose from when they decide to eat out. While many respondents appear to be somewhat satisfied with the variety of food, most respondents agree that there is a need for healthy food options in the area.

Shasta County Resident Desires for Downtown Redding

In an open response question, respondents were asked about their desires for new Downtown Redding restaurant offerings. Responses were grouped into overall categories with subcategories between those. Responses were primarily split into responses relating to increased variety of restaurants, increased number of restaurants, atmosphere, and affordable pricing. Each of these will be described in more detail below.

Increased Variety of Restaurants

Respondents voiced a desire for increased variety of restaurants in 52% of comments provided. Beyond that, respondent provided many examples about the types of variety they wanted to see and the types of things they wanted to see less of.

Those who mentioned a desire to see less of certain items specified the need for less chain restaurants, fast food, burger shops, and pizza. This desire further builds on the earlier responses mentioning the lack of healthy food options currently offered in Downtown and indicates that respondents would like to see restaurants offerings that are both healthy and unique.

The word cloud on the right summarizes the items that were most mentioned among respondents who spoke about increasing the variety of restaurants with more common subcategories expressed in larger fonts.



Respondents mentioned a desire for high quality, local food options as well as a desire to move away from larger, chain restaurants. One respondent commented:

*“On TripAdvisor...the #7 ranked restaurant in town is Black Bear Diner.
That's a step up from Denny's.”*

This respondent echoes a strong desire by many for the Downtown food scene to offer unique items that are not available in other parts of Redding.

Restaurant Atmosphere

14% of respondents discussed restaurant atmosphere in their comments. The majority of comments surrounding atmosphere pointed to a desire for live music and entertainment to be brought into restaurants. In addition to live music, respondents want to see more fun patio options. Details were not provided except in some comments that mention spaces for live music performers and stepping awhile from traditional restaurant setups.

Here, it is evident that respondents have a desire not only to welcome diverse food options in Downtown, but diverse entertainment as well.

Affordable Pricing

8% of respondents noted the need for affordably priced meals. Some respondents who mentioned a desire for fine dining options also offered that the economic demographics of Redding may not be able to afford some fine dining options and that low-cost and healthy options should be offered to make healthy restaurant food available to all income levels.

Safety

It should be noted that although unrelated to food, another 5% of respondents used this comment area to mention desires for increasing parking and bike accessibility throughout Downtown as well as a desire to increase general safety in the area.

Grocery Needs

71% of respondents reported that they typically grocery shop at a grocery store, 11% shop at a wholesaler, the remaining 18% shop at farmers' markets or at the butcher for their primary grocery needs.



Overall, respondents mostly considered produce freshness, cost, grocery quality, availability of healthy options, and store location when choosing where to shop with produce freshness being the top consideration. Respondents were least concerned with EBT availability (only 10% marked this option) and although respondents did not show significant difference in income distribution from the general population, significant oversampling of those in the 40-64 age group may create some bias in this data. Importantly, the 65+ age group was underrepresented in the survey group and makes up 50% of respondents who indicated acceptance of EBT would be a factor in considering stores to buy groceries from.

Only 5% of respondent reported no challenges when shopping for groceries, but among the 95% who reported challenges while shopping for food, the most common challenges were produce freshness (46%), finding specialty food items and ingredients (39%), and availability of ingredients and items (35%).

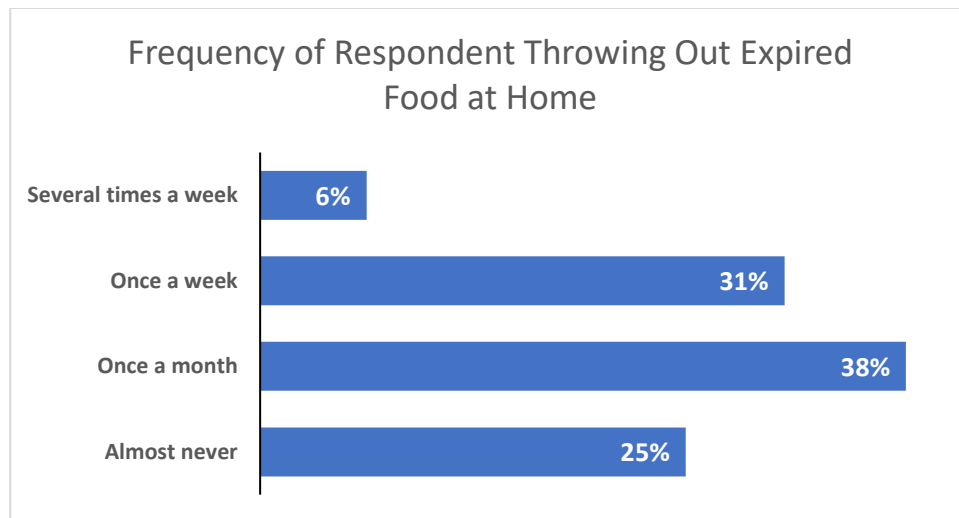
Transportation to and from grocery trips presents a challenge for approximately 8% of respondents. Among those who reported this as a challenge, 50% are in the 65+ age group who mostly have a reported income of less than \$25,000 (73%).

Of note, some respondents provided additional challenges in their grocery trips including the availability of organic food items and grocery delivery/pickup options.

Food Waste

When eating out at restaurants, approximately 11% of respondents commented that when they do have leftovers at a restaurant they either "Rarely" or "Never" take them home.

However, when asked further about food waste at home, only 25% of respondents indicated that they "Almost never" throw out expired food at home, indicating that food waste is more likely to happen in the personal home. The chart below shows the distribution of frequency in throwing out expired food in the home.



38% of respondents replied that they only throw out food at home “Once a month,” but another 31% indicated “Once a week.” Only 6% reported the highest level of food waste, throwing expired food out several times per week.

Summary

84% of respondents eat out at restaurants anywhere from 1-3 times a month to 1-3 times a week. The most important factors to respondents when considering where to eat out are atmosphere, cost of food, availability of healthy options, outdoor spaces, and food variety. These priorities are echoed in the expressed desires from residents as many have offered that a move away from chain restaurants toward locally own spaces with ethnic, fresh, and healthy options is greatly needed.

Perhaps most important to survey respondents is the variety of food offered in downtown, but following behind this is a desire to include a live music scene into local restaurants in order to bring something unique to Downtown. Respondents also acknowledge that food options remain affordable to all and that safety in the Downtown area should increase.

Most respondents shop at grocery stores for their groceries and consider produce freshness, cost, quality, healthy options, and location when deciding where to shop. Additionally, 95% of respondents reported some type of challenge when shopping for groceries, commonly: produce freshness, specialty food items, and availability of items.

Lastly, this survey included several questions to identify areas of food waste in Shasta County residents. Among respondents, only 11% reported rarely or never taking home leftovers and instead having them thrown away at restaurants when eating out. However, 69% of respondents reported throwing away expired food at their own home anywhere from once a month to once a week, indicating that the majority of food waste may be happening in the home. Education around food waste should focus on ways to mitigate food waste in the home.

Limitations

This survey is not without its limitations, primarily the difference in sampling of the population which proves to have a differing age and gender distribution than is seen in the Shasta County general population. Future efforts should focus on ensuring that the sample remains representative of the population in all aspects through periodic data validation.