



# Restaurant Impact Report

An in depth look at the role restaurants play  
in local economies, wellbeing and communities



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## Executive Summary

Restaurants do so much more than cook delicious food. They help shape communities and boost local economies, and can serve as a catalyst to reinvigorate entire towns or neighbourhoods. They're a critical third space, creating a place for people to gather and build bonds beyond the home and office. They are vehicles for pleasure, built on ideas of care and hospitality.

To underscore this importance, OpenTable is proud to present its inaugural Restaurant Impact Report. *“OpenTable’s Report celebrates restaurants and the value they provide local residents and their communities,”* said **Robin Chiang, SVP, International Growth at OpenTable.** *“The hospitality restaurants provide extends well beyond the walls of their venues, and we are pleased to shine a spotlight on all the ways they enhance our lives.”*

The Report brings together data from OpenTable and third-party sources including the Office for National Statistics, a OnePoll survey of 5,000 UK adults, and others. It also features commentary from Dr Tara Swart, a leading neuroscientist and doctor, and UK restaurateurs.



# Key Outtakes

## Economic Impact

In 2022, there were over 150,000 restaurants in the UK, an increase of 8% on 2019, according to the Office for National Statistics.<sup>1</sup>

The number of people employed by the hospitality sector is also growing, from 1.46 million in 2019 to 1.56 million in 2021, a 7% increase.<sup>2</sup>

67% of OnePoll survey respondents think that restaurants help boost their local economies by providing jobs locally.<sup>3</sup>

## Personal Wellbeing

Nearly a third (31%) of Brits agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes add value to their wellbeing. In London, that number is higher, with 37% of Londoners agreeing.<sup>3</sup>

*“Socialising at restaurants encourages the release of dopamine (the reward hormone), serotonin (mood) and oxytocin (bonding), which can ultimately reduce stress and make us happier,”* said **Dr Tara Swart, a leading neuroscientist and doctor.**

## Sense of Community

Almost two-thirds (64%) of people in the UK believe local places to eat are important in building a sense of community.<sup>3</sup>

Survey respondents from multiple cities including Glasgow (43%), London (41%), Manchester (40%), and Birmingham (37%) agreed that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes are one of the top three biggest enhancers of community spirit.<sup>3</sup>

More than half (58%) of Brits agreed that they feel “at home” at their local restaurant, with 15% saying they are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners.<sup>3</sup>

86% noted that the whole community can suffer when a local pub closes.<sup>4</sup>

# Economic Impact

Even as the cost of living rises, people still want to gather: dining demand remains steady in the UK, staying nearly flat **year-over-year** (September 2023), according to OpenTable data.<sup>5</sup>

And despite a few challenging years for the industry, restaurants continue to open. In 2022, there were over 150,000 restaurants in the UK - an increase of 8% on 2019 - with London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool seeing some of the biggest growth.<sup>1</sup>

The number of people employed by the hospitality sector is also growing, rising from 1.46 million in 2019 to 1.56 million in 2021 - a 7% increase - according to the Office for National Statistics 2023 figures on Britons employed in the hospitality industry.<sup>2</sup>

## Increase in number of restaurants\* from 2019 to 2022:<sup>1</sup>

### Birmingham



### Manchester



### Liverpool



### London



### Glasgow



### Edinburgh



\*Includes restaurants, bars, cafes, pubs, takeaway food shops, and mobile food stands

# Economic Impact

The OnePoll study also revealed that 35 minutes is the average time survey respondents are willing to travel to dine out at their favourite restaurants.<sup>3</sup>

Whatsmore, almost two-thirds (64%) of people agreed that they either ‘frequently’ or ‘sometimes’ will stay in the area to experience other paid activities before or after a meal, such as shopping and visiting the cinema,<sup>3</sup> demonstrating the role restaurants can play in stimulating the larger economy of a place.

***“Manchester has a vibrant culinary scene that continues to go from strength to strength, and I love being a part of it. Guests often plan their trip with us in great detail, including retail therapy or a visit to the cinema, before they join us to dine – they like to make a proper day of it. At Menagerie, we are proud to create a sense of occasion in everyday moments.”***

*Karina Jadhav, Owner of Menagerie Restaurant & Bar, Manchester*

## Respondents of the OnePoll study say that restaurants help boost their local economies by:



providing jobs locally



encouraging spending in the local area



increasing footfall in the area



encouraging people to move to the area



# Personal Wellbeing

Research shows nearly a third (31%) of Brits agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes add value to their wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> Green and blue spaces (44%), local amenities including the gym and library (36%), and neighbours (32%) are also key factors that made the list.<sup>3</sup>

This number is even higher in London – 37% of Londoners agreed that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes add value to wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> Other factors include: having access to transport links (40%), local amenities including the gym and library (39%), green and blue spaces (38%), and neighbours (29%).<sup>3</sup>



***“Dining out gives the brain a multi-sensory experience and stimulates many different regions across the brain. Socialising at restaurants encourages the release of dopamine (the reward hormone), serotonin (mood) and oxytocin (bonding), which can ultimately reduce stress and make us happier.”***

***Dr Tara Swart, Neuroscientist and Doctor***

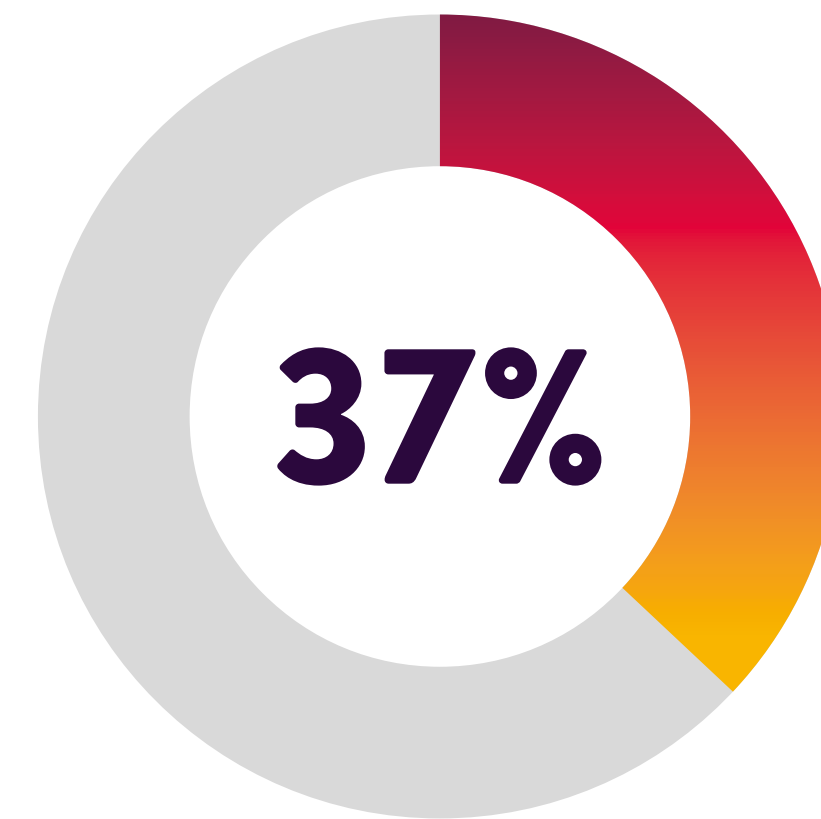


# Sense of Community

Restaurants, pubs, and cafes are a key factor in strengthening community spirit and creating a sense of belonging: almost two-thirds (64%) of people in the UK believe local restaurants are important in building a sense of community and 57% of respondents agree that eating out locally brings people together.<sup>3</sup>

**Fraser Smith, Head Chef at Angels with Bagpipes in Edinburgh,** said, *“When you dine at a restaurant, you want to have that sense of belonging. We’re an independent family restaurant and that family approach runs through everything we do, from creating an atmosphere where staff are part of the family, to sourcing locally, and of course creating a sense of community for our guests.”*

Respondents from multiple cities, including Glasgow (43%), London (41%), Manchester (40%), and Birmingham (37%) also agreed that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes are one of the top three enhancers of community spirit.<sup>3</sup>



**of nationwide respondents say local restaurants, pubs, and cafes are one of the top three biggest enhancers of community spirit, alongside:<sup>3</sup>**



**Green / blue spaces**



**Local amenities e.g. gyms, supermarkets, library, Post Office**



**Neighbours**



**Community events e.g. village fetes**



# Sense of Community

Research also shows that more than half (58%) of respondents agreed that they feel “at home” at their local restaurant, with 15% saying they are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners, and 56% typically visiting their favourite local hospitality spot at least once a month.<sup>3</sup>

Almost one in three people (29%) said they go to local restaurants because they give back to the local community, and nearly one in four (23%) agreed it made them feel connected to their neighbours and local businesses.<sup>3</sup>

**Jordan Johnson, Co-Founder, Jam Delish in London** said, *“I founded Jam Delish in 2020 with my mum and sister - we wanted to bring our grandparents’ authentic, traditional Caribbean recipes to our local London neighbourhood, with a vegan spin. We take pride in getting to know our diners and their preferences, including making an effort to know their name and remembering their favourite dish, to help deliver an exceptional experience.”*

**The Open Arms report,<sup>4</sup> a study looking at the role of pubs in tackling loneliness, shows that there are wider benefits to individuals and communities beyond the simple act of eating a meal or drinking a beverage. The report demonstrates the importance of hospitality within local communities:**

**86%** noted that the whole community can suffer when a local pub closes

**64%** of survey respondents felt that the pub is one of the main places that people living in a local area can socialise

**76%** felt that the hospitality venue where they work makes a positive contribution to the local community



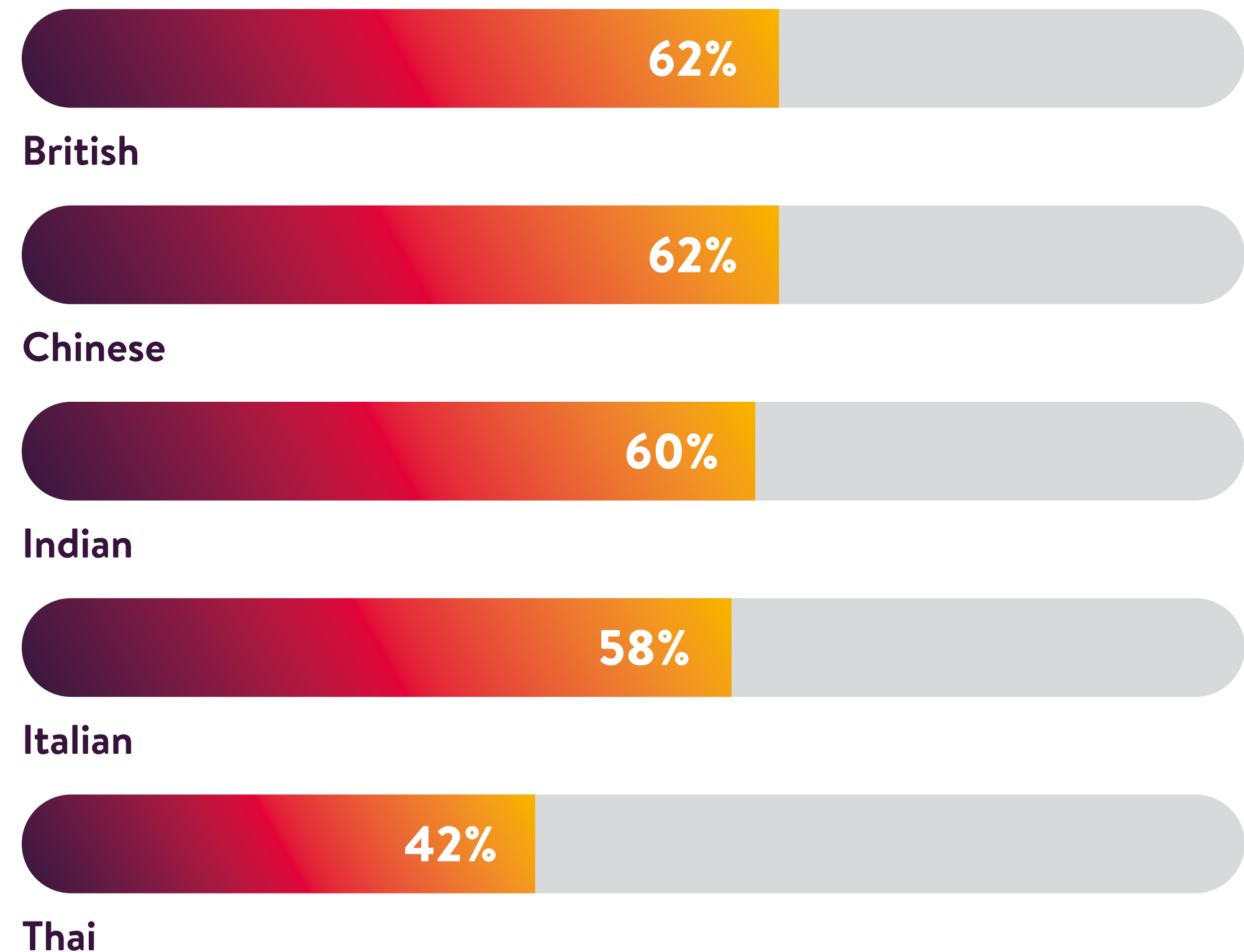
# Neighbourhood Gems: Discover a New Favourite Restaurant

Following London, which boasts 90 cuisines, Yorkshire came out on top for the number of food choices in the UK, with 40 different cuisines featured on the OpenTable platform, as of July 2023.<sup>6</sup> Manchester/ Greater Manchester boasts 31 different cuisines, and Birmingham/West Midlands offers 29.<sup>6</sup>

*“Novel experiences, variation in the kinds of foods that we eat - particularly from different cultures - can contribute to the plasticity of the brain as we age, leading to improved quality of life,”* said **Dr Tara Swart.**

To encourage Brits to get out and support their local eateries, if they can, OpenTable recently released curated lists of Neighbourhood Gems in [London](#), [Birmingham](#), [Edinburgh](#) and [Manchester](#), highlighting some of the restaurants that are most loved by locals across the UK.

**Nationally, when Brits were asked about their favourite type of cuisine offered by restaurants across the UK, the most popular were:<sup>3</sup>**





# Final Thoughts

Analysis shows that local restaurants can have a significant impact on both people and neighbourhoods, at a commercial and community level. They are important for communities and personal wellbeing, and can help stimulate their local economies by creating jobs and helping to drive footfall to the area.

*“Restaurants are an undeniable part of the fabric of local neighbourhoods across the UK. From individual wellbeing to collective economic growth, the positive influence and role restaurants play should be recognised and celebrated,”* said **Robin Chiang, SVP International Growth, OpenTable.**

*“At OpenTable we’re committed to supporting restaurateurs and the hospitality industry to make sure they can continue to serve their communities.”*



To show your support for the hospitality industry, and to discover and book restaurants near you, visit [www.opentable.co.uk](https://www.opentable.co.uk).

For restaurants interested in learning more about OpenTable and the tools, features and insights it offers, visit [restaurant.opentable.co.uk](https://restaurant.opentable.co.uk).



## Sources Cited

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2. Office for National Statistics. (2023, May 16). Business Register and Employment Survey. Nomis.
3. OnePoll UK. (2023, August). Survey of 5,000 UK adults, representative of the UK adult population age split. [Commissioned by OpenTable UK].
4. Thurnell-Read, D. T. (2021, January 29). The Open Arms Report: The Role of Pubs in Tackling Loneliness.
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6. OpenTable UK, (2023). Data looking at the number of cuisines that had at least one seated diner from 1st January – 31st July, 2023.



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



# London

**59%**

of Londoners agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**63%**

of London residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**17%**

of diners in London **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**19%**

of Londoners share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**37%**

of Londoners agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**63%**

of diners in London believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**42%**

of London residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**60%**

of Londoners **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**33%**

of Londoners, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**39 mins**

**is how long**, on average, **Londoners are prepared to travel to dine** at one of their favourite restaurants



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



**58%**

of Mancunians agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**60%**

of Manchester residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**14%**

of diners in Manchester **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**14%**

of people in Manchester share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**33%**

of Mancunians agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**62%**

of diners in Manchester believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**68%**

of Mancunians residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**55%**

of Mancunians **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**30%**

of Mancunians, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**32mins**

**is how long**, on average, **Mancunians are prepared to travel to dine** at one of their favourite restaurants



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



**55%**

of Glaswegians agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**63%**

of Glasgow residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**14%**

of diners in Glasgow **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**15%**

of people in Glasgow share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**33%**

of Glaswegians agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**66%**

of diners in Glasgow believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**65%**

of Glasgow residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**58%**

of residents in Glasgow **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**30%**

of Glaswegians, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**37 mins**

**is how long**, on average, **Glaswegians are prepared to travel to dine** at one of their favourite restaurants



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



# Edinburgh

**51%**

of Edinburgh diners agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**62%**

of Edinburgh residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**17%**

of diners in Edinburgh **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**14%**

of people in Edinburgh share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**25%**

of Edinburgh residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**67%**

of diners in Edinburgh believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**70%**

of Edinburgh residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**51%**

of residents in Edinburgh **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**32%**

of Edinburgh diners, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**40mins**

**is how long, on average, Edinburgh residents are prepared to travel to dine at one of their favourite restaurants**



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



**51%**

of people in Birmingham agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**62%**

of residents in Birmingham agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**14%**

of diners in Birmingham **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**14%**

of people in Birmingham share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**26%**

of people in Birmingham agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**54%**

of diners in Birmingham believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**55%**

of Birmingham residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**56%**

of residents in Birmingham **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**34%**

of people in Birmingham, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**34mins**

**is how long**, on average, **Birmingham residents are prepared to travel to dine** at one of their favourite restaurants



# What Locals Say About Their Dining Scene



**56%**

of Liverpoolians agree that **eating out locally brings people together**

**69%**

of Liverpool residents agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **are important to building a sense of community**

**18%**

of diners in Liverpool **are on a first name basis with their local restaurant staff or owners**

**18%**

of people in Liverpool share that **restaurant staff know their usual food and drink order**

**30%**

of Liverpoolians agree that local restaurants, pubs, and cafes **add value to their wellbeing**

**72%**

of diners in Liverpool believe that **neighbourhood restaurants help boost the local economy by encouraging spending in the area**

**74%**

of Liverpool residents believe that neighbourhood restaurants **help to boost the local economy by driving footfall**

**56%**

of residents in Liverpool **visit their favourite local hospitality venue at least once a month**

**39%**

of Liverpoolians, when asked why they choose to support local restaurants, stated that they **do so to help in the face of the cost of living crisis**

**33mins**

**is how long**, on average, **Liverpudlians are prepared to travel to dine** at one of their favourite restaurants