FOOD AND COOKING ARE INHERENTLY social. As long as humans have been gathering together, prepared foods have served as a centerpiece for celebrating and expressing care and creativity with others. Before MySpace and Facebook, the kitchen table served as the original social network. Today, broad-reaching mobile connectivity and social sharing are taking food sharing to entirely new levels. Go online today, and you’ll be hard pressed to find a social feed or stream without some sort of shared food experience such as recipes, reviews, photos, videos, comments, and posts. This issue of the Allrecipes Measuring Cup Report features highlights from our 2016 Food and Social Survey where we explore the social food experiences gaining the greatest traction among cooks, and the impact these experiences are having on shopping and cooking behaviors.

INSIGHT #1  A Seemingly Insatiable Craving

What is the primary reason you cook?

“I love to cook. It’s a passion for me.”

For the majority of home cooks, viewing food online is a daily or weekly routine. And for 51% of millennials, who are most likely to be glued to their smartphones, viewing food content is a daily habit. Cooks today have access to an endless supply of cooking information—whether to satisfy a sweet tooth or to travel via their taste buds to cultures far away from home. This effortless accessibility of food information and instruction is creating a generation of cooks with a heightened level of excitement about cooking. As the world’s largest food-focused social network, Allrecipes is benefitting from millennials’ fascination with cooking—39% of Allrecipes’ unique visitors are millennials, our largest and fastest-growing audience segment. Allrecipes’ millennial growth is pacing three times faster than the food category’s millennial growth (37% v. 12%) (source: comScore).
INSIGHT #2  Social Food Cravings Feed Home Cooking Renaissance

The surge of the distribution of food content online is driving a resurgence in the fascination with cooking; the more cooks are exposed to food content, the more excited they become about cooking. When asked how their cooking activity has changed over the past year, online cooks overwhelmingly responded that they are more excited and confident about cooking, and are making more meals at home. These responses were especially strong among millennial home cooks who spend the most time engaging with food experiences through social media.

INSIGHT #3  We Eat and Tweet When Bored

Many of us snack when we are bored. It turns out the same is true for consuming “virtual” food. One in four cooks (26%) say they are most likely to view food content on social sites when they are bored, and more than one in three (40%) say viewing social food content serves as a form of relaxation.
INSIGHT #4  It’s Okay to Play with Your Food

For many cooks, and especially millennials, food posts have become an important source of entertainment. Just like food itself, food posts bring people closer together through fun, humor, and entertainment. For one-third of cooks (30%), food posts keep them more closely connected with family and friends—taking the notion of shared meals to an entirely new level.

Reasons for engaging with social food posts

- **Fun**
  - Millennials: 68%
  - GenX: 57%
  - Boomers+: 41%
- **Inspiration**
  - Millennials: 59%
  - GenX: 50%
  - Boomers+: 33%
- **Entertainment**
  - Millennials: 35%
  - GenX: 31%
  - Boomers+: 21%
- **Stay connected with friends & family**
  - Millennials: 29%
  - GenX: 31%
  - Boomers+: 29%
- **They make me laugh**
  - Millennials: 14%
  - GenX: 9%
  - Boomers+: 6%

INSIGHT #5  A More Social Path to Purchase

The broad reach and creative formats of social sites offer brands new formats for connecting with audiences through native advertising. Brand integrations allow advertisers to infuse their brands and products directly into feeds and communities through posts, recipes, profiles, savings offers, photos, and videos. When asked, cooks say that sites such as Facebook and Allrecipes are the most influential when it comes to swaying purchase decisions for CPG brands.

The likelihood social activity will influence home cooks’ food/beverage product purchases

- **Facebook post**
  - 50%
- **Allrecipes recipe**
  - 42%
- **Pinterest pin**
  - 33%
- **YouTube video**
  - 25%
- **Blog post**
  - 21%
- **Instagram post**
  - 21%
- **Tweet**
  - 13%
- **Snapchat snap**
  - 7%
INSIGHT #6  Sensational Food Rules the Day

Brands’ posts on social sites have varying degrees of influence on cooks’ purchasing behaviors. These behaviors are likely tied to the environment and content mix offered within different social feeds. Survey results support that cooks have a heightened degree of interest in food as a form of entertainment—with post descriptions such as controversial, humorous, and shocking ranking higher on image-centric sites such as Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat.

**Millennials’ favorite food posts by social sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Site</th>
<th>Beautiful</th>
<th>Clever</th>
<th>Humorous</th>
<th>Shocking</th>
<th>Controversial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSIGHT #7  Not Just Any Recipe

While beauty, cleverness, and humor prevail in feeding cooks’ appetites for entertainment, peer approval and predictability top the charts for helping cooks select recipes. Forty-seven percent of cooks polled say positive ratings and reviews are the most important influence when selecting recipes, followed by lots of photos and likes.

**What’s most important when selecting recipes for you and your family?**

- Lots of positive reviews and ratings: 76% (Millennials), 59% (GenX), 51% (Boomers+)
- Lots of photos: 42% (Millennials), 27% (GenX), 15% (Boomers+)
- Lots of likes: 63% (Millennials), 44% (GenX), 27% (Boomers+)
- Lots of comments: 51% (Millennials), 48% (GenX), 46% (Boomers+)
- Recipe has a video: 43% (Millennials), 39% (GenX), 26% (Boomers+)
- Lots of repins: 26% (Millennials), 26% (GenX), 26% (Boomers+)
With Confidence and Positive Experiences Comes Trust

There’s no doubt posts that are beautiful, outlandish, or make cooking look impossibly easy are bound to capture our attention. However, when it comes to filling grocery carts and preparing family meals, sites that cooks trust most are those that offer content, community, and conversation focused on a cook’s success. In Allrecipes’ 2016 Food and Social Survey, cooks say the most trusted sites for food/recipe information are Allrecipes, Facebook and Pinterest.

Which sites do you trust for food/recipe information?

- **36%** Allrecipes
- **21%** Facebook
- **17%** Pinterest
- **10%** Food blogs
- **10%** YouTube
- **3%** Instagram
- **2%** Buzzfeed
- **1%** Twitter
Methodology

Data cited in this Measuring Cup Report is derived from an external independent panel fielded January 27, 2016, which consisted of 1,500 U.S. based participants. All respondents view food content online, cook at home multiple nights per week and are the primary grocery shopper for their household.

About Allrecipes

Allrecipes, the world’s largest food-focused social network, receives more than one billion visits annually from home cooks who inspire and inform cooking through shared recipes, photos, reviews, collections, profiles, and videos. Since its launch in 1997, the Seattle-based social site has served as a dynamic, indispensable resource for cooks of all skill levels seeking trusted recipes, entertaining ideas, everyday and holiday meal solutions, and cooking instruction. Allrecipes is a global, multi-platform brand with 19 sites, three mobile apps, and 15 eBooks serving 24 countries in 13 languages. Allrecipes magazine, recognized by MIN as the 2013 Magazine Launch of the year, boasts a readership of 7.5 million cooks.

About Meredith Corporation

Meredith Corporation (NYSE:MDP; www.meredith.com) is the leading media and marketing company serving American women. Meredith features multiple well-known national brands—including Allrecipes, Better Homes and Gardens, Martha Stewart Living, Parents, Family Circle, My Weddings, Shape, American Baby and Every Day with Rachael Ray—along with local television brands in fast-growing markets. Meredith is the industry leader in creating content in key consumer interest areas such as home, family, food, health and wellness and self-development. Meredith uses multiple distribution platforms—including print, television, digital, mobile, tablets, and video—to give consumers content they desire and to deliver the messages of its advertising and marketing partners.