

## Research shows insight into F&B experiences

The latest research from guest experience management experts HGEM has revealed diners' views on hotel food and beverage, gathering information from both guests' and non-residents' experiences.



The survey demonstrated an openness from both groups to dine in hotel restaurants, with 42% of non-residents dining in hotels at least quarterly and 74% of hotel guests visiting for more than one meal a day during their stay.

Meal preferences varied, with 90% of hotel guests most likely to eat breakfast and just 8% likely to stay in the hotel for dinner. For non-residents, however, over half (54%) said they would be most likely to visit for dinner and only 4% opted for breakfast.

Those surveyed were generally positive about hotel menus, almost half (46%) rating the variety of dishes as 'good'. However, 50% feel that there is room for improvement when catering for specific dietary requirements.

Social media and word-of-mouth emerged as the most popular ways to find out about hotel restaurants, yet a huge 87% said more could be done to advertise to non-residents.

When questioned, 31% of non-residents said that they would visit a hotel restaurant to celebrate a special occasion, with others citing reasons including menu quality and hotel reputation. However, cost was deemed to be a factor, with 82% of respondents perceiving hotels to be more expensive than other venues.

Sally Whelan, founding director at HGEM, said: "Over the years we have seen the rise of 'standalone' restaurants, typically run by renowned chefs. However, for most hoteliers, the challenge to keep residents eating more frequently in-house and attracting non-residents to enjoy their restaurants is greater than ever. These are unprecedented times, with so much choice and the immediacy of information and reviews on social media playing a major role. Competition is fierce.

"Our survey illustrates real opportunities for hoteliers around product, pricing and experience. Don't operate in isolation – know what is on offer in your area and find a way to differentiate, whether through your menu, service or added value to create memorable experiences. Making it easy for potential guests to find out about your restaurant and book a table is also crucial.

"Hotels are used to managing food intolerances and allergies, so why not create a campaign promoting the initiatives you are using? A number of high street operators are already winning a loyal following through this and, as 50% of our respondents see it is an area for an improvement, it could mean a better experience for half your guests."

HGEM provides hospitality operators with tools for intelligence gathering, guest engagement and learning, working closely with them on guest experience management.