

Consumer Trends: Fewer Organic Claims Made in Restaurant Menus

CHICAGO (PRNewswire) — Recently, consumer confidence in the food industry has been shaken by food scandals, lack of transparency in food preparation and questionable treatment of animals. As a result, restaurants have shifted their business practices to introduce a greater number and wider variety of claims that reflect trending food concerns, in hopes of regaining consumers' trust. According to [Mintel Menu Insights](#) [1], while "organic" is still the leading ethical claim on restaurant menus, its usage declined 28% between Q4 2010-13.

"The reality is that organic foods are quite expensive and consumers are looking for alternative claims to help them determine what other types of menu items are safe and of good quality to eat. Tying into this, we are seeing a return to tried-and-true, traditional preparations, signaled by claims tied to classic, original, homemade, etc.," says Julia Gallo-Torres, category manager - US foodservice Oxygen reports.

While organic is in decline, claims like "gluten free" are appearing more frequently on restaurant menus, posting a 200% increase between Q4 2010-13, and accounting for 40% of the total growth in ingredient nutritional claims on the menu during the same time period. Meanwhile, the biggest growth in ingredient claims came from nutritional claims (up 14%) and geographic claims (up 12%).

"Many Americans look to menu information to eat better and healthier. Nutritional claims signal that certain foods can contribute to general health. In terms of geographic claims, consumers are seeking dining experiences that are more authentic and these claims also can convey a healthier presentation," continues Julia.

Mintel Menu Insights also found that consumers are looking for foods that are representative of being homemade; for example, the claim "made from scratch" is contributing 10% to the overall growth of all restaurant menu claims. Also tying into this trend is the growth of claims such as original recipe, freshly-picked, farmstead and farm style. And as operators try to signal that their offerings are unique, "signature" as an ingredient marketing claim grew 34%.

"The number of allergen-related claims will continue to gain momentum, as more people are officially diagnosed with specific allergies and their families also go on restricted diets to help keep them healthy. Leaning towards health, there also is a surge in vegetarian and vegan foods. People also want to know where their foods are coming from. Consumers will continue to look to menus for guidance on what to eat," Julia concludes.

For more information about menu claims and how they relate to consumer food safety concerns, please join Julia Gallo-Torres and Paul Pendola, Mintel's new senior

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foodservice analyst, for a live webinar: Menu Claims: Addressing today's trending food concerns on April 29 at 2 PM CT. Register [here](#) [2].

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