

# STUCK IN A RESTAU-RUT

**COVID CONSEQUENCES: WE'RE A NATION OF REP-EAT-ERS AS OVER HALF OF BRITS SURVEYED ADMIT TO BEING CREATURES OF HABIT**

- **The UK's best restaurant discovery and booking platform, TheFork reveals nearly a quarter of bland Brits have not been to a new restaurant in over a YEAR**
- **Nervous nation: one in eight fear picking a new restaurant and getting it wrong more than not being pleased by a partner**
- **TheFork Festival launches today, offering diners the chance to spice up their dining habits with 50% off at hundreds of restaurants across the UK for the next 8 weeks**

**LONDON, October 14<sup>th</sup>** – Lifting the lid on just how un-adventurous post-pandemic Brits have become, research by TheFork.co.uk, the UK's best restaurant discovery and booking site, reveals how vanilla the nation is, as a whopping **64 per cent people** admit to being creatures of habit, while **31 per cent** confess to mundane meal-times only dining-out at places they have been before. The data reveals Brits have become a nation of rep-eat-ers; stuck in a lifestyle rut having lost the taste for flavour and adventure, opting not to add a pinch of bravery or a dash of excitement to their lives.

As food fatigue sweeps the nation, **over a quarter (27 per cent)** of people say they feel 'boring' because of their own selections, but **26 per cent** are too overwhelmed by choice to do anything other than stick with the same old. However, **over a quarter (27 per cent)** say they want to change, and spice up their eating out habits for the better.

As **26 per cent** of Brits say they feel being stuck in a rut and uninspired is holding them back from being more adventurous when it comes to dining out, TheFork has launched TheFork festival, enabling uninspired Brits the ability to discover new cuisines and 50% off food at hundreds of restaurants across the UK.

Locked in a lifestyle grind, with eating out habits and gastronomic choices firmly a damp squib; just under a quarter (**24 per cent**) of those polled admit to not having eaten out at a new restaurant in over a year, **18 per cent** are opting to eat where they know rather than trying something new, and a sad **15 per cent** even say they default to a go-to dish everytime without fail.

When it comes to the reasons for playing it safe, the research reveals **15 per cent** of Brits say a fear of disappointment is holding them back from being more adventurous and a massive **50 per cent** say the feeling of being disappointed in yourself for not being more adventurous and braver is worse than the feeling of failing a driving test. One in eight (**13 per cent**) fear picking a bad restaurant more than meeting the in-law's for the first time, **14 per cent** fear choosing a bad restaurant more than Sunday night work fear and **18 per cent** are more fearful of a bad dining venue than losing their mobile phone.

Decision paralysis has never been more real with **one in eight (13 per cent)** admitting they're a dithering diner, spending at least 168 hours researching where to eat out before getting cold feet and reverting back to an old favourite haunt over trying something new. With **42 per cent** going on to reveal they are more predictable in their restaurant choice than choosing underwear!

**Charles Spence, Experimental Psychologist at the University of Oxford commented:** "Many Brits narrowed down exposure to new tastes, flavours and cuisines, often without realising and the pandemic has resulted in many people seeking solace and comfort in familiar foods and nostalgia brands.

"It is human nature that when we are uncertain about the world and our place in it, it is common to gravitate more toward comfort foods, nostalgic flavours and brands that trigger the associated memories of better times.

"If people are admitting to feeling bored or in a rut, it is important to not only recognise the issue but also look at solutions to combat these negative feelings. Something as simple as dining out at a new restaurant could be the remedy to get out of a rut.

"Taste and trial supports opening the mind to new experiences. This will undoubtedly have significant mental health benefits. Having new experiences, and adopting new, positive changes can help to get people out of routines that may otherwise be impacting them in a negative way."

**Patrick Hooykaas, TheFork, Regional Managing Director said:** "It's fantastic to see people are going back to restaurants following the ups and downs of the pandemic, spending time and creating memories with loved ones. However, we can clearly see from our research that over a quarter of Brits surveyed have become less adventurous, and feel stuck in a rut and uninspired when it comes to eating out, that is why we have launched TheFork festival, offering 50% off food at hundreds of UK restaurants, to encourage people to get thefork out, discover new restaurants and cuisines and try something new.

"Money certainly plays a part in people being less bold as a quarter (25 per cent) claim finances as the main reason for not being adventurous – meaning people look at cheaper, closer to home options to add some zest into their lives.

“Despite this, the research does show people are wanting to be adventurous, with many recognising they are feeling in a rut.

“With our 6-week-long festival launching today and offering diners 50% off at restaurants across the UK, we hope price becomes less of a barrier for people to get out and about. The festival is all about exploration and discovery, giving diners the chance to put some variety back into their seemingly dreary dining habits, trying some of the many cuisines and delicious dishes our range of restaurant partners have on the menu.”

### **Charles Spence on how can people get out of their restau-rut, and try something different**

**WHEN:** No one wants to get experimental with breakfast. So, the best time to try something new is later in the day. Probably also later in the week. In shopping centres, the healthy food outlets tend to do well at the start of the week, the indulgent locations peak at the end of the week. Timing is everything.

**WITH WHOM:** We also find that people are more willing to try something new, like entomophagy (eating insects) when they are out with friends rather than at a family meal or on a romantic date. Discovering a new restaurant to dine in, or trying a new meal are simple, easy steps but help to recapture a sense of adventure through new discovery. The people around you are crucial and can help you get out of a rut.

**AWARENESS:** Part of the solution also starts with recognising the food ruts and routines we may have slipped into. Sensory deprivation so many of us have experienced under lockdown takes its toll and as we begin to get back to some way of normality, I believe people will want to experience new things and get their sense of adventure back sooner rather than later.

This lifestyle survey of 2,000 people, comes as TheFork Festival is set to mix-up meal times, adding flavour back to Brit’s beige lives with 50% off at hundreds of restaurants across the UK from **now until November 28th**. Get TheFork out! and discover something new with [TheFork Festival](#). Visit [www.thefork.co.uk](http://www.thefork.co.uk) or download TheFork app from the [Apple](#) and [Google](#) app stores to find out more.

**- ENDS -**

### **Notes to editors:**

#### **ABOUT THEFORK**

TheFork, a Tripadvisor Company is the leading online restaurant reservation platform. TheFork’s mission is to connect restaurants and diners, with a network of more than 80,000 partner restaurants worldwide. With 22 million reviews and 28 million downloads of its app, TheFork has become the smart move to make to get a table!

Through TheFork (website and app), as well as through Tripadvisor, users can easily select a restaurant according to their preferences, consult user reviews, check real-time availability and instantly book online 24/7. For restaurants, TheFork provides a software solution, TheFork Manager, to optimise reservation management, streamline operations and ultimately improve service and revenue.

The platform operates in 22 countries as "TheFork" in France, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, and as "ElTenedor" in Spain. In 2019, TheFork acquired Bookatable and expanded into the UK, Germany, Austria, Finland and Norway markets.

**Footnotes:**

*\*The research was conducted by Censuswide, with 2,000 respondents aged 16+ in the UK between 6.10.21-8.10.21. The survey was conducted from a nationally representative sample of UK adults. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.*

*\*\*methodology calculated based on number of hours in a week (168) relative to 13% of survey respondents stating they spend "At least a week to research somewhere new, but end up booking an old restaurant I've been to before"*