

Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy Canadian foodservice findings for the week of May 5, 2025

Image Source: Shutterstock



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Are Canada's top chains still expanding?

Technomic's newly released top 250 Canadian chain restaurant performance data reveals that 50% of all tracked chains grew by at least one new location in 2024, a slight reduction from the 52% benchmark observed in 2023.

BarBurrito led all brands in new openings this year, adding 67 new stores to its footprint. Other leading brands such as Firehouse Subs and Popeyes helped drive total new openings to nearly 1,000 new locations among the group.

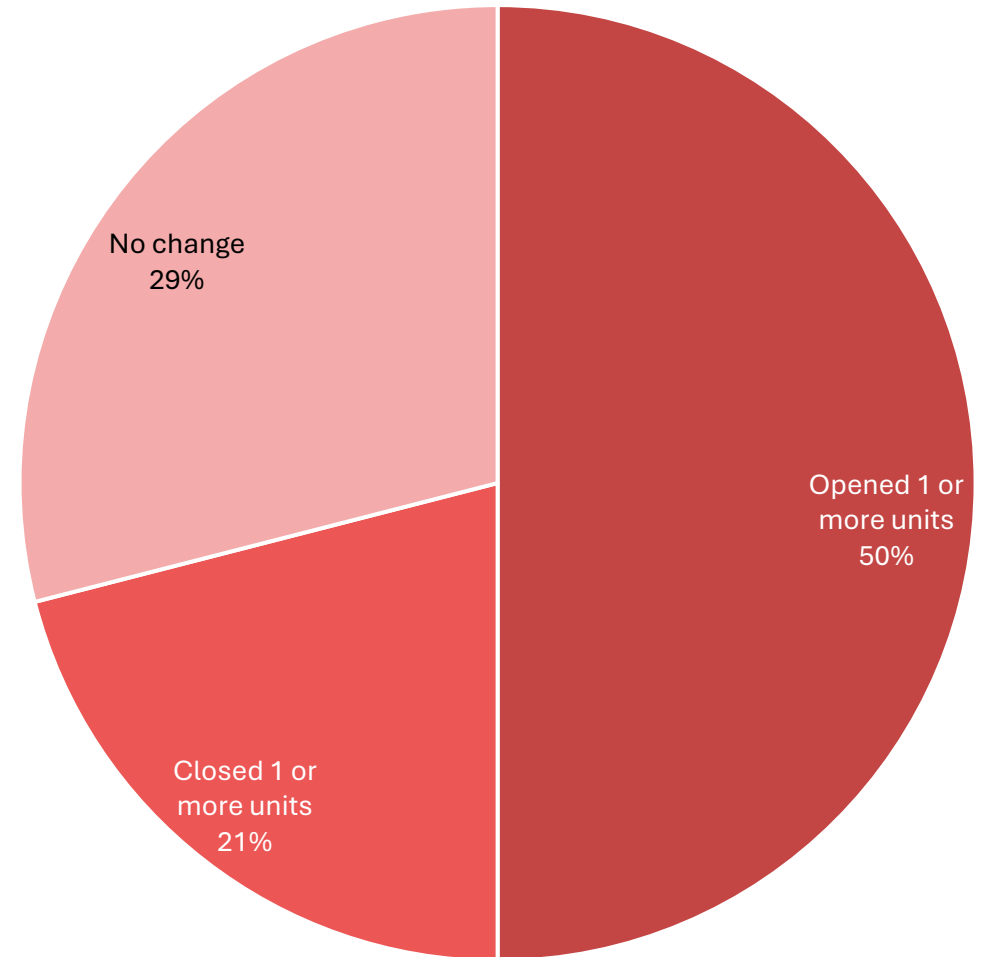
Only 21% of the top 250 chains saw their location footprint shrink by at least one location in 2024, edging up slightly from the 19% benchmark the year prior.

Over a quarter (29%) of chains experienced no change in total location count on a year-over-year basis, which was consistent with the prior year.

[Ignite Company clients: Click here for more](#)

Source: Technomic Ignite Company

TOP 250 CHAIN RESTAURANTS
NET CHANGE IN CA LOCATIONS VS. PRIOR YEAR



Ignite Menu

Fastest-growing fruits in desserts

Operators are highlighting both classic and lesser-known fruits in desserts across Canadian menus. Rhubarb is the fastest-growing fruit in desserts. The tart fruit is appearing as a compote or preserve in cheesecake and by itself after being poached. Although it is commonly paired with strawberries, operators are now menuing it with other ingredients as well, such as pistachio in cakes and ice cream.

Yuzu, an East Asian citrus fruit, is also on the rise. It is often combined with lemon atop ice cream or as a mousse, which mixes the floral, tart taste of yuzu with the sharper flavour profile of lemon. Operators are also spotlighting caramelized or curded yuzu for an interesting preparation method.

Operators are mainly menuing peach in cold desserts. Frozen options include peach ice cream, gelato, sorbet and frozen yogurt.

Dates, which can be used as a natural sweetener, are also growing in desserts. This tropical fruit is popping up in vegan desserts, including vegan cheesecake or date bars alongside oats and brown sugar.

Another tropical fruit, coconut, rounds out the top five list. It is often paired with seeds such as chia, flax, pumpkin and sunflower varieties in puddings and cookies for health-forward desserts. Other popular uses include carrot cake, cheesecake and coconut cream pie. Fun frozen offerings include coconut-flavoured sorbet and ice cream.

[Ignite Menu clients: Click here for more](#)

Source: Technomic Ignite Menu data, Q4 2023-Q4 2024
Image Source: Shutterstock

FASTEST-GROWING FRUITS IN DESSERTS

Q4 2023-Q4 2024

RHUBARB

+90.0%

YUZU

+60.0%

PEACH

+20.8%

DATES

+17.4%

COCONUT

+17.0%



Ignite Consumer

Shift in value priorities at limited service

Newly released data from Ignite Consumer reveals a changing value proposition for Canadian diners.

When selecting a limited-service restaurant for an occasion, the percentage of consumers who say that value through quick, high-quality service is very important has significantly decreased over the past three years.

At the same time, the percentage of diners who say that value through high-quality menu items is very important has increased.

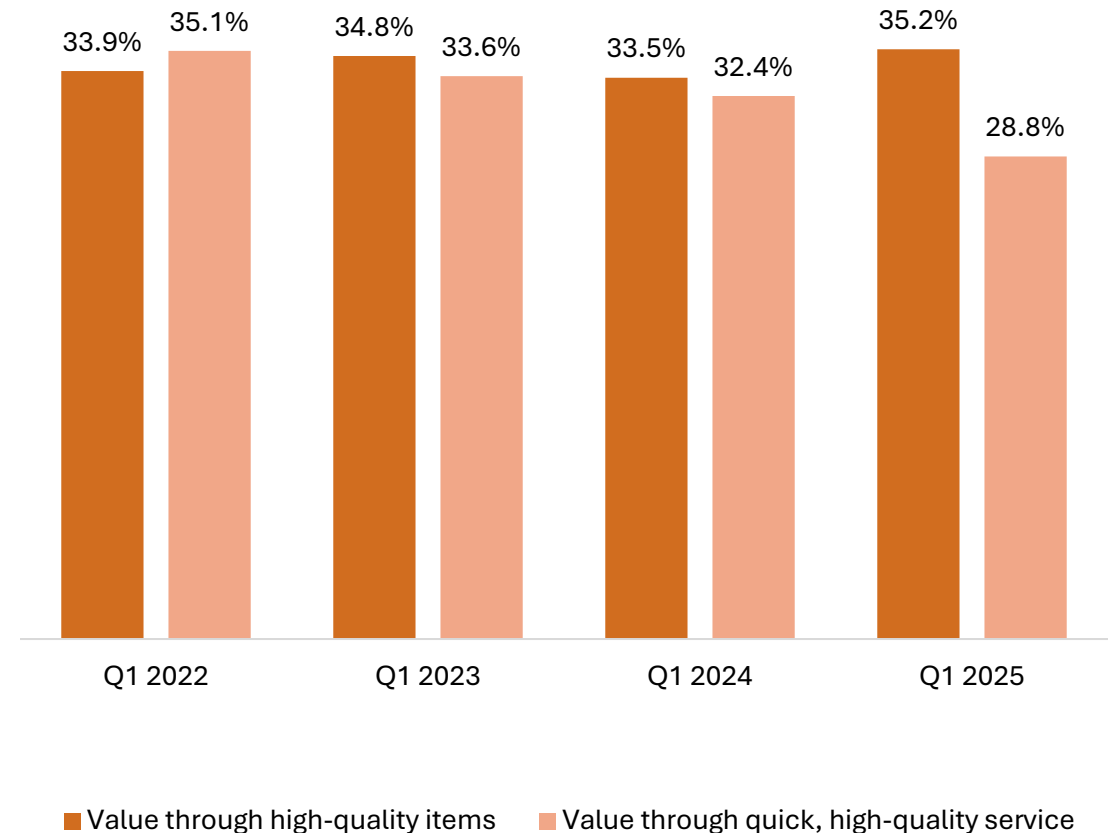
While speedy service will continue to be an important pillar of limited-service dining, this data reveals that it is becoming less important to diners when choosing one restaurant over another.

Restaurant operators and suppliers alike must keep food quality top of mind to attract and retain guests in today's environment.

[Ignite Consumer clients: Click here for more](#)

Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer, Q2 2024-Q1 2025

% VERY IMPORTANT WHEN SELECTING A LIMITED SERVICE RESTAURANT



Global enthusiasm for foodservice tech

Two stories emerge from recent data surveying consumers about their interest in a variety of foodservice-related technologies.

Respondents in Asia, Latin America and, especially, the Middle East consistently overindex global averages in their enthusiasm for restaurant apps, in-store kiosks, robotics, dynamic menus and many other technologies increasingly offered by restaurants worldwide. Conversely, those in Europe and North America underindex for the same, often by substantial margins.

Outpacing any other region, Middle East consumers' interest in food-preparing and -serving robotics stands at about 15% over the global average. Similar

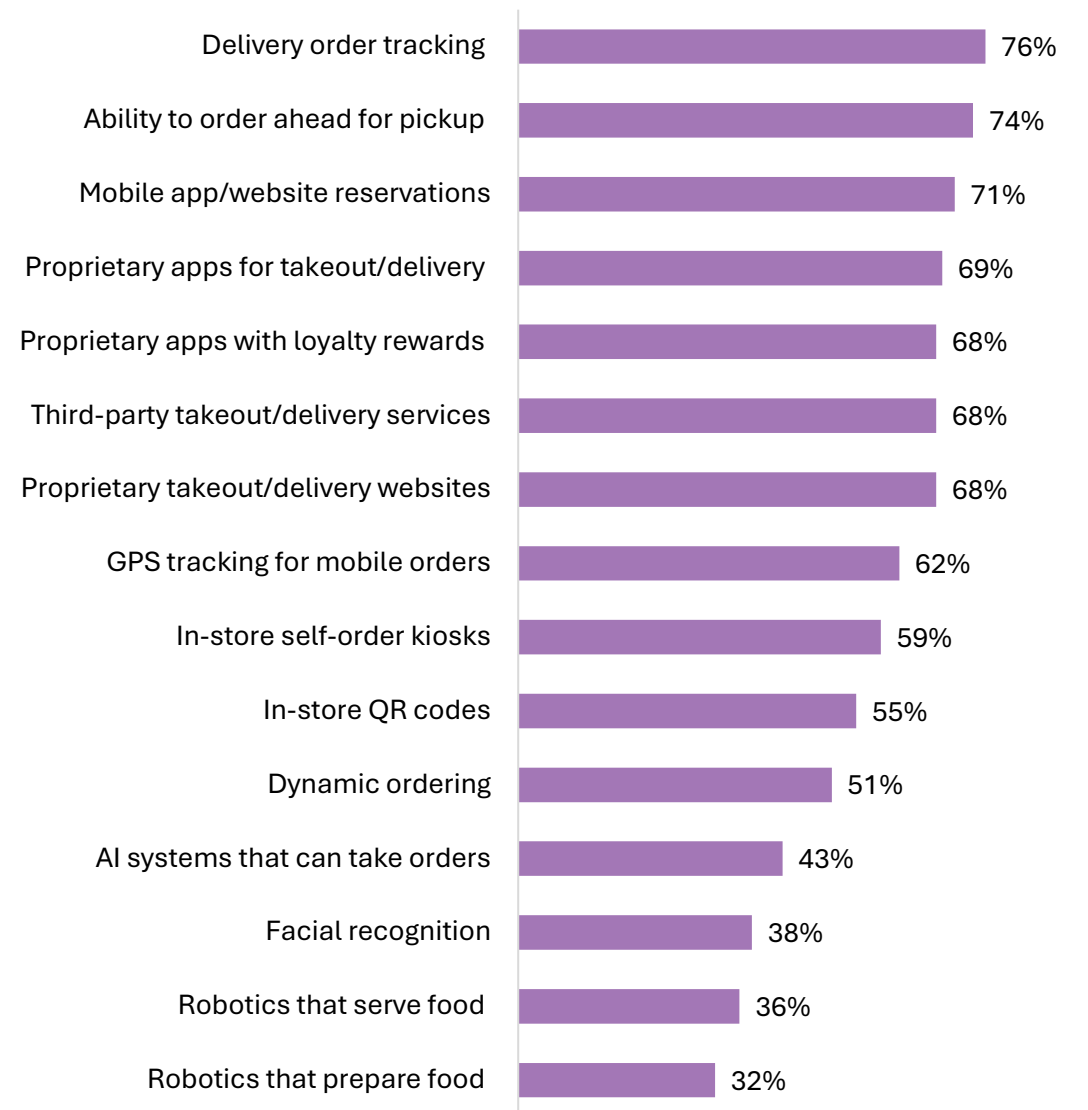
figures exist for Asia consumers' interest in in-store QR codes (+11%) and Latin American consumers' interest in proprietary apps capable of placing orders.

Asia and Middle East consumers again overindexed for interest in artificial intelligence capable of taking orders while Latin America consumers matched the global average (43%). These figures dropped to about a quarter of respondents in Europe and North America. No form of technology was more globally popular than delivery order tracking or, just behind it, the ability to order ahead for pickup, each with about three-quarters of respondents finding it somewhat or extremely appealing.

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Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program February 2025 consumer survey

% CONSUMERS DESCRIBING ___ AS SOMEWHAT OR EXTREMELY APPEALING



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We provide insights into consumer, industry and menu trends in the U.S., Canada and 23 markets around the world.

Our team of experts helps leaders in the industry make complex business decisions, set strategy and stay ahead of the curve.

Have questions?

Reach out to us today.

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