

# Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy foodservice findings  
for the week of Feb. 9, 2026



Image Source: Shutterstock

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# Track monthly sales and traffic for leading chains

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Monthly sales and traffic trends

Check averages with year-over-year changes

Sales and unit forecasts for the top 1,500 chains

Five-year industry forecast

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Ignite Company

# Independent restaurants contracted in 2025

The total number of independent restaurants across the U.S. declined by 2.3% in 2025, reflecting a net loss of more than 9,500 locations during the year. Independent restaurants finished the year with a total footprint of 412,498 locations, down from 422,001 in 2024.

The total number of full-service independent restaurants fell by 2.6% in 2025 compared to a 1.8% decrease for the limited-service segment.

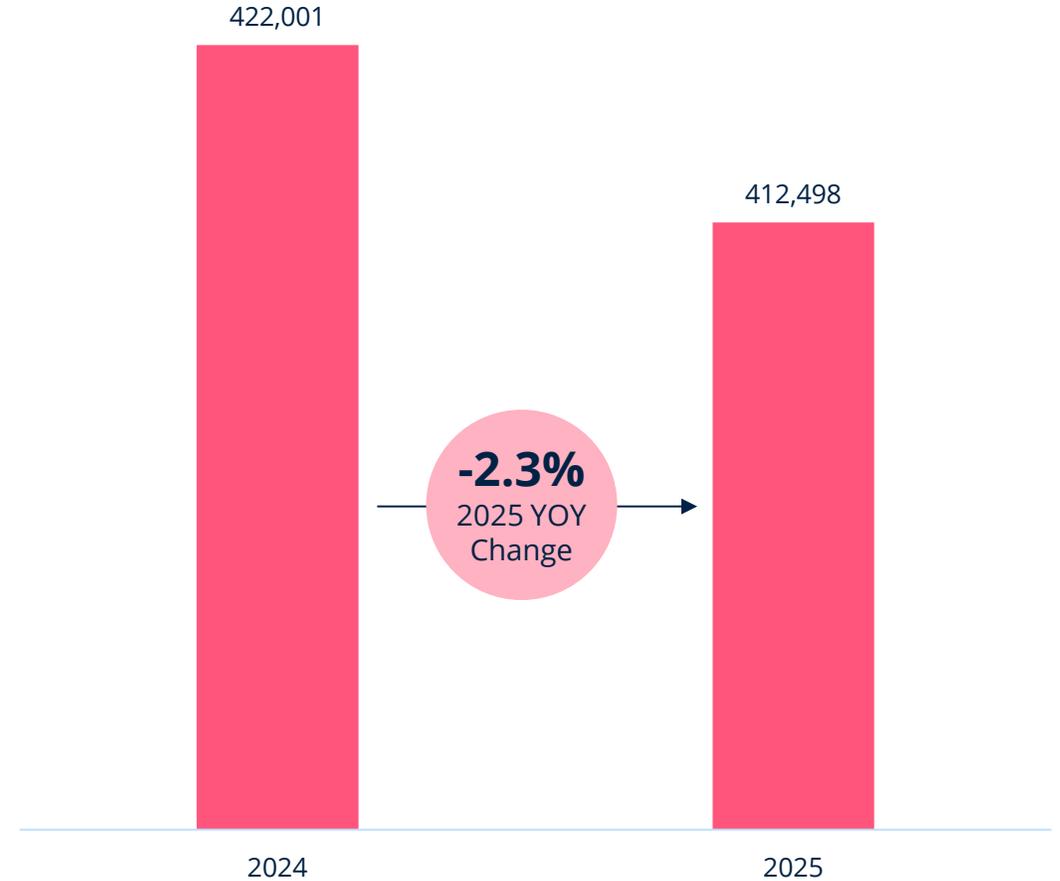
Additional insights can be found in Technomic's new *Independent Restaurant Location Intelligence* report, which summarizes opening and closure trends by state, segment and menu category.

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

Source: Ignite Location Targeting

Note: Independent restaurants includes all restaurants not associated with Technomic's top 1,500 chains

## U.S. INDEPENDENT RESTAURANTS TOTAL LOCATIONS AT YEAR-END



## Ignite Menu

# Alcohol-free beverages on the rise

With the launch of Technomic's new Ignite Menu Q4 2025 data, here are some key takeaways from adult beverage menus.

Overall, adult beverage mentions in the U.S. overall grew 1.8% over the last year. Categories that showed the greatest increases—most notably, alcohol-free beverages (+47%)—as well as spirits (+5%) and specialty drinks (+4%), are the same categories that saw growth in the previous Q2 2025 reporting.

Also tracking similarly to Q2, every wine category saw declining item counts, including white wine (-5%), other wines (-5%), Champagne/sparkling wine (-4%) and red wine (-4%).

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

Base: Top 500 chains, emerging chains and lodging operators with adult beverage menus

Source: Technomic Ignite Menu, Q4 2024-Q4 2025

\*Note: Includes all segments for which we track adult beverage in the U.S.

Image Source: Shutterstock

Despite declines in every wine category, certain wine types are seeing positive momentum, namely Bordeaux (+35%), moscato (+12%) and prosecco (+6%).

Diving deeper into the alcohol-free beverage category, other alcohol-free beverages (+233%), alcohol-free wine (+169%), alcohol-free cocktails and mixed drinks (+54%) and alcohol-free beer (+32%) are all on an impressive growth trajectory. This coincides with the top two fastest-growing brands: Ritual Zero Proof (+200%) and Seedlip (+80%).



# Growing importance of music selection in restaurant choices

Music has become a key ingredient in creating the perfect restaurant vibe, with its importance to diners growing by 10 percentage points overall between 2019 and 2025. What was once a minor detail now plays a bigger role in where consumers chose to go. Today's diners expect more than just good food—they want an atmosphere that feels right, and music plays a central role in setting the tone. The right playlist can transform a space, creating a vibe that's welcoming, memorable, and aligned with the overall dining experience.

This shift reflects a broader trend: restaurants are now destinations for experiences, not just meals. Music

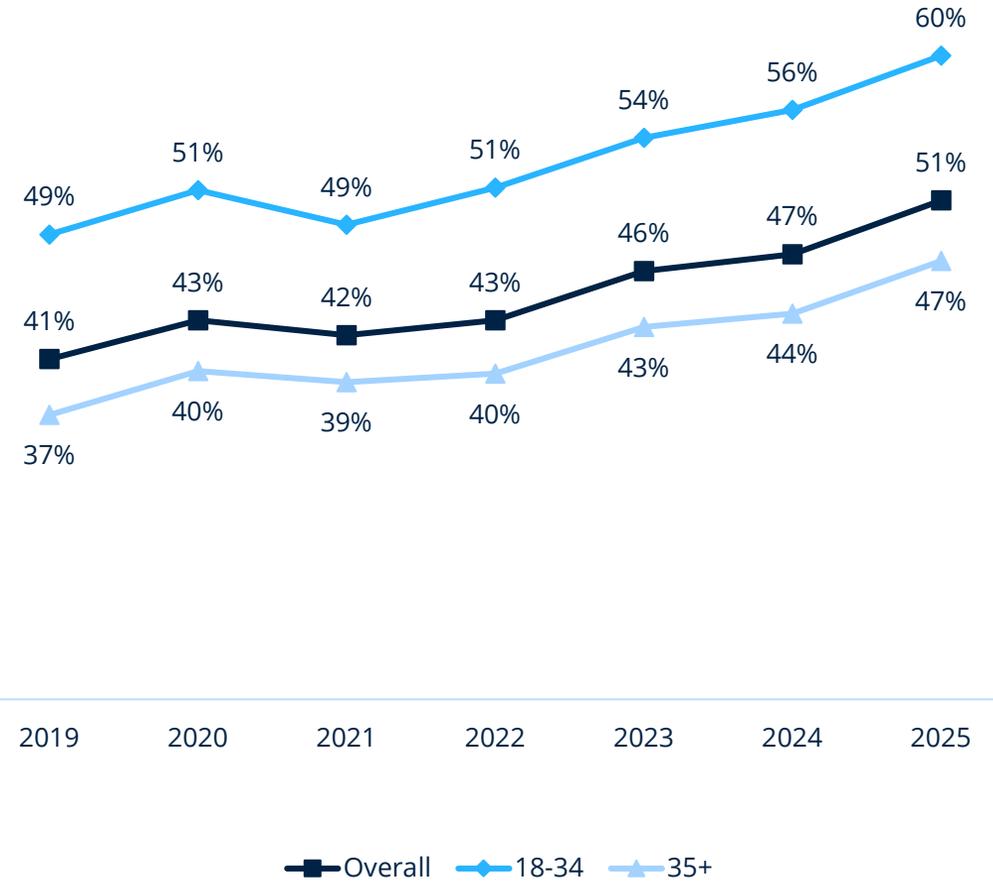
helps shape the mood, influences how long customers stay and even impacts how much they spend. For operators, this is both a challenge and an opportunity. Music can't be an afterthought anymore—it's a competitive edge. Curating playlists that match your brand and enhance the vibe is essential.

In 2026, diners aren't just choosing food—they're choosing the atmosphere, and music is the key to delivering it.

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

Base: 9,300 consumers ages 18+  
Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer

**IMPORTANCE OF "MUSIC SELECTION IS APPROPRIATE" WHEN SELECTING A RESTAURANT FOR AN OCCASION**  
% IMPORTANT/VERY IMPORTANT



## Global Foodservice Navigator Program

# Where is fried chicken most popular?

Fried chicken is a key dish for global operators, with nearly half of all consumers worldwide ordering it at least occasionally. Here are a few insights into how frequently global consumers order fried chicken at foodservice:

About two-thirds of consumers in Malaysia order fried chicken when dining out at least once every 90 days—the highest of any surveyed market and well above the global average of 42%.

Just under half of all consumers in Asia and the Middle East order fried chicken. These figures are slightly higher percentage than those in Latin America

and considerably higher than seen in North America or, especially, Europe.

Southeast Asia features a disproportionately high percentage of consumers ordering fried chicken compared both to the rest of Asia and to the global average.

Get more data-driven insights into global preferences and trends with Technomic's Global Foodservice Navigator Program.

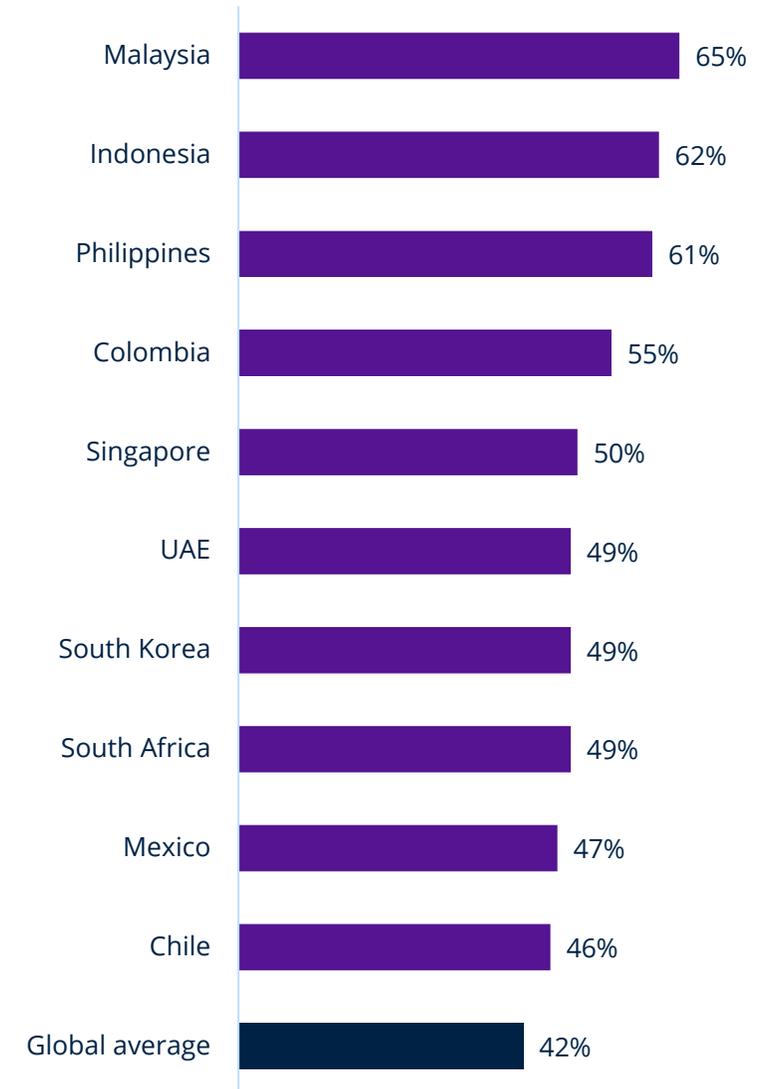
[Global Navigator clients: Click here for more](#)

Q: Which types of food do you order at restaurants or other dining establishments at least occasionally (once every 90 days)? Select all that apply.

Base: 8,602 global consumers

Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program Q3 2025 consumer survey

**% CONSUMERS ORDERING FRIED CHICKEN AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 90 DAYS**



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Since 1966, we have produced in-depth research focused on the foodservice industry.

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?

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312-876-0004  
[info@technomic.com](mailto:info@technomic.com)  
[technomic.com](http://technomic.com)