

Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy foodservice findings
for the week of Oct. 13, 2025



Image Source: Shutterstock

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Which menu category has gained the most share since 2019?

Paced by the success of players such as Raising Cane’s, Wingstop and Chick-fil-A, chicken chains have achieved the largest increase in sales share since 2019.

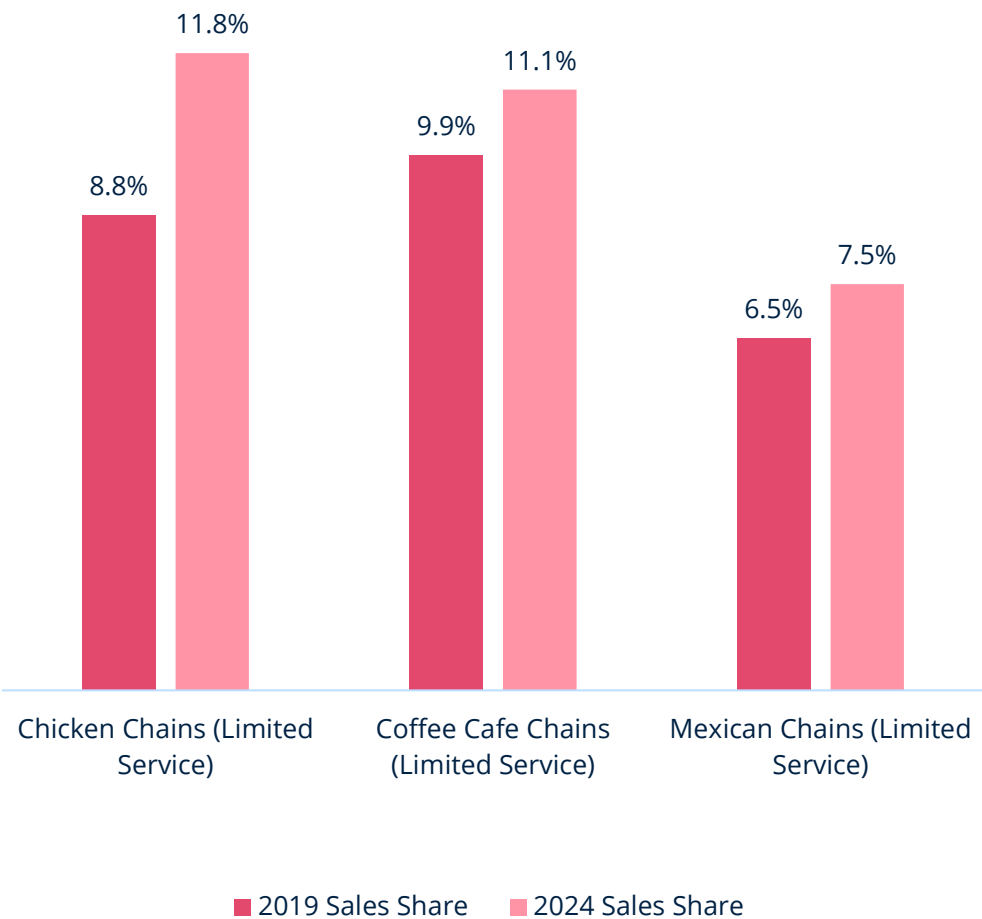
Total sales for all limited-service chicken chains rose to \$55 billion last year, accounting for 11.8% of all U.S. chain restaurant sales compared to 8.8% share in 2019.

Coffee cafe chains registered the next largest increase in sales share, growing from 9.9% in 2019 to 11.1% in 2024. This was followed by the Mexican chain category, which expanded from 6.5% to 7.5% during the same period.

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Source: Technomic Ignite Company

U.S. CHAIN RESTAURANTS
SHARE OF TOTAL ANNUAL U.S. SALES (%)



Menu ideas for winter 2025/2026

Technomic's recently published *Season's Eatings* report highlights winter flavors and ingredients, as well as providing recommended actions as to how they can be used in the upcoming winter season. For example, operators can throw cranberries in with roasted root veggies for a pop of sweet-tart flavor.

Here are some key themes for winter 2025/2026:

Utilize ingredients in unexpected ways

Play with menus by utilizing winter ingredients in nontraditional serving formats, such as infusing cinnamon

into meat preparations or cooking hazelnuts into pesto.

Focus on nutrients

Help combat winter colds by loading up menu items with seasonal additions that offer added health benefits, including vitamin-packed kale and mineral-rich sweet potato

Add bold pops of flavor

Put an upscale twist on common recipes by adding winter flavors for increased flavor sensation, such as cranberries for tartness or mint for freshness.



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

Parents and caregivers rely more heavily on restaurants

While rewarding, caring for children can be a challenging job. Recent data suggests one way that parents and caregivers are managing is with the help of restaurants.

On average, 67% of consumers report visiting or ordering from restaurants at least once a week or more often. However, for couples living with children in the home, that number jumps to 80%. Contrastingly, adults living with a spouse or significant other and no children report below-average weekly restaurant usage (65%).

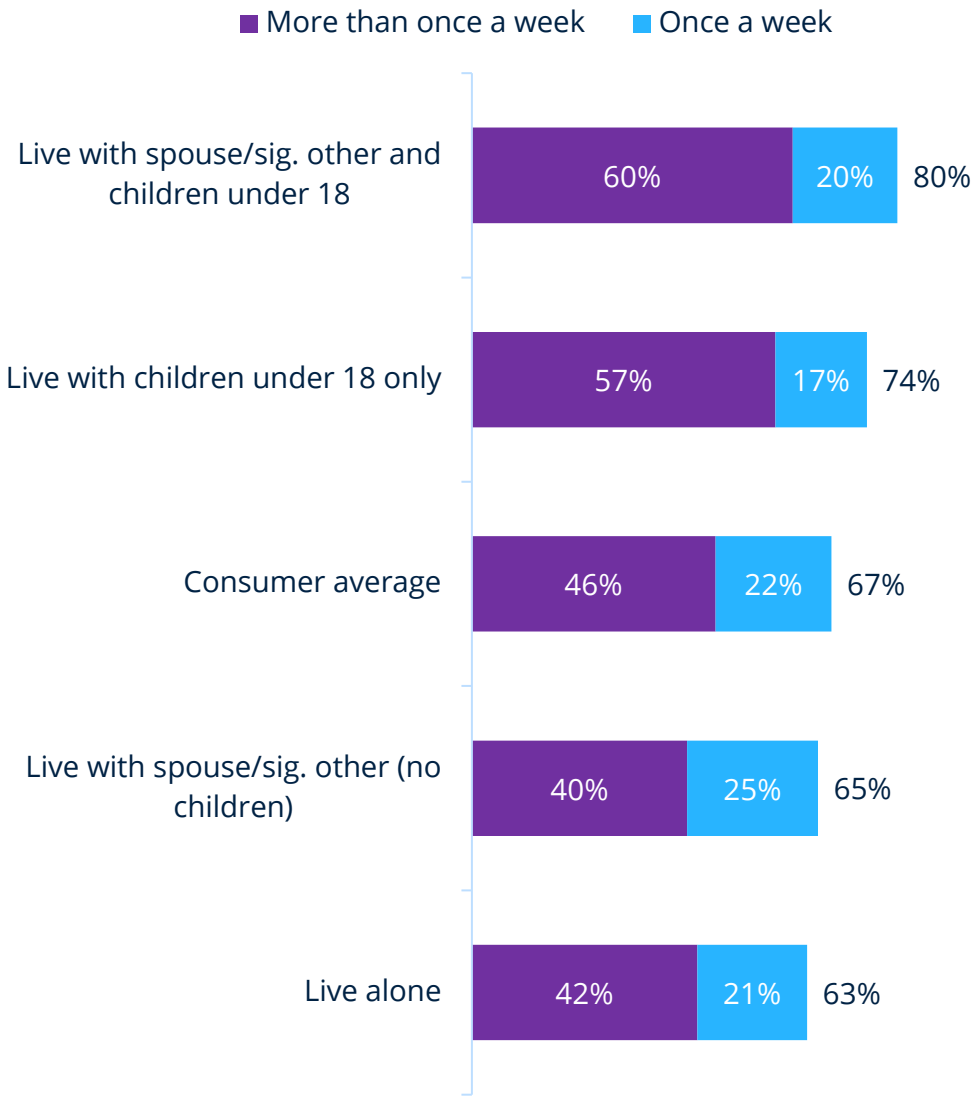
This 15-percentage-point gap between two-member household couples and families with children suggests frequent restaurant usage is more than an occasional convenience and often becomes a routine coping mechanism for busy families.

Restaurant operators and suppliers looking to better meet the needs of this high-frequency group may consider convenience-focused solutions and family-friendly options.

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Base: 112,000 consumers ages 18+
Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer, Q3 2024-Q2 2025

OVERALL RESTAURANT USAGE/FREQUENCY



Which chains are growing fastest-and where?

As detailed in its recent [Global 150 Chain Restaurant Report](#), Technomic's Global Foodservice Navigator program tracks chain unit changes and sales growth and decline on a year-to-year basis. Below are a few highlights from the report:

Half of the top 10 fastest-growing chains by location count worldwide are headquartered in East Asia, with four of these—including the top three spots—based in China.

In a market already known for sharp fluctuations in chain unit growth, several of these chains recorded eye-popping expansions, with Cotti Coffee's 68.3% growth claiming the top spot. This figure approximately doubles the second and third place increases,

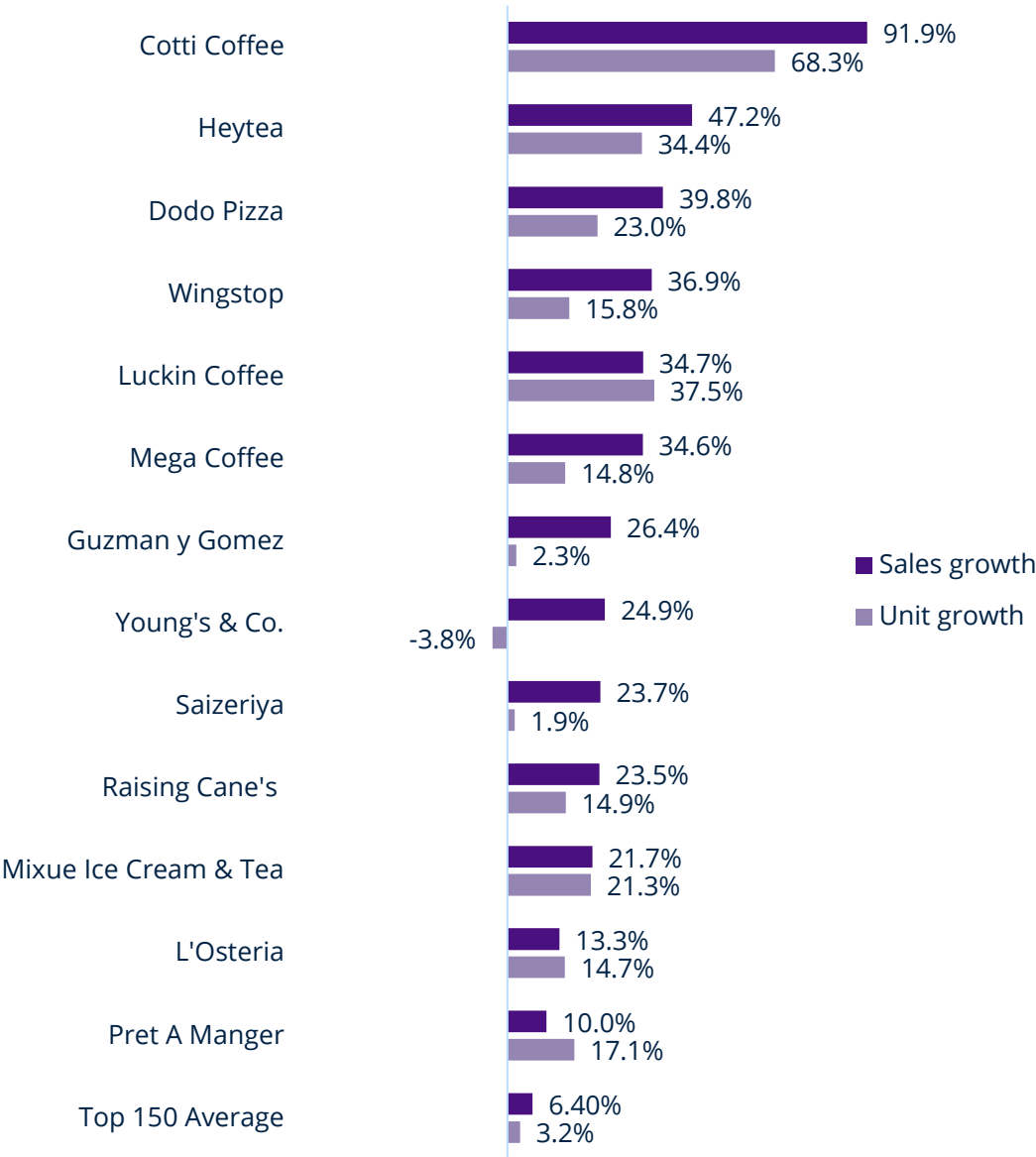
Luckin Coffee's 37.5% and Heytea's 34.4% growth.

By sales growth, East Asia chains again took half of the top 10 chains, with China-based operators accounting for three of these and Japan and South Korea claiming the other two.

As also seen when measuring chain growth by unit counts, quick-service beverage chains made up four of the top 10 brands, with three specializing in coffee (Cotti Coffee, Luckin Coffee and Mega Coffee) and the other, Heytea, a tea specialist.

Wingstop and Raising Cane's, two U.S.-based chicken specialists, appeared on both lists, notching noticeably above-average growth across each metric.

% CHANGE IN SALES GROWTH AND UNIT COUNTS, 2023-2024



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

Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program

Consumer Trend Reports

Consumers play it safe with flavor

As prices rise and consumers are unsure of how economic factors and tariffs may impact them, they're increasingly cautious toward paying more for unique ingredients. Only one-third (32%) of consumers say they're willing to pay more for premium ingredients, which highlights an important barrier to trial, especially for low-income groups.

Fear of paying for something they don't like is consumers' leading deterrent to trying new flavors, and it has grown from 39% to 43% since 2023. This demonstrates that consumers may be less willing to take risks or treat

themselves by trying new flavors amidst high prices; they'd rather spend their money on something they know they'll like. Still, innovation will remain a key way to enhance value perceptions and drive trial, even among cost-conscious individuals.

Get more data-driven insights on the retail foodservice space, including consumer attitudes, behaviors and perspectives with the *2025 Flavor Consumer Trend Report*.

[Learn more about Consumer Trend Reports](#)

Source: Technomic 2025 Flavor Consumer Trend Report
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