

## Social media driving millennials' interest in seafood

By Christine Blank

August 14, 2018



More millennials are dining on seafood as they seek healthy, sustainable proteins, according to recent statistics from a prominent U.S. television network.

Foodable, a provider of culinary-focused TV programming, recently took stock of the current state of U.S. seafood consumption, unearthing a picture of the modern American seafood eater in the process.

According to the network, the most prolific consumers of seafood in America right now are women aged 25 to 34 who live in California, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Washington. Many of these consumers are considered to be millennials, (generally defined as those born between 1981 and 1996), a generation of curious and seemingly social eaters, according to Foodable's latest findings.

Since last July, seafood has seen a 41 percent uptick in consumer social media mentions, Foodable Labs found. The network also tracked a considerable 318,630 total seafood conversations by brand advocates on social media over the past year.

Foodable TV's top 100 chefs seem to have heard the message about seafood's growing social popularity, with 42.3 percent of them increasing the number of seafood dishes featured on their menus since last July, the network revealed.

Linda Cornish, president of Seafood Nutrition Partnership, corroborated to SeafoodSource that social media mentions of seafood seem to be on the rise. This is partially due to restaurants serving up photo-ready meals, "making it easier and more appealing for millennials to share their poke bowl or sushi burrito on social media," she said.

While the photogenic nature of a seafood dish seems to be a big draw in today's social media-savvy world, that isn't the only reason millennials are gravitating toward the category. The adventure-factor has wide-ranging appeal, as does seafood's wellness benefits, according to Cornish.

“Many millennials pride themselves to be ‘foodies’ and are open to trying new seafood dishes,” she said.

Cornish said she is not surprised that health-conscious millennials – along with other demographic groups – are eating more seafood.

“Americans are suffering from a public health crisis. Seven out of 10 people are dying prematurely from preventable diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. Young people have witnessed family and friends living with chronic diseases that they know can be prevented with proper diet and exercise,” she said. “Millennials are more aware of the power of eating the right foods for good health, and seafood is a clear winner for its lean protein profile filled with vitamins, minerals, and essential omega-3 fatty acids. Research also shows that Millennials are driven by their desire to eat sustainably, wholesome and nutritious foods, and seafood fits well within that category.”

Restaurants are keeping up with a number of these food trends, offering healthy, novel dishes such as poke bowls, sushi burritos, grilled fish and shellfish options, seafood burgers, and fish tacos, Cornish noted.

*Photo courtesy of High Liner Foods*



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