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*This poll was conducted by the
Monmouth University Polling Institute*

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DINING OUT IN THE GARDEN STATE

Poll finds New Jersey restaurant scene rivals NYC and Philly

New Jerseyans like to eat out and most claim to be intrepid diners who are willing to try anything once. The latest *Monmouth University/New Jersey Monthly Poll* also found that the Garden State's dining options compare favorably with those in neighboring big cities.

Four-in-ten New Jersey adults report having lunch or dinner at a sit-down restaurant on a weekly basis. This includes 22% who do so several times a week and 19% who eat out about once a week. Another 25% dine out a few times a month and 14% visit a restaurant about once a month. The remainder eat out less often (14%) or not at all (5%).

New Jerseyans who earn over \$100,000 a year are more likely to dine out on a weekly basis (65%) when compared to those who earn \$50,000-100,000 (38%) or less than \$50,000 (25%).

When dining out, 19% of restaurant goers say they always or often order dessert with their meal and 29% always or often order drinks, wine or beer when dining out. Weekly restaurant goers (36%) are more likely than less frequent diners (22%) to imbibe an alcoholic beverage with their meal.

When asked to name their all-time favorite restaurant cuisine, Italian is the runaway favorite – 41% of Garden State diners report that pasta and scallopini are what they most crave. Good old-fashioned American cuisine takes second place at 17%, followed by fish and seafood (9%), Chinese (6%), steak (5%), Japanese (3%), Indian (3%), Mexican (2%), and French (2%).

While New Jersey diners certainly have their favorites, most say they maintain an adventurous palate. Fully 57% are “willing to try anything once” when dining out, compared to 43% who prefer to stick with what they know they like.

“No question about it, we like to eat out,” commented Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “While big cities like New York and Philadelphia are held out as dining meccas, New Jerseyans know there is no need to pay a bridge or tunnel toll to find a great restaurant.”

When asked to compare the Garden State’s dining scene to the restaurants in New York City and Philadelphia, a majority of restaurant goers (58%) say that New Jersey’s offerings are just as good. In fact, another 11% say their home state has better options than either of its big city neighbors. Only 22% of diners feel that New Jersey’s restaurants do not compare favorably to those in New York and Philly.

This poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute by telephone with 804 New Jersey adults April 12-16, 2007. Most of the results in this release are based on a sub-sample of 672 residents who dine out at least once a month. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.8 percent. These poll results are featured in the August 2007 issue of *New Jersey Monthly* magazine.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Not including fast food places, how often do you have lunch or dinner at a restaurant – several times a week, about once a week, a few times a month, once a month, less often, or never?

	TOTAL	INCOME		
		< \$50K	\$50 to \$100K	>\$100K
Several times a week	22%	14%	20%	36%
Once a week	19%	11%	18%	29%
Few times a month	25%	20%	31%	23%
Once a month	14%	22%	15%	5%
Less often	14%	24%	13%	6%
Never	5%	8%	2%	1%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	804	190	247	245

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF NEW JERSEYANS WHO DINE OUT AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH:

2. What is your favorite type of restaurant cuisine?

	NEW JERSEY DINERS	DINING FREQUENCY	
		Weekly	Less Often
Italian	41%	45%	37%
American	17%	18%	16%
Seafood/Fish	9%	6%	12%
Chinese	6%	4%	9%
Steak	5%	4%	6%
Japanese/Sushi	3%	3%	3%
Indian	3%	3%	2%
Mexican	2%	2%	3%
French	2%	2%	1%
Spanish/Portuguese	1%	1%	1%
Thai/Vietnamese	1%	1%	1%
Caribbean/Cuban	1%	<1%	1%
Middle Eastern/Greek	<1%	1%	<1%
Other	2%	2%	3%
Don't Know	7%	7%	6%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	672	<i>360</i>	<i>312</i>

3. When dining out, would you generally describe yourself as someone who is willing to try anything once or someone who prefers to stick with what you know you like?

	NEW JERSEY DINERS	DINING FREQUENCY	
		Weekly	Less Often
Willing to try anything once	57%	61%	53%
Stick with what I like	43%	39%	47%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	672	<i>360</i>	<i>312</i>

4. How often do you order dessert when dining out – always, often, occasionally, or never?

	NEW JERSEY DINERS	DINING FREQUENCY	
		Weekly	Less Often
Always	10%	9%	11%
Often	9%	10%	7%
Occasionally	50%	52%	47%
Never	31%	28%	35%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	672	<i>360</i>	<i>312</i>

5. And how often do you have a glass of wine, beer, or a cocktail when dining out – always, often, occasionally, or never?

	NEW JERSEY DINERS	DINING FREQUENCY	
		Weekly	Less Often
Always	15%	20%	10%
Often	14%	16%	12%
Occasionally	33%	33%	34%
Never	37%	31%	43%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	672	360	312

6. Overall, how does New Jersey’s restaurant scene compare to big cities like New York and Philadelphia – is it better, just as good, or not quite as good?

	NEW JERSEY DINERS	DINING FREQUENCY	
		Weekly	Less Often
NJ is better	11%	9%	12%
NJ is just as good	58%	59%	58%
NJ is not quite as good	22%	25%	19%
Don't Know	9%	7%	11%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	672	360	312

Results for this poll are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on April 12-16, 2007 with a statewide random sample of 804 adult residents. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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