



## What's for Dinner?

Recently YTV surveyed 50 kids (aged 8-10 years) about their dinner habits and preferences. Here's what they had to say:

### Favourite Meal

The kids' favourite meal differed slightly depending on whether they were eating at home or in a restaurant. At home, kids picked pasta as their favourite meal (although this was more a girl thing); pizza was the number 2 choice, again favoured by more girls than boys. The third choice was chicken, and this meal skewed more to boys than girls. Why are these their choices? Madison, age 8, has this to say about her fave meal, spaghetti: *"because when you slurp it it goes really fast down my throat and into my stomach"*. Steve, also 8, likes pizza because *"it goes good with soda pop"*.

When eating at a restaurant, the number one choice was chicken (chicken burgers, fingers & wings predominantly). Pizza was choice number two and hamburgers came in third. Mia, age 8, says she likes hamburgers because *"it doesn't make a mess and I like to be polite in a restaurant"*. Steve (8) also likes hamburgers, stating his favourite meal is *"hamburger and fries because a toy goes with it"*. Dave, aged 10, broke from the pack and said his favourite restaurant meal was *"Bacon, eggs and toast because it is greasier than at home"*.

### Restaurant vs. Home

More kids prefer eating dinner at home rather than at a restaurant (56%); girls were most likely to make home their pick. Interestingly, the reasons for preferring dinner at home were the same reasons other kids picked restaurant dining: Choice & quality of food. While Steven, age 8, says restaurants are better *"because the food tastes better"*, Michael, also 8, says at home he has a *"large choice and Mom cooks so good"*. Rachel (9) likes not having to get dressed up if you stay at home, whereas Mia (8) sees the home advantage differently: *"if I drop my food <at home> my dog will eat it"*.

Best things about restaurants: Choosing what to have for dinner, being served, no clean-up and being allowed to drink pop were the top responses. Joshua, age 8, had another reason to eat in a restaurant *"<so> my mom doesn't have to cook or clean" (!)*.

Best things about eating at home: Being more comfortable and being with family were the top responses. Explains Elliott (8): *"At home you can be just with your family"*. Frances (8) likes the involvement of eating at home: *"I like to help my mom make the food and set the table"*, a sentiment shared by several of the girls.

The biggest complaints about eating at home were having to eat vegetables and the cleaning up. Although when asked *"what's the worst thing about eating at home?"*, Theo, age 8, replied *"Nothing."*

### **Eating as a family**

The majority of these kids are eating dinner with their family either every day (28%) or almost every day (40%) - for a combined total of 68% eating together very often. Only 8% of kids claimed that eating dinner as a family was something they did "not very often". Where are they eating? 74% are eating in the kitchen, while 16% are eating in the dining room, and 10% in the living room.

The over-riding theme of the questionnaires we received was a desire for: Comfort food, comfortable surroundings, and good company - and for these kids, that means family.

Source: YTV Kid & Tween Report 2000, Wave 6