

LENTILS ON THE MENU

FOODSERVICE
CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Lentils.



YOUR CONSUMER ALREADY LOVES LENTILS

Consumers love lentils and want to see them on more foodservice menus. Read on to learn more about consumer lentil preferences at foodservice and how lentils can make the menu more effective for operators and their consumers.

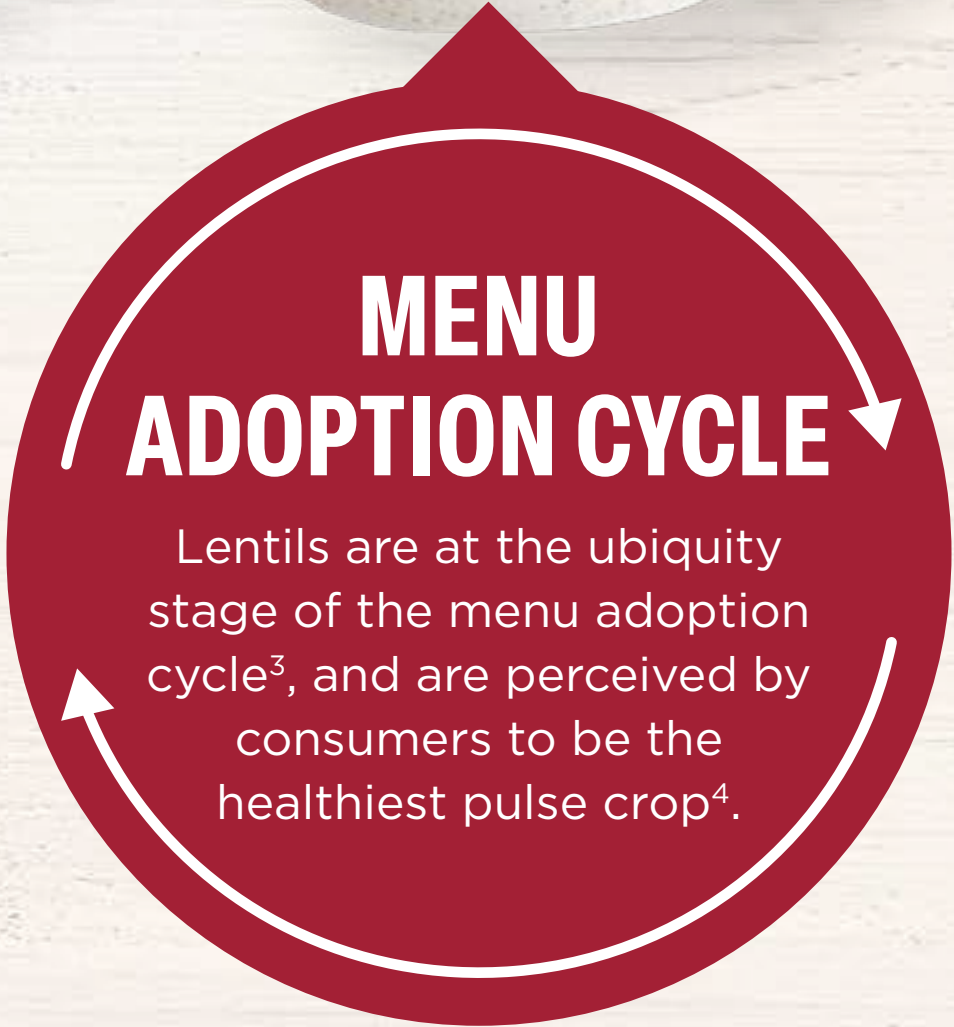


DRIVERS TO CONSUME MORE LENTILS AT RESTAURANTS¹

42.4%	Trying to Eat More Fiber
38.9%	Say They are Healthier Than Other Proteins
38.7%	Identify They Like the Taste of Lentils
33.2%	Are Trying to Eat More Plant Protein
31.3%	Like That Lentils are Often Featured in Dishes
29.9%	Are Trying to Eat Less Animal Protein
29.6%	Believe Lentils are Just as Filling as Meat

DRIVERS TO CONSUME MORE LENTILS OVERALL²

47%	To Better My Health
45%	Good Source of Protein
40%	For Nutritional Benefits
29%	Cost Savings
28%	I Love How They Taste
25%	To Eat More Whole Foods
21%	Greater Variety of Dishes Using Them



LENTILS ARE HERE TO STAY

OF CONSUMERS SAY THEY ENJOY LENTILS¹

71.5%



73.4%

OF CONSUMERS WANT TO EAT MORE LENTILS AT RESTAURANTS¹

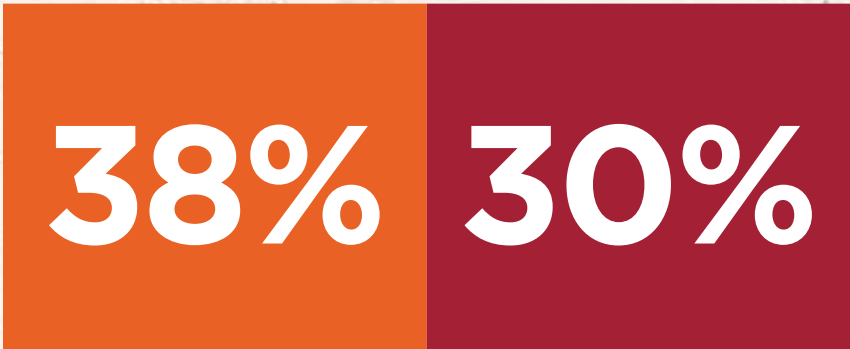
54.5%

OF CONSUMERS FEEL RESTAURANTS UNDER-MENU LENTILS¹

29%

OF CONSUMERS WANT TO EAT MORE LENTILS, BEANS, OR LEGUMES², PARTICULARLY YOUNGER GENERATIONS:

Gen-Z All Consumers



CONSUMER LENTIL CONSUMPTION

43% of consumers

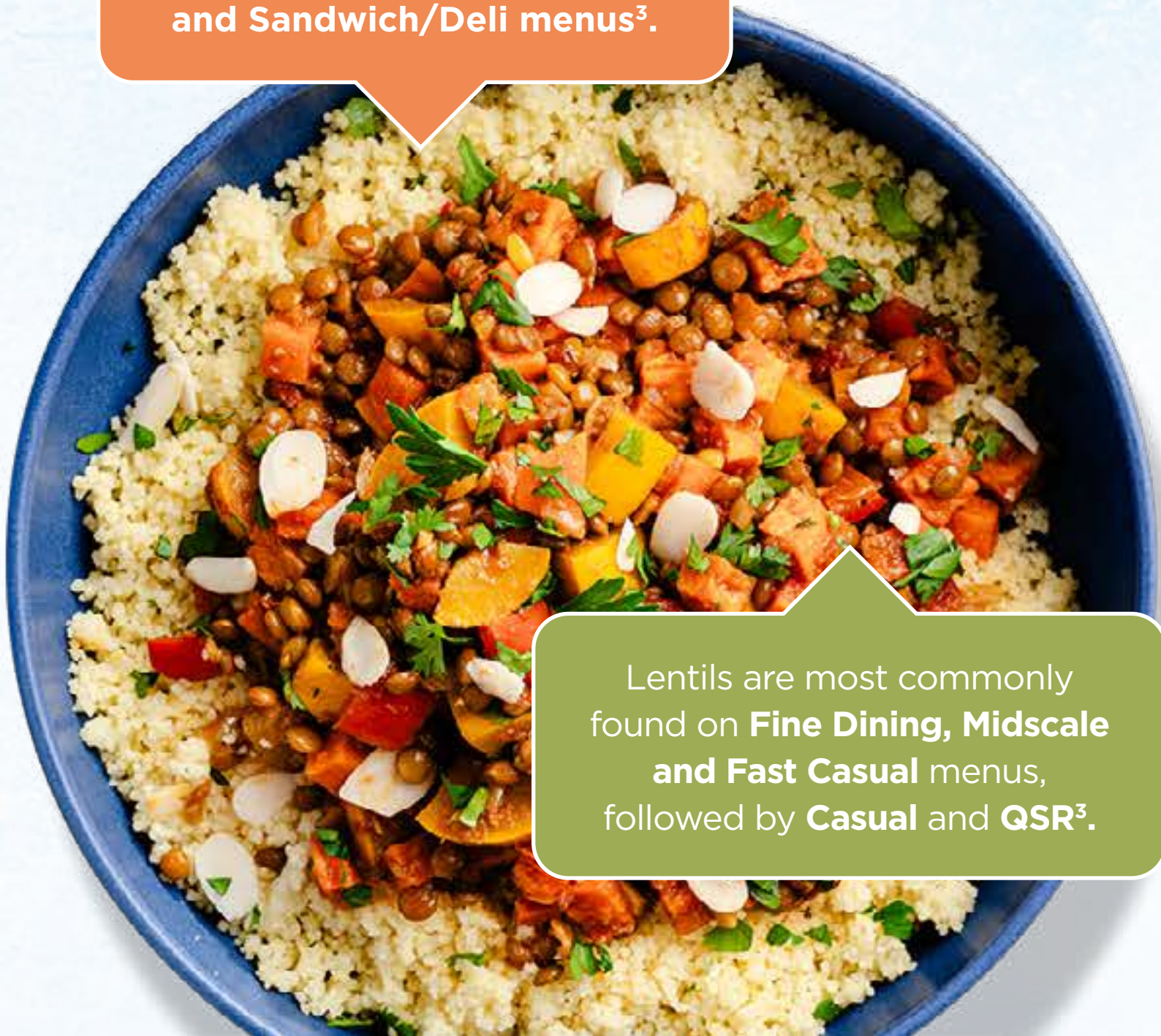
ORDER LENTILS AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH

outside of their home with consuming lentils weekly or multiple times a week⁴.

CONSUMERS ARE INTERESTED IN SEEING LENTILS AT THESE TYPES OF RESTAURANTS⁴

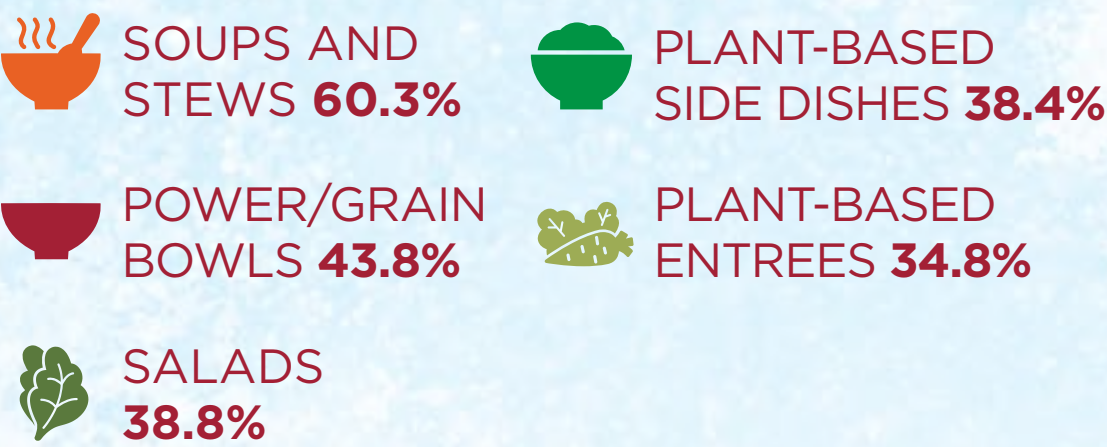
52% SALAD RESTAURANT	48% MEDITERRANEAN	45% VEGAN
44% CASUAL DINING	43% BAKERY/CAFE	39% BURGER JOINT
39% SANDWICH/DELI	35% BEVERAGE/ SNACK STAND	30% CONVENIENCE STORE

Lentils are most commonly found on **Indian, Mediterranean, American, and Sandwich/Deli menus³.**

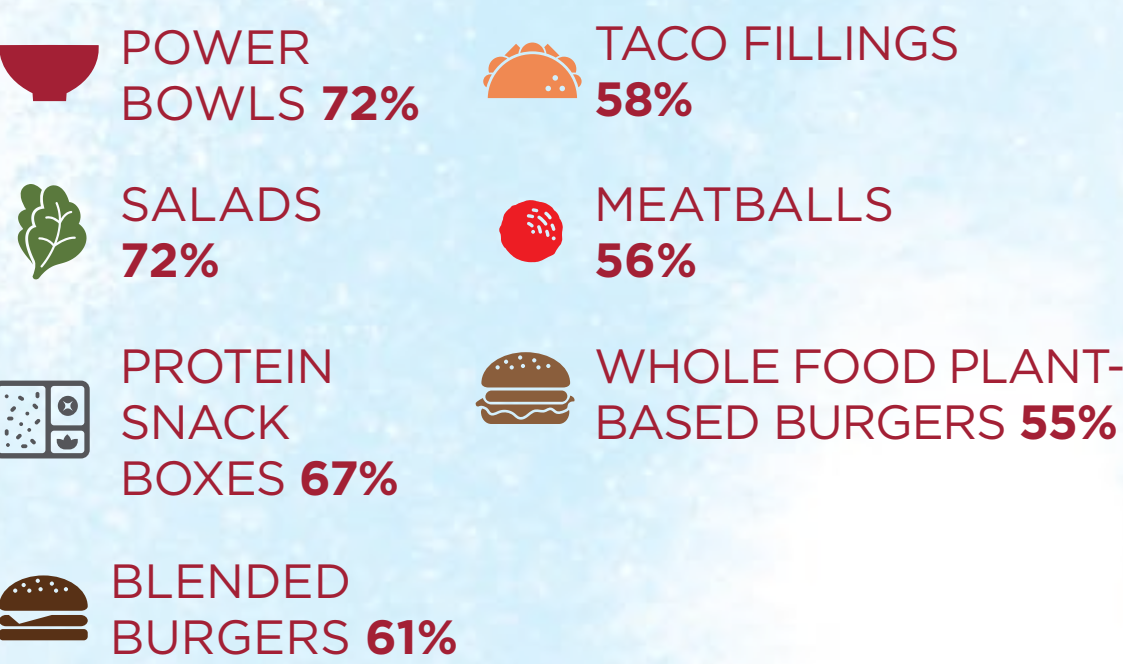


Lentils are most commonly found on **Fine Dining, Midscale and Fast Casual** menus, followed by **Casual** and **QSR³.**

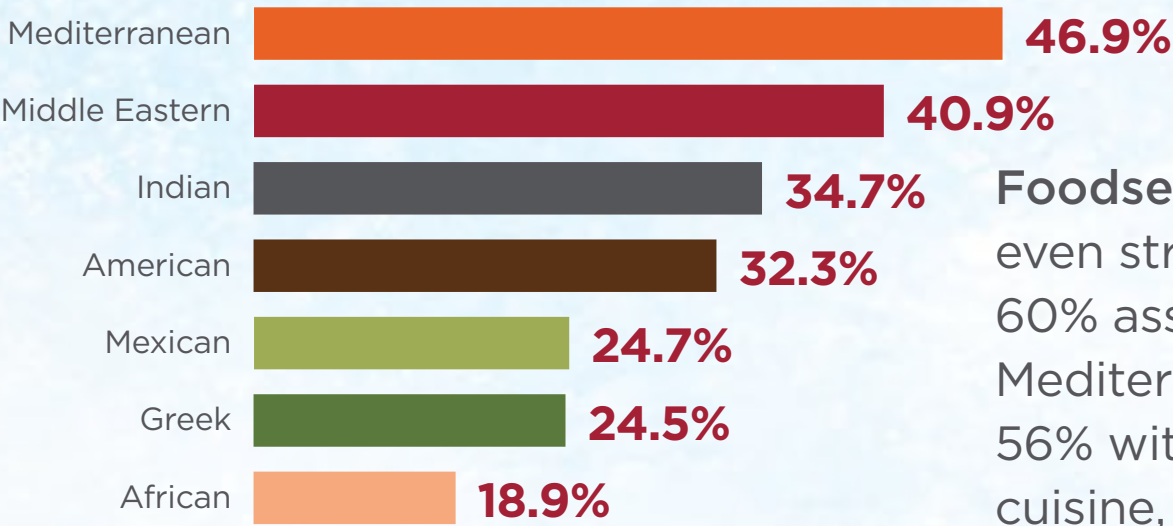
When consumers think of lentils, they **most associate them with the following dishes¹:**



But when considering lentils at restaurants, they **most want to find lentils in the following dishes⁵:**



CONSUMERS ASSOCIATE LENTILS WITH THE FOLLOWING CUISINES¹



Foodservice operators have even stronger associations – 60% associate lentils with Mediterranean cuisine, 56% with Middle Eastern cuisine, and 52% with Indian cuisine⁶.

SPICE IT UP



Lentils are flavor sponges, transporting the robust and complex flavors of a dish. The trending spices and sauces menued with lentils are⁷: **Curry Leaf, Guacamole, Balsamic Vinegar, Turmeric, Cilantro, Aioli, Rosemary, Horseradish, Cumin, and Ginger.**

BOWLS AND BURGERS

BOWLS

80% of consumers

PREFER A BOWL BASE OF LENTILS OVER QUINOA

based on the nutritional profile

(3X MORE PROTEIN)⁵

64% are

WILLING TO PAY MORE

for a menu item

WITH MORE PROTEIN

of which **9%** would pay significantly more⁵

SATIATION IS KEY TO VALUE PERCEPTION

Bowls and salads are interchangeable for most occasions, except power bowls are seen as more filling with **35% of consumers reaching for a power bowl for something to fill them up⁵.**

NEW YEAR GOALS AND SEASONALITY DRIVE NEW BOWL INTRODUCTIONS, WITH LAUNCH MONTHS BEING FOCUSED IN⁸:

JANUARY
15%

APRIL
12%

JUNE
11%

JULY
10%

TOP GRAINS TO PAIR WITH LENTILS IN A POWER BOWL⁵:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brown Rice | 6. Couscous |
| 2. White Rice | 7. Barley |
| 3. Pasta | 8. Rye |
| 4. Quinoa | 9. Farro/Wheat Berries |
| 5. Corn | 10. Buckwheat |

BURGERS

Blended and plant-based burgers in various formats are choices that consumers are interested in to varying degrees - but its a chef's spin on them that stand out to the consumer.



IF A PLANT-BASED OR PLANT-FORWARD BURGER WAS ON A MENU AT A RESTAURANT, CONSUMERS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN¹:

34.2% HOUSE-MADE LENTIL BURGER (whole food plant ingredients like lentils, grains, vegetables)

32.0% HOUSE-MADE LENTIL BLENDED BURGER (meat burger blended with lentils, beans, vegetables, mushrooms, etc.)

8.7% PRE-PURCHASED LENTIL BURGER (whole food plant ingredients)

6.6% MEAT SUBSTITUTE BURGER (Impossible, Beyond, etc.)

4.2% PRE-PURCHASED / BRANDED LENTIL BLENDED BURGER (a meat burger blended with lentils, beans, vegetables, mushrooms, etc.)

PROTEIN & PLANT PROTEIN CONSUMPTION

While 2% of consumers identify as vegan or vegetarian,

24% of the population identifies as meat limiters, including flexitarians in 2025².

28% of consumers are likely to

ORDER MORE MEALS WITH LENTILS, BEANS, AND/OR LEGUMES

as the main protein at restaurants

IN THE NEXT YEAR⁹

37%

are likely to

ORDER DISHES OF MEAT BLENDED

with grains or veggies at restaurants⁹

60%

of consumers are

OPEN TO TRYING DISHES THAT MIX ANIMAL AND PLANT PROTEINS

and **72%**

of consumers find this concept of

BLENDED DISHES APPEALING

21%

ORDER MORE DISHES THAT ARE INHERENTLY PLANT-BASED

(chana masala, salads, etc.)⁹

78%
OF MEAT
LIMITERS

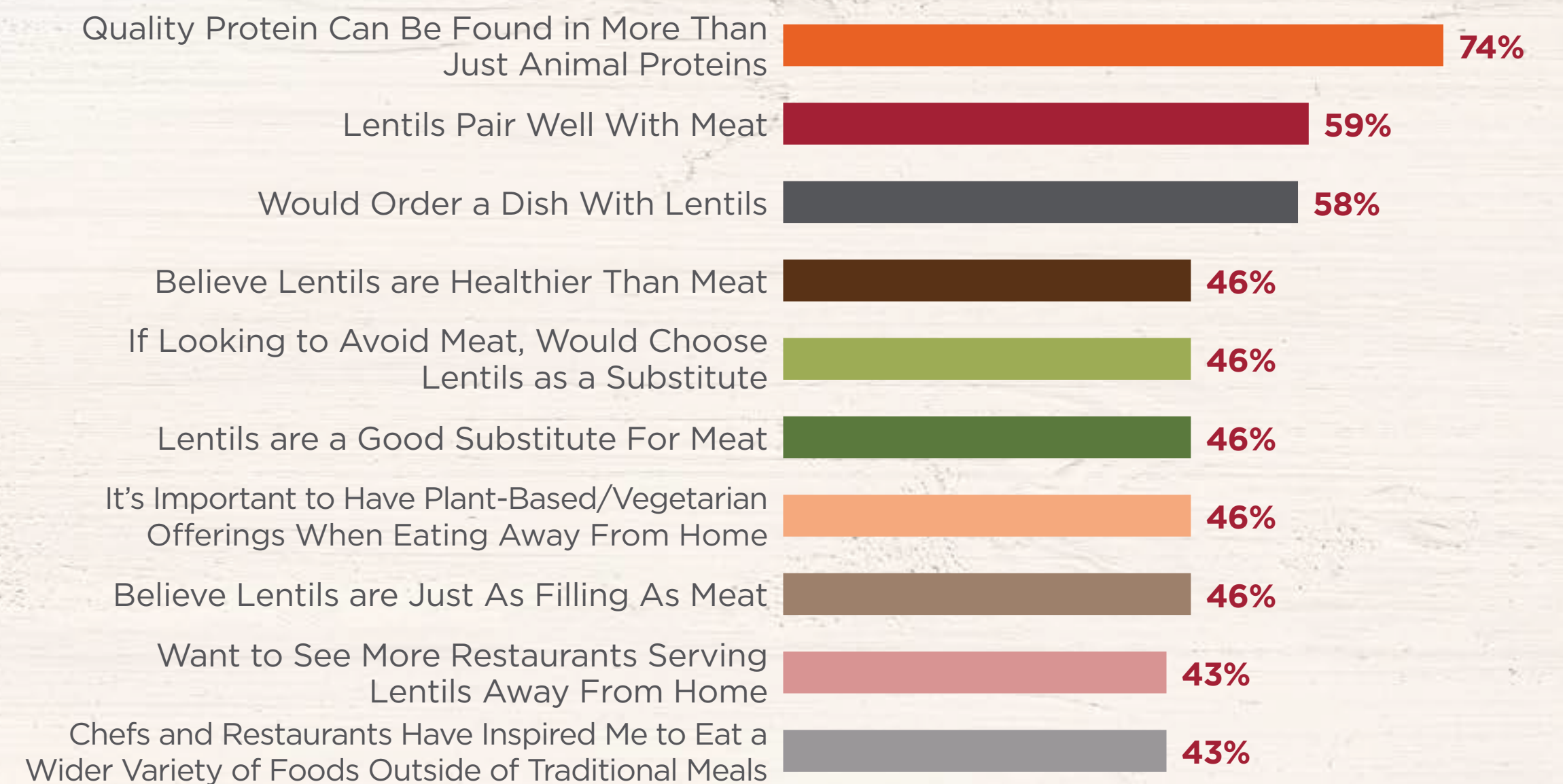
CONSUME LENTILS, BEANS, AND/OR LEGUMES **WEEKLY OR MORE FREQUENTLY⁹**

71%
OF MEAT
EATERS

CONSUME LENTILS, BEANS, AND/OR LEGUMES **WEEKLY OR MORE FREQUENTLY⁹**



CONSUMERS AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS²



HOW TO MENU PLANT-FORWARD DISHES



WHEN CONSUMERS WERE ASKED WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO SELECT A PLANT-FORWARD OPTION FROM A RESTAURANT¹:

48.2%

IF IT USED FLAVOURS I LOVE.

46.5%

IF IT WAS A DISH I HAD BEFORE AND KNOW I LOVE.

42.8%

IF I COULD TRY IT FIRST OR HAVE A SAMPLE.

40%

IF IT CAME IN A FAMILIAR FORMAT LIKE PIZZA OR A BURRITO.

30.3%

IF I KNEW ALL OF THE INGREDIENTS, OR IF IT USED SIMPLE INGREDIENTS.

27%

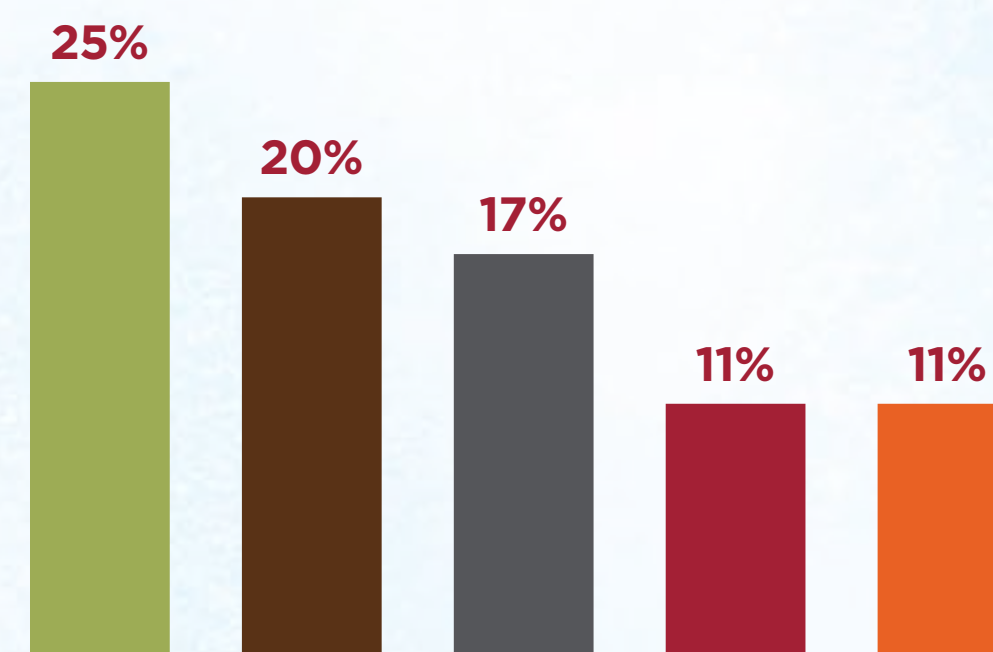
IF IT WAS CHEAPER THAN A MEAT OPTION OR OFFERED AT A DISCOUNT.

24.8%

IF IT WAS AN APPETIZER, OR A SMALL PLATE.



MOTIVATORS FOR CHOOSING PLANT-FORWARD RESTAURANT DISHES⁹



- If it Was an Appetizer or Small Plate
- If It Was Plated Well or Looked Visually Appetizing
- If it Was Recommended by the Chef or Server
- If it Was a Sharable Offering
- If the People I Was Dining With Were Also Ordering a Plant-Forward Option

Consumers Want to See More Plant Ingredients Included in the Following Dishes¹⁰:



BOWLS
52%



STIR FRY
51%



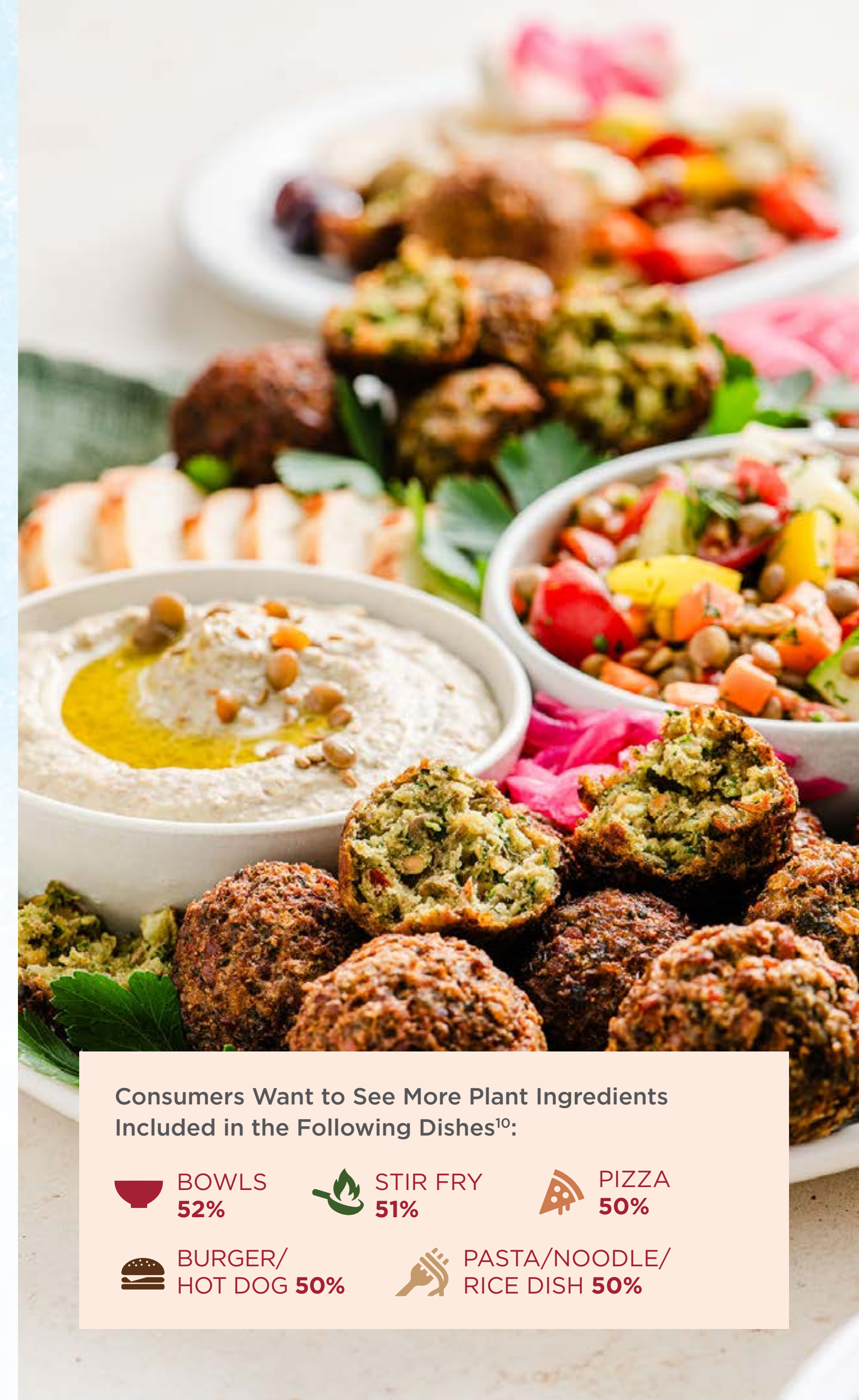
PIZZA
50%



BURGER/
HOT DOG 50%



PASTA/NOODLE/
RICE DISH 50%



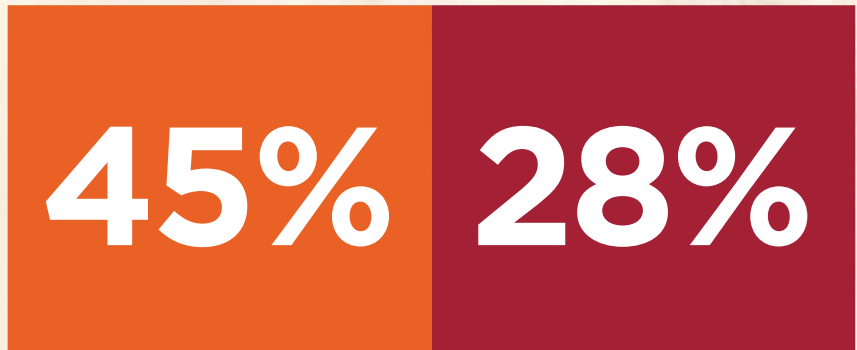
GEN-Z & COLLEGE STUDENTS



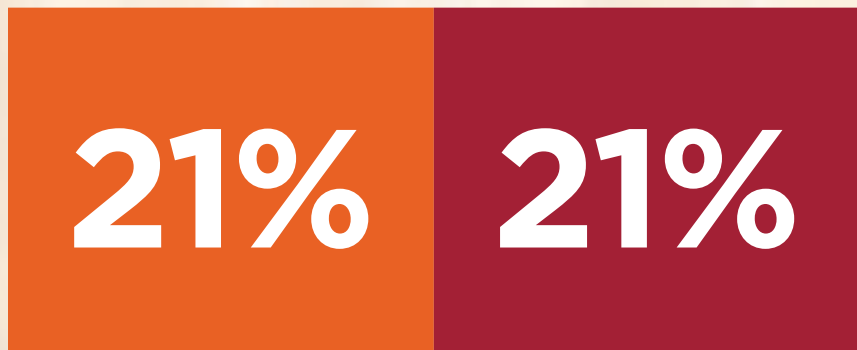
PLANT-FORWARD PREPARATION PREFERENCES¹¹

■ Gen-Z ■ All Consumers

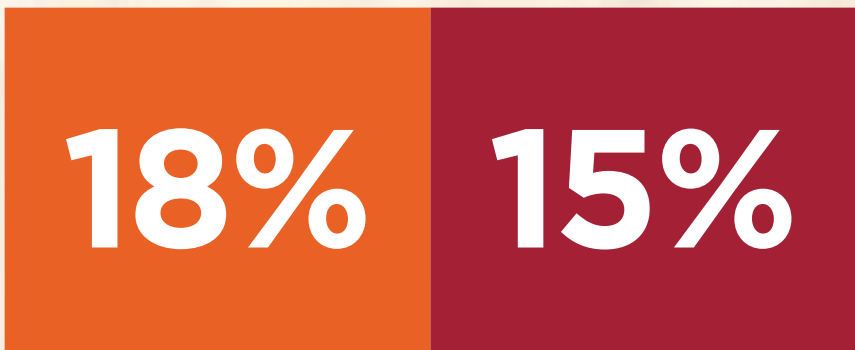
WHOLE FOOD
PLANT-BASED PROTEIN



BLENDED ANIMAL/
PLANT PROTEIN

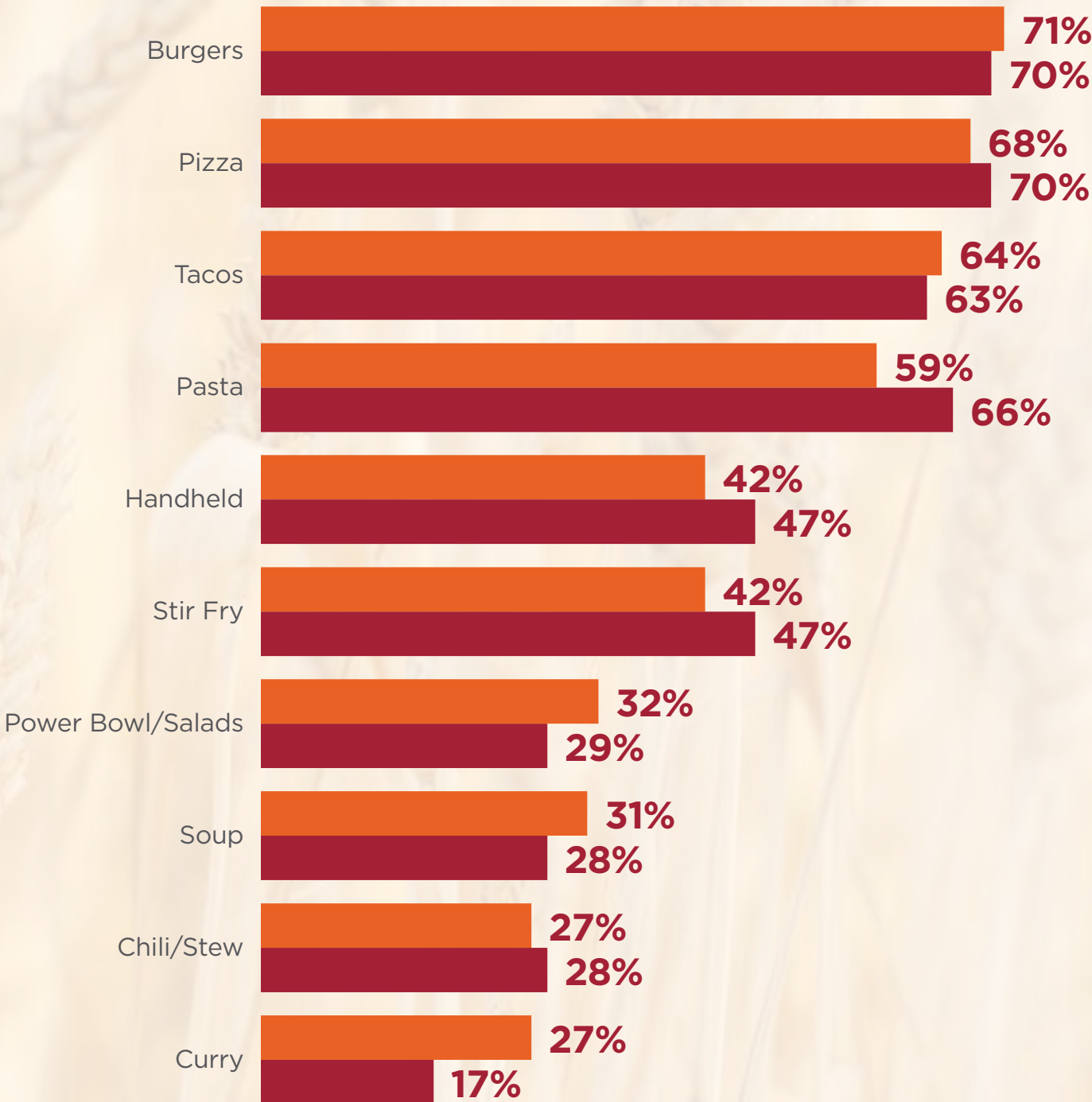


PLANT-BASED
MEAT ANALOGUE



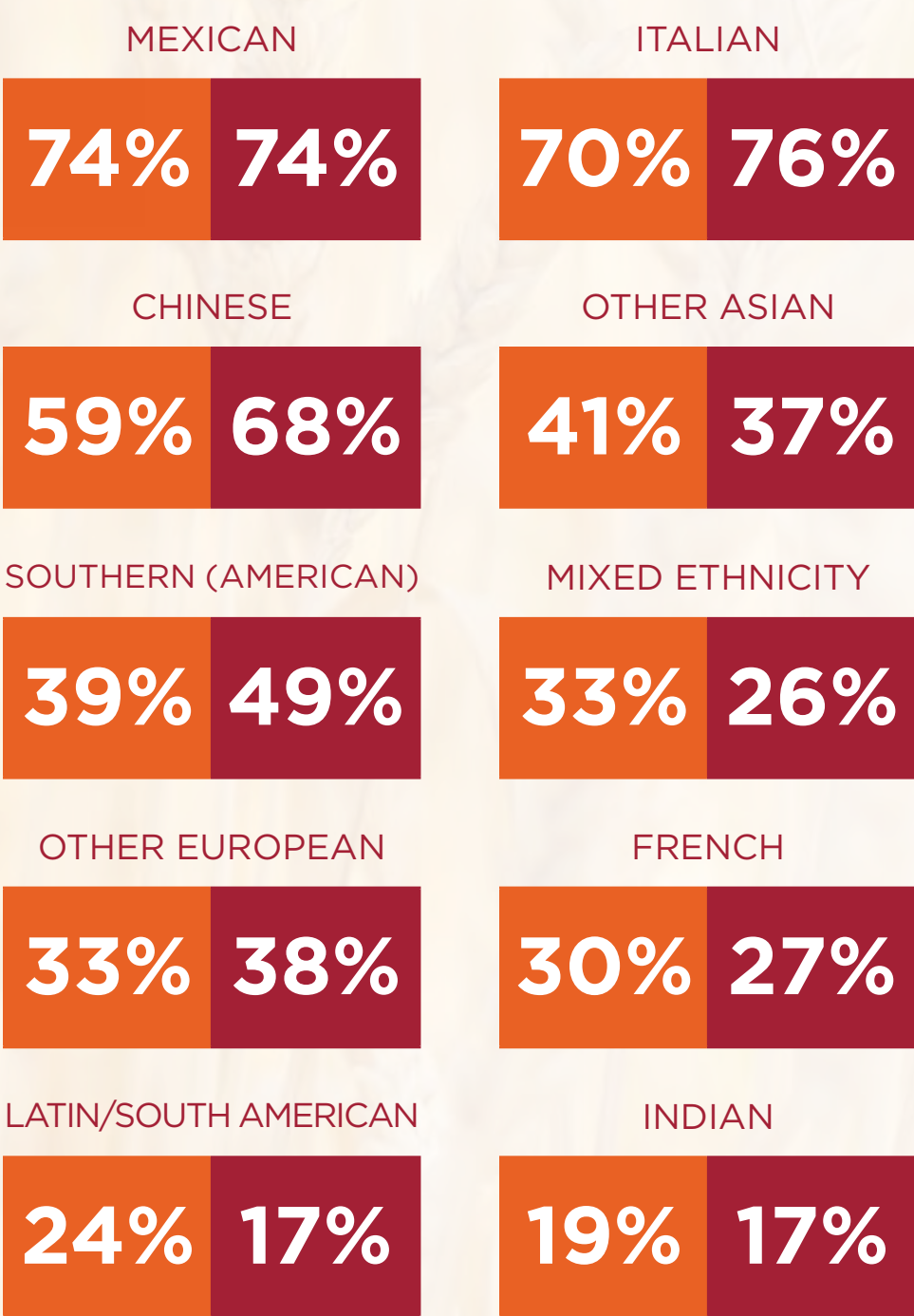
GEN-Z'S MOST LOVED DISHES¹⁰

■ Gen-Z ■ All Consumers



MOST LOVED CUISINES¹¹

■ Gen-Z ■ All Consumers



HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

OUTSTANDING REPUTATION

96.4%

of consumers think lentils are healthy¹.



LENTILS ARE APPEALING WHEN DINING AWAY FROM HOME BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS HEALTHY AND GREAT TASTING - TOP REASONS INCLUDE⁴:



HEALTHY
75%



TASTE
75%



HIGH IN PROTEIN
73%



HEART HEALTHY
71%



HIGH IN FIBER
69%



FARM GROWN
64%

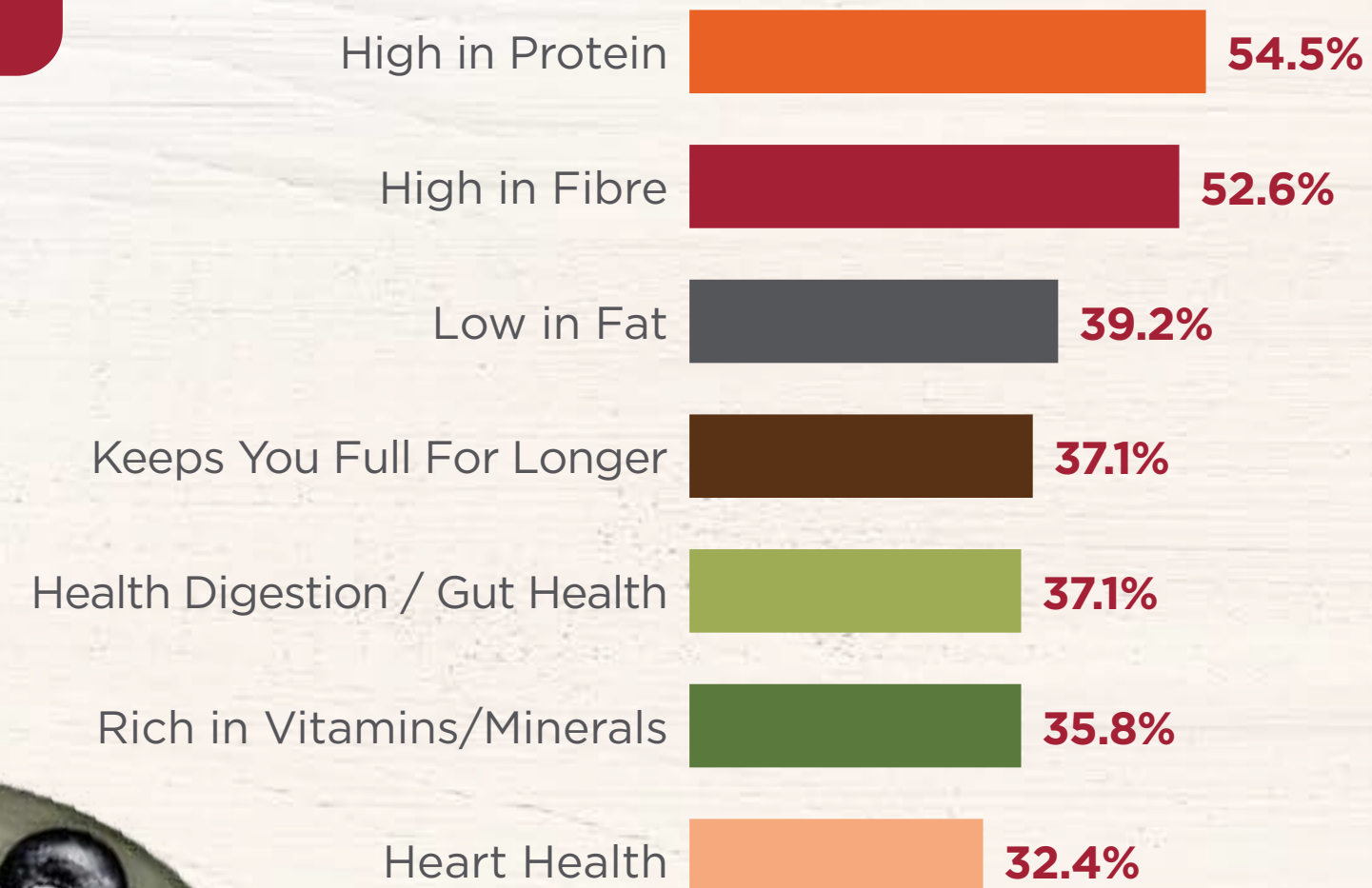


FILLING
63%



SUSTAINABLE
61%

TOP RANKED HEALTH BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH LENTILS¹



72% **74%**

■ Gen-Z ■ All Consumers

SAY MAKING SUSTAINABLE CHOICES IS IMPORTANT TO THEM⁷

70%

OF ALL CONSUMERS SAY IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE FOOD THEY EAT IS GROWN ON **FARMS THAT USE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES⁷**

1 ^{IN} **5**

OF ALL CONSUMERS HAVE ALREADY HEARD THE TERM **REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE⁷**

DATA SOURCES

1. Menu Matters x Lentils.org, Consumer Research: Quantitative Results, September 2024
2. Datassential, Consumer Omnibus, June 2025
3. Datassential, SNAP 2024
4. Datassential, Consumer Omnibus, Aug 2021
5. Datassential, Consumer Omnibus, May 2022
6. Datassential, Operator Omnibus, April 2025
7. Datassential, Consumer Omnibus, June 2020
8. Datassential, Good Food Culinary Presentation, 2023
9. Datassential, Plant-Forward Opportunity Report, 2025
10. Datassential, Plant-Forward Opportunity Report, 2023
11. Datassential, Insider 2022
12. Datassential, Salad and Bowl Seasonal Analysis, Dec 2022



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