

Bacon served at US restaurants, foodservice outlets up 6 percent

Pork bacon remains the most popular, but beef, turkey and chicken bacon consumption is also on the rise

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Bacon consumption in the United States continues to climb, as an estimated 1.1 billion servings of bacon had been eaten in U.S. restaurants and foodservice outlets during the year ending April 2014. The figure shows an increase of 6 percent when compared to the previous 12-month period, according to the NPD Group, a leading global information company.

Pork bacon not the only bacon growing in popularity

While bacon of all varieties has proven to be popular, pork bacon accounts for much of the bacon consumption. However, beef, chicken duck and turkey bacon have also been capturing more attention.

The pork bacon category grew in the year ending April 2014 with a 2.3 percent increase in units shipped in spite of dollar volume increases due to higher pork prices, according to NPD's SupplyTrack, which tracks every product shipped from a critical mass of leading broadline distributors to each of their foodservice operators. Although bacon types other than pork hold a very small unit share, turkey and chicken realized single-digit unit growth in the year ending April 2014 period while beef bacon units increased by double-digits and duck by triple-digits.

"The growth in bacon consumption at foodservice outlets is reflected in the dollar and unit growth in bacon shipments from the broadline foodservice distributors," said Annie Roberts, vice president, NPD SupplyTrack. "Among the key drivers of bacon unit growth are more consumers visiting restaurants for breakfast, and new and innovative bacon menu offerings, including new types of bacon."

Growth strongest at quick service, family dining restaurants

Quick service and family dining restaurants represent the largest dollar and unit share of the bacon category, and these two channels increased units and dollar volume shipped compared to a year ago, reports NPD. Units and dollars shipped to some non-commercial foodservice outlets, like preschools and daycare centers, increased by double-digits.

"Beyond the obvious popularity of bacon among restaurant consumers, we're seeing pockets of opportunity for the bacon category at other foodservice outlets that are less obvious," said Roberts. "There is definitely room for bacon, in whatever form or type, to grow."

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