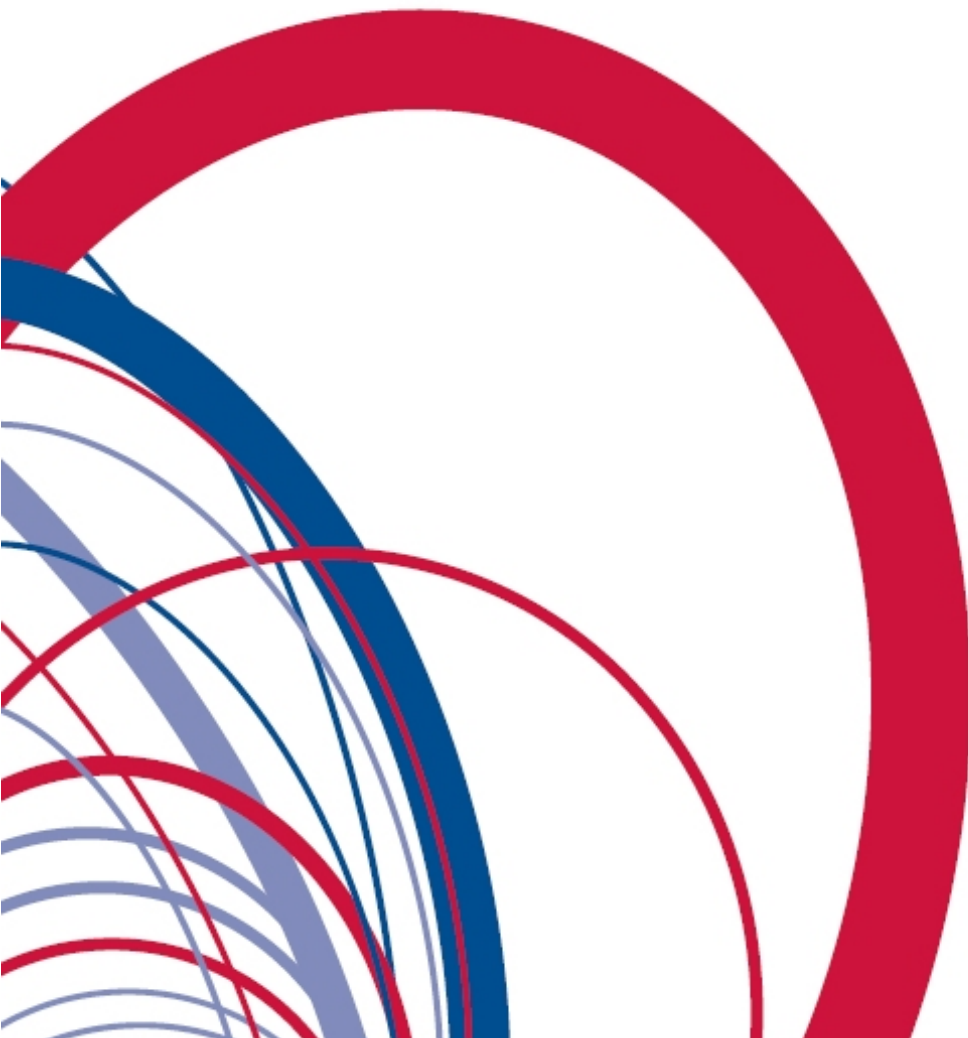


The Emergence of the Gastrosexual

Commissioned for PurAsia

Research conducted by the Future
Foundation 2008



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Foreword

Men appear to be cooking more now than ever before. The likes of Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay are continually on our screens and in the nation's homes almost on a nightly basis. As a food company, just about to launch a new Asian cooking product to confident cooks, we began to realise that we should consider men more when looking at our target market.

We commissioned Future Foundation, the leaders in understanding how we behave now in order to forecast the social trends of the future to discover more about men, food and cooking. We wanted to substantiate if men were cooking more, why they are doing so and what motivates these desires. We also wanted to find out about their culinary skills and what influences the food choices they make.

The research revealed some fascinating insights which clearly demonstrated that men are confidently claiming a stake in the kitchen, a place which has historically been seen as the woman's domain. We also found that men, do indeed, have different views and motivations about cooking than women.

We have called this group of keen and accomplished male cooks, the 'Gastrosexuals.' They are masculine, upwardly mobile men, aged 25-44, who are passionate about cooking and the rewards that it might bring – pleasure, praise and potential seduction.

We found that cooking for this new generation isn't simply a matter of refuelling, for them it's an enjoyable experience and something to be relished. This is a phenomenon created by a wide range of forces and one which will continue to grow.

I know that, going forward, these findings will help us to understand the male cook more which will help us cater to his culinary needs of the future.

Paul Aikens, Marketing Director, PurAsia.

Introduction

The emphatic arrival of men in to the nation's kitchens is an underappreciated revolution. As late as the 1970s it was almost unheard of for men to take on an active share of the cooking in their own homes. Since 1961 men have increased the time they spend cooking and washing up by more than five times. Our perceptions of men taking an interest in food - even being passionate about food - have been transformed. Our research shows that cooking was once considered somewhat unmanly - effeminate almost, but now cooking is something which is open and welcome to people from all parts of society.

At the same time, cooking has taken on new meaning and significance in British society. Our interest in food is extremely high and a majority of men now see cooking as a hobby and not a chore. New influences and ingredients from all over the world have suffused British cooking with new life and greater vibrancy. The tastes and smells of Britain's kitchens show the influence of these international inspirations. Celebrity chefs (mostly men) look out at us from the pages of every magazine and the flickering image of every television and laptop. As such, the time seems right for a new look at the state of cooking in Britain today and the role that men increasingly play in the nation's culinary life. We have found that the prominence of the celebrity chef is mirrored with a growing passion for food in the wider country and that the nation's men are following their food heroes and playing a greater role in the preparation of our food.

Our key findings

- The time which men spend cooking and washing-up has increased more than five times since 1961. Going from an average of five minutes a day to twenty seven minutes a day in the latest figures
- Until this increase almost all cooking in the home was undertaken by women; a system which had prevailed since the recognisable modern household took shape after the industrial revolution
- Cooking itself has changed and taken on more prominence and extra meaning. We call the latest wave of enthusiasts the Gastrosexuals. We have chosen the term as it expresses both their passion for food and the new ways food and cooking is integrated to gender identities and relationships
- Gastrosexuals come from all backgrounds (and both sexes) but are especially likely to be
 - Male
 - Aged 25-44
 - Upwardly-mobile
 - Aware of and passionate about cuisines from all over the world, especially Asian food

- Men's movement into the kitchen and growing confidence with food is partly the result of big social forces. There has been a very substantial growth in single person households (which are largely male). This new 'singleton male' has taken to cooking out of necessity but uses it as a way to show his modernity and, in some cases, to attract women
- 70% of women are now in work, compared to 50% in 1961
- Women have positively demanded more help from men in the home. As such, men living with their partners have also taken to cooking more
- Men have focussed on cooking as the most creative and enjoyable aspect of domestic work. They are much less likely to play the same role in cleaning. Men spend half as much time as women at work in the kitchen, but only a quarter of the amount of time cleaning or washing clothes
- Cooking is a passion for the Gastrosexual. 52% of men say they consider cooking to be a hobby and not a chore. Fewer women (40%) agree with this sentiment
- Contrary to the popular myth, men are not just occasional chefs at barbecues and dinner parties, 53% claim to cook from separate ingredients nearly everyday
- The men who enjoy cooking most are those who cook every day and not the occasional chefs
- The emergence of the Gastrosexual has been concurrent with the increased importance Britons as a whole place on their hobbies and leisure interests. Spending on recreation and culture is now worth over £100 billion (this landmark was passed in 2007)
- Key motivations for the Gastrosexual are:
 - Cooking as a passion - a form of self actualisation
 - Cooking for praise - the Gastrosexual likes to show their skill
 - Cooking to impress potential partners, even to seduce
- The Gastrosexual is at the forefront of the new dinner party. Cooking for friends is very common - especially with younger age groups as house parties and dinner parties begin to blur. 52% of under 44s cook for friends at least once a month (55% of 25-34s) as opposed to 44% of the population as a whole
- Rising affluence has played a major role in opening up new gastronomic horizons to the British people and cooking culture is strongest in some of the more wealthy parts of British society
- There is an apparent tension between the rise of our interest in food and the simultaneous success of convenience foods. However, the two are actually complementary. Most people

of working age say they are often under time pressure. Thus convenience is important for many of even the most committed gourmets. Our research shows that most people are involved in both cooking from base ingredients and opting for prepared foods. Most simply pick and choose food based on the most appropriate occasion

- The tension between cooking and masculinity has been resolved. It is now perfectly acceptable for men to show a passion for food
- This has been aided by the latest crop of celebrity chefs - with Jamie Oliver (29% say he is their biggest food hero) and Gordon Ramsay (23%) being the biggest inspirations for British cooks. The presence of unabashedly male cooks on television has helped the Gastrosexual man feel comfortable with his love of cooking
- Multiculturalism has aided the growth of the Gastrosexual. Britain's favourite cuisine when eating out is Chinese (30% of people say this is their preferred food)
- The Gastrosexual is especially likely to travel and is motivated by the search for authenticity in both his physical and culinary travels

1. The man who cooks

Men now do a greater share of cooking in our homes than at any point for which records exist; furthermore, it seems likely that this represents a greater contribution to this essential part of our lives than at other point in modern history. Younger men, both singletons and those living with their partner, are playing a far greater role in the kitchen than their fathers did. And what is more is that they enjoy this greater involvement. This is a passion and a leisure activity for this new generation of men in the kitchen. This report examines the phenomenon of the man who cooks - a group we have chosen to call the Gastrosexuals. These are young, upwardly mobile and unabashedly masculine men who love to cook and love to be seen to cook. This is a trend created by a wide range of forces, as we shall see, and one which will continue to grow in the future.

From an historical perspective men have generally had relatively little involvement with the preparation of food - the growing importance of men in the nation's kitchens is a recent development. Kitchens were not actually part of the urban household until relatively late in our history - until the development of the stove in the Eighteenth Century, kitchens did not form part of the typical home. Food was instead largely bought out of home and warmed in front of an open fire. The situation was different in rural households but the gender bias of cooking remained the same.

Eminent food writer and historian, **Dr Paul Levy** explains

"In terms of cooking in the home, there always was a pronounced divide between the sexes in most cultures ever since people started cooking for the family."

Technology developments play an increasingly important role in our kitchens today. The amount of time we spend cooking and washing-up has declined significantly in recent years. In 2000 we spent an average of 55 minutes per day engaged in cooking and washing up; by the time of the latest comprehensive time use survey (2005) this had decreased to 41 minutes. While there is a temptation to attribute this change to declining standards in our kitchens, it is rather linked to improvements in our lives - the greater number of dishwashers, microwaves and other labour saving devices. We are eating out more as affluence rises and we spend a greater proportion of our time engaged in leisure activities out of the home. As we shall see later, the simultaneous growth of interest in food and cooking with the continued growth of convenience foods has often been seen as a contradiction of sorts; it is our contention, however, that these developments are in fact complimentary.

1.1. The emergence of the Gastrosexual

In the context of an overall decline in the amount of time we spend cooking, men are claiming a greater share of this area of our lives. In 1961 men spent an average of just five minutes of each day involved in cooking and washing up, by 2005 this had risen to twenty seven minutes. An increase of over five times. The vast majority of men simply didn't cook even as late as the 1960s.

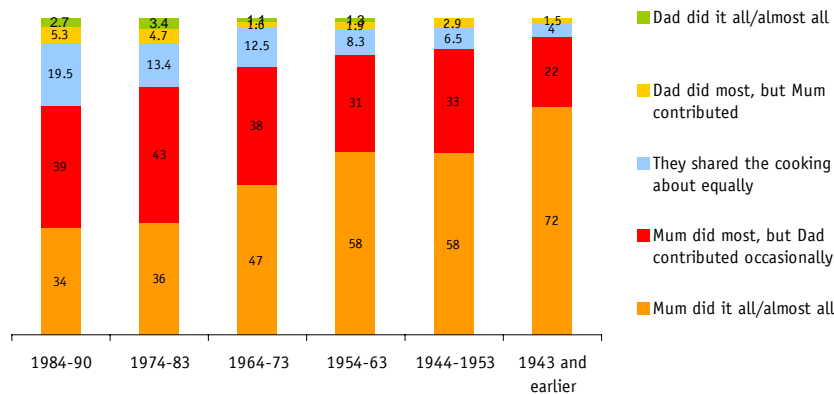
Dr Paul Levy comments

“The idea of men cooking for fun is not simply a post-war phenomenon. It didn’t really happen until the 1970’s.”

In 1961 women spent ten times as much time cooking and washing than men did. By 2005 women were still the primary cooks but only spending twice (rather than ten times) as long at work in the kitchen.

These findings are supported by the original research commissioned for this project. A huge generational difference is shown. As the chart below shows of the generations who grew up in the Sixties and before, well over half say that their mother did almost all of the cooking in their household (rising to 72% of those born in 1943 or earlier). Whereas only a third of those born between 1984 and 1990 say that their mother did almost all of the cooking as they grew up.

Chart 1 When you were growing up how often did your father cook meals for the family? By year of birth



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

Clearly men are cooking much more frequently today than before. We shall see there are many different motivations to cook and many reasons why men have taken on a greater role in this area.

A crucial development is that men are seizing this role with relish. Cooking for this new generation of male cooks isn’t simply a matter of refuelling; rather cooking is an enjoyable experience - something to be relished.

More than half of men agree that they enjoy cooking for friends and family. Yet this rises well over 60% with men between the ages of 25 and 44. This is the heart of the generation we have decided to call the Gastrosexuals. Men who cook, but who do so with passion and élan.

1.2. Identifying the Gastrosexual

We have chosen the phrase Gastrosexual as it goes some way to describing both the actions and motivations of this expanding group. Food is important to them, but this is not simply refuelling or the basic provision of sustenance - it is more like gastronomy, being a gourmet. Food is a passion, a leisure activity as well as a necessity. This in itself is not their defining characteristic, however. It is their motivations that really mark-out this group. The sensuality of food is key; the richness of the experience, but also the ability to control that richness to enhance one flavour with another - and the effect this has on others. The display of this skill brings about other benefits - the gaining of praise and the ability to impress others. The term also expresses the growing acceptance that men, cooking and masculinity are not mutually exclusive - rather they can be part of an attractive form of male identity.

The group includes people from a wide variety of backgrounds but has some salient qualities. There is a substantial generational difference at work here; although there are Gastrosexuals of all ages, they are especially heavily concentrated in men aged between twenty five and forty four. Younger men still largely live in their parents' homes (68% of 20-24 year old men according to the ONS), whilst many men over the age of 44 would be included as Gastrosexuals - the same attitudes and behaviours are not as widespread in older generations.

Gastrosexuals do also tend to be upwardly mobile. This is not to say they are a lofty social elite. It is simply the case that they are often paid somewhat more than the average and are consequently to be disproportionately in the A,B and C1 social grades. After all, this makes sense; cooking ability carries more status in these higher grades. Put simply, the wealthy cook more, and are in turn more impressed by skill shown in the kitchen. The rising affluence of these groups also means they can more readily afford the ingredients and kitchen equipment necessary to lead the Gastrosexual lifestyle.

A further aspect of this lifestyle is an interest in the cuisine of other nations. In our research young people, especially young men, expressed a high level of interest in foreign cuisine (in particular Asian food). This ties in to a wider trend in which foreign travel has become an almost necessary part of the lives of British people. 54% of people have taken a foreign holiday in the last year, a figure which rises to 63% among ABC1s. This love of Asian food is only tempered by the fact that, even for the skilled Gastrosexual, they still find many dishes from these cuisines either too time-consuming or complicated to prepare from scratch. Time is a precious commodity for the Gastrosexual and this affects the way he cooks - in Chapter 3 we explore how the Gastrosexual successfully manages his time and the ingredients he uses to achieve the best results he can in the kitchen, choosing a mixture of fresh, prepared and convenience products depending on what is most appropriate for each occasion.

1.3. Women and the Gastrosexuals

Women too have played a key role in the rise of the Gastrosexual. It is important to remember that whilst the gap is closing, women still do most of the cooking in British homes. Even in homes where men are enthusiastic cooks they often rely (albeit not always consciously) on the support of women. Gastrosexual men are motivated by the desire to impress, the prospect of praise for a job well done - the idea that a display of cooking skill will make them seem more attractive; therefore many still rely on women to contribute to less flashy but still necessary domestic work.

As we shall see in the next chapter, men love to cook but they do not, it would seem, love to clean. The cleaning of the home and the washing of clothes are still forms of work which are dominated by women - and to a much greater extent than cooking now is.

The food cooked in our homes is also much more likely to have been bought by women than by men. According to the British Household Panel Study in homes with a male / female couple, men took the main responsibility for buying groceries in only 14% (women taking the lead in 52% and equal share in the remaining 34%).

The following chapter shows how women's growing independence has caused the emergence of the Gastrosexual. Yet it is notable that many Gastrosexual men still rely on the support of the women in their lives and homes. Sometimes this is in doing the thankless tasks which some Gastrosexuals may not notice are even going on, but also more positively in playing an active role in cooking. Indeed, the research commissioned for this report has shown a significant number of women sharing traits with the Gastrosexual man. 17% of women say they cook for praise and 6% admit they are motivated to cook in order to impress (or even to seduce) potential partners. Some women would therefore clearly form part of the group we have called Gastrosexuals. Cooking is clearly a passion across genders and while this report focuses on the growing prominence of men who cook, it should be remembered that many women find great enjoyment in the preparation of food.

The Gastrosexual is a creation of our society. This report looks at the conditions which encouraged men to venture in to the kitchen, social, cultural and economic. The next chapters look in detail at these factors - at the role of women and of men, at the singleton society and the increased social use of our homes, at rising affluence and at time poverty, at our national food heroes and at the lived experience of multiculturalism. We find that cooking and food remain vital parts of our lives, for both men and women. And that far from being a casualty of progress, we are attaching more importance and more meaning to what we cook and the way in which we cook it.

2. Society and family

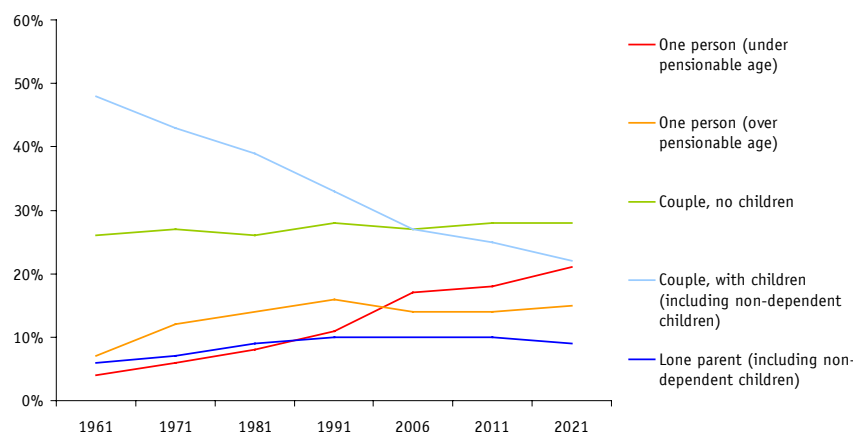
Over just a few generations British society has been transformed. Many important aspects of our lives have changed fundamentally. The role of women in our society is now very different, On the whole we marry later and also choose to have children later in life. The paths of our lives and the expectations we have for ourselves are, therefore, very different. These tectonic shifts in Britain's social make up have changed the way we eat and prepare food and the new male cook, the Gastrosexual, has been propelled forward by these changes. He has risen to the challenges and opportunities of this new society and will continue to do so as these trends become ever more prominent.

2.1. Singleton society

We have recently passed a milestone. 2006 was the first year in our recent history when the nuclear family was no longer the most common type of household. Back in 1961 nearly half (48%) of all English homes consisted of a couple living with their children, however by 2006 this had fallen sharply to 27%. Some have taken this as a worrying sign of family breakdown, however, the evidence shows a different picture. It is younger single people who are the fastest growing type of household: constituting only 4% of homes in 1961 but now making up 17%. For many it is a positive choice and not simply a status thrust upon them and the growth of this section of society is largely as a result of later marriage. The average age of a man entering his first marriage is now 32, which compares to 25 in 1962. The deferral of marriage and children has led to the rise of the modern singleton. A generation increasingly enjoying the freedom of youth and embracing the responsibilities of a family later in life.

Chart 2 Household composition as a proportion of all households

nVision forecast



Source: DETR/nVision

Base: England

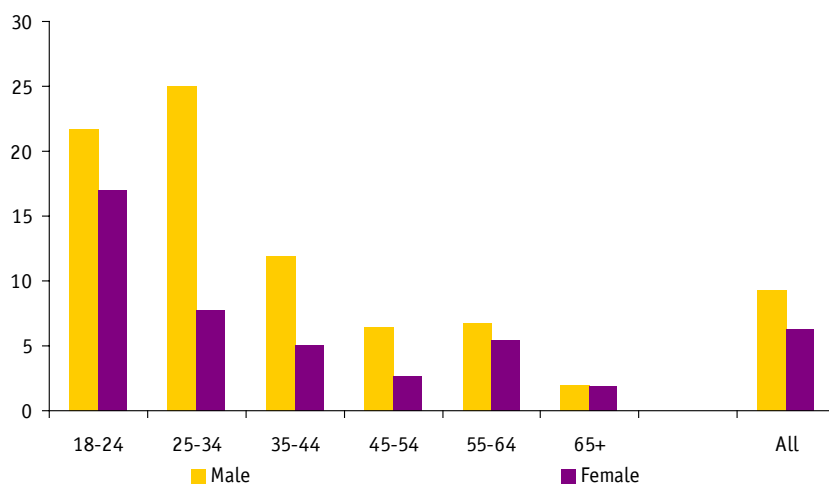
This generation of singletons is often referred to as *the Bridget Jones generation*, but as we can see it is actually significantly more common for young men to choose to live alone. Men are choosing to take on the responsibilities of running a home themselves.

James Woudhuysen, Professor of Forecasting and Innovation, De Montfort university, Leicester, explains:

“The British, and especially British men, are keener on and more knowing about cooking than ever before. A corner has been turned. Even among the solitary, philistine habits around cooking will be the exception, not the rule.”

For the single man, cooking can also offer other benefits. 48% of people say that being able to cook makes a person more attractive to them, and this is a message clearly not lost on young, single men especially. 23% of 18-34 year-old men say that they cook to impress or potentially seduce a partner as opposed to just 11% of women in the same age range.

Chart 3 What, if anything, motivates you to prepare a meal for yourself or someone else? For impressing and potentially seducing, partners - because you never know where it may lead - % agree by age within gender



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

In choosing to live as a single man a growing proportion of men are thereby taking on the responsibility for all aspects of running a home. However, this is not always an unwelcome responsibility - and it is clear that many young men are aware that food can be considered to be an attractive skill for a single man to have.

Dr Paul Levy says

“Accomplished cooking just blazons like an advertising slogan that you have a sensual relationship with food.”

Dan Davies, Deputy Editor of Esquire adds

“The ability to cook will only make a man look more sophisticated, more modern and more aware of what’s going on today.”

2.2. Women at work

However, men are not the only people to influence the rise of the Gastrosexual. In part, the growth of the *man who cooks* is a reaction to the increasing independence of women and the desire and need for men to play their part in running the British home.

Yet even with the rapid growth of the singleton generation, the majority of men are either married or live with their partner. So whilst we can attribute some of the emergence of the Gastrosexual to the growing phenomenon of single young men, men living with their partner cook as often as those living alone. Clearly men living with their partners face a different sort of necessity than the singleton male, as expectations have changed. Women have played a key role in changing men's attitude to cooking, as they are more independent than ever before and consequently men have had to share in some of what was once considered the female domain.

As we have already seen in Chapter 1, historically cooking, cleaning and the general running of the home was part of the woman of the house's domain. The domestic home, the private sphere, was also the female sphere.

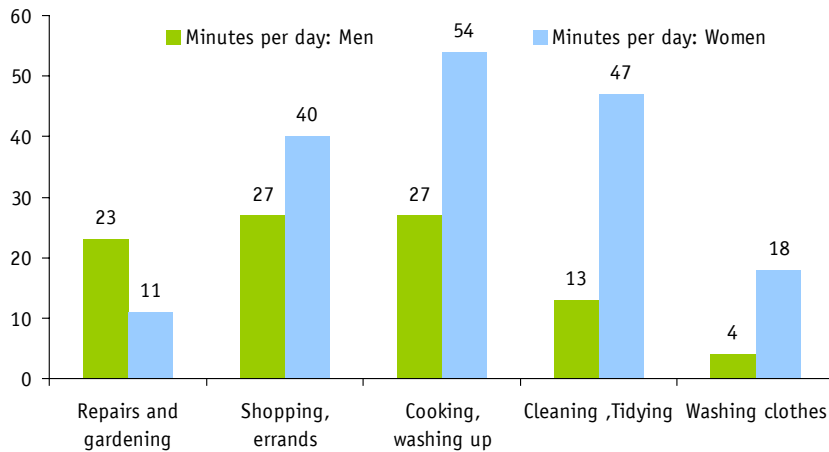
This strict division has now changed substantially. In large part this has been caused by the movement of women in to the workforce. 70% of working age women are currently in employment, compared to 50% in 1961. Indeed this is a relatively high figure compared to our closest European neighbours. The increasing economic independence of women has been matched by a massive cultural change. The expectation is that men should, in some way at least, contribute to the running of the home. Although this may now seem obvious or commonplace it is a massive cultural shift. As we can see below, in previous generations cooking was almost always the preserve of women alone, however, with many more women having jobs cooking has become more and more an activity shared by couples.

2.3. The battle of the sexes

Clearly many women have benefited from the emergence of the Gastrosexual. The famous dual burden of domestic work and paid employment has been alleviated somewhat by the arrival of men in to the kitchen. Many women, especially younger women, are very positive about the cooking ability of men. 20% of women agree that their partner is a better cook than them - this is at its highest with women under 34 (25% agreeing).

As we shall see in Chapter 3, men are very positive about their new responsibilities in the kitchen - for many, cooking is a form of leisure rather than a household chore. This is a crucial point. Men have taken up the spatulas and started to cook more frequently and spend much more time in the kitchen than their fathers did. However, men have not entered the other traditionally female tasks of home upkeep with same gusto, as can be seen by the following chart. Women still do four-times as much cleaning and laundry as men.

Chart 4 Time use around the house by gender



Source: National Statistics Time Use Survey/nVision

Base: 4,941 respondents aged 15+, UK, 2005

In some cases it seems that the Gastrosexual maybe using his prowess in the kitchen as a way of contributing to the housework without having to take on the less fulfilling jobs of cleaning the home and washing clothes. Men, on average, spend just four minutes a day washing clothes, less than a quarter of the time spent by women.

Professor Melanie Howard supports this theory

“Cooking is an efficient contribution to the house given the time you spend ... it means that you’re a good modern bloke and you’re playing your part. But it is actually a more rewarding and creative form of domestic contribution.”

Thus the movement of men in to the nation’s kitchens is a subtle continuation of the battle of the sexes. Women have successfully entered the world of work and have challenged attitudes to the role that gender should play in how homes and businesses are run. These changes in society and culture mean that men have faced a new pressure to contribute to the running of the home. That they have done this most in the area of cooking is significant. Men have chosen to play their part by involving themselves in the most creative area of housework, which is especially interesting because, as we shall see in the next chapter, the new male cook does not see cooking as a chore - rather it is a hobby - part of their leisure.

3. A life of leisure

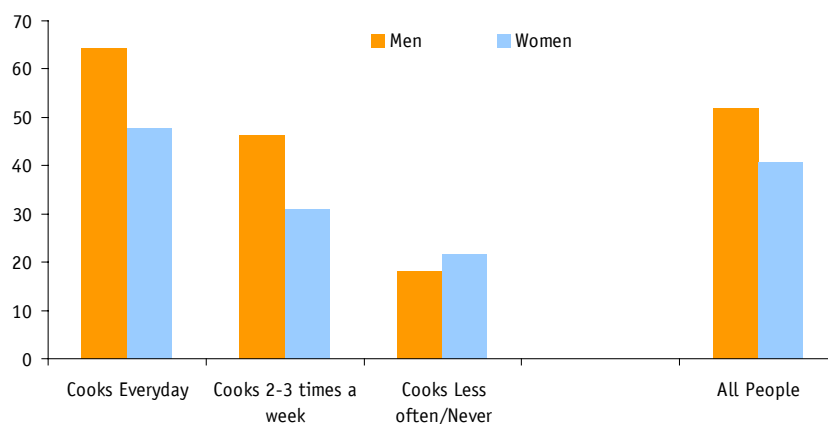
Cooking is frequently considered as part of a list of necessary but not always enjoyable household tasks. Cooking is frequently mentioned in the same breath as chores such as cleaning, the washing of clothes, vacuuming, dusting and the general upkeep of the home. However, cooking is clearly different. There are no Sunday supplements devoted to the latest happenings in polishing, few people go on holiday to learn to wash their clothes in the traditional style of some far-flung culture. Although cooking, like cleaning, is a necessary part of our lives, it has been elevated beyond that. The Gastrosexual cooks for more than just to satisfy his hunger - his cooking says a lot about him. It is leisure more than work and his ability to cook (and cook well) shows his friends, his partner and the outside world just how accomplished and sophisticated a man he is. We are often told that we are what we eat, well, the Gastrosexual is what he cooks. Cooking is an important part of his identity and his social life.

Men, especially younger men, are taking a greater share of the cooking duties in Britain's homes. And, as we saw in the last chapter, this seems to be a positive choice in favour of cooking over other domestic tasks where men do not play as active a part. The reason is that men who cook simply enjoy the process of the preparation of food. Most men (52%) agree that for them cooking is a hobby and not a chore - and this is substantially higher than the 40% of women who endorse the same statement.

It is often suggested that men are better able to enjoy cooking as a hobby because they have only occasional involvement with this most necessary of activities. The frequently cited idea is that men only cook for dinner parties and at barbecues - where they can show off and do "fun" cooking. The argument goes that as men only do the fun and interesting cooking they naturally find cooking more engaging; whereas women are saddled with the responsibility of providing food on a daily basis and so are not given the same opportunities to enjoy the act of making a meal.

It is certainly true that women cook more than men. However, it is interesting to note that it is *not* the occasional male cooks, not the barbecue kings who claim the most enthusiasm for cooking. The more frequently a person cooks the more likely they are to consider it to be a hobby and not a chore. Furthermore, this holds especially true for men - as the chart below shows. It is the men who cook everyday who consider making meals to be tantamount to leisure and whilst the pattern is also true for women, a regular female cook is less likely to be as enthusiastic as a regular male cook.

Chart 5 Frequent cooks - especially men - are least likely to consider it to be a chore



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents aged 18+, UK

3.1. The leisure society

Passion for cooking and for food is an important aspect of this trend and Gastrosexuals feel a strong personal involvement with cooking. Being a good cook carries with it social status and also helps the chef to get a sense of themselves - food actually helps to form part of their identity. In a context where some of the other ways in which people have identified themselves (class, job, politics) have become substantially less potent, passion for leisure, for hobbies, has stepped into this vacuum.

Professor James Woudhuysen agrees

“In the future, we can be sure that cooking, more than ever, will not just be a means to a full stomach. Cooking has always had added dimensions. Dimensions which are not formally related to the act of heating food, but which are nevertheless integral to the role of food in our lives.”

An ever-greater share of our national income is devoted to the pursuit of our hobbies and interest. According to the ONS, in 2007 British consumers spent £102 Billion on recreation and culture. Easily the most we have ever spent on this category of goods. This amounted to over 12% of all consumer spending in 2007 and represents huge growth over a relatively short period of time. Spending on recreation and culture at constant prices has increased more than seven fold since 1980, at a time when consumer spending as whole has grown by just over five times.

At the same time, surveys of opinion have shown growth in the importance people place on leisure in their lives. Conversely the importance people place on work has decreased. Britain is increasingly a leisure society, a society where we define ourselves by what we do in our spare time.

In Anthony Giddens' classic 1991 work "Modernity and Self Identity" he described this situation: people, he said, are constructing their identity for themselves using leisure and other signifiers in a post-traditional modernity where they are no longer given an established pattern to follow:

Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 1991 considers

"What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity - and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour."

It is in these circumstances that young men are becoming so passionate about the food they cook. It is not simply the provision of sustenance. It is part of who they are and what they do.

3.2. Glory hunters

In a world where identity is created by the individual rather than handed out by the accident of fate and social circumstance, the new male cook, the Gastrosexual is approaching the preparation of food in a very male way. He makes it a competition. Food for the Gastrosexual becomes a way of gaining social capital, of showing skill and taste.

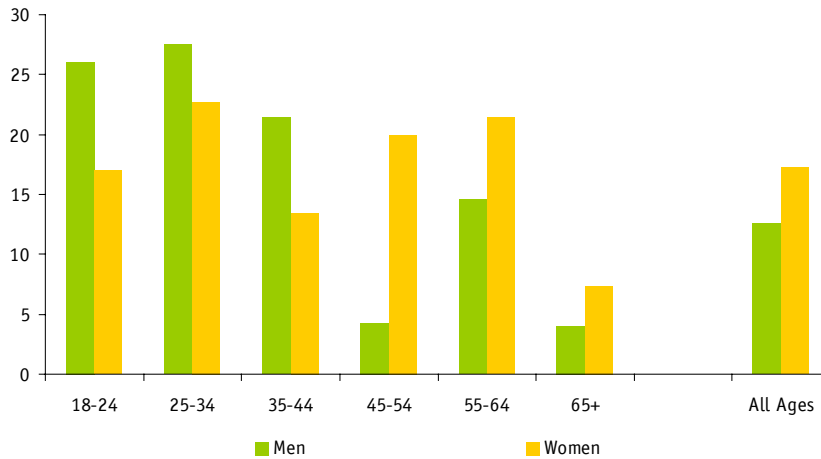
Dr Cynthia McVey, Psychologist adds

"Masterchef and the programmes about wild male chefs move the activity from home and care - traditionally female roles to more macho activities."

Praise can come to the accomplished Gastrosexual. The vivid examples of household-names: Jamie, Gordon, Heston, are continually fuelling the efforts of the nation's budding chefs. Food has become big business, an entertainment product, a lifestyle, a philosophy even. The amateur Jamies and aspiring Hestons have clear examples of the close association between gastronomic skill and public success. As such we see that, when cooking, young men are motivated unusually highly by the idea of receiving praise.

Chart 6 What, if anything, motivates you to prepare a meal for yourself or someone else?

For the glory – I like everyone to give me praise % agree



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

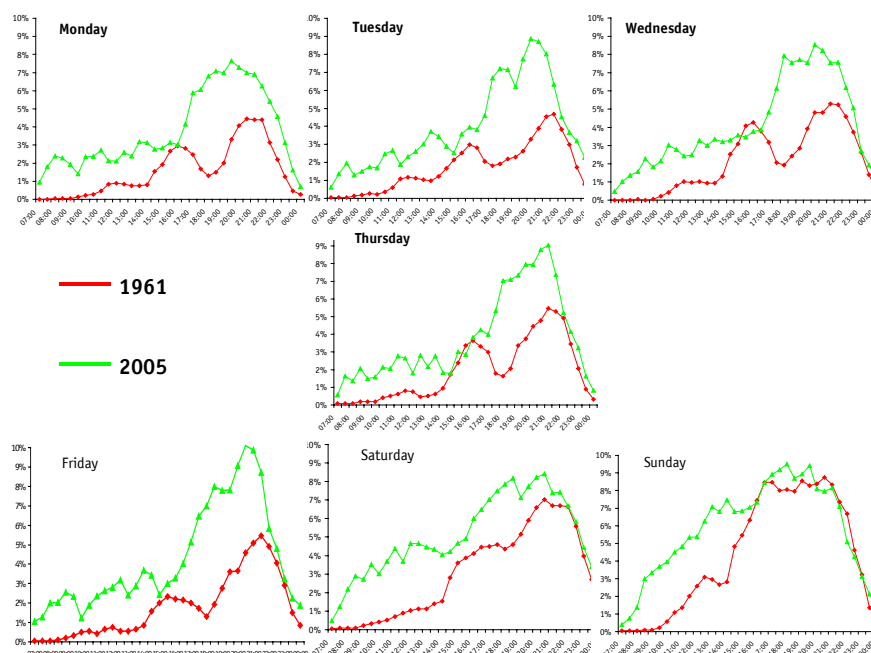
Base: 1005 respondents aged 18+, UK

An interesting example of this can be seen in the dinner party. The phrase itself is redolent of the 1970s, of Abigail's Party, of bourgeois social climbing and of prawn cocktails. But this assumption is often misleading. The research commissioned for this report shows that the dinner party is alive and well. Moreover, it is the younger age groups who cook most often for guests.

Dinner parties are, it seems, the new house parties, or at least now house parties represent a time to display one's skill in the kitchen as well as one's skill on the dance floor.

In home leisure is growing quickly. The British have a particular love for their homes and are increasingly using them as a venue for leisure. The next chart shows the tremendous growth that has occurred between the early sixties and the current decade in socialising at home. Our homes are becoming ever more pleasant environments in which to socialise as money is spent on improvements and plasma screens and games rooms are installed. As such this provides the Gastrosexual with a stage on which to show his skill and to impress his friends.

Chart 7 % time spent socialising in home: 40 year comparison



Source: National Statistics Time Use Survey/nVision

Base: 4,941 respondents aged 15+, UK, 2005

3.3. An age of affluence

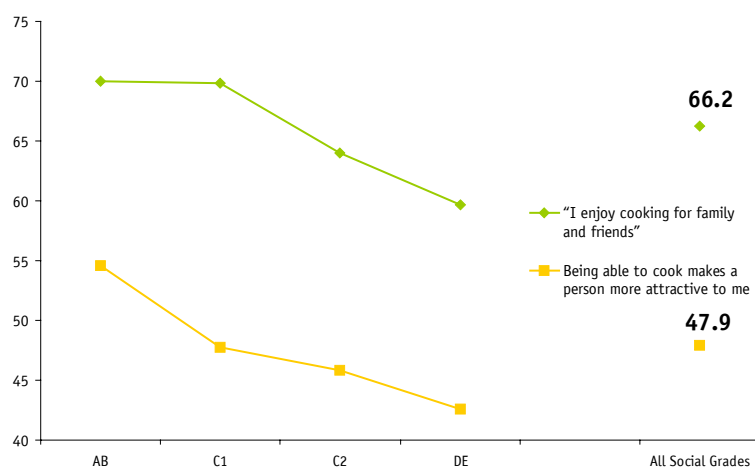
The exploits of the Gastrosexual have been greatly facilitated by the steady and profound rise of mass affluence in the United Kingdom. The Gastrosexual has been given new opportunities to express his taste and skill. Growing disposable income has opened up new foods, products and experiences which were uncommon only a short time ago.

Even with the economic doom and gloom which is prevalent at the time of writing, it is reassuring to note the scale of and the profound effect which rising affluence has had over a generation. Disposable income in real terms has more than doubled since 1980. We have twice as much money as we did twenty eight years ago. Mass affluence has changed our experience and expectations of what we should get from our lives. It has broadened our horizons and raised our expectations.

Affluence has changed the way in which we eat and the way in which we cook. A range of products previously unavailable have flooded the supermarket shelves and the kitchen cupboards across the whole of the United Kingdom. In the next chapter we will discuss the impact that increasing ethnic and cultural diversity has had on cooking in Britain. Those changes have obviously been very significant; however, it is worth remembering that even staples of European cooking were previously considered exotic items. Delia Smith had to advise her 1970s audience on where they could purchase rarities like garlic and olive oil was a product to be found in the pharmacy as much as the supermarket or grocer's shop.

Cooking has long been an area where social status and economic clout are important, discriminating factors and this continues today. Whilst Gastrosexuals come from all backgrounds and walks of life, they are more concentrated at the middle and wealthier end of society. The below chart shows that cooking meals from separate ingredients is most common in AB households and least common in DE households. This is in part because cooking carries greater social status in middle class society than it does elsewhere.

Chart 8 Attitudes to cooking by social grade



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents aged 18+, UK

Rising affluence continues to underpin the growth of the new male cook. More money has primarily meant greater opportunity, but it has also broadened horizons and changed values and attitudes towards the preparation of food. As we shall see in the next chapter, more common and increasingly far flung travel have had a profound influence. However, also crucial is that cooking is used by the middle classes as an expression of skill, accomplishment and taste. Much appreciation, much social capital flows to the successful cook and this has helped to motivate men to move into the kitchen.

3.4. Food and time

One of the most interesting developments in this area in recent years has been the apparent contradiction of a growing take up of prepared foods whilst the desire to cook from base ingredients has also grown. The dinner party is a prominent feature of many social lives, chefs are among the country's best known personalities, farmer's markets spring up, the 'slow food' movement is born ... and yet still prepared and convenience foods continue to grow. This is often seen as a contradiction, or

even as hypocrisy. The idea is floated that food is now only an entertainment product; that we watch celebrity chefs create culinary high art as we content ourselves with microwave meals. However, the two actually go hand in hand. They are a demonstration of people successfully managing the pressures on their time picking and choosing when to display their skills and when only a quick option will do.

As we saw in the previous chapter 70% of women are now engaged in paid employment and we have seen that the British people are placing an unusually high emphasis on the leisure activities they do away from work. In short there is a new and often challenging set of pressures on our time. 51% of people say that they are often under time pressure and this figure rises to two thirds (66%) of people in full time work.

Given the prevalence of frequent time pressure, trade offs do have to be made. So while there is a growing interest in food and people are cooking at home from base ingredients - this can not fit every occasion. As such, our research shows that people act tactically and with practicality - choosing the appropriate option. The nation is not simply split between couch potatoes and organic, healthy-eating purists - most people are a mixture of all parts of the spectrum. Half of even the most dedicated scratch-cooks still eat at fast food restaurants, 20% do this monthly or more often.

So convenience food, prepared food and fresh food are not sworn enemies. For most people, including many of the keenest cooks, they are a necessary part of a repertoire of ingredients and cooking styles. In the context of busy, complicated lives, people simply pick the dish and the ingredients which are most appropriate to them. The simultaneous growth of convenience and of cooking is not a contradiction; it is a symptom of the largely successful way in which we manage our time.

4. Food culture

4.1. Cooking and male identity

Throughout the research commissioned for this project we have seen a consistent level of social acceptance for the man who cooks. Gone, it seems, are the days where to cook was somehow seen as being less than macho. As we saw earlier men have moved into cooking with much more enthusiasm than they have moved into other areas of the previously female domestic sphere: cleaning, tidying and laundry. Male identity has been reconciled with the art of preparing food. Although not, it seems, with cleaning.

Crucial to this development has been the prominence of men who cook.

Juliette Kellow, Nutritionist adds

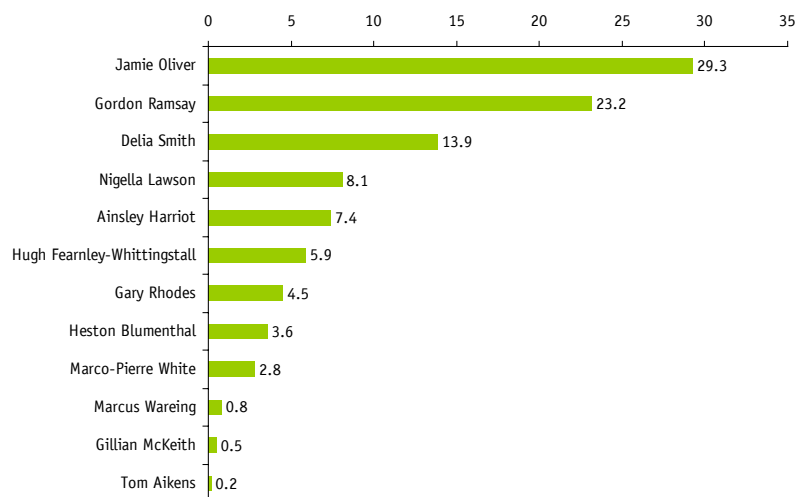
“There are very strong and easily identifiable role models available for men who show that cooking does not have to just be a female domain.”

Dan Davies, Deputy Editor of Esquire says

“Many of the current, best known celebrity chefs are men. And that’s different from the earlier era when the most prominent cooks on TV tended to be women.”

The new wave of celebrity chefs, as they have become known, have been very visibly laddish, macho or just plain angry when cooking. If there had been any doubt that real men could cook, it has been dispelled by a decade of unabashedly male cooks. It is ten years since Jamie Oliver first scooted on to our television screens in his *Naked Chef* series. Oliver, our poll shows, remains Britain’s most popular food hero, although hot on his heels is the no-nonsense ex-footballer turned chef, restaurateur and television star Gordon Ramsay.

Chart 9 Of the following list who would rate as your biggest food hero?



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

In their different ways both men have taken a masculine approach to the fine art of cooking. It is also notable that both men's wives have become celebrities in their own right (Tana Ramsay even publishing her own recipe books). Nothing could be more reassuringly heterosexual.

Celebrity chefs did not start the new wave of male cooks - as we have seen there are massive economic, social and cultural forces which have moved men in to the kitchen. However, this latest and most prominent group of male cooks has helped to change attitudes and opinions. Television has taken cooking out of the still female dominated domestic sphere and away from the idea of cooking as provision for one's family alone. Cooking can be stylish, it can be fiercely passionate - indeed, in the case of the successful Masterchef format, it can be directly competitive.

Ironically, therefore, by disassociating cooking from the traditionally female worlds of home and family, celebrity chefs have encouraged men in to domestic kitchens - often to cook for their girlfriends, wives and children. The Gastrosexual need not be embarrassed of his passion for cooking. This no longer seems fey or un-male, it can be heated, exciting and competitive.

Professor Melanie Howard agrees

"Many celebrity chefs are conspicuously masculine, red-blooded men. There is no suggestion that cooking is anything less than manly, which I think does make this field more attractive to men - and can actually also appeal to women."

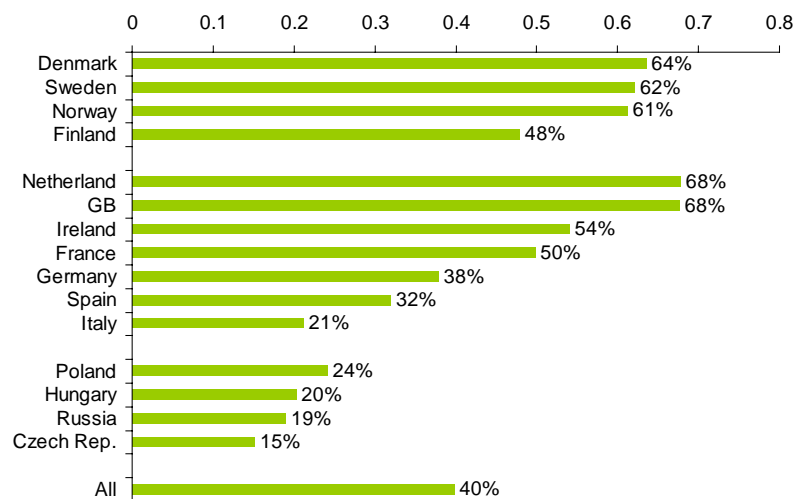
4.2. Multicultural men - cooking in modern Britain

The research for this project has revealed a geographically diverse range of influences on the modern male cook. British food remains popular, but the influence of foreign cuisines, especially those from Asia, is great. This Asian influence is especially strong with younger people. However, it is also the case that there remain stark differences between the preference of people for foods when eating out and the food they cook themselves. Many people perceive that other cuisines are difficult or arduous to cook.

At the time of the last census there were 4.6 Million people from ethnic minorities living in the UK, equivalent to 7.9% of the national population. Since the 2001 census Britain's population has continued to change. Both the inflow of new immigrants and outflow of those choosing to leave Britain have increased in this period as global mobility continues to rise. The experience of migration has itself changed as political and social developments mean that different nationalities have come to live in Britain and have spread to regions which had not previously been such common destinations for new immigrants. Most prominent has been the growth of the UK's polish community. Since Poland joined the European Union in 2004, 538,000 Poles have registered as workers in Britain since that date.

Migration – especially immigration - remains an emotive topic. However, British people are relatively positive about the contribution made to the culture by immigrants. An area where this contribution has been especially profound is in food. According to our research 67% of Britons claim to regularly eat food from other countries and cultures. We asked the same question across Europe and found that in Britain we are especially fond of foreign food and as we shall see later on especially Asian food.

Chart 10 "I regularly eat food from other countries and cultures"



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

Food has been an area where many immigrants have been able to enter the national culture. Chinese and Indian restaurants are regular features on high streets nationwide. Indeed, as Melanie Howard points out, food was one of the first areas where migrants from non English-speaking countries were able to enter the national consciousness in a positive way.

Professor Melanie Howard explains

“Food is the first and amongst the most positive and exuberant expressions of a positive multiculturalism”.

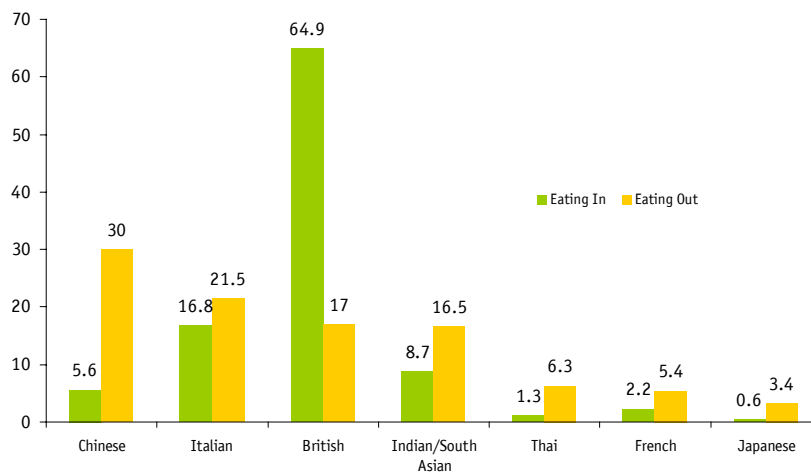
As we have seen, foreign cuisine is very popular in the UK. In the research commissioned for this project Chinese food emerged as the nation’s favourite when eating out - with 30% choosing it as their preferred option. Young people especially were likely to choose Chinese food - 37% of 18-34 year olds favouring this style of cooking.

The Gastrosexual has grown up in an era where foreign travel is increasingly the norm - 48% of Britons took a foreign holiday in the last year according to our latest research. At the same time the range of our travel is expanding with new intercontinental destinations increasingly opening up to Western visitors. Food has become an important part of the travel experience; 64% of people agree that experiencing the authentic culture of the place visited is the most important thing for them when on holiday (up from 52% in 2005). Independent travel has quickly stolen share from package holidays as people look more authentic travel experiences. Often this experience takes the form of the consumption of local food - recently many travel companies have begun to offer “gastro-tours” of

various regions in Europe, Asia and beyond. Asian food has come to Britain in the form of immigration, but Britain has also gone to Asian food. The consumption of Asian food has associations of exotic and authentic travel. It is noticeable that the foods most frequently described as exciting all came from Asia (38% of people described Thai as exciting, Chinese 38%, Indian 39%).

While foreign foods are established favourites out of home, eating in shows a different story;

Chart 11 Which of the following would you say is your favourite style of cooking when eating in and when eating out?

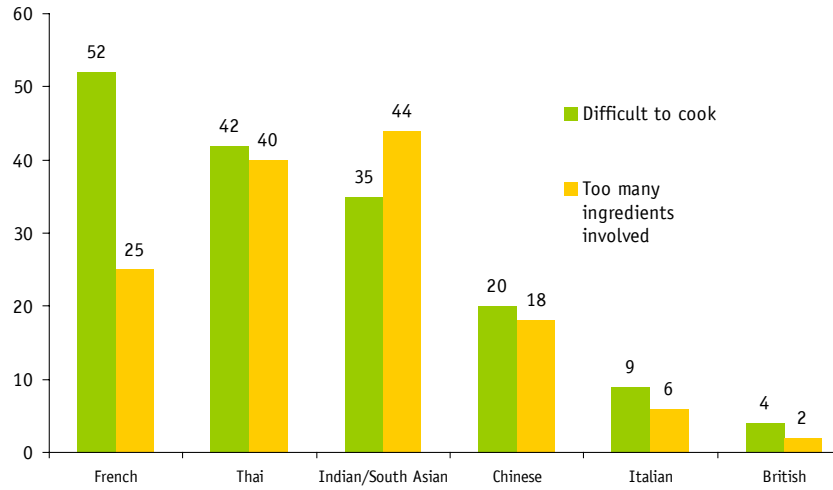


Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

Our research found that although there is a great deal of enthusiasm for foreign foods in terms of eating out this was not reflected in people's preferences when eating in. British food is strongly the preference when eating in. British people, it seems, find other cuisines more difficult to cook, and the number of ingredients involved can slow the process for people with already busy, complex lives.

Chart 12 Which of the following words would you associate with these different styles of cooking?



Source: PurAsia/The Future Foundation, 2008

Base: 1005 respondents (those who lived with both parents) aged 18+, UK

As such, multiculturalism has had a more profound effect on the food we eat out of the home than the food we eat in the home.

Appendix One

Biographies of the Expert Interviewees

Dr Paul Levy is a widely respected food writer and food historian. Now chairman of the Oxford Symposium on Food History, Dr Levy is best known for his food writing for *The Observer* where he was Food and Wine Editor for more than a decade (during which time he coined the term “foodie”).

Professor Melanie Howard is an expert in Social Trends Forecasting. Working as a director at the Henley Centre for Forecasting, after which time she co-founded the Future Foundation. Melanie is also a visiting Professor at Henley Management College.

Juliette Kellow is a registered dietician and respected writer on food and nutrition. She spent five years as editor of *Top Sante* and currently writes regularly for *The Daily Mirror*.

Dr Cynthia McVey is a professional psychologist. She is head of department at Glasgow Caledonian University. She has considerable media experience working across print, radio and television (including ‘Castaway 2000’, ‘Tonight with Trevor McDonald’, and ‘A child of our time’).

James Woudhuysen is an academic and business consultant with years of experience working with companies on social trends. He is Professor of Forecasting and Innovation at De Montfort University, Leicester.

Dan Davies is Deputy Editor at respected men’s magazine Esquire. Dan was previously Deputy Editor of Jack, Contributing Editor at Golf Monthly and Men's Lifestyle Editor on the Mail on Sunday's Live Night & Day supplement.