



# Should You Focus On Your Restaurant Website? 32% Of Diners Check Restaurant Websites Before Visiting

Toast conducted a blind survey on adults ages 18+ who have recently dined at restaurants. Here's the data we found regarding reviews, ratings, and more.



TESSA ZULUAGA Author



WORD RESOURCE

## Barista Resume Template

Use this easy-to-use Microsoft Word template to showcase your experience and secure your next barista role!

[Get Free Download](#)

toast | BUILT FOR RESTAURANTS

As we enter 2024, the significance of online reviews and ratings has been a popular topic of discussion in the restaurant industry. Customer experiences shared online can play a pivotal role in guiding diners and helping restaurant operators make new business decisions. Toast conducted a blind survey on these topics, and this article delves into the data points behind what diners are thinking.

Join us as we explore how these insights impact both diners and restaurateurs in 2024.

### Quick insights:

Offline channels like word of mouth (24%) and foot traffic (17%), were cited as better ways to find out about new restaurants compared to digital channels like social media (15%), online review sites (14%) and Google (19%).

Google reviews (46%) was the most popular place for users to check restaurant ratings online, more popular than Yelp (23%), TripAdvisor (9%) and OpenTable (6%).

18% of respondents admitted that they either never or rarely check a restaurant's online rating and review before going.

10% of restaurant goers said that they always write a restaurant review after their experience.

Below three stars was the most popular choice for when people would stop considering going to a restaurant, while 5% of people would still consider going to a restaurant whose online rating was below one star.

New restaurant discovery was described as difficult, with 63% of respondents expressing strong interest in a new product that specifically highlighted new restaurant openings in their area.

RESOURCE

## Restaurant Website Checklist

This template will help you update and optimize your website, so guests can easily find and order from you.

[Get Free Download](#)

served by  toast

### Restaurant review websites and ratings data

Ready? Let's dive in deeper.

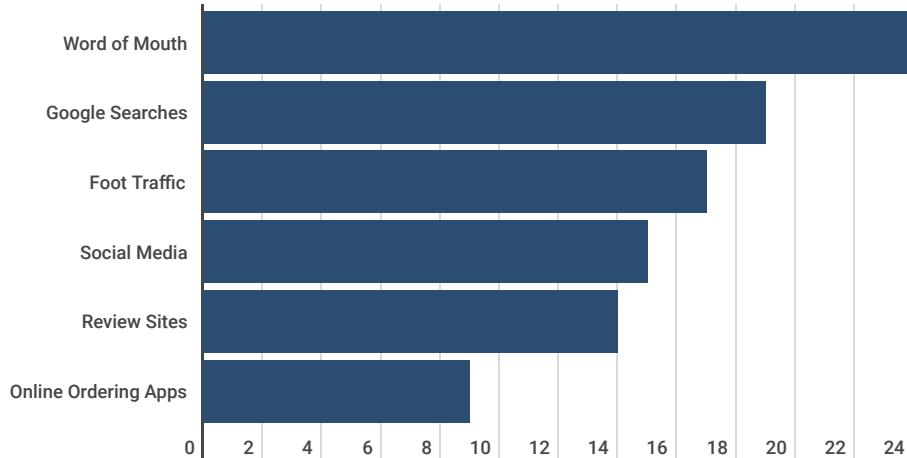
#### **Despite new online resources, 24% of restaurant goers are still using word of mouth to discover new restaurants**

In today's modern world of technology, there are many ways to find new restaurants online. However, when we asked diners to choose their top 3 ways to discover new restaurants to visit, 24% selected word-of-mouth. Surprisingly, the second most popular selection was foot traffic or passing by, with 17% of diners choosing this option.

For those who are turning to the internet, Google searches came out on top, as 19% of respondents included Google as their top source. Following Google, social media (15%) and

review sites (14%) were the top choices. Overall, females are more reliant on social media and word of mouth, while males are more likely to use reviews and/or online ordering sites.

## How do you find out about new restaurants?



### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by 

To break it down, 58% of participants who answered social media as their top choice for new restaurant discovery were female. A great way to use this information to your advantage is to create social media content geared toward women. On the other hand, 51% of people who answered review sites were men. Consider monitoring your restaurant reviews ↗ and responding to comments as often as possible.

This data leads us to believe that, although there are resources available online, customers trust other customers the most. The best way to ensure your restaurant gets the word-of-mouth attention it needs is to provide the best guest experience possible. If you give guests at least one thing to remember, whether it's stellar entrees, friendly staff, or a lively atmosphere, they'll spread the word about your restaurant business.

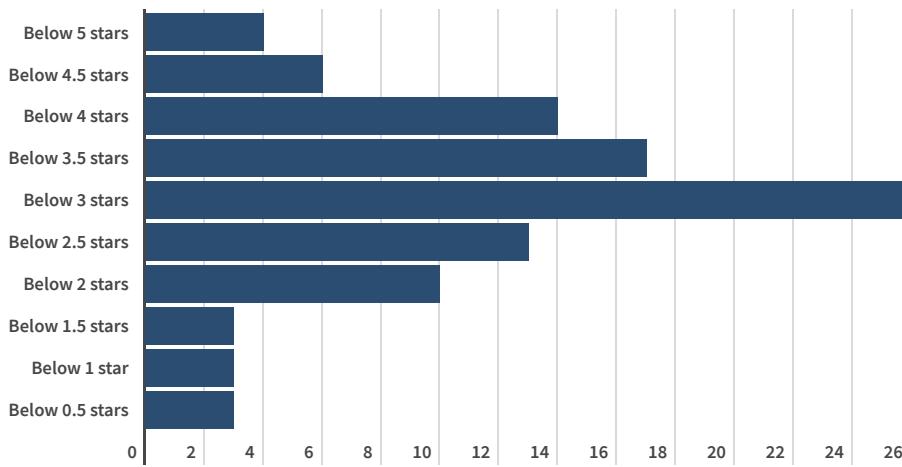
### **43% of people won't go to a restaurant if its rating is below 3-3.5 stars**

When asked which rating (out of 5 stars) would make respondents NOT consider visiting a restaurant- over 26% answered "below 3 stars" and 17% said "below 3.5 stars". 14% even answered that they wouldn't visit a restaurant below 4 stars.

More specifically, females are more sensitive to lower ratings and have a higher threshold. For example, if a restaurant has less than a 3.5-star rating, women aren't as likely to try it. Whereas males are more likely to try a lower-rated restaurant. When looking at the age of the respondents, people who are 60+ are more likely to draw the line at anything below a 3.5-star rating. We can use this data to conclude that women who are age 60+ aren't likely to visit your restaurant if you have a low rating. With this in mind, if this is your target market you may want to take action.

To shoot for that 4-star and above rating, restaurant owners must prioritize various aspects of their operation.

## Below which rating would you consider NOT visiting a restaurant?



### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by 

First and foremost, maintaining a high standard of food quality is paramount. Consistently delivering delicious and well-prepared dishes will leave positive impressions on customers and contribute to favorable ratings.

In addition to your menu items, attentive and friendly customer service plays a pivotal role. Staff members who are knowledgeable and responsive to customer needs even at their busiest can enhance the overall dining experience. Ambiance and cleanliness are also key factors that contribute to a positive impression.

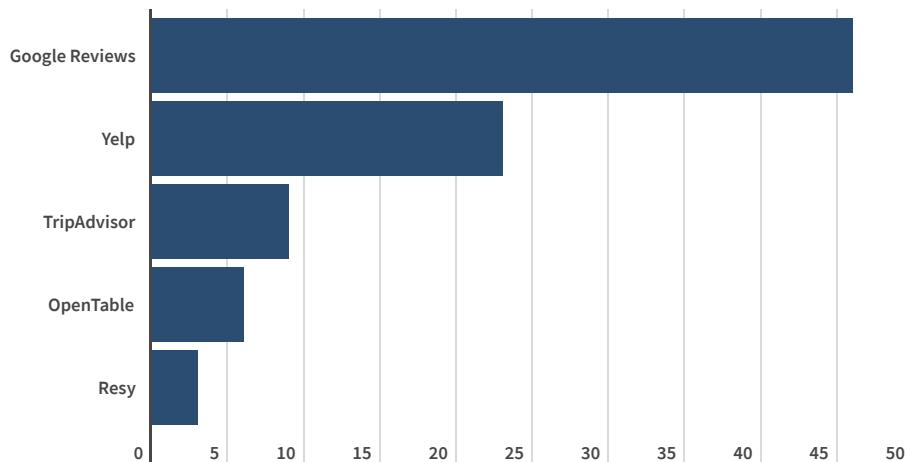
Regularly seeking feedback from customers and addressing any concerns demonstrates a commitment to improvement. By consistently focusing on these elements, restaurant managers can increase their chances of achieving a 4-star and above rating.

### 46% of diners are likely to check Google Reviews first

So where are these ratings coming from? For 46% of people, Google Reviews is the first place they check restaurant ratings, while 23% check ratings on Yelp first. This comes as no surprise as users can immediately see your Google Reviews when they search for your restaurant.

Beyond these top two sources, users are also checking restaurant ratings on a few other sites. 9% first check TripAdvisor, 6% look at OpenTable, and 3% use Resy. However, 10% answered that they don't use any of these sites.

## Where do you check restaurant ratings most frequently?



### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by toast

Customer reviews provide big data opportunities for your restaurant business. Leveraging customer reviews for insightful data analytics can be a game-changer in such a competitive industry. Analyzing the sentiment and specific feedback from reviews on platforms like Google Reviews and Yelp can offer valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of your restaurant.

By identifying recurring themes in customer comments, businesses can pinpoint areas for improvement or areas that resonate particularly well with their clientele. Additionally, tracking trends in customer preferences can inform strategic decisions in real time. For example, you can make menu adjustments, service enhancements, or targeted marketing campaigns.

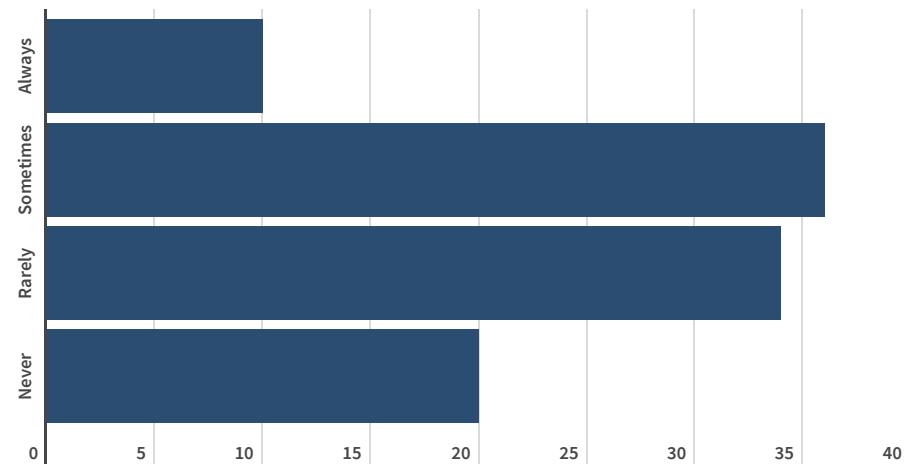
Lastly, how you choose to respond to negative reviews says a lot about your business. Take the opportunity to make amends, and ask the customer for a second chance.

### **53% of diners aren't likely to write reviews after their experience**

Although users are reading the reviews you have, 53% of people either “never” or “rarely” write a restaurant review after their experience. When looking into the demographics of these responses, we found that 20% of women never leave reviews, regardless of their experience, while men are more likely to leave a review.

However, we can’t forget the critics. 10% of people said they “always” write reviews. Of the 121 participants who answered this, 53% were male. We also found that those who “always” write reviews are most likely between the ages of 45-60.

## How often do you write a review for a restaurant after visiting?



### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by toast

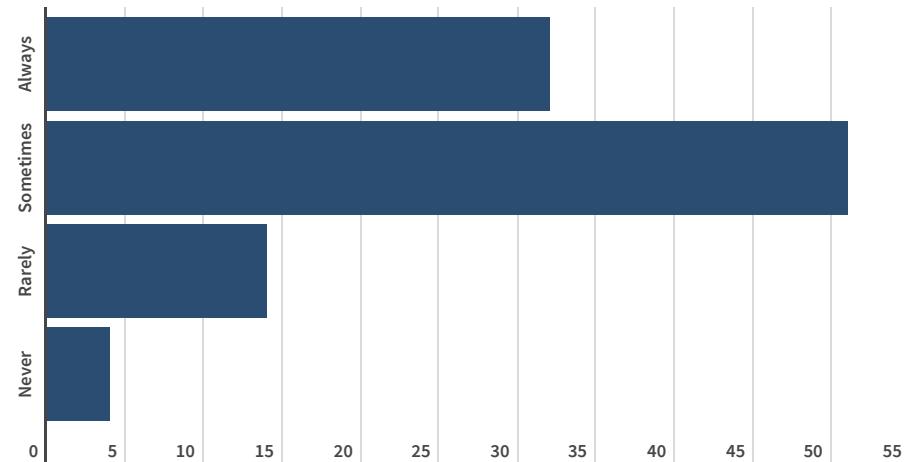
With this being said, it's even more crucial to make sure the reviews that are being posted are positive ones. Consider encouraging guests to leave a review. After their meal, thank them and tell them you'd love to hear about their experience. Make it simple by putting a [QR code](#) on the receipt or a link on the menu that takes them directly to the review page. You can also offer a little reward, like a discount for their next visit or a chance to win something. If your restaurant is on social media, engage with customers there and show you're interested in their thoughts.

Not every guest is forecasting their opinion on your restaurant. However, if you're looking for ways to get your restaurant reviewed more often by critics and bloggers, check out [this article](#).

### Only 32% of diners always check restaurant websites before visiting

Diners might use word-of-mouth the most to discover restaurants, but they're also searching for your restaurant and what comes up is important. 51% of survey respondents answered that they "sometimes" check a restaurant's website before visiting. 32% answered "always", 14% said "rarely", and only 4% "never" check restaurant websites. Furthermore, these Google searches are most likely from users ages 18-29. Needless to say, your website needs to be up to date.

## How often do you check a restaurant's website before visiting?



### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by toast

To capture the interest of these potential customers, your website must be both user-friendly and regularly updated with accurate information. Your website should include:

Address, Phone Number, & Hours

Direct links to your social media

Your restaurant menu

An online ordering integration link

Gift cards and merchandise

Loyalty program and email signups

By investing in the online representation of your restaurant, you're not just creating a virtual storefront; you're enhancing the overall dining experience.

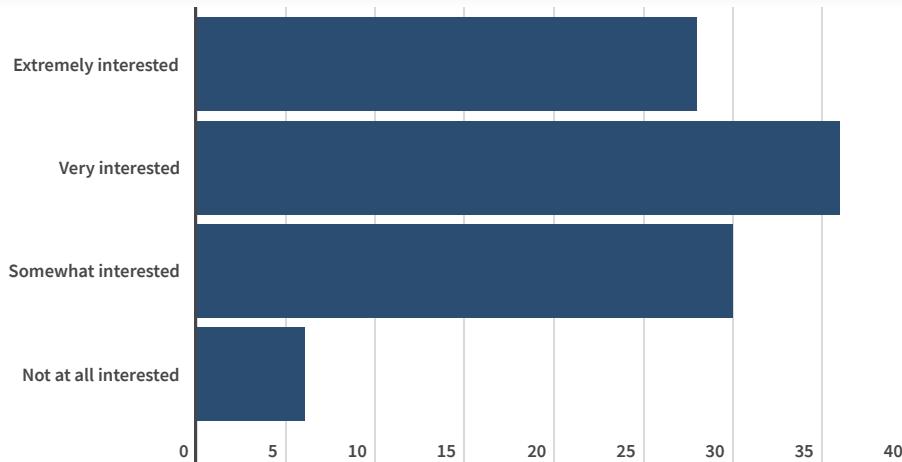
### 63% of guests want to find new restaurant openings

The bottom line is diners are looking for new restaurants. 63% of people expressed strong interest in a product that specifically highlighted new restaurant openings in their area.

For new restaurants looking to add their voice to the conversation, this means spending more time on marketing to ensure you get heard amongst all the noise. By taking your marketing in creative and enticing directions, new restaurants can successfully introduce themselves to their future customers and make a valuable contribution to their communities.

**toast** Restaurants Retail Products Pricing Resources [Get a Demo](#)

Switch to Toast to get \$4K off hardware & more. Learn if you're eligible.<sup>†</sup> [Get a free demo →](#)



#### Source details

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey.

powered by **toast**

## Top restaurant review sites

Now that we know guests are reading your restaurant reviews, it's important to know where they're finding these. Restaurant operators and managers should be active on the sites where guests are leaving their input. Managing your online reputation can mean the difference between a full dining room on a Saturday night and closing your doors. Don't forget—there's a kind way to [respond to negative feedback](#), too.

Here are the top review sites:

1. Google My Business
2. [Yelp](#)
3. [OpenTable](#)
4. [Tripadvisor](#)
5. [Foursquare](#)
6. [Gayot](#)
7. [The Infatuation](#)
8. [Eater](#)

## Set your restaurant up for success on restaurant rating sites

The insights from our blind survey shed light on the current state of restaurant ratings and

reviews. These reviews can influence both customer decision-making and restaurant operations. Word-of-mouth remains a dominant force in restaurant discovery. However, the increasing popularity of Google searches, particularly among the younger demographic, emphasizes the importance of maintaining an up-to-date website.

In 2024, focus on your website and [leveraging your customer feedback](#). For more information on guest feedback check out our free, downloadable [Restaurant Survey Template](#). These survey questions will give you the data you need to make informed changes and improve the overall dining experience.

## Survey methodology

Toast conducted a blind survey on this topic of 1157 U.S. adults ages 18 and older on December 12, 2023. Respondents were not made aware that Toast was fielding the study. All respondents indicated they have dined out at a restaurant at least once in the last 30 days of the survey. Using a standard margin of error calculation, at a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error on average is +/- 3 - 5%.

## Related Resources

[Restaurant Industry Statistics](#)

[Food Truck Industry Statistics](#)

[Coffee Shop Industry Statistics](#)

[Dessert Trends and Statistics](#)

[Bakery Industry Statistics](#)

[Gen Z Food Trend Statistics](#)



**Is this article helpful?**

Yes

No

*DISCLAIMER: This information is provided for general informational purposes only, and publication does not constitute an endorsement. Toast does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of any information, text, graphics, links, or other items contained within this content. Toast does not guarantee you will achieve any specific results if you follow any advice herein. It may be advisable for you to consult with a professional such as a lawyer, accountant, or business advisor for advice specific to your situation.*