The Coronavirus Restaurant Sentiment Survey

Results:
Businesses and Professionals

The restaurant industry is one of the hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, and nobody is better placed to comment on its effects than those on the front line. Lockdown measures across the world have seen doors shuttered and livelihoods endangered. And despite some creative short-term solutions and pivots into new ways of working, the crisis has taken its toll on professionals, both economically and mentally.

Through this anonymous survey, Fine Dining Lovers has reached out to its wide audience of restaurant professionals to gain expert insight into the effects of the coronavirus crisis upon their industry, and the path to recovery. We have all worked in partnership with Gronda.eu who distributed the survey across their own network of chefs. While a consistent base of restaurant professionals reluctantly agreed with the lockdown measures, most are understandably anxious about its impact. They know that hard times are unavoidable, yet there is optimism about the role of professionals in shaping a better future. Chefs in particular can play a key part in the recovery of the industry, and their expertise and professionalism will be vital as we take those first few steps into a new gastronomic landscape.

Thanks to its unique readership of key industry experts, Fine Dining Lovers hopes this survey will shed light on the restaurant lockdown from those closest to it, and that it will feed into the wider conversation about how the industry can emerges from the crisis.
Who answered our questionnaire?

- 2708 complete interviews across the globe
- 85% working in Restaurants or Hotel
- 55% more than 10 years of experience
- 55% working in kitchen:
  - 52% Executive or Head Chefs
  - 32% Sous or Station Chefs

% Respondents per country

- UK
- USA
- Canada
- Italy
- Germany
- France
- Australia
- Mexico
- Rest of the world

Main Findings

Professionals concerned about the future

Professionals are concerned about the near future and among professionals currently working or furloughed, 72% are concerned about losing their job.

Question: to what extend do you agree with the decision to close Bars and Restaurants?

- 44% Totally agree
- 32% Are somehow paid*
- 68% Not working and not paid

- 51% feel their financial situation will get worse over the next 6 months
- 27% agree that the government has provided adequate care for the restaurant industry
- 65% of those not working declared they lost the job due to COVID-19
- 49% of those who lost the job, or think they will loose it, are confident they will find a new one in the future
- 84% declared they will keep on working in the restaurant industry in the future

* working as usual, reduced time or reduced salary
Time spent away from the kitchen

51% of professionals working in kitchens took the opportunity to rest and spend time with their families. Yet 52% declared they were eager to return to work, suggesting that the current situation creates anxiety among restaurant professionals.

Question: thinking about the time you have spent away from the kitchen, indicate to what extend the following statements apply to you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>52%</th>
<th>51%</th>
<th>41%</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>9%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am waiting every day to get back to work</td>
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<tr>
<td>I took the chance to rest and spend time with family</td>
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<td>I used my time to research and develop new recipes and ideas</td>
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<td>I am connecting with my following and teaching them how to cook</td>
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<td>I am helping feed social projects and charity initiatives</td>
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<td>I have started a community food project with my team</td>
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Strategies to face the crisis

To face the present crisis, 49% of restaurants involved in the survey have introduced or further developed delivery. Meal Boxes are less appealing as only 12% declared they have started this initiative. Still, 1/3 of the sample took the chance to refurbish their kitchens or dining room furniture showing that a consistent base retained a forward-looking attitude.

Question: which of the following initiatives did your restaurant implement during the COVID-19 crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>35%</th>
<th>31%</th>
<th>29%</th>
<th>32%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>17%</th>
<th>12%</th>
<th>12%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Took the chance to renew kitchen appliances or furniture</td>
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<td>Introduced Delivery services</td>
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<td>Further develop Delivery services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Started Deal Boxes</td>
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<td>Prepared food for social projects and charity initiatives</td>
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Totally agree (Working in kitchen)
Future scenario
Professionals taking part in the survey agreed that a significant number of restaurants will not open again following the crisis. According to them, the restaurant industry will recover slowly and chefs will have a crucial role in its future. Overall, participants believe in the importance of fine dining in the industry, as delivery, casual dining and ghost kitchens are not seen as key elements of any future scenario.

Question: here is a list of statements about possible restaurant industry scenarios after the crisis. Please select how much you agree or disagree:

The road to recovery
According to professionals, external support to help the industry recover is essential. Still professionals feel the industry needs to be redesigned specially introducing technology and new revenue streams. The survey shows that for professionals, the crisis can be an opportunity to change the game.

Question: what help does the industry need to return and be stronger after the lockdowns?
Key Takeaways

- Although a consistent base of professionals agreed on the restaurant lockdown measures, the current situation creates status anxiety, especially when thinking about the future.

- Professionals are conscious that hard times are inevitable and that the recovery will be slow. This creates uncertainty about their professional future.

- The results show that despite an obvious sense of uncertainty, professionals feel they can contribute positively to the industry's recovery.

- According to survey participants, chefs can and will have a crucial role to contribute to the recovery of restaurants.

- The high levels of professionalism, skills and expertise in the industry should be the starting point for a fruitful discussion aimed at rethinking restaurants in terms of their offering, processes and revenue streams.
About FineDiningLovers.com

FineDiningLovers.com is the international digital platform for foodies by S.Pellegrino and Acqua Panna. Exploring the culture of taste and the pleasure of conviviality, FineDiningLovers.com offers every day original and inspirational food-related stories, interviews with the world’s most famous chefs, news, trends, videos, photos and recipes. Online since March 2012, the magazine considers food more than just taste: a sensorial, social and cultural experience. Expert gourmands, curious foodies as well as the most innovative chefs know the site and consider it one of the most influential online magazines for fine dining and gastronomy.

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