



LUNCH IS THE MOST POPULAR MEAL TO DINE AL FRESCO - SURVEY FINDS



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As the summer months approach, a new survey has found that more than three quarters (79%) of Brits would increase their dwell time while dining al fresco if table service was available.

The survey by HospitalityGEM also found that lunch is the most popular meal for al fresco dining, with the majority choosing to eat two courses.

Steven Pike, MD of HospitalityGEM, said: "The summer season is hugely important for any pub operator and there are real opportunities to maximise sales by getting the al fresco dining experience right. It's easy

to neglect this area but operators may find opportunities in focussing similar attention on its appearance and facilities as they do on the inside of a site.

"Rather than stretch your team across both areas, and neglect customers as a consequence, make sure you have enough staff on to cover outside as well as inside. This will ensure that all guests feel valued and give team members the opportunity to create a memorable experience that will lead to positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits."

In terms of facilities, 39% would expect a pub to offer a children's play area as part of its outdoor experience, while almost a third (32%) would like music played through speakers.

Comfort is also key, with heating, shelter from the wind and garden umbrellas all expected as basic facilities for a pub with outside dining facilities.

Over a third of diners (37%) said they would be more inclined to dine outside if they could communicate with serving staff via an app on their phone, increasing to 45% amongst men and 53% of 18-25 year olds.

Written by **Nathan Pearce**