



The 2022 Definitive U.S. Restaurant Ranking

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The 2022 Definitive U.S. Restaurant Ranking Report

Recovery was evident for the U.S. commercial restaurant industry in 2021 as stay-at-home advisories were lifted and pent-up demand led to consumers dining out more. Restaurant online and physical visits increased 9% last year compared to the 12% decline in the 12 months ending December 2020. Although traffic is still down 4% compared to 2019, the restaurant industry is making some headway and is expected to recover 98% of 2019 visits by the end of 2022.

Consumer spending at restaurants grew 16% in the year ending December 2021, lapping 2020, when spending declined by 12%. As a result, consumer spending was 2% above the pre-pandemic year ending December 2019 period.

Similar to the overall restaurant trend, aggregate sales for the Top 50 chains grew 15%, from \$234 billion in 2020 to \$269 billion in 2021. The composition of the Top 50 remained fairly stable compared to 2020, with only one chain breaking into the list to displace competition. TGI Fridays returned to the Top 50, while Del Taco dropped to number 51, similar to their pre-pandemic positions.

The Top 5 chains retained their rank in terms of dollar sales: McDonald's, Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, Taco Bell, and Wendy's. Subway displaced Burger King as the sixth-largest chain in the country, rebounding from a low in 2020 and returning to pre-pandemic position. Looking at the Top 25 chains:

- Eight held the rank they had in 2020 – the Top 5 as well as Sonic, Pizza Hut, and Dairy Queen.
- Seven of the Top 25 moved up in rank. Four of those that moved up are casual dining chains, recovering from significant declines in 2020.

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Top Restaurant Chains	Estimated 2021 Sales (Millions)	Estimated AUV (Millions)	2021 AUV Rank	Unit Count	Unit Change	Operator Category	
1	McDonald's	\$45,256.6	\$3.37	10	13,437	-2.6%	QSR Hamburger
2	Starbucks	\$22,744.7	\$1.52	34	15,008	3.8%	QSR Gourmet Coffee/Tea
3	Chick-fil-A	\$16,840.7	\$6.27	3	2,688	1.8%	QSR Other Sandwich
4	Taco Bell	\$13,446.2	\$1.79	27	7,502	0.0%	QSR Mexican
5	Wendy's	\$10,812.7	\$1.85	26	5,856	0.1%	QSR Hamburger
6	Subway	\$9,907.0	\$0.46	50	21,436	-6.7%	QSR Sub/Deli/Bakery Sandwich
7	Burger King	\$9,905.3	\$1.41	35	7,029	-2.3%	QSR Hamburger
8	Dunkin'	\$9,207.6	\$1.02	43	9,050	1.2%	QSR Donut
9	Domino's	\$9,077.1	\$1.41	36	6,443	5.1%	QSR Pizza/Italian
10	Chipotle Mexican Grill	\$6,858.3	\$2.40	21	2,862	8.7%	QSR Mexican
11	Panera Bread	\$6,780.4	\$3.18	11	2,135	-1.3%	QSR Sub/Deli/Bakery Sandwich
12	Sonic	\$5,442.1	\$1.55	33	3,507	1.5%	QSR Hamburger
13	Pizza Hut	\$5,242.5	\$0.80	47	6556*	-1.8%*	QSR Pizza/Italian
14	Dairy Queen	\$4,815.9	\$1.11	41	4,325	-2.3%	QSR Frozen Sweets
15	Panda Express	\$4,318.7	\$1.94	24	2,221	1.8%	QSR Asian
16	Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen	\$4,294.5	\$1.68	30	2,552	5.4%	QSR Chicken
17	KFC	\$4,269.4	\$1.07	42	3,973	-1.1%	QSR Chicken
18	Arby's	\$4,262.3	\$1.24	39	3,425	1.4%	QSR Roast Beef
19	Olive Garden	\$4,238.5	\$4.86	4	872	0.1%	CD Italian
20	Jack in the Box	\$4,133.4	\$1.86	25	2,219	-1.3%	QSR Hamburger
21	Chili's	\$3,741.8	\$3.07	12	1,218	-0.3%	CD Bar & Grill
22	Texas Roadhouse	\$3,706.1	\$6.34	2	585	2.6%	CD Steak
23	Buffalo Wild Wings	\$3,688.4	\$2.98	14	1,237	-0.2%	CD Bar & Grill
24	Applebee's	\$3,583.5	\$2.26	23	1,586	-0.8%	CD Bar & Grill
25	Little Caesars	\$3,499.5	\$0.85	46	4,102	-0.9%	QSR Pizza/Italian
26	Papa Johns	\$3,322.5	\$1.11	40	2,982	-1.0%	QSR Pizza/Italian
27	IHOP	\$2,674.3	\$1.62	31	1,655	4.0%	MS Family Style
28	Wingstop	\$2,546.7	\$1.75	29	1,455	8.3%	QSR Chicken
29	Outback Steakhouse	\$2,496.8	\$3.59	9	695	-2.7%	CD Steak
30	Culver's	\$2,483.7	\$3.01	13	825	7.4%	QSR Hamburger
31	Cracker Barrel (Old Cntry Str)	\$2,421.5	\$3.65	8	664	-0.3%	MS Family Style
32	Jimmy John's	\$2,381.6	\$0.90	45	2,645	-1.4%	QSR Sub/Deli/Bakery Sandwich
33	Denny's	\$2,373.7	\$1.61	32	1,477	-1.1%	MS Family Style
34	Whataburger	\$2,316.6	\$2.69	20	860	4.5%	QSR Hamburger
35	LongHorn Steakhouse	\$2,235.4	\$4.05	6	552	2.8%	CD Steak
36	Zaxby's	\$2,225.6	\$2.38	22	937	4.1%	QSR Chicken
37	Raising Cane's	\$2,197.3	\$4.17	5	527	5.2%	QSR Chicken
38	The Cheesecake Factory	\$2,036.2	\$9.70	1	210	0.0%	CD Bar & Grill
39	Red Lobster	\$1,962.9	\$2.91	16	674	-1.2%	CD Seafood
40	Hardee's	\$1,847.4	\$1.00	44	1,849	1.8%	QSR Hamburger
41	Five Guys	\$1,776.1	\$1.27	38	1,393	4.3%	QSR Hamburger
42	Golden Corral	\$1,486.6	\$3.78	7	393	-19.0%	MS Family Style
43	Carl's Jr.	\$1,485.6	\$1.40	37	1,060	-2.2%	QSR Hamburger
44	Red Robin	\$1,390.1	\$2.70	19	514	-1.5%	CD Bar & Grill
45	Bojangles	\$1,348.8	\$1.76	28	767	2.7%	QSR Chicken
46	Jersey Mike's Subs	\$1,273.9	\$0.64	49	2,003	16.7%	QSR Sub/Deli/Bakery Sandwich
47	Waffle House	\$1,249.2	\$0.64	48	1,948	-1.0%	MS Family Style
48	In-N-Out Burger	\$1,093.9	\$2.98	15	367	0.8%	QSR Hamburger
49	Krispy Kreme	\$990.7	\$2.76	18	359	-1.6%	QSR Donut
50	TGI Fridays	\$940.4	\$2.81	17	335	-4.8%	CD Bar & Grill

Methodology

The Definitive Restaurant Ranking leverages multiple data products and services from NPD's unmatched research product portfolio, combined with experienced analyst estimates. Sales estimates represent each chain's total U.S. system for the year ending December 2021, and are anchored on CREST®, NPD's flagship syndicated study of consumer purchases of restaurant-prepared meals, snacks, and beverages. Unit counts source to the Fall 2021 release of NPD's ReCount service, a census of chains and independent restaurant locations regularly updated since 1988. Today, ReCount provides unit counts and trends for over 1.2 million foodservice operators. These primary sources, combined with other proprietary NPD data, public reporting, and NPD analysis, generate this new industry standard restaurant ranking. *Indicates public information was used in place of ReCount.

What's AUV?

AUV (average unit volume) = total sales divided by total units. AUV helps restaurants monitor and benchmark how stores performed.

For more information

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