

Creating A Stir - Internet Now Beats Cookbooks For Recipes As Home Baking Booms

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Whether its Cupcakes or Cordon Bleu, home baking has boomed during the recession.

However, latest research from Mintel reveals that it is no longer the bookshelf consumers are reaching for to learn how to do it but the internet, as over half (52%) of Brits now say that they get recipe ideas from online websites compared to the 46% who rely on cookbooks.

The revival in home baking has helped the sector to grow by 13% between 2007 and 2009 to reach a massive Â£523 million. And baking mad Brits are not going to stop there, with further estimated growth in 2010 helping the home baking market to reach Â£576 million.

Indeed, it seems consumers have been bitten by the baking bug, as today, 28% of Brits are baking from scratch using raw ingredients at least once a week.

Vivianne Ihekweazu, Senior Food and Drink analyst at Mintel, said:

"While cookbooks have traditionally been the main source of information for baking recipes, consumers now have access to a wide range of sources when looking for inspiration or a specific recipe - and the internet and recipe blogs have become a vital part of this. The importance of the internet for recipes has been driven in part by TV cookery shows and the celebrity chef boom - recipes from the programmes are often available online immediately while books take longer to come out. Online recipes are more personal, free of charge and consumers can just print off the recipes they like. They are also now an important tool for supermarkets, equipment and ingredients manufacturers as well as cookbook authors and publishers, and have supported the revival in home baking around the recession."

Despite a trend towards smaller cakes, the top item consumers bake at home is a standard cake, with 42% of consumer saying they baked this type in the past year.

Cupcakes follow this with 39%, batters (such as Yorkshire Puddings) with 37%, biscuits/cookies (29%) and sweet pies, tarts and puddings in joint position with 28% Brits baking this type over the past year. Brownies come bottom of the list with just 14%.

"The popularity of cupcakes has spread beyond the traditional children's market and they are now one of the most popular items baked by consumers - and almost two fifths of Brits choosing to bake these in the last year - but it seems that the traditional large cake still reigns supreme. A great deal of the baking revival can be attributed to consumers becoming increasingly frugal and baking in a bid to save money, but the recent media exposure for the industry in making baking fashionable again has also been a key driver. While its easy to wonder whether the popularity of home baking will abate once the economy starts to recover, the rediscovery of the pleasures of baking should enable the category to sustain growth as consumers become more appreciative of their higher-quality baked items." Vivianne continues.

Despite being adversely affected by rising commodity prices, the flour category has been helped by consumers' desire to bake from scratch using raw ingredients, and has seen the category grow by 19% between 2007 and 2009 to stand at Â£75 million - up from Â£67 million in 2008.

Meanwhile, the revival in home baking has also helped the decorative sector " with cake decorations also enjoying a boom with market value up from Â£53 million in 2008 to Â£58 million in 2009, despite the recession.

In fact, with tightening budgets and relatively less disposable income, half (50%) of UK consumers now say they are baking at home as it enables them to cut down on their personal shopping bills and just 19% of consumers say baking from scratch takes too much time.

Meanwhile, it seems we like to showcase our home baking efforts to those close to us - as nearly half (45%) of Brits say they like to show off their baking skills to friends and family.

Indeed, almost all consumers have bought some kind of baking ingredient in the last year, with over two thirds (69%) having bought raw ingredients. And when it comes to what consumers are using to bake with, it seems Brits are not too brand driven.

Just over two fifths of consumers (42%) do not see any difference between branded and own-label ingredients and just over a third (35%) claim to have bought more own-label ingredients in the last year.

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