

## America chows down on hamburgers

Two weeks ago, I reported a study by NPD Group revealing that Americans were eating fewer french fries. Well, now this group, in conjunction with Datassential, reports that hamburger sells are booming.

According to an article in Nation's Restaurant News, hamburgers made up 14 percent of all restaurant orders in 2007, and in the year ending in March, total hamburger sales increased 2 percent over a year ago.

Just in case you thought Americans are eating healthier because of the fry decline, this study shows that fat is thriving: The bacon cheeseburger made up 42 percent of all burger sales, up more than 5 percent from a year ago.

The article pointed out that many higher-end restaurants are trying to reinvent the burger with premium meats and artisan breads. In fact, Angus burgers have experience double-digit menu growth over the past two years, but still are a minor player in the overall picture.

Perhaps the most startling figure to me was that 44 percent of all restaurants, including fine-dining establishments, have a hamburger on the menu. I guess I shouldn't be surprised. I've seen such high-end places as Spruce, **Epic Roasthouse**, Serpentine, Nopa, Flora and Wood Tavern, both in Oakland, feature burgers on their dinner menu.

In related news: A White Paper released yesterday by the James Beard Foundation called the "The State of American Cuisine" reported that on a national survey 44 percent of the respondents named hamburgers and cheeseburgers as our most iconic food. The full report can be downloaded on the James Beard Foundation website.

Hamburgers really *are* America's favorite food.

Posted By: Michael Bauer (Email) | July 01 2008 at 05:13 AM