



May 18, 2005

Well, We Try To Eat Right

Washington Post

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By Judith M. Havemann

Washingtonians spend \$49.32 per person, including tax and tip, when they go out to dinner at a fine restaurant.

The average is \$49.37, according to a new survey commissioned by OpenTable Inc., an online reservation service.

Washingtonians prefer Italian, seafood, steakhouse, fusion, French and Japanese cuisine, in that order, and nationally the favorites are . . . Italian, seafood, steakhouse, fusion, Japanese and French.

Washington area residents responding to an online poll said they tip 25 percent for excellent service, precisely the average response that 3,218 patrons of "white tablecloth" restaurants gave in eight cities.

How much do we hate overhearing cell phone calls? Well, 82 percent of us either "strongly or somewhat" agreed that we "get really irritated with people who use their cell phones in fine restaurants." Overall, the figure was 84 percent.

We were a little more health-conscious than most cities. About 44 percent of us said we try to order dishes with lower carbohydrates or fats. The average was 38 percent.

With a 9.9 percent response rate, the survey of registered members of OpenTable may not be the last word on our averageness. But other surveys on other topics have also found that we are, if not in Middle America, then right there in the middle of Americans.