

Example of research paper on how fast food changing american food culture

[Nutrition](#), [Fast Food](#)



They say that, “ Eating is a moral act” (“ Ethics of Eating”). Unfortunately, even though what we eat is a reflection of our character, basic values and beliefs, the American people of today are not giving much thought to what they eat. Whether they are buying their food at a local fast-food franchise or at a supermarket, Americans prefer their food to be cheap, convenient, and quick. The American way of life is built around efficiency and speed, and today, they like things that are easy and fast, that require minimal economic or personal sacrifice. However, there was once a time when American food culture was all about spending sufficient time cooking health and quality food, and then sitting down and enjoying those meals with the whole family. However, as fast food restaurants came by and times changed, the American food culture started moving far away from its origins, and ultimately fast food managed to completely change the American food culture.

Drive on any American highway and you will notice that fast-food restaurants at every service area and exit. Walk through any supermarket and you will find premade foods that say “ prepare it in minutes” or “ ready to serve.” Today, merely a third of the U. S. is using fresh ingredients to actually cook their food. Unlike the 1960s, back when Americans would spend two and a half hours cooking dinner, today they cook dinner within merely 30 minutes. Moreover, everyday, one-fourth of Americans are eating in fast-food restaurants. Why are Americans consuming so much fast food today?

Apparently, it seems that Americans are willingly trading quality for speed. There are many aspects of fast food that are attracting Americans to it and are changing American food culture. The fact that Americans have actually become obsessed with fast food is also hurting their health and their quality

of life.

The main reason that Americans have started to favor fast food over cooking meals in their homes is because they no longer have the time. In over two-thirds of households in the United State, two people are working (Bone).

Americans no longer have enough time to shop for ingredients and cook food because their work schedules have become very demanding. The younger adults of today have grown in a fast food culture, as a result of which they spend very little time consuming meals. In the past fifty years, the pace of life has increases because of technological inventions such as computers and televisions. Simultaneously, the way Americans eat has also changed because of drive-through restaurants and television dinners. Americans today prefer to have quick meals, whether they eat in front of the TV or in their cars, while cooking meals and sitting together at the table are losing their value. In this fast food culture, food itself has lost its importance.

The American diet plan and food culture did not change overnight. In the modern American culture, fast food comes by quite easily and has become readily available. The most problematic factor that has influenced the American food culture and lifestyle is the globalization of fast food (Ritzer).

The idea behind fast food globalization is that it stems from America, and not only has the U. S. created enormous economic stress, health and mental problems, and social issues for itself but has also spread these negative effects of fast food to other cultures and nations too. In the process of globalizing other nations, America has become so industrialized that Americans are now acting and interacting like robots. Fast food has pushed the American people to a way of life where they are no longer thinking or

acting themselves, but are repeating the same exhaustive routine over and over again, going on with the daily grind (Ritzer).

It is easy to understand why fast food has become a trend in the United States. As the world became more dynamic, Americans adopted the establishing value of achieving the most in every field, not leaving much time for other activities, such as food and nutrition. After the second industrial revolution a new perception of food and nutrition emerged among Americans, as a result of which they began viewing food as a pleasure, rather as a human necessity. The widespread of the fast food trend in the United States has resulted in the valuable loss of the diversity of the American food culture (Schlosser). Prior to the emergence of the fast food trend, the rite of cooking and eating was an important part of the American cultural life, but these days, Americans do not appreciate home cooking much. Fast food industries are making Americans addicted to their food (Spurlock), which is the reason main reason the U. S. is currently struggling with obesity.

Since the mid 1970s, there has been a rapid increase in the prevalence of obesity and diseases related to obesity, and over the same time period, more twice as many fast food restaurants emerged in the country than were already existing the time. While there is no strong evidence that links fast food to obesity, however, it is not too difficult to figure out that the widespread availability of fast food is a decisive contributor to the drastic increases in the rates of obesity in the U. S. In various cities, policy makers have addressed this concern by limiting the content of fast food available, or even making it mandatory for fast food restaurants to post the caloric

content of their meals (Mair et al.). However, the major concern about fast food restaurants is not the caloric content of their meals, but their extensive use of easy brand recognition and advertising.

According to a Canadian study, exposure to fast food logos can make people considerably impatient and it eliminates their impulse to save money (Zhong). The researcher briefly showed the volunteers of the study the McDonald's logo on screen for such a short period of time that it would not be identifiable, but they still became agitated. The study revealed that a single sighting of a fast food restaurant logo subconsciously impacts us for a short time, while being repeatedly exposed to takeaway signs can have the cumulative behavioral-priming effect, which makes people impatient and rush even when it is not necessary. The study also revealed that after the volunteers saw the logos, they read a 320-word passage considerably faster than they had before they had seen the logos. Fast food culture has caused people, especially Americans, to develop unhealthy eating habits such as gobbling down their food at incredible speeds even when there is no need rush.

Fast food restaurants also rely on advertisements to directly promote food purchasing and indirectly influence social norms, as a result of which they manage to have an effect on food consumption in the United States and in every other country where these advertisements are viewed. Fast food advertising has been associated with adolescent obesity (Zimmerman, and Bell) and marketing of fast food products more generally has been highlighted among the major factors that contribute to the obesity epidemic. A new study carried out by the American Academy of Pediatrics reveals that

Americans who are extremely familiar with fast and junk food advertising are either already suffering from obesity or are likely to become obese. Outdoor advertising has also been labeled as a factor that contributes to the obesity epidemic that is escalating in the United States. To sum up this point, fast food restaurants are actually marketing obesity through their advertisements, even enticing people who spend money on their products.

Works Cited

- " Ethics of Eating." National Catholic Rural Life Network. National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Web. 29 Apr 2013. .
- Bone, James. " Good home cooking - right off the assembly line." The Times. Times Newspapers Limited, 27 Mar 2006. Web. 29 Apr 2013. .
- Mair, Julie Samia, Matthew W. Pierce, and Stephen P. Teret. " THE USE OF ZONING TO RESTRICT FAST FOOD OUTLETS: A POTENTIAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT OBESITY." Welcome to the Centers for Law and the Public's Health. Centers for Law and the Public's Health, n. d. Web. 29 Apr 2013. .
- Ritzer, G. Mcdonaldization of society five. Thousand Oaks, CL: Pine Forge Press, 2007. Print.
- Schlosser, Eric. Fast Food Nation, The Dark Side Of The All-American Meal. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002. Print.
- Spurlock, Morgan, dir. Super Size Me. 2004. Film. 29 Apr 2013.
- Zhong, Chen-Bo. " You Are How You Eat: Fast Food and Impatience." Psychological Science. (2010): n. page. Print. .
- Zimmerman, F. J., and J. F. Bell. " Associations of television content type and obesity in children." Am J Public Health. 100. 2 (2010): 334-340. Print.