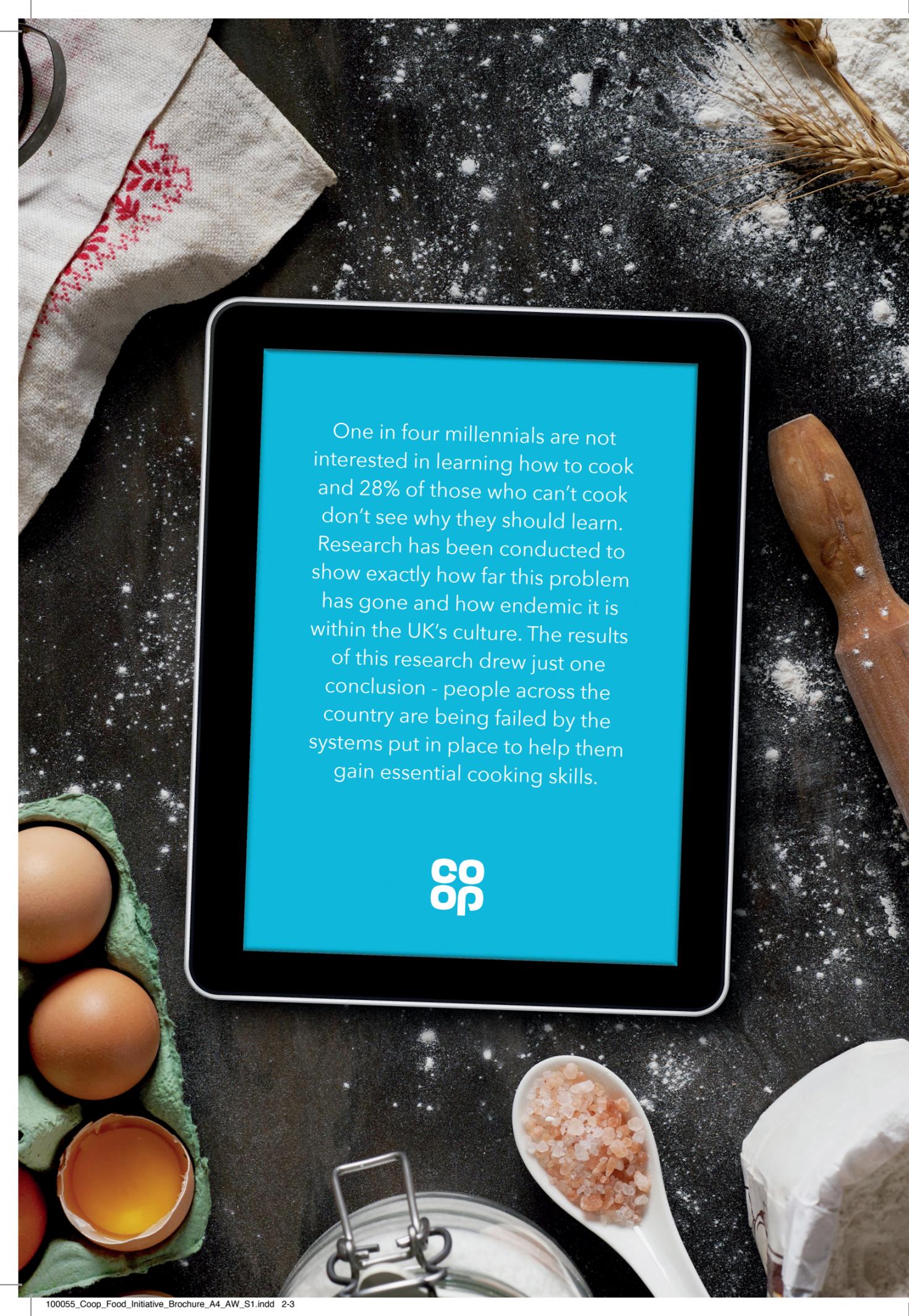




# Millennials' Cooking Skills Gap

Independent research into the understanding and relationship millennials have with food and cooking





One in four millennials are not interested in learning how to cook and 28% of those who can't cook don't see why they should learn. Research has been conducted to show exactly how far this problem has gone and how endemic it is within the UK's culture. The results of this research drew just one conclusion - people across the country are being failed by the systems put in place to help them gain essential cooking skills.



- 31% of millennials cook a limited repertoire of dishes
- 48% rely on parents to teach them how to cook
- 54% decrease in home cooking in the last 30 years
- 29% of adults are bored of eating the same meals each week
- 37% feel they struggle to see how flavours work together
- 55% of people enjoy cooking
- 27% of millennials are not interested in learning how to cook
- 22% of millennials find watching TV food shows inspires them to cook
- Co-op's first cookery demonstration was filmed in 1955

# Millennials: what's cooking?

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Millennials are, without a doubt, masters of social media and a digitally savvy generation. Their unlimited access to the world via their smartphones and tablets means that more than any other generation they are more likely to be particularly avid and adventurous travellers.

Because of this, they are more likely to have picked up tastes from around the world and become adventurous eaters; willing to try new foods, generally more open and receptive to new cuisines, styles of cooking, products and brands.

## Food: a social currency

In the last ten years, food has become not just physical sustenance but also a social currency. Millennials often look for recognition of their food across social media and they are keen to be inspired with new, novel and different ways of cooking.

## The decline of cooking at home

Dining out and food on the move has seen considerable growth in recent years and as a result, there has been a decline in home cooking by 54% in the last 30 years.



Just 31% admit to only having a small portfolio of dishes they are able to cook\*, with a huge 26% of these blaming the level of cooking lessons at school or college.

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Only 16% of millennials say they learnt to cook at school or college, whereas 48% relied on their parents to learn how to cook – an age that will be dying out if the 16-34 year olds aren't better equipped with cooking skills for their future and their children's future.

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When millennials do cook at home, they tend to cook to entertain – there has been a 9.5% increase in consumers enjoying cooking specifically to entertain friends since 2012\*\*.

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Yet there are fewer family meal occasions:

15% of millennials cook for four or more people at home

17% cook for three or more

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Furthermore, despite the popularity of cooking TV shows, there has been a decline in the perception of baking in the home, as it moves from being considered as a necessity to a hobby.



# If you can't stand the heat

Those under 35 are less confident than those 55+ to cook a meal from scratch<sup>†</sup>.

16-24 year olds are the most likely group to perceive cooking as stressful.

Of those not confident in the kitchen, the main reason given is that they never learnt to cook or that someone else in the household tends to cook for them.

Other negative perceptions of cooking include the washing up and that it's not worth cooking for just one person.

## The joy of cooking!

55% of millennials enjoy the experience of cooking and note that it leaves them feeling satisfied. They have control over their ingredients, as well as being able to keep their dishes healthy and fresh and others can also enjoy it.

We find it's all about inspiration in the kitchen as 29% of adults get bored eating the same meals each week and tend to stick to the same familiar dishes, so there's no surprise that there is a knock on effect that 72% of consumers mainly cook family favourites.

## Getting ready

Given the shifts in attitudes, there has also been a change in cooking behaviours, with increasing numbers of consumers choosing to cook assisted meals using pasta sauces and prepared salad boxes, due to their ease and convenience, rather than cooking dishes entirely from scratch.

This is reflected in the performance in the meal inspirations sector, which is consistently ahead of the total food and drink market over the past two years, suggesting that consumers aren't shopping for completely raw ingredients.

'Assisted cooking' is a growth area as 85% of Brits say that one of the highest factors when deciding what to cook being that it must be quick and easy to prepare.

**35% of adults would like to spend just 30 minutes preparing and cooking dinner.**



## Importance of cooking skills

40% of adults think that it's important for older children to cook for themselves, and the most useful skills to learn include:

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Steaming              | Seasoning |
| Baking                | Boiling   |
| Combining ingredients | Timing    |
| Knife work            | Frying    |

27% of millennials have never been interested in learning to cook and 28% of those who can't cook don't see the importance in being able to.

# Under 35's: how they cook

The way in which we learn has very much changed and is constantly evolving. We see younger customers going online for inspiration and in particular, those under 35 years old being more likely to use a digital device for inspiration<sup>^</sup> and to follow recipes.

We are always looking for quick ways to add a twist onto normal dishes and 38% of adults enjoy experimenting with flavours and recipes<sup>~</sup>. 16-24 year olds, however, are not confident in matching flavours and ingredients, as 37% feel they struggle to see how flavours work together, leaving them least likely to experiment.

22% note that watching TV food shows inspires them to cook

44% refer to a recipe closely when cooking

32% get an idea of the recipe in advance then broadly follow from memory

25% work out a recipe as they go along

26% of millennials who can't cook think everyone needs to be able to cook

46% of millennials who can't cook think you only need to know basic skills

# Lifestage triggers

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There are a number of lifestyle stages which trigger the need/desire to learn how to cook. Given that the number of 20-34 year olds living with parents has risen 25% since 1996, leaving home, marriage and kids are falling a lot later in life.

37% of those who can't cook plan on learning when they leave home

24% don't think they'll ever learn

18% feel they haven't met the right stage in their life to need to know how to cook

## Health

As consumer confidence returns, the need and desire to make healthy choices is definitely on the rise. The amount of sugar found within products and meals is making a real impact on some categories. Since 2012, there has been an increase in consumers restricting how much sugary food they eat, with an increased focus in consumers leading a healthier lifestyle and being more conscious of their diet.



# Co-op educational background and vision

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The first cookery demonstration ever filmed was by Co-op in 1955 and the retailer has been using film to educate and entertain consumers since the last few years of the nineteenth century. This dates back to the 1850's when co-operatives set out to help teach members and their children, two decades before the Education Act made state provision of primary education a legal requirement. Co-operatives began to fulfil an essential function in helping working-class advancement, by introducing members to classes which helped them to read and write and use basic arithmetic.

The history of member education for Co-op started back with the Rochdale Pioneers, with the seventh principle being Education, which saw every store the society opened from the middle of the 19th century, running a reading and study room above the shop. Schooling facilities at Co-op developed with the introduction of regular Saturday afternoon discussions taking place at the store, a newsroom and book department was introduced in 1848 and school and education classes in 1850, thus an educational committee was formed. As well as this, a school for young persons was conducted between 1850-1855, the first Co-operative summer school opened in 1913.

Co-op always has, and will continue to pioneer a vision of people helping each other whilst helping themselves, by working together for mutual benefit.

# SORTEDfood

## Now it's time to meet the SORTEDfood team

SORTEDfood is a global movement of more than 2 million 18-35 year olds who are passionate about discovering, learning and sharing incredible recipes and the skills needed to create them. Started by a small group of old school friends in 2010, SORTEDfood has grown into an online phenomenon with a reach of over 2 million people. But it isn't just an audience, SORTEDfood is a community that talks and works together to make the world's largest cooking conversation.



Name: Jamie Spafford  
Age: 29  
Role at SORTED: Communications  
Favourite food/ingredient: Steak  
Unusual fact: Played both the Artful Dodger and Willy Wonka on stage when younger



Name: Ben Ebbrell  
Age: 29  
Role at SORTED: Chef  
Favourite food/ingredient: Mint  
Unusual fact: Cooked for the Queen



Name: Michael Huttleston  
Age: 29  
Role at SORTED: Video Director/Editor  
Favourite food/ingredient: Peanut butter  
Unusual fact: Seen Nickleback 5 times



Name: Barry Taylor  
Age: 29  
Role at SORTED: Creative/Innovator  
Favourite food/ingredient: Avocado  
Unusual fact: A fully trained ski instructor



Scan to watch SORTEDfood introduce themselves in their kitchen

With the exception of a few people there is a whole generation of 16-35 year olds who have been failed by the traditional education system, when it comes to cooking.

A sense of fun and adventure around food and cooking became the central theme that kept the SORTEDfood boys together during their ongoing university days. They've each turned their passions into considerable expertise, all focused on using the internet to make cooking and food fun and accessible to all.



### Jonny Mitchell

- Rose to fame as the head teacher in 2013's BAFTA award-winning Channel 4 documentary, *Educating Yorkshire*
- Currently holds the position of Principal at [The Co-operative Academy of Leeds](#)
- Known for his tough love approach with pupils
- Prides himself on ensuring that all students achieve their maximum potential and that the Academy is an outstanding learning community
- The Co-operative Academy of Leeds is a specialist Enterprise and Communication Academy, offering outstanding opportunities for students to develop the skills and knowledge essential to prepare them for their future
- The academy is sponsored by [The Co-operative Group](#); the UK's largest mutual business, owned by millions of members. [The Co-operative's businesses are run ethically in line with their values and principles, which form the basis of the Academy's ethos](#)



## Together we've got this SORTED

In the same way that Co-op pioneered a vision of people helping themselves by working together for mutual benefit in the 1850's, SORTEDfood has in a very 21<sup>st</sup> century way resonated with vast audiences through social media, creating one of the world's most engaged communities of millennials who help each other to learn about food and cooking.

Both organisations with community at their heart have therefore formed a partnership to try and tackle this problem.

\*Consumer research conducted in April 2016, with 4,000 respondents, by Atomik Research. \*\*Kantar Worldpanel, usage state of the nation, 2015. †jointthedots consumer research, conducted in March 2016. ‡Content Marketing Among Millennials, Yahoo!/DigitasLBI/razorfish/tumblr  
~Mintel, consumer attitudes to cooking in the home UK, 2014

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