

MEDIA RELEASE – embargoed until 00:01 on 13 March

SYDNEY-SIDERS ARE TOO LAZY TO COOK BUT ARE AUSTRALIA'S MOST GENEROUS TIPPERS

- High-income earners are often the biggest scrooges when it comes to tipping
- Most diners prefer sitting next to a smooching couple than a table of noisy kids
- 40% of women eavesdrop on their fellow diners

Sydney, 12 March 2006: The Citibank Dining Insights Survey has revealed that Sydney-siders are the nation's most generous when it comes to tipping at restaurants, with nearly 40 per cent happy to fork out extra after a meal, regardless of the service received.

In comparison, restaurant goers in Adelaide are Australia's tightest tippers, with only 20 per cent prepared to always leave a gratuity.

Speaking at the release of the Citibank Dining Guide, Director Citibank Credit Cards, Roy Gori said the result was surprising considering the cost of living in Sydney is higher than all other capital cities. "One explanation could relate to the fact that Sydney residents are also the laziest when it comes to shopping and cooking, with an overwhelming 63 per cent saying they sometimes eat out at restaurants because they are just too busy.

"Perhaps they are so grateful someone else is doing the cooking, they make up for it by tipping," Mr Gori said.

Interestingly, the nation's highest earners, those who earn \$80,000 plus a year are also the biggest scrooges with just one in three (33%) always tipping after a meal, compared to 41 per cent of those on half the wage. At the same time, it's the older folk (aged 55 plus) who are the most reluctant tippers, with only 26 per cent prepared to dig deep, in contrast to 47 per cent of their more giving and younger (aged between 16-24 years) counterparts.

However overall, service is what gets us over the tipping line, as almost 60 per cent are happy to tip more than 10 per cent provided the service was good. This struck a chord particularly with younger people as 71 per cent would leave a tip of more than 10% based on superior service.

Maureen De Groot, editor of the "Best Restaurants of Australia" website, views these results as a fascinating insight into the state of mind of Australian restaurant goers. "Eating out is considered to be a special occasion for most of us and that's why we really value a good experience – so much so that we are prepared to acknowledge that through tipping. But our tipping etiquette is different to the United States, where it's almost a sin not to," Ms de Groot said.

The release of the survey coincides with the launch of the Citibank Dining Guide, a partnership with de Groot's Best Restaurants. The Dining Guide contains special privileges available only to Citibank customers when they use their credit card at participating restaurants.

"We launched this guide because Australians are passionate about enjoying good quality dining. While there's no such thing as a free lunch these days, there are some fantastic offers and savings available exclusively to Citibank credit cardholders at many top restaurants around the country," Mr Gori said.

When it comes to the dining experience, it seems that kids aren't our most favoured dining companions, with 53 per cent of people preferring to sit next to a couple smooching than a table with noisy children.

At the same time, 35 per cent of people admit to eavesdropping on other tables' conversations, with those that eat out most frequently the worst culprits. Females are nosier than their male counterparts, with 40 per cent confessing to listening in on conversations around them.

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While some may think food is a way to a man’s heart, only 18 per cent of the females surveyed would spend more money at a restaurant to impress their partner. In stark contrast, the males are convinced that money can buy love with 42 per cent spending more to gain points in the love stakes.

With over 15,000 restaurants to choose from in Australia, how do we decide which one to part our hard earned cash with? The survey has shown that a resounding 95 per cent of people value a friend or family member’s recommendation as an important factor when selecting a restaurant, while price weighs in on the debate for 93 per cent of people.

“The research indicates that while Aussies do enjoy dining out, budget plays a huge role in their decision. So it comes at no surprise that 69 per cent of restaurant goers consider a special offer or privilege card important when they decide where to dine,” said Mr Gori.

Bosses can relax as just one in three employees would deliberately choose a more expensive restaurant if they knew the company was paying. However, of those, it’s the males (39%) who are more likely than females (26%) to take advantage of a more pricey feed.

Food critics will be pleased to know that their restaurant reviews are taken into account by 67 per cent of the population when they make a decision about where to dine.

Mr Gori said: “To celebrate the launch of the Citibank Dining Guide, customers have the chance to win a \$1000 de Groot’s Best Restaurants gift voucher for the ultimate dining experience. To enter, they write a review of their own dining experience at any of the restaurants in the guide. For more details, visit www.bestrestaurants.com.au/cwp.”

In other findings:

- Restaurant goers don’t care much for pomp and ceremony with 70 per cent considering a restaurant based on how casual the dress code was
- Aussies are keen diners with 38 per cent frequently eating out at restaurants either weekly or daily
- Younger people (16-24 year olds) are the most frequent diners, with 53 per cent eating out regularly, followed by 41 per cent of 25-34 year olds
- Over 50 per cent of females would choose a restaurant based on how fashionable or trendy it was

I always tip irrespective of the service I receive	TOTAL	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Perth	Adelaide
Agree	33.9%	38.3%	37.0%	34.7%	22.4%	20.1%

Source: Citibank Dining Insights Survey 2006

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Media enquiries:

Anita Fu: T: (02) 8225 1631 M: 0401 862 986 anita1.fu@citigroup.com
 Leila Dean: T: (02) 8225 1658 M: 0404 509 894 leila.dean@citigroup.com

Notes to editors:

The research was conducted by Woolcott Research using the OmniAccess Consumer Survey between 24-27 February 2006 amongst a representative and statistically valid sample (confidence interval of +/-4%) of 632 Australians living in capital cities, aged 16 plus.