

# MILLENNIALS CRAVE CONVENIENCE STORES



## More 18- to 34-year-olds are coming to convenience stores for food.

February 9, 2015

MCLEAN, Va. – Much can and has already been said about Millennials: they love texting, hate talking on the phone and don't drive as much as the older demographics. But more importantly, this age group — consumers ages 18 to 34 — is discovering that convenience stores are a destination for food, both for quality and price.



USA Today reports that for food and beverages, convenience stores are almost twice as important to Millennials as fast-casual restaurants. “Millennials are cheap — they're no different from anyone else,” Harry Balzer, chief food industry analyst at NPD Group, told the news source.

The \$204 billion convenience store industry is well-positioned to meet the needs of this valuable consumer demographic. USA Today writes that Millennials are more likely to stop and buy items — particularly food items — at convenience stores than any other age group, according to NACS spokesman Jeff Lenard. “That's why the future of convenience stores is food — not gas,” he said.

The news source continues, writing that many of the larger convenience store chains have enhanced their foodservice offers in recent years, adding fresh food items that are priced competitively and give customers options for both healthy and indulgence foods. For example, 7-Eleven began offering take-out pizza last year, and some Southern California 7-Elevens began selling a line of “nutritionally-balanced” fresh sandwiches, wrap, salads and cold-pressed juices under the banner of fitness guru Tony Horton Kitchen. “These changes were directly targeted at health-conscious Millennials,” writes USA Today.

Recent news surrounding Chipotle could be even more good news for convenience stores. The fast-casual chain announced last week that it is considering raising prices on steak and possibly its braised beef barbacoa later this year to account for increases in beef costs.

“If the company Chipotle increased prices to make up for this gap, customers in some pricier areas like New York City would be looking at a \$10 steak burrito with tax,” reports CNBC.

Find out how convenience stores are gaining loyalty from their Millennial consumers in last year's NACS Magazine cover story, “Meet the Millennials.”