

“Health-related New Year’s resolutions may further boost air fryer use,” suggests Leatherhead Food Research

Consumers’ New Year’s resolutions to eat more healthily could lead to an uptick in air fryer use, prompting more businesses to develop on-pack cooking instructions according to Leatherhead Food Research.

The consultancy ran a representative survey of 2,063 UK adults which shows 43% of air fryer owners purchased them to cut down on fat consumption, and 41% did so to cook healthier meals. These figures are significantly higher in the 55+ age group, where 55% purchased an air fryer to reduce the amount of fat they consume, and 48% were looking to cook healthier meals.

Natasha Burton, Head of Cooking Instructions at Leatherhead Food Research, says many food producers are responding to the increased use of air fryers by developing dedicated on-pack cooking instructions. However, she cautions that these should be scientifically tested and validated to ensure product safety and quality.

“Over the past three years we’ve seen a steady increase in the number of businesses looking for support with air fryer cooking instructions,” Burton explains. “This escalated in the second half of 2022, and we helped several businesses develop instructions for entire product ranges. There was a big rush before Christmas, and we’re now expecting a similar surge as food producers make it easier for consumers to cook healthy meals. However, it’s important to ensure the instructions consistently deliver safe, high-quality ready-to-eat products.”

Burton highlights microbial safety of food prepared in air fryers as the top concern, followed by sensory properties. Testing products in relation to these factors can be complex due to disparities between air fryer models. However, a comprehensive, science-led approach to cooking trials accounts for variability across equipment.

Once air fryer cooking instructions have been generated, they should be validated via repeat tests then written in an accessible way so they’re easy for consumers to understand.

Leatherhead Food Research recently published a guide outlining [five critical factors for the development of air fryer cooking instructions](#). In August 2022, the Member-based consultancy added air fryers to its UKAS-accredited cooking instruction generation and verification services (UKAS accredited testing laboratory no. 9365). The accreditation is based on testing time and temperature combinations to ensure the consistent production of safe food using the same cooking instructions across a variety of models. In the UK, the

Food Standards Agency (FSA) suggests that consumers cook food until it has reached at least 70°C and held that temperature for two minutes.

“Chips and potato-based products are the items most commonly cooked in air fryers, but consumers are becoming more ambitious and we’ve also developed instructions for various chilled and frozen meat and fish products,” Burton continues. “This includes everything from wings, burgers and meatballs to sausages, steaks and joints. For products where microbial safety could be a concern we err on the side of caution, recommending an appropriately longer cooking time if it is on the borderline of the 70°C for two-minutes requirement.”

Leatherhead’s air fryer cooking instructions validation guidance is available at <https://www.leatherheadfood.com/news-detail/air-fryer-food-safety-and-quality/>

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Notes to editors

In 2016, Leatherhead Food Research became the UK’s first provider to achieve UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) accreditation for specific cooking instruction techniques across comprehensive equipment. Audited annually against ISO 17025:2017 (general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories), Leatherhead maintains its status as a UKAS accredited testing laboratory (no. 9365) for: cooking instructions testing (microwave oven, gas and electric thermal oven, electric fan oven, gas and electric hob, gas and electric grill, deep fat fryer, air fryer, defrost) and in cook temperature measuring techniques.

The research mentioned in the above news release was conducted online between 16-19 September 2022, and the total sample size was 2,063 adults. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults.

About Leatherhead Food Research

Leatherhead Food Research provides scientific and regulatory affairs advice to the food and beverage industry through a membership-based consultancy. We solve our Members’ problems with our specialist team of food scientists, toxicologists and multi-lingual regulatory

affairs professionals. For over 100 years, Leatherhead Food Research has kept the global food and beverage industry informed, compliant and prepared for the future.

Leatherhead Food Research is a Science Group company.

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