



## ‘COLD’ dining: 1 in 3 Aussies overspend on dining out

Nearly one third of Australians (32%) admit they overspend on dining out or takeout, despite the cost of living crisis, according to a survey by [Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au).

The survey found that younger Australians, particularly Gen Z (40%), were the most likely to fork out too much on restaurant meals and takeaway, followed by Millennials (37%). In contrast, older Australians were the least likely to splurge on meals out and food delivery, with Gen X at 26% and Boomers at 21%.

[Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au)'s Finance Expert, Sean Callery, says despite rising living costs, dining out remains a priority for many Australians.

“Aussies are indulging in 'cost-of-living denial' (COLD) dining — where they know they should cut back but can't resist dining out or buying takeout because it feels like a small indulgence in tough times, a social necessity, or simply more convenient than cooking at home,” he says.

“Our survey found that overspending on dining out or takeaway is the second worst financial habit reported, only behind not budgeting or tracking expenses. This tells us that, for many Australians, the ease and enjoyment of dining out often take priority over sticking to a budget.”

Victorians and Queenslanders were more likely to report spending big on dining out (at 34%), followed by people in New South Wales (32%). Western Australians (25%) and South Australians (24%) were less inclined to splurge on eating out.

“People in the Eastern states might report spending more on dining out because these regions have larger metropolitan hubs and naturally a bigger food and cafe culture than the rest of Australia,” he says.

### Aussies spend more on eating out in the last 4 years

Household spending on cafes, restaurants, and hotels has surged by 72% since early 2021, according to the ABS Household Spending Indicator. However, growth slowed significantly last year to just 4.3%.

[Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au)'s Research & Data Expert, Peter Drennan, says Australians are spending more on dining out not just because of rising prices, but because they are actually dining out more frequently.

"Restaurant meal inflation was 3% annually, while household spending on dining out grew slightly higher. This suggests that Australians aren't just paying more due to price increases — they are actually dining out more often or splurging on higher-end meals," he says.

## [Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au)'s 5 tips to stop overspending on eating out

### 1. Set a dining out budget

Allocate a fixed amount each month for eating out and stick to it. Treat it like any other expense — once the budget runs out, it's home-cooked meals until next month.

### 2. Embrace the 'one less rule'

Cut just one dining out occasion per week or month. If you usually grab takeaway four times a week, reduce it to three and pocket the savings.

### 3. Look for discounts & happy hours

Check for deals like 2-for-1 meals, weekday discounts, or happy hour specials to enjoy dining out for less.

### 4. Make it a treat, not a habit

Reserve dining out for special occasions rather than convenience. Pre-plan meals at home to avoid last-minute, expensive takeaways.

### 5. Try 'dine in dupes'

Craving a restaurant meal? Recreate your favourite dishes at home. It's cheaper, healthier, and gets you thinking outside the box. There are thousands of online recipes that mimic top restaurant meals. Vodka pasta, anyone?

**ENDS**

**PS:** If you use this information, please include a link to <https://www.money.com.au/>. Providing a linked credit helps us continue sharing valuable content with you. Thank you!

#### **About Money.com.au:**

[Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au) is an Australian financial comparison platform founded by industry experts in 2019. Its goal is to provide people and businesses with financial education and access to financial products.

#### **About the data:**

[Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au) commissioned the survey from Pureprofile, with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Australians by gender, age, and location. Consumer spending data was analysed using figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Household Spending Indicator.

#### **Media contact:**

Megan Birot | 044 835 6474

[megan@money.com.au](mailto:megan@money.com.au)

