Oatly presents: The Great Barista Survey

Ever wanted to know what was going on in the mind of your favorite Barista? Well, the oat gods at Oatly have stepped in to help, so you can be a walking green flag next time you order your Oat Flat White.

Check out what everything you can learn from the Oatly Great Barista Survey* here:

Want to know the reason why these caffeine-fixing, oat dealing gods do what they do? Well, 65% of Baristas said it's all because of the community and friendships they build in their job.

Ben Richardson, Brighter Coffee, says “Honestly, it's pretty simple, I just really love people - that's it. For me it’s a chance for me to be exposed to lots of different people. I like to be in service and it's very humbling and enjoyable to serve people from all different backgrounds, I want to look after them all as much as possible. Roasting coffee is an extension of this love of people. All the relationships that are involved and the care and love that needs to go into the process is what I’m all about.”

Fernanda Munoz Vargas, Sonido, says “I love the relationship you build with customers; you end up getting involved in their lives and sharing your own – it's a beautiful connection to have.”

Jerome Lim, Bench, adds “To see people smile when they take their first sip of coffee – it's such a great feeling knowing you are part of that joy.”

Good manners cost nothing as 26% of Baristas say rude customers give them the ick.

Alicia Feng, Calēre, says “Generally, a rude attitude ruins the experience of interacting with a customer – it isn't pleasant for anyone involved. Coffee is all about connection and so rudeness from either the customer or the barista can take that connection away, which is a real shame.”

Whilst Liam Aguilera, Kōhī No Deshi says “The thing that gets to me most is rudeness. When someone doesn’t offer any curtesy or even acknowledge me it can be quite upsetting; it doesn't take much time to be polite.”

Another 26% of Baristas share their biggest ick: customers placing orders whilst on their phones.

Xavier Whitton, Tarts Anon says “The biggest ick is being on the phone when you come into the shop and shushing me when I greet you. That specific type of rudeness definitely tests my ability to keep my mouth shut.”

Zak Hardinge-Francis, Green Refectory, agrees “A big ick for me is people on their phone expecting you to understand what they want through a mime – it’s tough, how am I meant to understand their flapping hand gestures?!”

On the flip side, patience and understanding are the two big green flags that 30% of Baristas are on the lookout for in their perfect customer.

Junji Tai, Brighter Coffee, says “Showing appreciation for the work we put into our craft as Baristas with patience and courtesy for the staff and team is always awesome.”

Nic Myhre-Downes, Proud Mary, adds to this saying “If you are super busy, people who aren't short and snappy and understand we are all human and give us a little grace are very appreciated.”

56% of Baristas would choose to make an oat milk coffee all day long if they could.

Thea Dean, Plug Nickel, agrees saying “If I could make one drink all day long then it's probably an oat flat white because it's my order and I always assume everyone drinks oat milk as it's the best in coffee.”

Ben Richardson, Brighter Coffee, says “For me, being plant-based, it is always easiest to share the things that I enjoy drinking the most like an oat flat white.”

Zak Hardinge-Francis, Green Refectory, adds with a laugh “Honestly the customers who order oat milk are just cooler and easier to chat to.”

43% of Baristas confirm what we were all thinking; Gen Z & Millennials are leading the pack when it comes to ordering alternative milks.

Alicia Feng, Calēre, says “We are really seeing alternative milks really grow and takeover the space thanks to Gen Z’s and Millennials. They are also so much more open to change and trying new things like pairing their oat milk with a different coffee each day if it will give them a new flavour profile experience.”

Dennis Roshal, City Saints, says “The younger is more open to alternative milks. The share of alternative milks, and especially oat is growing fast. As a local café with a strong specialty coffee focus, we serve a good mix of coffee enthusiasts and takeaway guests across the demographic spectrum. And you can really see that the dairy orders we take have declined whilst alternative milks orders have increased to 60% of all milk drinks we serve, driven mostly by the younger customers. Pretty impressive given the fact there is a strong dairy culture in Australia.”

Junji Tai, Brighter Coffee, says “A lot of people drink oat now. A third of our orders are oat milk. Even when people say they don't like oat milk we often say give us a chance to make you a coffee with Oatly and see if we can change your mind and 99% of time, we see them change.”

Nic Myhre- Downes, Proud Mary, agrees “I’d say young people, like me, just don’t drink dairy milk, mainly because we are just so much more health aware and want to make more environmental and ethical choices.”

Ly Truc Ha, Proud Mary, adds “People even call us to check what brand of oat milk we use, that's how passionate they are about their alternative milks!”

56% of Baristas share that Boomers like to feel the burn with an extra hot coffee.

Liam Aguilera, Kōhī No Deshi, says “Not to pigeonhole, but older generations love hotter coffees, dairy and sugar in their coffee and want the darkest roast we have.”

Callum Gregori, Proud Mary, adds “7 times out of 10 you can guess someone's coffee order based on their age. Boomers love their coffee piping hot and generally if someone older I’ll always make their order extra hot.”

17% baristas say health and lactose intolerance is leading consumers to switch to plant-based milks

Fernanda Munoz Vargas, Sonido, says “With a growing lactose intolerance issue, people are trying new things and are more open to trying oat milk like, Oatly which doesn’t change the flavour of the coffee so it makes for a great drink.”

Meredith Cohn, Soulmate, says “There is a whole group of people who have undiagnosed IBS, and they don’t know the havoc dairy is wreaking on their systems, it’s wild.”

21% baristas say location is the biggest barrier to plant-based milk access for consumers

Alicia Feng, Calēre, says “Location has a huge impact because regional areas just don’t have the variety of options and awareness of alternative milks, so people from those areas just don’t necessarily realise how delicious they can be. Whereas, I am based in Fitzroy, which is a city fringe location, and it's a creative, artistic area with a growing vegan population, which has meant it’s become a location where you can really see and enjoy a wide variety of alternative milks.”

Jeremy Massa, Acustico, adds “I own two cafes in two very different areas, Brunswick and Mooney Ponds, and between the two locations we see a big difference in oat milk consumption so I would say that the area you are in plays a big part in this. On top of that in Brunswick it is probably more of a younger crowd, so that plays a part too, as I often find younger people are just that much more health conscious.”

Discover more about Oatly, the world’s original and largest oat drink company and the benefits of all thing's oat at: oatly.com

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*Oatly commissioned an Australian survey focused on cafe culture to investigate the reasons why Barista’s love to sling oats and give us our daily caffeine fix. As part of the survey, Oatly spoke to 23 Barista participants from across Sydney & Melbourne. The goal of the survey was to gain insights about the cafe culture scene in Australia in 2024.