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North Texas foodies shopping on their smartphones

We asked some of our favorite North Texas foodies to share which apps they use for shopping, cooking and dining out

By Kate Parham
Special to the Star-Telegram

Long gone are the days when a smartphone was seen as a luxury; today, more than 80 million Americans own a smartphone, and most will tell you it has changed their lives. One way more and more users are relying on their mobile apps is for their food needs.

Need to make a reservation? There's an app for that (OpenTable). Want to find a new restaurant near you? Search UrbanSpoon. Looking for a recipe for dinner tonight? Try the AllRecipes dinner spinner.

We talked with some of our favorite local foodies and asked them which app they have always got pulled up on their smartphone, and which ones can help you improve your cooking and dining experiences in the new year.

Chef Melissa Weiner, owner of Young Chefs Academy in Fort Worth

Favorite app: Smart Chef Substitutions

Why she loves it: "It is a great app if you find yourself short an ingredient, have food allergies, or want to make a dish healthier."

Download: \$1.99 on iTunes

Kent Rathbun, executive chef and proprietor of Abacus and other North Texas restaurants

Favorite app: Around Me

Why he loves it: Rathbun uses Around Me when he is traveling to a new city. The app provides a list of restaurants nearby, so he can always find a great meal.

Download: Free

Sarah Hooton, cooking school manager at Central Market Fort Worth

Favorite app: Epicurious, Yelp

Why she loves it: "I LOVE Epicurious ... I tend to go to that website first for all recipe references because they usually have more professional recipes. I refer to Yelp sometimes for food reviews."

Details: Both are free

Callie Salls, chef/owner of Linguine and Dirty Martinis Private Chef Services

Favorite app: LIVESTRONG Calorie Tracker

Slideshow



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Tuesday: Fashion resolutions for women over 50

Today: Using mobile apps to improve your cooking and dining

Thursday: Follow the "happiness diet" to feel more positive and energetic

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10:30 am 2/07 Picture and Pages: "Hey, Pipsqueak!"

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Why she loves it: "The tracker helps you record the nutritional values of your favorite supermarket and restaurant foods to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. The app counts calories, lets you track fitness goals and allows you to plan meals in a customized food diary -- the perfect app for a foodie on the go!"

Download: \$2.99 on iTunes

Megan Rountree, cake designer and pastry chef at Legacy Cakes Bakery, Grapevine

Favorite app: OpenTable

Why she loves it: "I could not live without my OpenTable app! I am often the party planner in our bunch, and so no matter where I am, I can make a reservation in a snap. I love OpenTable because you can read reviews, but it is also great to search for new restaurants, especially when traveling. I love that it is also a one-stop shop. I can order flowers, balloons, etc. all in one place to really finish off a special celebration. I use it on my Droid X and have never had a problem."

Details: Free

McKenzie Zieser, marketing communications at Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau

Favorite app: ShopShop and Epicurious

Why she loves it: "The ShopShop app makes grocery shopping easy and organized. You can access multiple lists and cross off items with just a swipe. Whenever I cook, it's mostly weeknight dinners, so the 'week night dinner' section is perfect on Epicurious when I'm in need of some creative cooking inspiration."

Details: Both are free

Debbie Rhea, associate dean of research and health sciences at Texas Christian University

Favorite app: Nutrition Menu

Why she loves it: "You can plug in fast-food locations, find the foods you are eating, and find out how many calories you are going to eat [with Nutrition Menu]. You can plug in your exercise logs, and many other things to understand calories burned and calories consumed. Great resource!"

Download: 99 cents on iTunes

Sebastien Layen, executive chef at Omni Fort Worth Hotel

Favorite app: Donna Hay digital magazine

Why he loves it: Layen loves reading Donna Hay to learn new recipes, get new ideas and find creative inspiration for food presentation. "I love the pictures; they are really country and home-style. The food is really great and simple, [just] the way I like it. The magazine [is seasonal], so it keeps you up to date and refreshes your memory on what will be great to use."

Download: Free on the iPad

Brent Hines, executive chef at Winewood Grill, Grapevine

Favorite app: Chef's Feed

Why he loves it: "It hasn't hit the DFW market yet, but it's coming. It's cool; you can basically follow your favorite chefs and get their recipes from the restaurant. Just click on the chefs of the city, read their profile, picture, their favorite dishes from other restaurants and their background, and you can send them messages."

Download: Free on iTunes

Comments

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