

P.30 PORK'S TOUGH MOUTH
BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES

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Rare finds

The Power of Meat report
explores the new frontier
of consumer preferences



For some,
White Castle's
new chicken
sliders are not fit
for royalty.

Dethroned



PRODUCT:

White Castle Chicken
& Cheese Sliders

PRICE:

\$5.49 for four sliders

PLUS:

Ample amount of
meat per serving

PROBLEM:

Complex preparation
and rubbery textures

Many of us have fond memories of those affordable, small and square hamburgers at White Castle, which some hesitantly admit to liking (especially late at night). Back in the late '80s, we could even buy them in our local supermarket to enjoy anytime at home.

Fast forward to today — the age of the fast-food chicken sandwich — and now you can purchase a stand-out, colorful box of White Castle Chicken & Cheese

Sliders directly from the grocery store. These sliders feature, as described on the packaging, “breaded chicken breast with rib meat on our signature (square) bun,” and contain 22 grams of protein per serving of two sliders. Given all the buzz around fast-food chicken sandwiches, we thought this would be a fun Taste Test.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Our tasters included male teens and a variety of adults, many of whom admit

to craving White Castle's sliders.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Many of the tasters were, on first impression, concerned with the product's preparation. Although a couple remarked on the “fun” and “easily recognizable” packaging — and another noticed the “ample” amount of chicken on each sandwich — there was a chorus of uncertainty about how to cook the food, particularly White Castle's recommendation to thaw the

sliders before cooking them.

“You need an engineering degree to understand the ‘from frozen’ prep,” one taster shared, noting their uncertainty about the “folding and tucking” with the packaging. Another stated, “I was thrown off that it needed to thaw (for best tasting sliders).”

A third taster asked a relevant question: “What happens if you only want one slider?” The sliders, as packaged, come in two packs, and the

“I felt I was working too hard for a fast-food chicken slider.”

cooking directions involve making two together.

TASTE, TEXTURE AND MORE

Some tasters enjoyed the chicken and cheese sliders. One taster remarked on the “steamy soft” bun and “nice, seasoned

coating” of the chicken, and another taster said the sandwich “tasted exactly as a white-meat chicken patty should,” with “properly seasoned breading” that was “not overly salty.”

However, for many of the other tasters, their initial suspicions

of the product’s preparation were realized.

“The frozen microwave directions felt complicated,” one taster said. “I felt I was working too hard for a fast-food chicken slider.”

“The (microwave) directions were rather long and com-

plicated for a frozen product,” another taster shared. “And how many people know how to adjust their microwave to 50% power?”

Yet another taster detailed how White Castle’s original frozen sliders were simple to prepare,

whereas the new chicken sliders were “way too complicated.” The taster continued: “You had to take the sandwich apart and cook the chicken patty separately at a certain percentage, then put it back together, wrap it a certain way and

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TASTE *test*

microwave again. My husband decided to make one later, and I heard him mumbling, 'Wait. What? I'm not doing all that.'

Those difficulties in preparation extended to finished product. A number of tasters remarked on the "rubbery" texture of the chicken and the "mushy" consistency of the bun.

"The chicken never crisped up," one taster elaborated. "It wasn't

soggy, just not crispy (thawed before cooking) and the taste was bland. It had a weird rubbery texture. It definitely needed cheese and a sauce, so I made a quick sriracha mayo."

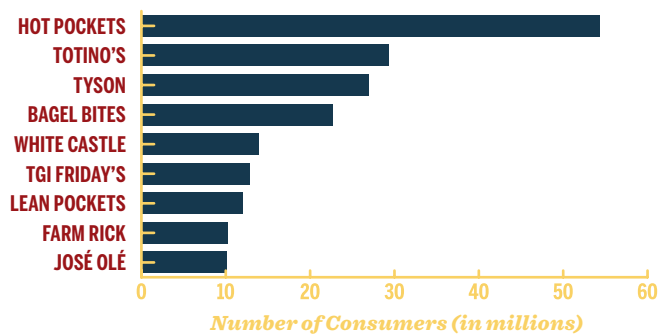
One taster even went the extra mile and prepared the dish in multiple ways. "I cooked it 'from thawed' and also 'from frozen,'" the taster detailed. "From thawed, it heated

HOT FOODS *in the* FROZEN AISLE

U.S. consumers were asked, in a 2020 survey, which frozen food snacks they had eaten in the previous 30 days.

Hot Pockets was the clear favorite, with 54.4 million consumers.

White Castle was the fifth-most popular, with 13.93 million.



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“You need an engineering degree to understand the ‘from frozen’ prep.”

nicely, but the bun became hard and dry. From frozen, it was overly hot, the cheese became rubbery and the bun turned a wrinkled up, hard consistency.”

UPSHOT

In assessing whether or not they would purchase the White Cas-

tle Chicken & Cheese Sliders a second time, some tasters referenced their household dynamics.

“Both of my boys loved them, and asked me to buy these in the future for a late-night snack or quick lunch,” one taster said. Another taster shared, “An entire box of four

was able to satisfy the hunger of a teen boy after school.”

A third taster, who’s mother purchased White Castle “Crave” boxes for parties, stated he ate the chicken sliders as a “snack” and would “definitely be finishing the box!” He added, “My mom would purchase at

this price.”

Consistent with other taster comments, though, a sizable number were more critical in their final assessments.

“My expectations were low, and I’m glad they were,” one taster said. “I definitely wouldn’t buy these when I can buy reg-

ular chicken patties and use any roll/bread I want.”

Two other tasters — one who enjoys White Castle’s frozen sliders, and another who “loves” the restaurant’s burgers — were similarly critical. The first taster stated, “These sliders were a big letdown,”

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