

# Organic claims in restaurants decline

By [Meatingplace Editors](#) on 4/10/2014

The “organic” claim is still the leading ethical claim on restaurant menus, but its use has declined 28 percent between fourth-quarter 2010-2013, according to market research firm Mintel.

"The reality is that organic foods are quite expensive and consumers are looking for alternative claims to help them determine what other types of menu items are safe and of good quality to eat. Tying into this, we are seeing a return to tried-and-true, traditional preparations, signaled by claims tied to classic, original, homemade, etc.," Julia Gallo-Torres, foodservice category manager, said in a news release.

Meanwhile, claims like “gluten free” are appearing more frequently on restaurant menus, posting a 200 percent increase between Q4 2010-13, and accounting for 40 percent of the total growth in ingredient nutritional claims on the menu during the same time period. The biggest growth in ingredient claims came from nutritional claims (up 14 percent) and geographic claims (up 12 percent).

"Nutritional claims signal that certain foods can contribute to general health. In terms of geographic claims, consumers are seeking dining experiences that are more authentic and these claims also can convey a healthier presentation," Gallo-Torres said.

Mintel also found that consumers are looking for foods that are representative of being homemade; for example, the claim “made from scratch” is contributing 10 percent to the overall growth of all restaurant menu claims. Also tying into this trend is the growth of claims such as original recipe, freshly-picked, farmstead and farm style. And as operators try to signal that their offerings are unique, “signature” as an ingredient-marketing claim grew 34 percent.

“The number of allergen-related claims will continue to gain momentum, as more people are officially diagnosed with specific allergies and their families also go on restricted diets to help keep them healthy. Leaning towards health, there also is a surge in vegetarian and vegan foods. People also want to know where their foods are coming from. Consumers will continue to look to menus for guidance on what to eat,” Gallo-Torres said.