

TEATIME TENSIONS: 40% of Brits say preparing dinner is more stressful than enjoyable, as Paul Brunson launches ‘The Dinner Decree’



- New research by HelloFresh reveals women are carrying the bigger share of the ‘dinner mental load’, with 70% saying they take on most or all of the cooking load each day, compared to 44% of men
- And “I don’t mind, you decide” isn’t always as helpful as it sounds – 45% of Brits are regularly met with the dreaded phrase when asking what’s for dinner, with almost one in five (19%) then having their suggestion rejected
- HelloFresh has teamed up with Paul C. Brunson to launch ‘The Dinner Decree’: a commitment by households to work together to make mealtimes a breeze

Please see here for press pack, including imagery and video

LONDON, [5th October] 2026: Dinnertime is supposed to bring us together, but new research from [HelloFresh](#) reveals that for many households, the daily dinner decision is becoming a source of stress, with **40%** of UK adults saying preparing dinner makes mealtimes stressful rather than enjoyable - rising to **52%** of parents.

And while the question of “what’s for dinner?” might sound simple, the research reveals a much bigger invisible mental load behind it. **70%** of women say they carry all or most of the mental load around cooking

each day, compared to 44% of men, while **64%** of women say they are mainly responsible for deciding what to eat, compared to 37% of men.

For those tasked with making the decision, there's another familiar frustration: **45%** of UK adults say they are often or always told "I don't mind, you decide" when asking what's for dinner. And the phrase doesn't always mean the decision will be accepted - almost one in five (**19%**) say their suggestion is then rejected, rising to **27%** among parents.

The dinner dilemma is just one part of the tension around mealtimes. Washing up and the cost of food are joint top sources of tension (**24%**), followed by the responsibility of deciding what to eat (**23%**). For parents, catering to children's or fussy eaters' food preferences is also a major sticking point, cited by over a quarter (**28%**).

Helping to tackle household tensions around dinnertime, HelloFresh has teamed up with [Paul C. Brunson](#) - the world's leading matchmaker and a familiar face from Married at First Sight UK, whose career is built on making relationships work rather than ending them. Building on a desire to bring back the joy around dinnertime, Paul is spearheading HelloFresh's '**The Dinner Decree**' - inviting households across the nation to make a commitment to confront the daily tensions around 'what's for dinner?', and take this question off the table for good.

Despite only **4%** of UK adults thinking their partner takes on all the mental load around cooking, HelloFresh's research shows that it's not all bad news. When households cook together, over a quarter (**28%**) say it makes them feel like a team, while **40%** of parents say cooking together makes them feel more connected to the family. Despite these positive benefits, almost one in five (**21%**) of UK adults say they never cook together as a household.

With the research showing that having meals or ingredients planned in advance is the single thing most likely to make mealtimes easier, cited by nearly a third (**30%**) of adults and rising to **39%** of parents, HelloFresh is stepping in to take the decision off the table.

Paul C. Brunson, matchmaker and relationship expert, said: *"Whether you're cooking for a partner, family or friends, making dinner may seem like a fairly standard task in day-to-day life, but in my work I've seen how it can become one of the daily frictions that quietly wears relationships down. Cooking together, with a plan and without the stress, is one of the simplest things a household can do for itself. Acknowledging when that load falls unfairly on one person, and agreeing to share the dinnertime responsibility, brings connection through shared, meaningful moments, transforming the kitchen from a source of tension to a shared, enjoyable space."*

Mimi Morley, Senior Recipe Development Manager at HelloFresh UK & Ireland, said: *"Our research shows just how much unseen work goes into answering the question of 'what's for dinner' every day. With couples, families and housemates each facing their own unique stresses, 'The Dinner Decree' spotlights the often unspoken mental labour that comes around with dinner every single evening. HelloFresh offers a simple solution to that problem, helping households step away from the dinnertime tensions by sending fresh, pre-portioned recipes straight to the door, bringing together households to connect and rediscover joy around cooking and mealtimes."*

Alongside his role in leading The Dinner Decree with HelloFresh, Paul C. Brunson has also shared his top five tips to help households resolve tension around mealtimes:

1. **Name the invisible work.** The first step to understanding how each other feels is to talk about it. Sit down, name your frustrations and listen to what each other has to say. This isn't about winning an argument, it's making the time to learn where each household member is coming from.
2. **Make a plan, together.** List out all the tasks that make up the dinnertime decision, and split them out equally. Knowing your own role each day will help each person in the household to feel prepared for what's coming up, and ensure that sole responsibility doesn't sit with one person.
3. **Rotate the decision-making.** Instead of household decisions falling to one person, take it in turns to own the question of what's for dinner. Whilst this might feel like a simple step, rotating the decision maker will mean that everyone's voice is heard and bring fresh ideas to the dinner table.
4. **Cook together, at least once a week.** Making time to decompress and work together will stop cooking feeling like a chore, and re-position dinners as a source of quality time together.
5. **Choose the plan that works for you.** Cooking isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Whilst some homes will value meal prepping ahead of time, for others the best solution is investing in a recipe box, like HelloFresh, to save time and energy.

Uncovering the hidden stress around cooking, HelloFresh's 'The Dinner Decree' takes note of who plans, who cooks, who cleans up, and who quietly carries the 'dinner mental load' of the household when it isn't equally shared.

To celebrate the launch of The Dinner Decree, HelloFresh is inviting households across the UK to make their own commitment to taking 'what's for dinner?' off the table for good. To enter, share an Instagram Story announcing that you're signing up and what your household is pledging to change, whether that's who's taking charge of Monday's meal plan or a promise to cook together once a week. Tag @HelloFreshUK and use #TheDinnerDecree, and ten lucky households will be in with a chance to win a selection of HelloFresh prizes designed to help bring joy back to dinnertime. Terms and conditions apply, for further details please visit <https://www.hellofresh.co.uk/about/press>

Notes to Editors

High-resolution imagery available via hellofresh@ready10.media

For more information, interview requests or imagery, please contact: hellofresh@ready10.media

Sources:

The research was conducted by OnePoll on behalf of HelloFresh between 28th August to 2nd September 2026, among a nationally representative sample of 2000 UK adults.

About HelloFresh:

The HelloFresh Group is a global digital-native FMCG company and the world's leading meal kit provider. The HelloFresh Group consists of eight brands that provide customers with high quality food and recipes for different meal occasions. The Company was founded in Berlin in November 2011 and operates in the USA, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Australia, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, France, Denmark, Norway and Ireland. HelloFresh SE went public on the Frankfurt



Stock Exchange in November 2017 and is currently traded on the SDAX (Small-Cap German Stock Market Index). The HelloFresh Group has offices in Berlin, Saarbrücken, New York, Chicago, Boulder, London, Amsterdam, Sydney, Toronto, Auckland, Paris, Copenhagen, Dublin, Wrocław and Warsaw.