

12 - 14 December 2025

Cambridge , United Kingdom

Smartphones at the Table and in the Kitchen: How Devices Shape Eating and Cooking Habits Across Continents – Insights from Empirical Research

Magdalena Hodalska

Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland

Abstract

This paper presents how smartphones are changing our eating and cooking habits around the world. Using data from the international HumanePhone research project, the study looks at how people in Europe, Asia, America, and Australia use their phones during meals and in the kitchen. The HumanePhone project, supported by Jagiellonian University, aims to explore smartphone habits across different cultures and countries. The research shows that people tend to use their phones while eating, which can make meals less enjoyable and influence how much and what we eat. The study includes survey results from Polish participants from five different generations (N=1,555), as well as from young adults in China (N=363) and the Philippines (N=70). It also presents findings from research conducted in the USA, Ireland, and Canada, highlighting the risks associated with using smartphones while cooking. While these devices have become like multimedia cookbooks, they can carry a lot of bacteria. Studies show that only about 1 in 3 people wash their hands after touching their phones and many continue cooking immediately afterward without cleaning their hands, which can spread germs and lead to food contamination. The paper will discuss these health risks, as well as trends like foodstagramming, FOODMO, and how multitasking with smartphones during meals can increase calories intake.

Understanding how smartphones influence our food habits is more important now than ever. By the end of 2025, 9 out of 10 people worldwide will own a smartphone. This makes it vital to study how mobile devices shape food culture and affect health across different countries and cultures.

Keywords: Smartphone, mobile phone, mobile communication, habits, digital wellbeing, food, FOMO, FOODMO, Foodstagramming, Instagram