

## **Emerging Cuisines: Drivers of UK Consumer Choice and Preference**

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### **Summary**

While the total European ethnic foods market (including rice) is estimated to be worth around £5bn at retail selling prices, the UK market at £1.29bn, followed by Germany and France, is by some way the largest ethnic retail food market in Western Europe. The expanding appetite for ethnic food purchasing among UK consumers has been driven by increased exposure to alternative cultural influences particularly through the presence of restaurants, greater frequency of overseas travel coupled with visits to more exotic locations, and developing flavour preferences. In addition, the significant demand for convenience products such as ready meals and cook-in and stir-fry sauces in response to changing UK consumer lifestyles, has provided a strong platform of growth in the ethnic foods sector over the past 25 years. But growth in the UK market has slowed considerably over the past 5 years. Consumer interest in mainstream ethnic cuisines may be waning and hence suppliers are becoming increasingly innovative by offering more authentic and regional ethnic products and unusual flavours, along with healthier eating options in response to consumers' increased focus in this area. This offers opportunities for less well established cuisines to develop a presence in the UK market. Forecast growth in the UK sector is likely to continue to be robust, but at 3% per annum over the next five years, is more modest than previously experienced.