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ARE WE READY FOR SUSTAINABLE COOKERY? COMPARING CURRENT (AND FUTURE) COOKING AND TIME USE PRACTICES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA

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Cooking practices play a pivotal role in a healthy diet and lifestyle. Cooking is intertwined with dietary choices. To achieve a sustainable food system, we need to change how we cook and prepare food, along with the time we use to prepare and cook food.

Cooking practices involve a variety of parameters such as cooking times, method of cooking (e.g. boiling, baking, steaming) and type of appliances (e.g. electric hobs, gas ovens, microwaves), which all influence the nutrition content and energy density of food and result in varying amounts of emitted greenhouse gases. Behavioural cooking choices are driven by factors such as convenience, taste, health and lifestyle and shape certain eating habits, but are also influenced by tradition and transfer of knowledge.

This article presents the findings of three pilot surveys deployed in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia in 2019 (n = 385+ for each survey). These surveys asked about cooking and preparation time, methods and equipment for 30 common foods.

Though based around similar food cultures, we find differences in cooking practices among the different countries' populations. We then examine how food choices and cooking practices need to change differently in each country to be in line with current guidance on healthy, sustainable eating such as the guidelines provided by the EAT-Lancet report.