# North-South divide in England revealed by curry sauce and ketchup fish and chip preferences



The long-standing debate regarding the North-South divide in England has recently taken a new turn, veering away from traditional metrics such as wealth, health, or political affiliation to focus on a surprisingly mundane topic: fish and chips. According to a survey conducted by supermarket Iceland, a distinct culinary preference has emerged as the defining line between the two regions, centring predominantly on the choice of condiment.

In a poll of 2,000 individuals, Iceland found that the North leans heavily towards curry sauce, with a preference that ranges between 39% and 46% among respondents. In contrast, Southern regions such as Hertfordshire, London, and the West Midlands demonstrated a clear inclination towards ketchup, where preferences registered between 39% and 49%. This discovery, as articulated by Iceland’s chief commercial officer, Paul Dhaliwal, points to a culinary demarcation rather than any sociopolitical boundary: “If you live in Wales and Nottingham, you’re Northern. But if you live in Birmingham, Coventry, or anywhere below Northampton, consider yourself Southern.”

Critics of the divide often point to more significant factors underpinning regional disparities, such as public investment, economic conditions, and social mobility. However, this nuanced survey introduces an interesting cultural lens through which to examine identity, highlighting that even the simplest choices, like a condiment on fish and chips, can serve as markers of regional affiliation. Saliently, while 84% of Britons reported using salt on their chips and 28% deemed mushy peas an essential side, the broader condiment preferences paint a vivid picture of national identity.

Supporting data reveals even deeper trends across the UK. Regional analyses have consistently shown that tomato ketchup reigns supreme in the South, whereas curry sauce is notably favoured in Wales, with a remarkable 35% preference among residents. Even within regions like Worcestershire, preferences diverge significantly, showing 44% opting for curry sauce. Additionally, a YouGov survey highlights that mayonnaise is also increasingly popular in the capital, showcasing yet another layer of regional culinary distinction.

Further illustrating this divide, the Midlands exhibit a stronger preference for curry sauce than other areas, with 82% of respondents expressing their fondness. The North East, on the other hand, sees a variant in preference, with some residents still opting for traditional accompaniments like a meaty pie alongside their fish and chips.

Such culinary insights lead to essential discussions about cultural identity and regional pride in the UK. The new survey positions the condiment debate as a playful yet profound reflection of broader social patterns. Iceland has embraced this shift in narrative by marking the newly identified North-South divide with a promotion, offering free fish and chips north of the designated border in Skegness, further solidifying the cultural branding of this divide.

As the nation prepares for National Fish & Chips Day, it is clear that the debate surrounding the North-South divide, while often dominated by economic or political discourse, has found a novel and distinctly relatable battleground. Whether it's curry sauce or ketchup, this culinary choice encapsulates a microcosm of identity that resonates deeply within England's varied sociocultural landscape.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14734453/real-north-south-divide-fish-chips-sauce.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14734453/real-north-south-divide-fish-chips-sauce.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14734453/real-north-south-divide-fish-chips-sauce.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://yougov.co.uk/consumer/articles/31350-what-do-britons-most-their-chips), [[3]](https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/2967-great-british-chip-divide)
* Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://yougov.co.uk/consumer/articles/31350-what-do-britons-most-their-chips), [[4]](https://pressreleases.responsesource.com/news/90881/revealed-how-you-eat-fish-chips-proves-where-you-are/)
* Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.scotsman.com/read-this/national-fish-chips-day-we-ask-the-nation-for-their-preferred-chip-toppings-including-gravy-and-mushy-peas-4168274)
* Paragraph 6: [[4]](https://pressreleases.responsesource.com/news/90881/revealed-how-you-eat-fish-chips-proves-where-you-are/), [[5]](https://frymax.co.uk/fish-chips/fish-chips-north-south-divide/)
* Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14734453/real-north-south-divide-fish-chips-sauce.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/food-drink/recipes/437950/celebrate-national-fish-chip-day-june-2-tasty-variation-traditional-favourite/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14734453/real-north-south-divide-fish-chips-sauce.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://yougov.co.uk/consumer/articles/31350-what-do-britons-most-their-chips> - A YouGov survey of over 36,000 people across England, Scotland, and Wales examined regional preferences for chip toppings. The study found that tomato ketchup is the most popular choice in England (34%) and Scotland (25%), while in Wales, curry sauce leads at 35%. The survey also highlighted regional variations, such as Worcestershire's 44% preference for curry sauce and East Sussex's 13% preference. Additionally, the survey noted that 84% of Britons use salt on their chips, with vinegar usage varying across regions.
3. <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/2967-great-british-chip-divide> - A YouGov poll revealed regional differences in chip condiment preferences. Salt and vinegar are the most common toppings nationwide, with 66% and 57% usage, respectively. Tomato ketchup is favored by 43% of respondents, with higher popularity in England (34%) compared to Scotland and Wales (both 24%). Mayonnaise is more popular in London (over 25%) than in other regions, while brown sauce is preferred by 22% of Scots. Curry sauce is chosen by 16% of Northerners and 15% of Midlanders, but only 6% of Londoners.
4. <https://pressreleases.responsesource.com/news/90881/revealed-how-you-eat-fish-chips-proves-where-you-are/> - A survey by hungryhouse.co.uk found that fish and chip preferences vary across the UK. In London, 66% favor cod, while in Scotland, over half opt for skate. The Midlands show a strong preference for curry sauce (82%), while Londoners prefer ketchup. The North East has 30% ordering a meaty pie as an alternative or addition to fish. The study also noted regional differences in terminology, with Londoners and the South using 'Fish 'n' Chips' and the North using 'Chippy'.
5. <https://frymax.co.uk/fish-chips/fish-chips-north-south-divide/> - An article by Frymax discusses regional differences in fish and chip preferences. In the South, 72% prefer cod, with ketchup being the most common sauce, followed by mayonnaise and curry sauce. In the North, 82% favor haddock, with gravy being the preferred sauce, often served on the side. Mushy peas are a common accompaniment, and 'bits' or 'scraps' are offered as an extra topping. Bread and butter is also a typical side in the North.
6. <https://www.scotsman.com/read-this/national-fish-chips-day-we-ask-the-nation-for-their-preferred-chip-toppings-including-gravy-and-mushy-peas-4168274> - A YouGov poll of around 36,000 people revealed regional preferences for chip toppings. In the South, ketchup is the preferred choice, while in the West Midlands and Northern counties like Tyne & Wear, Cumbria, and Northumberland, curry sauce is favored. Elsewhere in the North and the Midlands, mushy peas are the ideal accompaniment. The survey highlights a significant North-South divide in condiment preferences for fish and chips.
7. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/lifestyle/food-drink/recipes/437950/celebrate-national-fish-chip-day-june-2-tasty-variation-traditional-favourite/> - A survey conducted for National Fish & Chips Day revealed regional variations in chip accompaniments. Salt (41%) and vinegar (37%) are the most popular additions nationwide. Mushy peas (28%) and ketchup (25%) are also common, with bread and butter (23%) being a typical side. Regional 'accompaniment capitals' include Yorkshire & Humber for curry sauce (28%), London for ketchup (33%), and the North East for tea (20%).