

2012 Food Trends and Tips

FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY TRENDS TO HELP YOU GROW YOUR BUSINESS

CRAVING COMFORT AND SLOWING IT DOWN

Your customers are still feeling the results of a strained economy. As such, items described as "handmade" or "home style" are popping up on restaurant menus and in many cases outselling other menu items. Even on the go, consumers recognize that they want more from their dining experience than just efficiency. Integrating "feel good" items such as roasted chicken, savory barbecue and "served all day" breakfast items are predicted to surge.

TIP: *Trying adding a classic menu item with a modern twist, such as a B.L.T. made with applewood smoked bacon, the freshest produce and herbed aioli on artisanal bread.*



HEALTHY KIDS MEALS

According to Dr. Joy Dubost of the National Restaurant Association, "Nutrition, especially when it comes to children, is becoming a major focus for the nation's nearly one million restaurants, in tune with consumers' increasing interest in healthful eating." If your children's menu still consists of grilled cheese, PBJ and chicken fingers, it's time to make a change. Health-focused parents are insisting on more creative menu items from their local delis to their favorite restaurants.

TIP: *Get creative with kid's menu items by offering spiral sandwiches full of fresh, healthy ingredients, mini pizzas made with wheat crust and topped with seasoned grilled vegetables and yogurt sundaes.*



ARTISANAL EVERYTHING Not new, but still going strong, "artisanal" originally referred to handcrafted foods but is now springing up everywhere. The term has even trickled down to quick-service restaurants, with major chains like Jack in the Box touting "artisanal" breads as a selling point. From meats and cheeses to bread to olive oil and honey, your customers will respond positively to the integration of these items into your menu offerings.

TIP: *Sharing "the story" about some of your artisanal menu items will engage your customer. Learning about the family-run creamery that produces the blue cheese used on your signature salads has a "feel good" effect on customers.*



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MOSTLY MEDITERRANEAN

While ethnic food grew in popularity in 2011, Mediterranean food is leading the pack as we enter 2012. In a recent Technomic poll, 60 percent of restaurant-goers said they are interested in trying Mediterranean food, and sales of Greek, Spanish and Middle Eastern menu items are increasing, with no signs of slowing down. A growing interest in eating healthy, delicious ethnic foods are among the factors in Mediterranean food's popularity.

***TIP:** Integrate the exotic flavors of feta or goat cheese, hummus or olive tapenades with marinated vegetables, chicken or lamb and serve on rustic flatbreads or pitas. Dress with fresh produce, drizzled olive oil or citrus-infused dressings. The flavor combinations are endless.*

LUXURY REVALUED

Health-and money-conscious consumers are seeking small indulgences that are easier on the body and wallet. "We are living with less but still want to treat ourselves with smaller, high-quality products," explains Cathryn Olchowy, culinary director of Sterling-Rice Group, a food consultancy. Whether you call them tapas, small plates or appetizers, smaller-sized portions are going to keep growing strong for several reasons. They're less expensive for cost-conscious diners, offer smaller portions for health-conscious diners, and are made for sharing. On the dessert front, sales of items like two-bite cupcakes, single truffles made with premium chocolate and cake pops are surging.



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

2012 is the year for smaller restaurants, delis and grocers to get on-board with social media. Sites like Twitter and Facebook, in essence produce free advertising and can make businesses successful by spreading the word about themselves to fans and potential new customers. It's also "a must" these days to maintain an informative website with menu items, specials, online coupons and even online order-taking. Apps, tweets, blogging...it's the new way of doing business. Take advantage of the trend!

The entire staff of Monterrey Provision Company wishes you a bright and prosperous New Year. We appreciate your business and continually seek to be a valued partner. In 2012 we look forward to bringing you new ideas, menu items and information on industry trends. We'll also be focusing on even more cost savings opportunities for you.

Yet with all these enhancements, you can always be certain of one thing.....our foundation will never change. As we enter our 40th year of distribution, we know that You, our valued customer, remain the focus of our entire business. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with "over the top" service throughout the coming year!

