

Foodservice Updates

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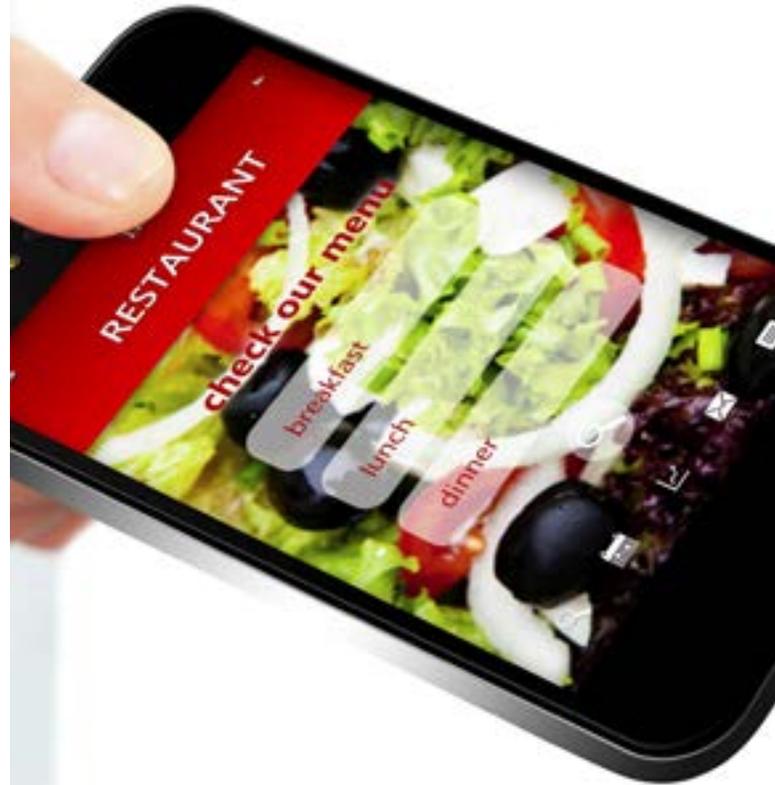
Ask for what you need

Beyond serving customers in a new way this year, restaurant operators are having to make decisions and take steps that would have seemed outlandish last year. Has there ever been another year when restaurants have sold toilet paper in an effort to keep sales coming in? Consumers know times are tough for restaurants and they want their favorite businesses to survive – a strong local economy is good for them too – but they may not always know how to help. So tell them! As Restaurant Manifesto reports, operators can and should have higher expectations of their customers right now. If it's critical for guests to honor a reservation right now and you have been plagued with no-shows in the past, require a table deposit when taking bookings. If you need a table returned after a certain amount of time, allow them to be booked for a set start and end time. Does your storefront need a cleanup or a new coat of paint? Reach out to churches or schools you have served in the past who might have a small crew of volunteers who can pitch in to help you for a few hours. Posting on local websites about needing help may result in some offers of pro-bono assistance. You likely have customers with a wide range of expertise that can benefit you right now, so don't be afraid of making a request – even if it feels odd. If anyone questions it, you can remind them of the package of toilet paper you sold them in April.



How does your online ordering experience measure up?

COVID-19 has forced operators to scale down their dining room business while scaling up their capacity for off-premise orders. But preparing for an increase in online orders isn't as simple as plugging your existing menu into your website. Your online menu needs to exude the same professionalism as the experience of sitting in your dining room. But instead of relying on your décor and friendly servers, your online menu alone must make people feel comfortable that they are in good hands. Restaurant Den suggests operators keep several tips in mind when revising their online menu, including scaling down choices, clarifying ingredients (and directing those with food allergies to more information on their website), and checking the spelling of each item.



Have you tried this social media platform yet? TikTok.

This year is all about stepping outside of your comfort zone, right? If you haven't harnessed TikTok to promote your brand yet, it may be worth your while. Restaurant Business says TikTok is among the most downloaded mobile apps in the world, with about 800 million active users around the world. It can be especially effective at targeting Gen Z consumers and the simple, quirky videos it allows users to make can help a brand create the kind of content that goes viral. Case in point: Chipotle's recent TikTok video showing a montage of people mispronouncing the brand's name has generated millions of views.





Southwest Dry Rubbed Chicken Thigh Street Tacos

Ingredients:

Chicken, thigh, fc, Tyson® precision cooked chicken™ - thigh ready to pull - Tyson - 4/3 lb

½ Cup: lime juice and oil

¾ Cup chipotle chili powder (or more to taste!)

¾ Cup each: garlic powder, ground cumin, and kosher salt

Mexican street corn:

8 Cups roasted corn

2 Cups chopped scallions

2 Cups each: chopped cilantro and crumbled cotija cheese

8 Jalapeño peppers chopped

1 Cup lime juice

Sauce:

1 Cup each: sour cream and mayo

1 Cup lime juice

1 Cup adobo sauce

Let chicken lead the way



If you're looking to appeal to flexitarians and offer a strong gateway to the plant-based foods on your menu, chicken can serve you well. Not only is it a lean protein that can benefit a person's muscles, bones, mood and cardiovascular health, but it can also be seasoned and prepared in many of the same ways as the vegetables on your menu, making it easy to create different variations on a single dish.

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Instructions:

1. **CHICKEN:** Combine the lime juice, oil, chipotle powder, garlic, ground cumin, salt in a bowl. Add the chicken and toss using a rubber spatula so that the chicken is coated in the marinade. Allow the chicken to marinate for 30 minutes at room temperature or cover it and let it sit in the refrigerator for up to 8 hours. Lightly spray a nonstick skillet with cooking spray and cook the chicken over medium-high heat 6-10 minutes, flipping halfway through until it cooks through.
2. **STREET CORN:** Combine the corn, scallions, cilantro, cotija cheese, jalapeño, and lime juice in a bowl. Season with a big pinch of salt and pepper. Taste and adjust as needed; set aside.
3. **SAUCE:** whisk together the sour cream, mayo, lime juice, and 1 tablespoon of adobo sauce in a bowl. Taste and add additional adobo sauce and salt as desired.
4. **TACOS:** Warm the tortillas, add chicken, a slice of avocado, street corn, and top with chipotle sauce. Serve with lime wedges if desired.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Tyson



Play it safe with poultry

'Tis the season for poultry – and an important time to review how to prepare it safely. Remember to wash hands, cutting boards, utensils and other nearby kitchen prep surfaces with soap and water immediately after handling raw poultry. Don't rinse poultry in the sink, as it will not remove bacteria and can actually spread it around your kitchen. Place it on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator to avoid any leakage that could contaminate other foods. Cook it to an internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a food thermometer, then refrigerate leftovers no more than two hours after cooking.



#FoodSafety

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Stay safer inside

As the weather cools in many places around the country, the lure of indoor dining becomes harder to ignore. While the pandemic persists, however, packing dining rooms simply isn't safe – for guests and the staff whose health you're relying on to operate smoothly this winter. While you're still making use of outdoor space to serve guests, act now to make sure your indoor air is as safe as possible for everyone. Good ventilation is key, so your HVAC system should ensure a regular exchange of stale indoor air with fresh outdoor air. In a recent report from Eater, Dr. Elizabeth Noth, a researcher in environmental and occupational exposure science at UC Berkeley, advises that ventilation measures and mask wearing need to include not only dining areas but also break rooms and communal areas.



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Serve guests in a new way this season

The holidays are coming – though they are likely going to look a little different this year, with fewer work gatherings and indoor celebrations filling your dining room every night. But can you still make it a season of goodwill? If you're looking at a likely downturn in business this year because of capacity restrictions and virus infection upticks, how can you use this time to ensure that you're still taking care of the customers who can help you come back stronger in 2021? A recent Business Insider report shared the out-of-the-box ideas that Geoff Tracy, the chef owner of several Washington, D.C. area restaurants, has implemented in recent months. He and his teams took on a number of goodwill projects in the early weeks of the pandemic, including offering free car washes for customers and even calling their top-500 loyalty point members and offering to pick up prescriptions, drop off dry cleaning and give rides to doctor's appointments. To be sure, these aren't the kinds of tasks his staff signed up for when they started working with him. But the next time Tracy's customers are looking for a takeout meal – or their first indoor sit-down meal after the pandemic – how could they consider ordering from anyone else? At a time when celebrating looks different, tap into your service mindset. How can you help brighten the day of your best customers? Maybe it's with a custom meal package created for a loyal guest isolating at home. Maybe it's something your restaurant has never done before that could supercharge guest loyalty like never before.



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