

# Foodservice Updates

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## Recalibrating for the new restaurant landscape

It may seem like the world has moved beyond Covid-19, but the virus continues to make the restaurant landscape feel different than it once did. Where, when and how people consume food from restaurants has changed. The numbers prove it: As a recent Washington Post report indicates, restaurants are serving 16 percent fewer people in their dining rooms as compared to before the pandemic. Meanwhile, off-premises dining has picked up the slack. While carry-out business is down 3 percent, delivery is up more than 5 percent and drive-through business is up 13 percent. The National Restaurant Association's Hudson Riehle says a commanding 39 percent of all restaurant traffic is coming through the drive-through lane. This has divided restaurants into a couple of categories – those that provide fast, convenient, quality service for people on the go, and others that focus more on providing a memorable dining experience that's worth lingering over. If you're among the large and growing number of restaurants in the first category, consider how you might iron out any kinks in your mobile ordering, pickup and delivery processes. If you don't provide drive-through service, how can you incentivize people to collect carry-out from you? Could your technology empower your staff to track orders with greater precision and bring them out promptly to waiting guests? Consider how you might infuse your service model with some flexibility and show guests that dining with you – whether off-premises or on – is a convenient and worthwhile option for them in this new environment.



## Use tech to avoid negative ripple effect

Mistakes happen. But even little ones – like a burger being served with the condiments a guest had asked to be omitted – can have significant negative consequences. At the very least, you're wasting food and losing profits when a replacement and/or comped dish is required. So where do errors occur in your operation? Are guests unable to communicate their preferences clearly using the ordering platform you offer? Are requests somehow lost in translation between the guest and the chef preparing their dish? Are chefs misinterpreting requests that were understood by the server? Your technology can not only help you pinpoint where problems are occurring, but also bring greater control and precision to those processes and prevent one mistake from snowballing into something bigger.



## Give tracking power to the hungry customer

As curbside pickup gained momentum during the early months of the pandemic, many restaurants adopted geofencing technology to track customers driving to the restaurant to collect their food. While the tracking information helps restaurants coordinate the prompt delivery of orders to the curb and also helps them target customers in the vicinity of the restaurant with coupons and promotions, geofencing provides additional customer-side benefits too. More delivery drivers are now being equipped with their own devices that enable customers to not only track the status of their order but to trace its path. It's another way some restaurants are trying to enhance transparency and service at a time when consumers need more incentive to spend.

# Food Trends

## Grain Salad

### *Ingredients:*

8 Cups Tri-Colored Quinoa, Cooked, Cooled  
8 Cups Farro, Cooked, Cooled  
4 Cups Brown Rice, Cooked, Cooled  
4 Cups Cucumber, Small Dice  
4 Cups Tomato, Small Dice  
4 Cups Dannon Oikos Greek Yogurt  
2 ½ Tablespoons Lemon Juice, Fresh  
½ Cup Apple Cider Vinegar  
8 Each Garlic Cloves, Pressed  
½ Cup Parsley, Fresh, Chopped  
2 ½ Cups Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
2 ½ Tablespoons Salt  
1 Tablespoon Pepper



### *Instructions:*

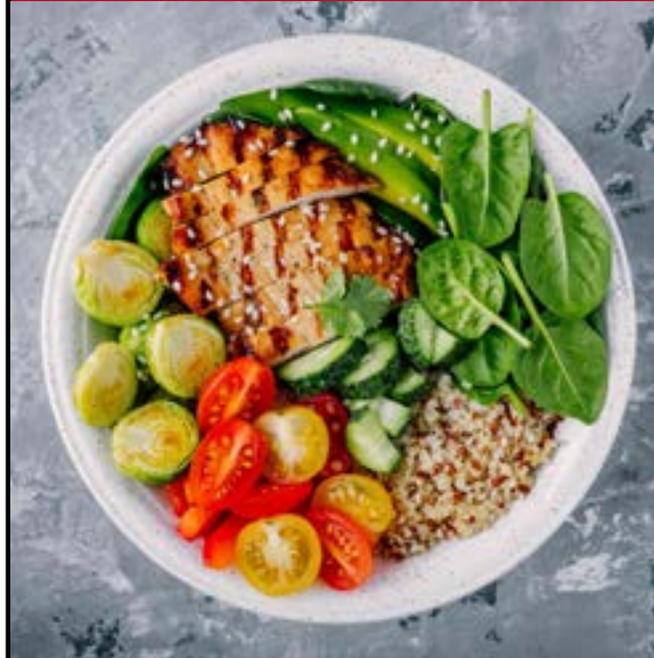
1. Combine all grains together in a large bowl with diced cucumber and diced tomato. Set aside.
2. In a separate bowl, combine Dannon Oikos Greek yogurt, lemon juice, apple cider vinegar, pressed garlic, and parsley; whisk to combine. Slowly pour-in olive oil, whisking constantly. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Pour dressing over grain salad and fold together to combine.

Make it your own: flavor inspirations

Roasted Balsamic Vegetable, Pesto & Heirloom Tomatoes, Sesame Miso, Moroccan Style Chick Pea, Harvest Grain Salad (Sweet Potato, Cranberries, Apple, Pecans)

Recipe and photo courtesy of Danone

## Winter-ready salads



Salads can be a harder sell in the winter months, when consumers may crave hearty, warm dishes. But at the same time, many consumers also prioritize their health in this first part of the new year. You can tick both boxes by making some tweaks to your salad menu. Weaving in some whole grains – or even using them as the foundation of some salad options – can help you offer more satisfying salads that deliver key nutrients as effectively as produce-packed salad choices. Grains can also be a reliable winter warmer, so try bringing some additional dimension to your menu with warm, grains-based salad options.

# New service models require new safety controls

Your restaurant has likely had to make big changes to adapt to new consumer habits in the past few years. If you're juggling a new mix of order streams, you may also be adjusting to new traffic patterns, as well as to new food preparation and service areas required to support changes to your business. This can create opportunities for cross-contamination, as well as missed temperature checks or overall quality checks. Make sure your food and safety training accurately reflects your work flow and – if your technology isn't already helping to direct traffic – that your team knows how to respond to (and ensure the safety and quality of) orders coming from multiple sources.



**#FoodSafety**

# #FoodSafety

## Take the intimidation out of your safety audits

At your restaurant, do in-person safety audits feel like a relic of the pre-pandemic era, or have you reverted back to those routines? In a recent report from Modern Restaurant Management, Kari Hensien of RizePoint says the shift to remote audits and self-inspections may be one of the best things to come from the pandemic: It has made it possible for restaurants to audit more frequently and with a combination of tools. As a result, audits may feel less like intimidating events and more like ongoing check-ups designed to support continuous improvement. While an in-person presence has its benefits too, taking full advantage of technology as an auditing tool can help you spot small problems more quickly and with greater precision. When the required course-correction is minor and feels less punitive, staff morale is likely to benefit too.



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## When you're forced to limit hours and service

Your business has likely been taking a range of actions to manage inflation and lower costs, from revamping the menu to working with a smaller staff. But according to the latest edition of PYMNTS' Digital Divide Study, which surveyed over 2,300 restaurant customers in the U.S., the biggest change that consumers noticed

restaurants making right now was reducing their hours or closing their dining rooms (49 percent).

This figure was well above the percentage of guests who noticed longer order processing times, lower-quality service or lower-quality food in restaurants. While closing dining rooms and reducing hours may be unavoidable for many operators in the midst of a labor crunch and high inflation, the fact that such a large percentage of consumers are noticing this change indicates that restaurants could be missing sales opportunities and likely turning off potential guests who seek them out only to find they're not open. If you're open less frequently right now or have

closed your dining room, regularly ask for guests' feedback about what they like and when they eat your food – and mine your tech for this data – to ensure that you're making the most of the more limited service you're offering. That could call for changing up your menu to ensure it includes only your most profitable items, or, if you have a loyal following who used to visit your dining room regularly, offering promotions or other experience-boosters to entice them to pick up carryout from you. At the very least, make sure your restaurant's hours and available service are up to date on your website, social media and search engine listings so guests aren't chasing you down only to be disappointed you're not open.



Team Four/Value 4 provides customized Supply Chain Solutions and Business Consultancy to the foodservice owners and operators throughout the United States. To find out how we can help your business save money contact us at:

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