

# Foodservice Updates

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## For help with recovery, look to your village

In 2020, even Daniel Boulud has needed to be creative about finding new sources of financial support. Bloomberg reports that Boulud, who just opened a temporary restaurant in New York City, accepted luxury-product sponsors ranging from a coffee company to a vineyard to help fund the renovation of his new Mediterranean-style dining room and staff uniforms. Granted, Boulud has strong name recognition and a high-end clientele to his benefit. But his story is an example of how a community – whether that be neighborhood patrons, businesses serving a similar demographic, or large corporations that rely on a strong local economy – can come together to support restaurant businesses in recovery. This year has forced restaurant operators to think beyond conventional boundaries. As businesses look to find a sustainable path to recovery, there may be opportunities to partner with others to help pave the way. Could you solicit sponsorships from local companies to help make needed improvements at your business – and look for ways to credit them (and promote their products) both within your restaurant and on your online platforms? Could you contact organizations your restaurant has donated to in the past to encourage them to place orders with you? Are there any opportunities to partner with other restaurants who lack suitable outdoor space and open a winter-time outdoor dining area offsite? Communities need local businesses to thrive. What people and organizations can help you stay the course?



## Tech that can see you coming

As more quick-service restaurants look for ways to remove friction from the food-collection process, expect to see more vehicle-recognition technology in use that can detect the arrival of a customer and prepare their order for a quick pass off. It might become a useful tool for other restaurants that have adopted curbside collection for the long term too. White Castle, which has adopted a range of technologies in both the kitchen and at the point of sale, is adding vehicle-recognition tech to its lineup. Mastercard is providing it through its new AI-Powered Drive Through Platform.



## Mining for more valuable data

We all know that customer data is becoming increasingly valuable for restaurants as they look to better understand taste preferences, evaluate emerging menu trends, and make decisions around everything from staffing to inventory. But how complete of a picture are you getting from the data you collect in a single customer transaction? And how valuable is that data if a person is often ordering on behalf of others, as might happen in an office setting? As QSR Magazine reports, restaurants could benefit from forming new data partnerships across a number of different areas of a foodservice operation – whether that be with delivery vendors, suppliers, credit card partners or other brands within similar foodservice categories. Are there opportunities for you to collaborate with other businesses across the industry to share and gather insights in a way that still protects consumer privacy?





## Goat cheese and vegetable lasagna rolls

### Ingredients:

- 24 wavy lasagna sheets
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 lb. zucchini, diced into 1/3-inch pieces
- 2 Lb. asparagus, sliced thin on a bias
- 2 eggplant, Sliced thin lengthwise
- 10 oz, goat cheese
- 2 Lb. ricotta cheese
- 1 Grated Parmigiano cheese, divided
- 12 leaves of basil
- 4 cups house marinara sauce
- Salt and black pepper, to taste



## The future looks plant-based

Consumers are thinking more about not only their health but the health of the planet right now. Incorporating more plant-based meals into your menu and promoting their environmental, health and ethical benefits can help you support the changes they are making to their diets. A recent report from Meticulous Research estimates that the plant-based market will grow nearly 12 percent annually in the next seven years. Nestlé also reported that 87 percent of Americans are incorporating plant-based protein into their diets. As consumers look to eat more plant-based dishes, restaurants are in an ideal position to make those plants more craveable. Consider updating traditional dishes with plant-based alternatives and changing up presentations to add interest to your menu.

# Food Trends

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Season eggplant with salt pepper and bake on a sheet pan, until thoroughly cooked (about 10 minutes).
2. Boil the lasagna sheets for eight minutes, coat with a bit of olive oil, lay them out separately on a sheet pan and allow them to cool.
3. Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the ricotta, goat cheese and half of the Parmigiano cheese.
4. In a skillet, sauté onion with remaining olive oil until translucent (about five minutes).
5. Add zucchini and sauté for two minutes over high heat. Then, add asparagus, season with salt and pepper and cook for two more minutes.
6. Set aside and allow to cool down.
7. Mix veggie mixture with cheese mixture.
8. Place lasagna sheets flat on the table, cover with a slice of eggplant, spread the cheese/veggie mixture over the top and make rolls. Then, place each one in muffin pans.
9. Bake at 350°F, until slightly crispy on the outside and cooked all the way through (about 15 minutes).
10. Serve lasagna rolls with warm marinara sauce, a bit of sliced fresh basil and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil, if desired.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



## Help your guests have a safe Thanksgiving

Turkey time is coming quickly. Whether you're planning to pack up full meals to be heated and eaten off-premise, provide Thanksgiving meal kits for home cooks, or serve Thanksgiving meals on site (and obviously boxing up guests' must-have leftovers), you need to ensure your food is both transported securely at the proper temperatures and consumed in a way that minimizes the risk for foodborne illness. It's easy for not only turkey but also side dishes to be left out for too long or cooked inadequately, making it easier for bacteria to multiply. Providing your guests with detailed instructions for heating, refrigerating and reheating, and make sure you have well-insulated packaging that will ensure your dishes can be transported at safe temperatures.



**#FoodSafety**

## Fine-tune your COVID response

COVID-19 infections continue to climb in the U.S. and since virus symptoms can take up to two weeks to emerge, it's probable that at some point in the coming months, one of your team members will contract the virus or be exposed to others who have. Operators should have a clear plan of action to follow when this happens, to include sending the sick employee home, closing down any areas used by the employee, informing other staff of the infection, and then cleaning and sanitizing the affected areas in your restaurant. In the meantime, consider what support you would need to operate if and when one or more employees cannot come to work. Ensure there are multiple people cross-trained in daily tasks so you can avoid training someone on the fly. Also consider how you could adjust your seating or traffic flow if you had to temporarily close off any areas of your restaurant for cleaning and disinfection.



# Foodservice Updates

## Nutritional niche marketing creates opportunities for restaurants

If you were to deconstruct your menu and assess the key nutrients included in each dish, where does your menu over-deliver (or under-deliver)? Having this detailed level of knowledge about the foods you serve will soon be a key advantage in foodservice – if it isn't already. Mintel's new Global Food and Drink Trends 2030 report, which forecasts what the next decade will look like in food and beverage consumption, predicts technology will play an increasingly important role in providing consumers with in-depth, customized information about their health and nutritional needs. What's more, consumers will become more comfortable sharing their personal data if it means they are getting information tailor-made for them in return. Imagine struggling with anxiety and depression – or an autoimmune disease, or high blood pressure – and knowing which specific foods and restaurants in your neighborhood can provide you with the best combinations of nutrients your body needs to function at its best, while omitting harmful additives? Of course, the current climate is so challenging for restaurants that many operators aren't focusing on menus at the level of nutrients. But people will always need food – and are becoming more conscious about their needs and willing to support the businesses that accommodate them. Could you create several versions of a dish based on varying nutritional profiles? A range of meal kits that accommodate different diets? If you can step back and take a longer view of what your customers want and then market those benefits, you are likely to earn their loyalty for life.



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