

Foodservice Updates

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Direct traffic

Restaurant delivery continues to climb: In 2023, the online food delivery market is expected to balloon to \$154 billion from \$111 billion in 2020, according to Statista. Are you doing all you can to make sure that as many delivery orders as possible are coming to you from customers directly instead of through third-party delivery apps? Your patrons aren't necessarily seeking out the DoorDashes and GrubHubs of the world – they are simply ordering via the channel that's most convenient to them. You can make direct orders more convenient (or at least more enticing) for them when they're ready to place an order. First, make sure your customers know they can find the best food selection and deals if they order directly from you. Limit the menu options you offer via third-party providers to your highest-margin items – and make it clear on your website, search engine listings and social media posts that people can find a wider variety of food options, lower prices and access to limited-time offers by coming directly to you. When they do visit your website, they shouldn't have to navigate far to where they place an order. Modern Restaurant Management suggests using a pop-up banner with a link (and perhaps a QR code) that directs them to your online ordering page. On that page, encourage them to join your loyalty program so you can continue to reach them with direct and increasingly targeted offers. Finally, make sure your customers know that they can best support you and your staff in challenging times – and help ensure they can keep their favorite dishes coming – if they order from you directly. Include language on your menu, website and on notes placed in third-party delivery bags that says just that.



Protect your brand transfer point

Restaurant brands are more reliant than ever on third parties responsible for the last mile between a consumer and the takeout food they ordered. Yet even when food arrives cold or soggy due to a third-party delivery vendor who took too long to reach an end customer, the restaurant – not the delivery provider – is far more often the one to receive the negative review or angry phone call. The handoff is critical and both the restaurant and third-party delivery provider need to be in sync about the importance of protecting the restaurant’s brand in off-premise environments – through accuracy, speed and service. As Geoff Alexander, President & CEO of Wao Bao, said at The Spoon’s recent Restaurant Tech Summit: the “brand transfer has to be the most guarded and respected piece by the brand itself and by the operator to work together.” If your restaurant offers delivery, what do you do to ensure your brand doesn’t lose value when you hand an order to a third-party delivery provider?



Tech-driven labor shortcuts

You might not be ready to outsource your drive-thru business, phone orders or curbside pickup to a chatbot just yet – but what if you don’t have sufficient staff on hand to manage those channels either? One of the tech innovations that is looking to provide a happy medium is Bite Ninja. The company allows restaurants to outsource drive-thru tasks to gig workers who work remotely but appear on a screen and take customer orders as if they were working onsite. The Spoon reports that the company is looking to expand the model to front-of-house kiosks, phone orders and curbside pickups.



It's always time for breakfast

The pandemic has elevated consumer interest in breakfast – and not just at what is typically thought of as breakfast time. According to a recent survey of more than 2,000 adults by the Harris Poll and General Mills Foodservice, 24 percent of Americans say they have eaten more breakfast foods during the pandemic and 79 percent have eaten breakfast foods outside the hours of the traditional daypart, Winsight reports. Consider testing the boundaries of breakfast by offering traditional breakfast items – or creative twists on them – on your lunch, dinner, snack and even dessert menus.

Food Trends

Chilaquiles Eggs Benedict

Ingredients:

For the Chilaquiles Base:

2 (14.5-ounce) cans fire roasted diced tomato with green chili
14 6-inch corn tortillas
2 cups Mexican four cheese blend

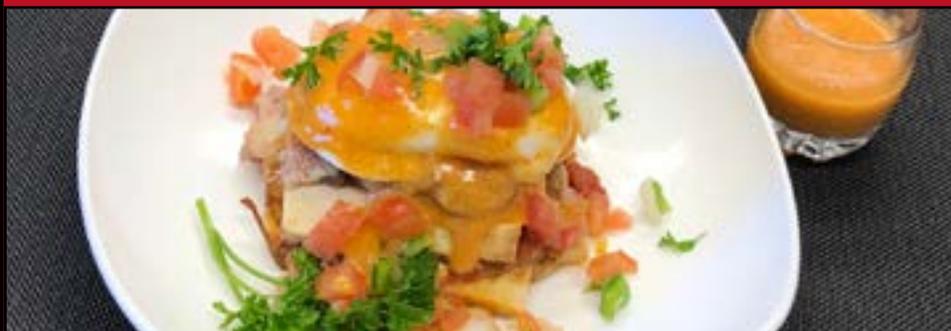
For the Green Chili Hollandaise:

4 egg yolks
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 pinch cayenne pepper
1/2 cup melted butter, warm
2 cups your favorite green chili sauce (I used a mild green enchilada sauce)

For the Eggs Benedict:

10 eggs, poached
16 ounces JENNIE-O® Roasted Thigh Meat
Freshly ground pepper
Chopped fresh parsley for garnishing



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Place pot roast in pan with 2" high sides and place in oven. Heat pot roast until internal temperature reaches 140°F, as measured by a meat thermometer. When done, remove from oven and shred turkey. Keep warm.
2. Place fire roasted diced tomatoes with green chili in a food processor and pulse chop a few times until the tomatoes are not chunky anymore, do not puree them.
3. Spray a 8X10" baking sheet with cooking oil and line it with 8 corn tortillas, ensuring that there are no gaps. Spread 1/3 of the tomatoes and chili mixture on the tortillas and add 1/3 cup cheese. Repeat the process until all the Chilaquiles base ingredients are used.
4. Bake for 10 minutes or until the cheese has completely melted and the tomato and chili mixture has soaked into the tortillas. Let cool.
5. While the Chilaquiles base is in the oven, start making the Hollandaise sauce by combining the egg yolks, lemon juice, salt and cayenne pepper. Whisk over double boiler until doubled in volume. Keep your heat moderate to avoid curdling the yolks.
6. Remove from heat and slowly drizzle the warm melted butter in as you whisk until all butter has been incorporated in the sauce.
7. Keeping the sauce warm, and add green chili sauce and stir until blended.
8. Poach 10 eggs and place them in cold water to stop them from cooking.
9. Cut the Chilaquiles base into 10 circles with a biscuit cutter. Prepare two serving plates and place two pieces of the base on each plate.
10. To assemble the eggs benedict, top each base with shredded turkey, followed by a poached egg. Drizzle with green chili hollandaise. Repeat to finish the other three eggs benedict.
11. Sprinkle with freshly ground pepper and chopped fresh parsley. Serve with your favorite Pico de Gallo.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Jennie-O



A clearer look at food safety

Delivering food safety training and staying on top of hazards was challenging enough for foodservice businesses before the pandemic. Now that these businesses are short-staffed and trying to stay ahead of worker turnover, it's even more difficult – and has accelerated efforts to use technology to ensure food safety. That has been the case for Wendy's, which has been working with NSF International to use their EyeSucceed smart glasses to protect food safety. Nation's Restaurant News says the augmented reality glasses allow real-time, two-way, hands-free communication used for inspections, approvals, trainings and demonstrations for one person or many at once. Could you outsource any of your food safety training to tech?

#FoodSafety

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How well are you communicating cleanliness to current and potential staff?

At a time when restaurant operators are concerned about demonstrating their cleanliness practices to guests, they may also benefit from demonstrating them to employees. Modern Restaurant Management reports that a recent survey of U.S. and Canadian workers found that 60 percent of respondents would leave their current role for a lower-paying, healthier work environment. It's a good time to review your health and hygiene protocols to ensure you're communicating them clearly to existing staff and staff candidates – particularly as flu season threatens to collide with the delta variant in the coming weeks and months.



Foodservice Updates

Push forward with plant-forward

U.S. consumers are embracing plant-based foods – both in restaurants and at home. According to a Gallup study, 41 percent of people in the U.S. have tried plant-based meats — and of those people, 60 percent said they were likely to continue eating them. Further, Technomic found that 59 percent of consumers say they eat meatless meals at least once a week, and 33 percent are actively trying to reduce their meat consumption. New releases of a plant-based meal kit for home preparation by Nestle’s Freshly brand, as well as a chicken substitute for restaurants by Impossible Foods, have underlined how plant-based foods are embedding themselves in the mainstream food industry. Incorporating more plant-based meals on your menu isn’t about denying your loyal carnivores their burger or being a slave to trends. Rather, it’s a means for you to stretch your inventory and budget at a time when supplies are short and operators must do much more with less. You can approach this in different ways depending on your clientele. If you serve devoted carnivores, consider offering slightly smaller cuts of meat and filling a larger portion of the plate with vegetables, legumes and grains. This Restaurant Hospitality report also suggests playing up vegetables’ interesting colors and shapes with creative presentations, enticing customers with lesser-known plant-based ingredients and creating interest around them, and to share the benefits of these foods by telling stories about how versatile they are and how they can support good nutrition.



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