

# Foodservice Updates

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## Where can you flex?

Other than labor, the top challenges for restaurant operators right now are escalating food costs and short supplies, according to recent commentary from Larry Reinstein, industry consultant and president of LJR Hospitality Ventures. (And of course, labor shortages can impact both costs and supplies.) When you look at your operation, where might there be room to flex when the foods you are known to offer are priced out of your budget or are simply unavailable? First, consider what dishes and ingredients on your menu are more variable and adaptable. You may be able to be more flexible with ingredients than you think. Case in point: When Wingstop, which literally has chicken wings in its name, had to keep business going amid a wing shortage in recent months, it offered the alternative of chicken thighs, the National Restaurant Association reports. For every dish you serve, consider how you might reinvent it without a perceived loss of value for the guest – or if you should temporarily replace it until cost and supply challenges shake out. Of course, you may have some room to raise your prices – media reports are spreading the word to consumers that they have not been paying sustainable prices for restaurant food in recent years. But if you must raise prices, look for other ways to elevate the experience you’re providing guests – particularly if you’re already short-staffed and out of popular menu items. This is where the human side of the restaurant business has an opportunity to demonstrate its worth.



## Deconstruct your data

We all know that data is important to operating a successful business – hence the sharp rise in restaurant tech before and during the pandemic. But even if you have tools to gather reams of insight about everything from your inventory to your guests, they aren't as useful as they could be if you can't make sense of the information they collect and readily translate it into actionable steps to boost your business. Brightloom, for one, has been making a business out of helping operators put their data to work. When you look at your systems, how much do they tell you about your guests' preferences, their order history, and other business-critical variables such as the weather forecast and local goings on? Can you review that information and quickly make incremental improvements as a result?



## Can you harness texts for better engagement?

Consumers are significantly more apt to read a text than an email. In fact, according to the Mobile Consumer Engagement Study 2020, 40 percent of consumers say they have at least 50 unread emails. Ten percent say they have more than 1,000 such emails. On the flip side, only 4 percent of consumers say they have 50 or more unread mobile text messages. Knowing this, how can you use texts to drive guest engagement? Could you use them to send a location-specific promotion of your popular mozzarella sticks before a big game? Ping a request for an online review immediately following a dine-in meal? What key guest actions could you best encourage with a brief message that gets immediate attention?



## Bangers and Mash with a German Twist

### *Ingredients:*

- 12 Hillshire Farms Smoked Sausage Link  
or
- 12 Hillshire Farms Chicken & Apple Sausage Link
- 2 lb Baby Red Potatoes
- 3 cups Caraway style Sauerkraut (Drained)
- 2 oz Olive Oil
- 4 Yellow and Red Onion, sliced
- q lb Unsalted Butter
- 1 cup Water
- to taste Salt & Pepper



## Feature global classics this fall

The season of hearty food is upon us. As the weather cools, customers will be craving warming, filling options that taste good on autumn days. In the months leading up to the holidays, which are often filled with classic American dishes, take a broader view and consider these chillier months as opportunities to add some global flair to your menu – especially as international travel remains slow. Where can you add some interest to your menu with authentic dishes from other places?

# Food Trends

### *Instructions:*

1. Peel and slice onions, add to a pre-heated skillet, add 2 tablespoons of butter and on low heat cook the red and white onions until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Add onions to the sauerkraut, mix together, set aside.
2. Peel the potatoes, place in cold water, add salt, cover, and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook until fork tender.
3. In a skillet, on medium heat, place sausage links, add water to cover just about halfway up, cover with lid, cook for 20-30 minutes until sausages are cooked through. Once the water evaporated from the skillet, drizzle some olive oil and brown sausages on both sides.
4. Drain potatoes, add butter (optional) and mash them with a potato masher. Serve alongside the sausages topped with sauerkraut and onion mixture.
5. Garnish with French fried onions.

Healthy Alternative Hillshire Farms Low Sodium Turkey Smoked Rope Sausage  
Recipe and photo courtesy of Tyson



## Could dried foods support your food safety plan?

Your inventory needs a lot of workhorse ingredients these days – and it’s even better if those ingredients are shelf-stable for long periods or can otherwise deter the growth of bacteria and mold. Using a food dehydrator or your oven to incorporate some dried foods onto your menu can help, while also allowing you to find uses for excess fruits and vegetables you may have on hand toward the end of summer and into autumn. Just ensure that you treat fruits with an acidic solution like lemon juice and water beforehand (and blanch vegetables in a similar solution) to prevent the growth of bacteria while drying. Penn State Extension also advises that any unpeeled or uncovered produce be heated in the oven at 160°F for 30 minutes or chilled in the freezer at 0°F or below for 48 hours. Once you have packed dried items into air-tight containers, monitor them for condensation, which would indicate that further drying is needed.



# #FoodSafety

## Expect climate change to impact your food safety management

In a year of many extremes, extreme weather has become way of life for many parts of the U.S. this summer. From droughts to fires to floods, these events have a ripple effect on the food supply. Food Safety Magazine reports that rising temperatures alone may increase infections by food- and waterborne pathogens, push plant pests into new areas and potentially result in greater use of pesticides, increase the uptake of toxic metals in staple crops, make plants more susceptible to fungal infections, and expand the presence of algal blooms that threaten seafood safety. All told, the current situation requires foodservice operators to have a reliable means of monitoring new potential hazards and adapting the menu accordingly.



# Foodservice Updates

## Waste not

At a time when everything from labor shortages to supply chain kinks are posing challenges for operators, doing anything you can to manage and minimize waste is especially important. To be sure, there are plenty of tech-driven solutions designed to help prevent over-ordering supplies, measure ingredients, condense left-overs and reroute excess inventory – but a number of simpler solutions exist that restaurants

can start using today. Most of them have to do with skewing small when it comes to portion size and accommodating size preferences. For instance, you can offer a choice of portion sizes and provide smaller container sizes of any refillable items. Make sure that whatever side dishes or even garnishes you're serving are ones the guest has chosen, so you're not perpetually throwing away the potato chips and coleslaw you have always served with your sandwiches. Pricing items à la carte can help. The National Restaurant Association also suggests offering guests the option



of splitting an entrée or having part of it wrapped to go before it is served. To help minimize waste once your meals have left your establishment, you can provide reheating instructions on food packages to-go to ensure the meal retains its quality as much as possible when eaten as leftovers.

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:

1-888-891-3103 or visit our web site at [www.teamfourfoods.com](http://www.teamfourfoods.com) and [www.valuefour.com](http://www.valuefour.com)