



BREAKFAST'S BIGGEST WINNERS

How to leverage the latest trends to build your business

Operators who understand how to give today's customers what they want stand to win big in the breakfast wars. Here are five hot ways to give your breakfast program a boost.

CUSTOMIZATION

It's no secret that customers like to customize—they want to be able to have their food just the way they like it. Customized foods are perceived as fresh, creative and “made just for you” and can be tailored to specific dietary needs and tastes. They also encourage repeat business because guests can come back again and again to try different combinations.

- Mix-and-match omelets and scrambles on menus
- Breakfast bars, from oatmeal and waffle toppings to DIY grain or scrambled-egg bowls
- Cook-your-own waffles and pancakes
- Toast-and-topplings bars (bread, English muffins, bagels, etc., with toppings ranging from peanut butter to ricotta cheese to jam and marmalade)
- Fresh fruit smoothies with health boosters like protein powder or vitamins
- Offer a range of flavored creamer options at the coffee bar or tabletop so that customers can customize their cup

ICED COFFEE

It's not just for summertime anymore. In fact, Datassential groups iced coffee with hot brewed and specialty coffee for popularity during the early-morning, breakfast and mid-morning dayparts and clocks steady growth from 2013 to 2015. Moreover, according to a 2016 Nestlé Professional Beverage Coffee Trend Report, 10 percent of consumers enjoy iced coffee on a daily basis.

- Remember that iced coffee deserves to be more than just leftover coffee, chilled or poured over ice; fans will be happier with purpose-made iced coffee
- Offer a flavored iced coffee special of the day, using flavored coffees, syrups or Coffee-mate for flavoring
- If you want to brew your own iced coffee, experiment with cold brew systems, which many fans say make some of the best iced coffee
- Products like Coffee-mate Iced Coffee Liquid Concentrate are a one-step solution for offering flavored and creamed iced coffee

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GLOBAL INSPIRATIONS

Breakfast tacos and burritos are nearly as commonplace as eggs and bacon today, indicative of growing consumer appetite for global food in all guises, including breakfast. Everyone in the world eats some kind of breakfast, so that's a lot of inspiration.

- Italian frittatas
- Greek yogurt or Brazilian açai bowls
- Chinese congee (rice porridge)
- Japanese okonomiyaki (a type of omelet), or miso soup with grilled fish and pickles
- Liège-style Belgian waffles
- Mexican specialties, such as chilaquiles (fried tortilla strips topped with spicy sauce and cheese, often scrambled with eggs)
- New Orleans-style beignets and chicory coffee, or Spanish churros and hot chocolate

Or simply swap global ingredients into a familiar American favorite, such as chorizo sausage instead of breakfast sausage, or create a signature item, like a ramen omelet or Kalua Benedict (Hawaiian-style smoked pork, sriracha hollandaise and poached eggs on toasted Hawaiian buns).

ALL-DAY BREAKFAST

McDonald's success with all-day breakfast helps verify that "clockless" lifestyles and continued desire for the comfort of breakfast spell growth beyond the traditional daypart. In fact, Technomic has found that 48 percent of people enjoy eating breakfast foods at nontraditional times.

- Quiches, frittatas, stratas and other prebaked egg dishes are easy to integrate into other meal-part service
- Consider breakfast pizza something that can be served all day
- Offer an egg sandwich as part of the lunchtime lineup
- Creating signature breakfast items (hash, Benedicts and so on) can support premium pricing, so as not to erode check averages at lunch and dinner
- Treat breakfast as a snacking occasion between meals if lunch and dinner cannibalization are a concern
- If all-day breakfast isn't feasible, late-night or brunch specials may attract more traffic
- Themed options like pancakes for dinner can be fun and can build sales

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BETTER BREAKFAST SANDWICHES

If there's one item that signals what's trending in the breakfast segment right now, it's the better breakfast sandwich. Like burgers, like tacos, like pizza, like sandwiches in general, this menu stalwart has been elevated in quality, creativity and signature status and now, according to Datassential, appears on nearly 51 percent of all breakfast menus—not just in quick service. As with all sandwiches, it's all about the build.

- Look to interesting carriers, as the starting point for the build, such as ciabatta, jalapeño bagels, biscuits or flatbreads
- Eggs can be scrambled or fried (provide extra napkins for over-easy!), or used in the form of an omelet or the omelet-like Spanish tortilla
- Bacon or sausage is fine, but consider such meats and proteins as Black Forest ham, pancetta, glazed or specialty smoked bacon, smoked turkey, salmon and thinly sliced steak
- Cheese is a must, but look beyond predictable American or Swiss to Gruyère, fontina, Brie and feta
- Condiments and toppings that go beyond same-old ketchup include aioli, caramelized onions, fresh spinach and arugula, roasted tomatoes, sriracha and pesto
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