

FROM THE CATERFOOD BUYING GROUP

INFUSE

SPRING 2026



THE BUSINESS OF BRUNCH

MORNING PLATES THAT WOW

SPRING CLEAN YOUR MENU

YOUR NEW SEASON REBOOT STARTS NOW

THE NEW STANDARD

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FOR BUSY KITCHENS



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From operational tweaks to smarter menu decisions, this issue is all about sharpening what you already do well.

Brunch continues to earn its place on menus and we explore how to make it work for your business. Ready for a seasonal refresh? Our dive into the science of strong menus is packed with ideas – think good visuals, great storytelling and how to choose dishes that speak to customers.

For three recipes that guarantee mass appeal, our bacon-filled dishes deliver on flavour and familiarity. If you're after something lighter, don't miss our trio of feel-good nourish bowls, while our garden-inspired drinks are the only way to toast spring.

Plus, we take a clear look at allergen awareness, with practical advice on building menus that feel inclusive, confident and easy to navigate. And our exploration into Gen Z dining habits offers an insight into the exciting future of our wonderful industry.

The Infuse Team x

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GOOD, BETTER, BEST

Be inspired by our colourful trio of goodness-packed nourish bowls



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KITCHEN CHAMPIONS

Crispy, salty, delicious – celebrate bacon in all its glory with our three dishes



9 BRUNCH CLUB

Why it matters – and how to make the most of this much-loved mealtime

The Hot List

Your guide to everything fresh on the food scene...



We've only scone and done it

We're extremely proud to announce that Team Caterfood celebrated a double win at this year's Cash and Carry Management Chefs' Own Brand Awards! Caterfood Select Back Bacon claimed the Butchery award (see p35 for some delicious recipe inspiration), while Caterfood Select's excellent Plain and Fruit Scones won in the Afternoon Tea category. These accolades are a fantastic endorsement of the quality of our collection and mark an exciting milestone in the long-term plans of our own-brand range. Here's to a successful year ahead!



Drinks as desserts

Cocktails are officially stepping beyond the bar and onto the pudding menu, with sweet beverages emerging as a category in their own right. Tap into the trend with pistachio syrup from a range of brands including DaVinci, Monin and 1883 **Maison Routin** – the rich, luxurious flavour works in everything from martinis and milkshakes to coffees and coladas.

Seal of approval

Are you on the hunt for deeply flavourful cuts of meat, tailor-made to your requirements? Somerset-based company **grubworkz** offers chefs an answer to their prayers: bespoke sous vide products, including pork belly, duck legs confit, lamb rump and more. Order according to flavour profile, weight and pack size amongst other things; it's as creative as it is convenient! grubworkz.com



EAT THE SEASON

A spotlight on spring's unsung heroes



Edible top to bottom, wild garlic grows abundantly across Great Britain and is easily foraged. The aromatic leaves are best picked young – in late February to March – and make an excellent pesto when blended with lemon juice, olive oil, pine nuts and seasoning.



Resembling honeycomb and boasting a nutty, umami flavour, morels can be found throughout the UK from March to May. Ensure they're washed and cooked thoroughly and enjoy them pan-fried, stewed or grilled with butter – they're also cracking in an omelette!



This conical cabbage is the gift that keeps on giving. When harvested early, its leaves (also known as spring greens) are tender, earthy and slightly sweet – try them sautéed in garlic butter. Left to mature, the cabbage head develops and is tastiest grilled or roasted.

5 ways to use... *Asparagus*

Bake, chargrill and deep-fry this punchy spring vegetable to bring out its ultimate texture and taste. A worthy main or show-stealing side dish.



1. Asparagus wrapped in bacon
2. Asparagus and goat's cheese quiche
3. Creamy asparagus soup
4. Prawn and asparagus tempura
5. Asparagus linguine

Images: Adobe Stock

FOOD FIGHT EGGY BRUNCH



EGGS ROYALE

Vs

For more mouth-watering brunch inspo, turn to p9



SHAKSHUKA

1st



KITCHEN QUICK-FIRE

Q&A

PETER JOSEPH
CHEF PATRON
KAHANI LONDON

Best thing about what you do
Bringing joy, comfort, celebration, memories and connection through food. Turning simple ingredients into beautiful, delicious dishes is an art. Cooking lets me express love, culture and emotion in every meal, and I'm constantly learning.

Your chef hero
Rakesh Upadhyia, my very first Head Chef.

One thing you'd change about the industry
One thing I'd change about the cooking industry is the work/life balance for chefs. Many chefs work long, exhausting hours under intense pressure, often at the cost of their health and personal life.

Your biggest kitchen fail
It was a while ago, but once I left oil on a pan to overheat and caused a small (manageable) fire!

One piece of advice for young chefs
Never stop learning and be ready to work hard. Focus on passion and patience. ■

EGGS APPEAL
7
TUCK IN AND STRIKE GOLD

Eggs Benedict's classier cousin, the royale elevates its soft-poached eggs with a generous helping of smoked salmon. Wobbling atop its English muffin throne and drenched in hollandaise sauce, this dish screams 'trendy British brunch'.

A modern brunch-menu star, this hearty Maghrebi dish is a deeply warming mix of poached eggs, garlic and onion in a spiced tomato sauce. Served in its very own skillet with a stack of bread on the side, it's a wholesome way to start the day.

EGGS APPEAL
9
SHAKSHUKA LEG AND MAKE YOUR OWN!

TRENDING NOW

SENSORY BITES

Multisensory dining is slated to be bigger than ever this year. These food and drink trends will tickle more than your taste buds!



PÃO DE QUEIJO
This beloved Brazilian snack marries cheese, eggs and tapioca flour for a delightfully chewy texture. Minas Meia Cura is the cheese of choice, but mozzarella and a hard cheese like Parmesan are good substitutes. Mix sweet and sour cassava starch for a crisp shell and elastic core.



TANGHULU
Dazzlingly colourful and polished to perfection, it's little wonder that Chinese tanghulu is a hit on social media. They're essentially candied fruit skewers, dipped in hot sugar syrup and plunged into an ice bath to harden the coating, creating a wonderfully glassy shell that delivers a satisfying crunch.



FLUFFY COKE
Originating in the US, fluffy Coke is a TikTok sensation that turns soda into dessert. Grab a tumbler and coat the inside of your glass with a swirl of marshmallow cream, add a layer of ice cubes and pour in your Coke. Super easy to create and big on theatre, it's the perfect party drink, fizzy and foamy in equal measure.

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*AMERICANA BURGERNOMICS RESEARCH, DECEMBER 2024

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Brunch



THAT
MEANS



BUSINESS

Start each day on the right note with our guide to AM catering, from building a strong menu to refining your sit-in and takeaway services

Brunch is big news – and it's going nowhere. A lucrative corner of the foodservice industry that's boomed for years, it's beloved by many and continues to shine – reliably driving covers, boosting spend and filling the lull between breakfast and lunch.

From all-day eggs and small plates to premium coffees, cocktails and endless grab-and-go options, brunch offers a rare opportunity to do more

with less. Whether you're catering to laid-back Sunday diners chatting over eggs Benedict, weekday business brunchers grabbing tea and bagels, or bigger groups gathering for boozy weekend spreads, brunch menus are built for flexibility, sharing and social appeal. For operators, that versatility translates into longer dwell times, broader appeal and stronger margins. So whether you're refreshing your menu or starting from scratch, now is the time to ensure your brunch offering is the very best it can be. ▶

CRAFTING YOUR MENU

There are certain dishes we expect to see on the morning menu: avocado toast, a hearty fry-up, pancake stacks and granola bowls. Even formerly adventurous options like shakshuka have become bastions of the modern brunch. The beauty lies in its adaptability: many key ingredients can work across a number of brunch dishes, helping to streamline prep, reduce waste and boost efficiency behind the scenes. Sweet or savoury, light or loaded, this meal is all about choice and it's constantly evolving to meet consumer tastes.

From trade events and market reports to social media scouting, keep your finger on the pulse to identify trends worth weaving into your

“Aim for familiar comforts with a few global twists that tap into Gen Z’s adventurous taste buds”

menu. With attention spans at their shortest and social media turning things viral every day, steer clear of fads with a fast burn-time and focus on those informed by wider consumer behaviour. Unlike the digital sphere, your establishment allows customers to experience food and drink at their own pace. This makes brunch the ideal testing ground for new dishes, flavour twists and limited-time specials without the pressure of a full menu overhaul. While every kitchen runs a little differently, the consensus is to refresh your menu at least four times a year, so take advantage of seasonal produce and drum up excitement with limited-time dishes. For more tips on refreshing your menu this spring, turn to p17.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

We all want to feel comfortable when dining out, but ambience might play a bigger role in customer spend than you think. According to OpenTable’s 2026 Dining Trends Report, 39% of Brits believe a restaurant’s atmosphere is just as important as its food and drink, while 45% of us are willing to pay more for a dining experience with a ‘unique vibe’. But what exactly does that mean?

More than half of diners favour ‘cosy local charm’ when choosing where to eat, reflecting a wider pull towards comfort and familiarity. For brunch in particular, warm, welcoming spaces encourage longer stays – and second coffees, shared plates or an extra round of drinks.

Don’t skimp on a decent soundtrack either.

Images: Adobe Stock



HOT HONEY

Spearheading the ‘swicy’ movement, hot honey has shifted from viral to mainstream and we’re drizzling it over just about everything. Bring a welcome dash of heat to your brunch menu by partnering it with porridge bowls, bacon buttermilk pancakes and protein-packed salads, or pair with halloumi for your avo toast.

Not only does music set the tone, it eases queuing tension, drowns out unwanted noise and *makes food taste better...* Yes, ‘sonic seasoning’ is a thing! Your playlist should reflect your brand identity – just keep in mind that high-energy tunes are on their way out, and 61% of diners prefer ambient tracks. Perfect for slow, social brunches.

THE HOT SEAT

A good floorplan is key and effective restaurant zoning can tick a lot of boxes, from improving the customer experience to maximising profitability. Brunch attracts a mix of quick coffee drinkers and long-stay social groups, so your layout needs to accommodate both without friction.

Think about the flow of traffic: you want to create natural pathways for staff and customers, avoiding bottleneck situations. Keep high-traffic areas like the entrance and collection points as uncluttered as possible, allowing swift comings and goings. For short stays, provide small tables and window seats. Reserve a more leisurely dining space for customers with a higher dwell time to enhance their enjoyment and encourage repeat orders. And don’t forget a long bench or two! Believe it or not, the communal table is back in a big way, thanks to sociable Gen Z.

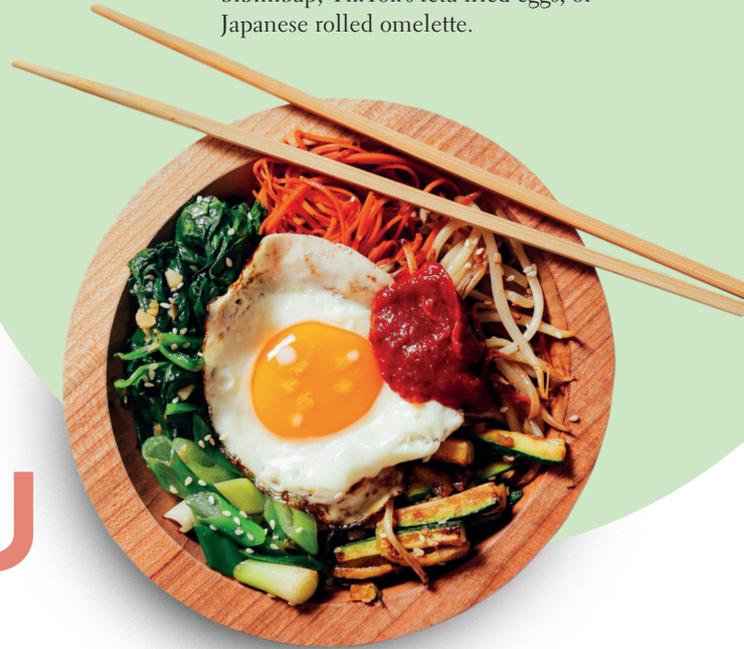


HŌJICHA

Riding matcha's vibrant green coat-tails, hōjicha is the next Japanese import to take the wellness tea scene by storm. Made from late-harvest tea leaves and roasted rather than steamed, this pleasantly mild brew is toasty, nutty and faintly sweet, making for an excellent palate cleanser after a big brunch.

**GREAT EGG-SPECTATIONS**

Poached, fried or scrambled, eggs are the main character of brunch. Just think of the iconic Benedict, royale, shakshuka and frittata! The thing about protagonists is they need development to stay interesting. Tap into the current appetite for protein-heavy foods and reimagined classics to keep your eggy offering fresh – like bibimbap, TikTok's feta-fried eggs, or Japanese rolled omelette.



What's on THE MENU

From the rise of natural yoghurt to matcha's savoury successor, we've rounded up the unmissable trends of brunch present and future...

**NOURISHING
NATURAL YOGHURT**

Yes, that's right – the humble yoghurt is back on the breakfast table! As Brits seek healthier light bites and steer away from UPFs, both dairy and plant-based plain yoghurts are surging in popularity with a 24% YoY increase as a breakfast item*. Serve with homemade granola to eat in or take away in eco-friendly pots.

PISTACHIO... WITH ROSE

Flavouring everything from chocolate to coffee, the ubiquitous pistachio has made a lasting mark on café culture. As its success begins to stabilise, we look towards new uses and variations. With 67% of Gen Z wanting more floral flavours**, we see the Eastern rose and pistachio combination fully blossoming here in the UK very soon.



*Worldpanel by Numerator (February 2023)
**Global NEXT Flavor Network

BOOST

your bagels

Those doughy Os should always bring some well-rounded fun to your brunch spread. Here are five toppings we keep reaching for again and again...



EGG AVO

High in protein and rich in flavour, egg and avocado are brunch all-stars - and they work just as well on a bagel as they do on toast. Add chilli jam for a trendy kick.

BANOFFEE

Combine **Nutella**, sliced banana, dark maple syrup and a scattering of black sesame seeds to create this delightfully gooey dessert bagel.

TOMATO

Aromatic and moreish, basil and tomato are the perfect pairing. When bagel-fied, this iconic duo is best served on a thick bed of cream cheese with salt, pepper and olive oil.

SALMON

Nicknamed 'The New Yorker', this flavourful bagel is layered with dill cream cheese, smoked salmon and cracked black pepper. Don't forget the slice of lemon!

HALLOUMI

Spread a little tomato chilli relish onto your bagel base, heap three to four grilled halloumi slices on top and finish with rocket leaves and a drizzle of lemon oil.

TO ORDER THIS RANGE

Contact your local
CFBG Member
Sales Manager

All about that Base

Introducing the fantastic **New Yorker Bagel** range - with seven flavours to choose from, each as delicious as the next, it's never been easier to elevate your selection of baked goods. Choose from the following flavours: Onion, French Toast, Sesame, Poppy Seed, Apple Cinnamon, Everything Seeded or keep it simple with a Plain Original Bagel. The combinations are limitless!



on the grid

These Insta-savvy cafés don't shy away from boasting about their brunch, and you shouldn't either!



@foliagecafeclyfton

What we love: Fat stacks! These fruity house pancakes are refreshed periodically with seasonal compôte.



@halfcup_

What we love: It's always sunny side up on HALFCUP's grid thanks to vibrantly warm food photography.



@thecraftyegg

What we love: Rustic wooden backdrops make The Crafty Egg's colourful drinks and dishes pop.

Fresh out of the oven

Now available to our customers: NEW Caterfood Select Croissants, made for sweet and savoury brunch moments that feel effortlessly indulgent. Contact your local CFBG Member Sales Manager to find out more.



The Big Takeaway

A strong brunch menu should work just as hard off-premise as it does in-house, with portable versions of bestsellers. While brunch remains a sit-down social affair, on-the-go breakfast has increased 52.1%* since last year as busy diners eat on the run or tuck in at their desks. Capitalise on the morning rush by offering click-and-collect, delivery options and a grab-and-go counter built for speed and efficiency.

When creating your takeaway menu, choose items that travel well. Investing in compostable packaging and reusable utensils can pay dividends. Not only

is it a green choice, it's also good for business with 90%** of diners favouring eateries with strong eco-friendly practices, and around a third willing to spend more on a sustainable menu.

Finally, ensure your online ordering setup is as slick as your service. From delivery platforms and commission-free systems to integrated POS and clever tools for upselling, there are plenty of ways to streamline the experience.

Get it right, and brunch becomes more than a meal – it's a flexible, feel-good fixture of your venue that keeps tills ringing, tables full and customers coming back for more. ■

Santa Maria



KANSAS CITY
BURNT ENDS



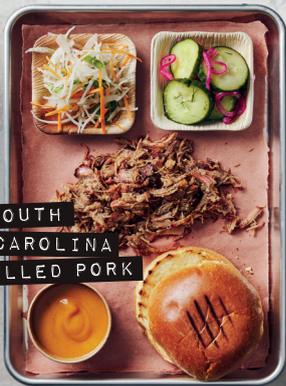
MEMPHIS
BABY BACK
RIBS



KENTUCKY
BEEF CHEEKS



NEW MEXICO
PORK BELLY
TACOS



SOUTH
CAROLINA
PULLED PORK



ALABAMA
BBQ CHICKEN



SOUTH
AFRICAN
LAMB SOSPATIES



KOREAN
BEEF
SSAM



ICONIC SAUCES. AUTHENTIC FLAVOURS.

We travelled to the epicenter of craft BBQ, where people wait for hours to get a taste of what's raved about on social media. We teamed up with top pitmasters. And we created a set of iconic sauces that capture the flavours from BBQ hotspots around the world. Discover the products, the stories and the ways to put those flavours on your menu.

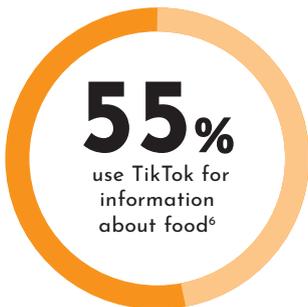
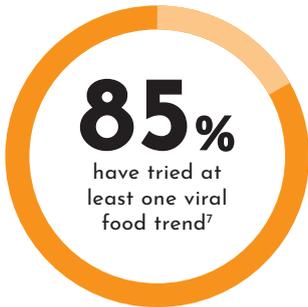
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PAULIG^{PRO}

UNLOCK A WORLD OF FLAVOUR

THE FUTURE OF FOOD

From social meals to social media, we dive into Gen Z's eating habits and how they're shaping the foodservice industry



STREET FOOD
REIGNS SUPREME

84%
like the idea of visiting a street-food market. This mirrors a growing trend for global flavours, with 77% of Gen Z finding restaurants with international cuisine appealing.¹

IN FACT...



One in 10 Gen Z-ers claim they only go to restaurants where they can customise dishes.¹

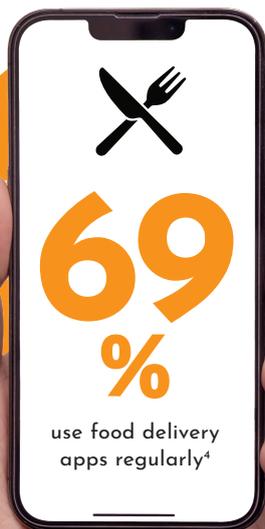
90%
of Gen Z enjoy communal dining

With 'third places' on the decline post-pandemic, it's harder than ever for the younger generation to meet new people offline. Enter the communal dining table, a school-lunch classic that's back in fashion as 20-somethings seek deeper connections over food.⁵

...they think 'basic' is boring.

One in 10 Gen Z consumers would think less of someone for ordering 'basic' food.

This adventurous audience is also less likely to go to restaurants serving exclusively British fare. These days, it's all about fusion food and fresh spins on classic dishes.¹



52%
of Gen Z visit chicken shops

They may be more likely to go vegan than any other age group, but Gen Z also happens to love their fried chicken. Perhaps it's the influence of *Chicken Shop Date* on YouTube, the current protein push on social media, the rapid expansion of US-style chicken shops themselves... or all of the above.³

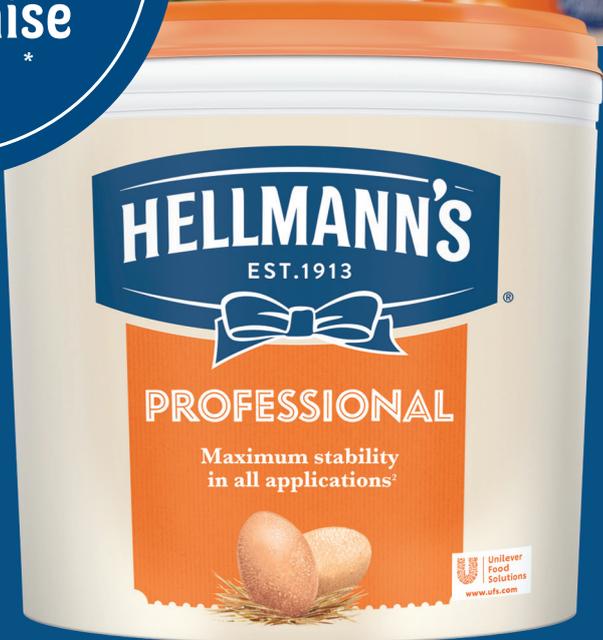


1. UniLever Future Menus Volume 3 2. OpenTable 3. theguardian.com 4. zego.com 5. Resy 6. AHDB 7. Attest 8. hotpotatoneWSletter.com



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*Source: Euromonitor, Cooking Ingredients & Meals retail value sales - excluding foodservice. For more info at: unilever.com/brands/nutrition/hellmanns



6

Ways to **SPRING CLEAN YOUR MENU**

Breathe new life into your menu with fresh flavours, bold redesigns and strong storytelling

It's the season of new beginnings and there's no better time to refine your menu – from what you serve to how you sell it. Now is your golden opportunity to introduce

new flavours, put a creative spin on existing dishes and give your branding a fresh lick of paint. Not sure where to start? Read on to discover six rejuvenating ideas for a spring menu makeover... ▶

1

STAR POWER

Menu items can generally be broken down into four categories: 'stars', 'dogs', 'plough horses' and 'puzzles'. In order to make your menu as profitable as possible, you'll need to suss out which camps your dishes fall into so you know what stays and goes.

Stars are your sweetheart dishes, both lucrative and popular with guests. It's your mission to let them shine, from promoting on social media to placing them in a hot zone on your menu. The 'golden triangle' at the centre, top right and top left of a traditional menu is prime real estate and precisely where you should list bestsellers. Dogs are the opposite and ought to be weeded out to strengthen your overall performance. Plough horses are steady favourites – despite low profit margins, they are well-loved, so consider how you might lower their costs without sacrificing quality. Finally, puzzles are the dishes that need solving. They're high-margin but rarely ordered, so finding a way to boost their appeal to customers is key.

iStock



2

UPSELL, UPSSELL, UPSSELL

There are lots of ways to use your menu as an upselling tool. A great place to start is by nailing your dish descriptions, especially when you want to increase the perceived value of high-margin items. Use evocative language that taps into people's senses, e.g. 'rich', 'crispy', 'succulent' and 'velvety', and don't be afraid to flag your green credentials and provenance.

From page to table, make sure staff are trained in upselling, knowing which dishes to promote, which qualities to shout about and how to suggest premium sides and high-margin extras (think truffle fries, avocado, halloumi, hot honey).

Adobe Stock





3

BUILD IN KEY MOMENTS

Dining out is a social event, with more than half of us doing so to spend time with friends or family*. More than ever, customers are seeking memorable multisensory experiences that connect good food with a stimulating or comforting atmosphere. A brilliant way to achieve this is by tapping into local and national events that people celebrate communally – like Wimbledon or this year’s World Cup – through special menus and promotions. It doesn’t have to mean a full redesign either – single-page inserts, chalkboard features and digital add-ons allow you to jump on events with things like match-day sharing platters and limited-edition dishes, without disrupting your day-to-day offering.

*Stock

4

THE LAWS OF LAYOUT

Each corner of your menu serves a different purpose and there’s some real psychology behind what goes where. We’ve mentioned the golden triangle, but the rest of your menu should be thought out, too. Divide your dishes into groups using visual indicators such as frames, headings and icons, so customers are able to find what they’re looking for quickly. Are a couple of your dishes struggling to take off? Research has shown that the first and last items listed in a category are the most ordered, making these ideal spots for puzzle dishes that need greater visibility.

Clever use of colour can also sell your menu. Is your text legible and are your brand colours being implemented effectively? It’s handy to plot out seasonal colour palettes as well, to keep things fresh and engaging with each rotation.



DID YOU KNOW?

Warm colours like red, orange and yellow stimulate hunger. Unsurprisingly green is associated with health, whereas blue is actually an appetite suppressant – but can work well in small doses for a calming effect!

*Mintel

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Clear iconography is the fastest way to help diners with dietary requirements make confident and quick decisions. Use bold and instantly recognisable symbols for vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, allergen and Halal dishes and go into further detail in the description box.

Adobe Stock



5

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

The first port of call for prospective diners is your website and social media, so you need to show off your best bits online. Features like behind-the-scenes footage, an illustrative origin story and strong food photography are essential. In fact, menu pages showing photos of the dishes have the potential to increase sales by up to 30% as opposed to those without. After all, we preview every other item we buy online!

Suggested add-ons are another great way to upsell digitally. This can be achieved through smaller tickboxes beneath a main dish, i.e. 'Add falafel +£2.50', or as an automated pop-up once users have filled their basket. Bundle deals like family feasts and meals for two are also massively successful on third-party delivery sites, and can set you apart from the local competition – you just need to know your audience.

6

TELL YOUR STORY

Today's customer demands transparency and appreciates a true story, making provenance a key part of your menu. With 90%* of Brits wanting to see more food produced in the UK and many diners willing to pay more for local produce, now is the time to highlight these USPs.

It can be as simple as a line under each dish mentioning where the key ingredients are sourced, a bigger box-out flaunting collaborations with local farmers, or a link on your online menu taking users through to a page detailing your farm-to-fork journey. It all goes towards communicating your core values as a business, which in turn helps build customer loyalty. ■

*Grabhub // Red Tractor





SUITABLE FOR VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

PRE-FRIED, FROZEN, AND READY TO EAT

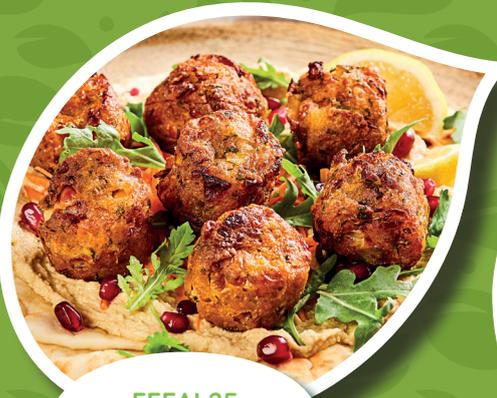
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GOOD, BETTER, BEST
NOURISH BOWLS

Packed with goodness and bursting with colour, this trio of carefully crafted bowls proves that balance doesn't have to be boring





GOOD

RAINBOW VEG BUDDHA BOWL

Serves 1 Prep 20 mins

A hero of the feel-good food world, a Buddha bowl is all about colour and texture. Built on seasoned quinoa and piled high with vibrant roasted veg and hummus, this dish is ideal for counter service or for grab-and-go.

- Cooked quinoa
- Lemon oil
- Roasted sweet potato cubes
- Pinch of paprika
- Roasted courgettes
- Roasted peppers
- Kale
- Mixed leafy greens
- Classic hummus
- Mixed seeds

Hummus:

- 400g Caterfood Select Chickpeas, drained
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove
- Salt
- Cold water, as needed

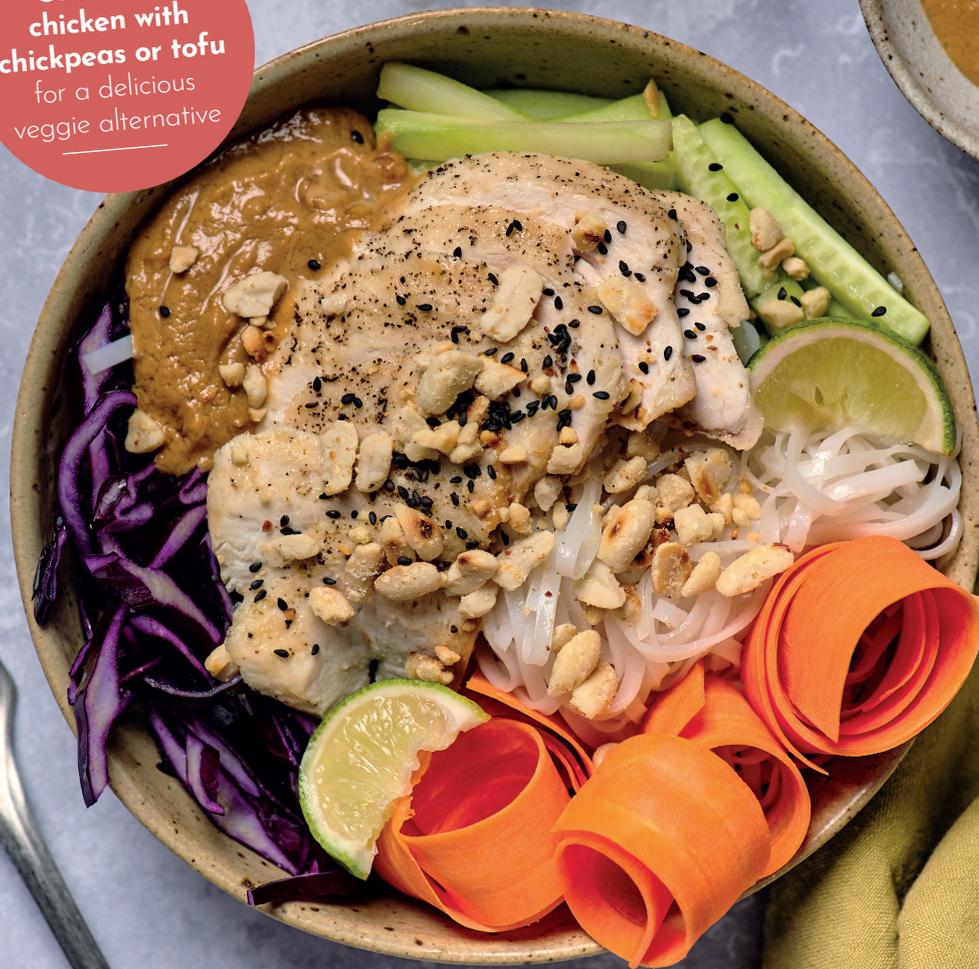
Lemon-tahini drizzle:

- 1 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp lemon
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- Splash of warm water
- Salt

1. To make your hummus, blend all ingredients together until smooth, adding water as needed.
2. Add a base of protein-rich quinoa to your bowl, seasoned with lemon oil and a pinch of salt.
3. Layer with sweet potato cubes which have been roasted in olive oil, paprika and salt, until slightly charred, and add in roasted courgettes and peppers.
4. Toss raw kale in a squeeze of

- lemon and a pinch of salt to soften the leaves, then add to your bowl along with your mixed leafy greens, plus a generous serving of hummus.
5. Combine the ingredients of your lemon-tahini drizzle and whisk together until smooth and pourable.
6. Drizzle your sauce over the ingredients of your rainbow bowl and finish with a scattering of pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds for added crunch. ▶

Substitute chicken with chickpeas or tofu for a delicious veggie alternative



Images: Sonny Flanagan

BETTER

- Rice noodles
- Sesame oil
- Cucumber batons
- Shredded red cabbage
- Carrot ribbons
- Sliced cooked chicken breast
- Lime wedge
- Fresh coriander
- Fresh basil
- Crushed peanuts and sesame seeds for topping

Thai peanut-lime dressing:

- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp Caterfood Select Pure Honey
- ½ tsp freshly grated ginger
- Splash of warm water

CHICKEN, PEANUT & LIME NOURISH BOWL

Serves 1 Prep 20 mins

Inspired by the flavours of a Pad Thai, this noodle bowl combines crunchy veg and succulent chicken, bound by a creamy peanut dressing and brightened with zesty lime. Quick and easy to put together, it's a fresh, flavourful dish made for everyday service.

1. Cook your rice noodles and rinse with cold water. Toss lightly in sesame oil to prevent them sticking and place them in your bowl to form the base.
2. Place the cucumber batons, red cabbage and ribbons of carrots around the rim of the bowl.
3. Whisk the ingredients of your dressing together until they are smooth, adding more warm water

- to loosen the sauce if needed.
4. Place your cooked chicken (or protein of choice) on top of the noodles, at the centre of the bowl. Add a wedge of lime and dollop your sauce on the side.
5. Complete the bowl with a sprinkle of crushed peanuts and black sesame seeds for added crunch. Garnish with roughly chopped coriander and basil.



KONA-STYLE POKE BOWL

Serves 1 Prep 30 mins

Light yet indulgent, the stars of this poke bowl are its trio of seafood, layered with sunshine-filled Hawaiian flavours for a quietly luxurious result.

- Sushi rice
 - Seared tuna
 - Flaked salmon
 - Warm water prawns
 - Pickled cucumber
 - Pickled daikon
 - Mango, cubed
 - Avocado, sliced
 - Spring onion
 - Shredded red cabbage
 - Pinch of nori flakes
 - Fresh herbs
 - Sesame seeds
- Kona sauce:
 - 1 tbsp ponzu
 - ½ tsp sesame oil
 - ½ tsp Caterfood Select Pure Honey
 - Tiny pinch of chilli
 - Lime zest

1. Thoroughly wash your rice before cooking. Once cooked, allow it to cool, season and spoon it into your bowl to make the base of your poke.
2. Arrange your tuna, salmon and prawns on the top of your bowl in a triad, adding a clump of pickled cucumber and daikon in between one section of seafood.
3. Take the mango cubes, avocado and shredded red cabbage and arrange them to fill the remaining gaps between your seafood.
4. Whisk the sauce ingredients together, tasting to ensure the correct balance of flavours. Spoon the sauce all over the bowl.
5. Chop spring onion and fresh herbs and sprinkle over the bowl with a pinch of nori flakes and black sesame seeds. ■

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APPLICATIONS



Coffee



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Cocktails &
Mocktails



Smoothies



Frappes



Iced Tea &
Iced Coffee



Flavoured
Water



Three months *in food*

Serving up essential culinary dates for your diary

MARCH

1st

ST DAVID'S DAY

Celebrate the patron saint of Wales with tender Welsh lamb and sweet, softened leeks, or for the veggies, try a leek and Caerphilly pastry tart.



2nd-8th

BRITISH PIE WEEK

Is there anything more comforting than flaky, buttery pastry surrounding a perfectly balanced, flavour-filled centre? Celebrate the beauty of British pies by delving into classic recipes to offer up something special.

4th

CATERFOOD TRADE SHOW

The Matford Centre, Exeter
caterfood.co.uk

15th

MOTHER'S DAY

Design a delicious set menu for all the awesome mums and mother figures out there. Think elegant plating and seasonal spring flavours. Don't forget to give gift vouchers a little extra push at this time of year too.

30th-1st

IFE INTERNATIONAL FOOD & DRINK EVENT

ExCel, London
ife.co.uk

APRIL

3rd

GOOD FRIDAY

This bank holiday marks the start of the Easter break for many, so prepare for an influx of holiday diners by sprucing up your kids' menu.

5th

EASTER SUNDAY

Nothing says Easter Sunday like a proper roast dinner. For something different, swap out the usual meat centrepiece for a whole head of cauliflower smothered in harissa.

13th-15th

FOOD & DRINK EXPO

NEC, Birmingham
foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk

22nd

SOUTH Lincs FOODSERVICE THE FOOD SHOW

Springfield Events & Conference Centre, Spalding
southlincsfoodservice.co.uk

23rd-30th

GREAT BRITISH BEEF WEEK

Have you herd? This is the week to champion every form of beef and highlight provenance. For large-scale catering try slow-cooking brisket in local ale for extremely tasty results.

29th

TURNER PRICE CATER EXPO

Utilita Arena Newcastle
caterexpo.co.uk

MAY

1st-31st

COELIAC AWARENESS MONTH

In need of some gluten-free guidance? Find out more about free-from catering on p40.

9th

WORLD FAIR TRADE DAY

Highlight ethical suppliers by sharing their stories on social media and putting Fair Trade front and centre across your menus.

13th

WORLD COCKTAIL DAY

Bartenders and mixologists, it's your time to shine! Get creative by offering your twist on current cocktail trends (black pepper and olive oil martini, anyone?).



17th

WORLD BAKING DAY

Tempt customers with just-baked treats that look and smell irresistible. Colourful traybakes are an economical crowd-pleaser that tap into nostalgia trends, too.

18th-24th

BRITISH SANDWICH WEEK

The average Brit gets through around 18,000 sandwiches in a lifetime, so it's your mission to make them count. Take lunchtime to the next level with a burrata, mortadella and pistachio pesto ciabatta. ■

Our *proudest* plates

Sometimes you just need to take a step back and admire your handiwork. We asked six catering professionals what their best dish is right now and why...

We know you *shouldn't* have a favourite child, but some dishes simply stand head and shoulders above the rest.

We passed the mic to six industry experts to speak on their hottest current menu item, whether it's a bestseller, personal favourite, sustainability hero or creative marvel.

From BAFTA-ready chicken caesar to panko fried egg, béchamel bolognese to succulent aged duck, here are some of the nutritious, imaginative and downright delicious dishes being made as we speak...



SOHAN BHANDARI

EXECUTIVE CHEF
COLONEL SAAB

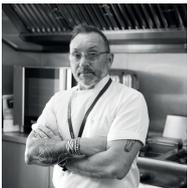


“As Executive Chef at Colonel Saab, I focus on creating food that is rooted in Indian tradition but presented in a

refined and contemporary way. My favourite dish on our menu right now is Bhatti ka Murgh. ‘Bhatti’ refers to a traditional clay oven and ‘murgh’ means chicken. The chicken is marinated in roasted spices, roasted gram flour, yoghurt, and aromatic North Indian spices before being grilled. What I love most about this dish is the homemade mustard and tomato sauce served alongside it. The sauce is tangy, spicy, and really lifts the flavours of the chicken. We serve it with a baby gem lettuce gratin finished with Parmesan, which adds richness and makes the dish feel complete.” colonelsaab.co.uk

NEIL MOORE-MCCARTHY

DEVELOPMENT CHEF
TURNER PRICE



“Being a Development Chef, my role is to present and bring to life our products for customers in

demonstrations and workshops, as well as help develop our product portfolio (currently over 8,000 lines). I have recently developed a hybrid breakfast dish that I think will be especially popular this year: deep-fried panko-coated poached egg, served on a New York deli roll or French toast bagel and topped with crispy maple-cured bacon, smashed avocado, crispy pickles and honey mustard hollandaise.” turner-price.com

JON CALABRESE

OPERATIONS MANAGER
CLAYS



“Clays is a virtual clay shooting experience where food is central to the experience, with seasonal

sharing plates rooted in British heritage, ethical sourcing and a commitment to

quality without compromise. There are plenty of dishes I am proud of, from our sweetcorn ribs to our Gloucester Old Spot and venison Scotch eggs, but my favourite is our crispy chicken sliders. They’re simple, but everything is intentional. The brioche comes from an independent North London baker and the chicken is sourced from a farm in North Devon, where Devon Whites are reared to exceptional welfare standards. We brine the thigh for 24 hours, crumb it, fry it until crisp, then finish with roasted garlic mayo and house-made slaw and pickles. Crisp, tender, comforting and dangerously moreish.” clays.bar

TIM BRENNAN

FOUNDER
CAPER & BERRY



“Caper & Berry is a premium catering company specialising in exceptional food and service for

events, weddings and corporate parties. We focus on quality experiences at scale, combining seasonal British produce with global inspiration. One standout is a historic dish made for the BAFTAs, which has become a firm favourite: chicken caesar, triple-cooked chips, black garlic purée, baby gem, caesar emulsion, Petworth sourdough, shaved parmesan and truffle sauce. It’s a brilliant example of how we balance luxury with responsibility. By using chicken, we significantly reduce environmental impact while still delivering richness, indulgence and familiarity. It’s refined, comforting and elegant.” caperandberry.co.uk

CAMERON TETLOW

HEAD CHEF
THE REFUGE



“My main goal is to make our guests connect with each other, because that’s what dining out is all about to

me. I love that so many different people meet here to spend time with their loved ones, and our food then becomes part of their story and memories too. Because of this, we serve everything sharing style,

proper ‘roll your sleeves up and dig in’. My favourite dish currently on the menu is the salt-aged duck leg. In my opinion, the best thing from a Chinese menu is duck pancakes, so I wanted to bring that here with our own special twist. The dish is a stunning confit duck leg sitting on pickled cucumber and hoisin sauce made in-house. To finish, we glaze the duck leg in mirin, soy, honey and yakitori sauce, and when it’s all sticky we cover it with crispy seaweed.” refugemcr.co.uk

“My main goal is to make guests connect with each other, because that’s what dining out is about”

ANDREW MACLEOD

FOUNDER
EMILIA’S CRAFTED PASTA



“Emilia’s exists to do one thing properly: fresh pasta made from scratch every day, using traditional

techniques and natural ingredients. An equally important part of what we do is how our sauces are paired with each pasta shape. There’s a huge amount of detail and testing that goes into this – from long, delicate strands to ridged or curved shapes designed to hold sauce in a very specific way. Getting those pairings right is fundamental to the experience, and it’s something we’re meticulous about. My favourite dish is our four-hour-minimum, slow-cooked Béchamel Bolognese, finished with freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano D.O.P. and served with daily fresh-made egg pappardelle.

The ragù is cooked low and slow to develop a deeper, heartier flavour, using carefully sourced premium British beef. We enrich it with a touch of béchamel to create a creamier, more rounded sauce. The egg pappardelle is made fresh every day using durum wheat semolina to give the pasta a slightly rougher texture and cut 20mm wide. That width and surface are deliberate – long, wide ribbons designed to properly carry a rich, juicy sauce so the meat and sauce cling to every bite.” emiliaspasta.com

At **Pan'Artisan** we harness authentic, traditional recipes inspired by culinary traditions from around the world, reimagined for the modern kitchen.



210G MADE WITH SOURDOUGH DOUGH BALLS

Our Sourdough dough balls are made with rye sour that has earthy cereal notes and an intense acidity to provide a superior tasting crisp-crust pizza. No flavourings and contain only natural sugar.



12" thin & crispy



12" deep pan

12" BASES | THIN & CRISPY | DEEP PAN

Our 12" pizza bases are hand-finished and made using the finest quality ingredients, using no GM materials, artificial flavours, or preservatives and are supplied part-baked frozen. Simply defrost, top and bake for a delicious pizza.



FOCACCIA ROMANA

Made from a high-hydration dough (92% liquid to flour), creating a light, open texture. Hand-crafted due to its delicate nature, it's then rested, proved, and is available part-baked and frozen for maximum convenience.



DETROIT STYLE PIZZA BASES

Our Detroit style pizza base is approximately 15"x11" in size and made using a Focaccia style dough hand stretched into a deep rectangular base. The end result is a product with a light airy texture, deep crust and high hydration level.

TASTE MAKERS



Every issue we shine a light on the people powering the Caterfood Buying Group's success. In this edition, we're chatting to an award-winner in operations and a Managing Director drawing on his decades of hands-on experience ►





JESSICA NORRIS

STOCK TEAM LEADER

THOMAS RIDLEY

Stock Team Leader Jessica Norris reflects on her journey at Thomas Ridley, from joining the business on the warehouse floor, to being recognised with Thomas Ridley's Employee of the Year Award and CFBG's Rising Star Award



Can you tell us a bit about your career so far and what led you to Thomas Ridley?

Prior to joining Thomas Ridley, I worked as a teaching assistant at my daughters' school. I wanted to do something completely different, so I joined Thomas Ridley as a picker, with the intention of working my way up and progressing.

Congratulations on winning the CFBG's Rising Star Award! When did you first realise the impact you've had at CFBG?

I'll be completely honest, I wasn't aware of the impact I've had until the CFBG conference. I have always just tried to keep the company's best interests at heart and work to a high standard. If I see an opportunity to make a difference, then I aim to do so. I pride myself on being hardworking and reliable, which has helped spur me on.

Describe a typical day as Stock Team Leader

I wake up at 7am and get my daughters to school, ready to start

Jessica takes every opportunity to implement new strategies and make a difference

work. Although no two days are the same, an average day in stock consists of counting, checking discrepancies, answering emails and carrying out requests from other departments. We also record and dispose of damages daily. As well as taking notes for meetings and being on hand to help with anything else operationally. I then leave work, go home to my family and jump back into 'mum mode'.

What's your favourite part of being a Stock Team Leader?

The best part of my job is the satisfaction that I feel knowing I have helped make a difference. I enjoy my job and never dread coming to work – I don't think many people can truthfully say that! I also work with some really great people at Thomas Ridley and I have met lots of lovely people working across the whole of the Caterfood Buying Group.

What's one simple piece of advice you'd give to someone just starting out in

foodservice operations?

My best piece of advice would be to remain open-minded. Every day is different and it can definitely keep you on your toes!

How do you see your role developing? Is there an area of the business you're keen to work on in the future?

I have always been interested in accountancy and business management, so that could potentially be an avenue for me to explore in the future, but for now, I'm happy working in operations. I am very driven and I am always looking to learn new things, to better my skills and understanding. This will hopefully help me to continue progressing up the ladder.

After a busy day, what's your favourite go-to meal?

That's a really tough question. We're big pasta fans in my family, so that would probably be my pick after a long day, for ease. Having said that, if an Indian takeaway were on offer, I would take that any day!



DAMON INGAMELLS

MANAGING DIRECTOR HARVEST

Built on nearly 30 years of experience in foodservice operations, Damon Ingamells reflects on his path from milkman to Managing Director, the value of strong teams, and what's driving his focus as he leads the business onwards

Can you tell us a bit about your career journey? What path led you to becoming Managing Director at Harvest?

For nearly 30 years my career was spent in the dairy distribution sector. Starting out as a doorstep milkman, working my way through various positions and various companies, becoming Operations Manager for a site in Sheffield. In 2021 I managed to secure the Transport Manager role at South Lincs Foodservice. I worked with Simon Davison, the Managing Director there, and with his guidance I was promoted to Head of Operations in 2023.

You started this role in the latter half of 2025 – what has surprised you most since stepping into the position?

My first day driving to Harvest felt like the first day of school! I was full of anticipation but with an element of nervousness about the challenge ahead, but the support I've received from my team has been exceptional.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I can honestly say that there is no typical day here. Every day has its own challenges and rewards.

What's the best bit about your job?

The people – not just my wonderful team at Harvest, but the wider CFBG team. I get to work with some truly amazing people who all share the common goal of success for our businesses.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the industry right now?

Supply chain challenges, increasing costs and labour shortages all have an impact. We have seen a sharp decrease in footfall for hospitality, which in turn leads to our customers requiring fewer deliveries. We are constantly trying to find new ways to give our customers a better choice – the Caterfood Collection range is a perfect example; a great product at a fair price.

Growing the business and building strong customer relationships is a crucial part of Damon's role

What areas of the business are you especially focused on developing or strengthening?

My team and I are currently working on restructuring our operations departments to further enhance our offering to customers, while ensuring we have the capacity to continue to grow and react to demand.

What's your biggest career achievement to date?

My new role at Harvest is the proudest moment of my career to date. I strive to always try and do better today than yesterday and I have taken on extra roles, responsibilities and training to support my career.

What's your favourite meal?

A roast chicken dinner every time! I love to cook a roast with all the trimmings and lashings of homemade gravy – it was always my sons' favourite as they were growing up, and still is. Even though they are now adults, they ask for 'Dad's roast dinner'! ■

★★
CATERFOOD
SELECT

award winning bacon



Caterfood Select Rindless Unsmoked Back Bacon

Chosen for its thicker cut and consistency, this Caterfood Select Rindless Unsmoked Back Bacon provides good quality rashers of back bacon in every pack. Offering a reliable and tasty product, this award winning bacon is perfect for serving up traditional breakfasts, bacon sandwiches and using in lunchtime specials.

4 x 2.25kg

Speak with your Area Sales Manager or Telesales Representative for more information.



CATERFOODBG.CO.UK



KITCHEN CHAMPIONS

BACON

Endlessly adaptable and a hands-down favourite for many, bacon is a kitchen staple that delivers big flavour with minimal fuss. Here are three ways to make it work harder on your menu...



“

When you're developing dishes, you need ingredients that really perform. Caterfood Select Back Bacon gives me consistency, balance and a reliability I can build recipes around.

Phil Clark: Business Development Chef, Harvest

MACARONI CHEESE WITH BACON

Serves 4 **Prep** 25 mins **Cook** 20 mins

Say hello to comfort food at its peak. Macaroni cheese is a dependable favourite that always earns its place on the menu, either as an indulgent side dish or a stellar main. In this version, salty and crispy Caterfood Select Back Bacon cuts through a rich cheese sauce to add depth, bite and texture to this crowd-pleasing classic.

- 300g macaroni
- 200g Caterfood Select Back Bacon, diced
- 50g butter
- 50g plain flour
- 600ml whole milk
- 150g Caterfood Select Grated Mature Cheddar
- 75g gruyere, grated
- 1 tsp Dijon Mustard
- A pinch of smoked paprika
- Breadcrumbs

1. Cook the macaroni until al dente, drain and set aside.
2. While the pasta is cooking, cook the

bacon until golden and slightly crispy. Set aside, reserving a little of the bacon fat for extra flavour.

3. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter, add the flour and cook for 1 minute to form a roux. Gradually whisk in the milk until smooth and thickened.

4. Stir in the cheddar and gruyere, add the Dijon mustard, smoked paprika and some salt and pepper.

5. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Stir the macaroni and bacon into the sauce.

6. Transfer the macaroni to an ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with extra cheese and breadcrumbs and bake for 20 minutes until bubbling and golden.

BACON JAM

Makes 800g **Prep** 15 mins **Cook** 50 mins

A combination of bacon, onion, garlic and coffee comes together in this deliciously smoky, sweet and rich spreadable jam. It works just as well with breakfast as it does with burgers, toasties and deli boards.

- 500g Caterfood Select Back Bacon, diced
- 2 medium brown onions, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 100g light brown sugar
- 80ml apple cider vinegar
- 60ml strong black coffee
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp Caterfood Select Honey

1. Place diced bacon in a cold frying pan and slowly bring the heat to medium so the fat renders out. Fry until the bacon is crisp and golden.

2. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and keep 2 tbsp of bacon fat in the pan.

Add diced onions and garlic.

3. Cook on a low heat for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soft and lightly caramelised.

4. Add the sugar, cider vinegar, coffee, paprika and some black pepper to the pan. Stir gently until the sugar melts and everything is combined.

5. Return the cooked bacon to the pan and simmer on low for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally until the mixture has thickened to a glossy, chutney-like consistency.

6. Allow to cool then pulse briefly with a food processor – just enough to create a spreadable, yet chunky texture.

7. Warm before serving. ▶

Add instant depth to everything from cheeseboards to sandwiches with this moreish jam



TOP TIP

Warm before serving to unlock the jam's flavour

BACON, PEA AND CRISPY POTATO SALAD

Serves 4 **Prep** 20 mins
Cook 25 mins

The addition of juicy bacon and golden potatoes gives this salad a warmth and heartiness that's ideal for sharing. Peas add a pop of sweetness, and combined with the zesty lemon dressing, it's a well-balanced dish that's both satisfying and fresh.

Salad

- 400g new potatoes, halved
- 250g Caterfood Select Back Bacon, sliced into strips
- 200g Caterfood Select Fancy Peas
- Handful of fresh mint leaves, torn
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced
- Olive oil

Lemon Dressing

- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Caterfood Select Pure Honey
- ½ tsp lemon zest

1. Boil the potatoes until tender and drain. Fry them in a little olive oil until golden. Set aside.
2. In the same pan, fry the bacon strips until crisp. Remove and keep warm, reserving a little bacon fat for flavour.
3. Add peas to boiling water and cook for 2 minutes until bright green. Drain.
4. For the dressing, whisk together lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard, honey, lemon zest and salt and pepper. Adjust acidity or sweetness to taste.
5. In a large bowl, combine crispy potatoes, warm peas and bacon. Add torn mint leaves and spring onions. Drizzle with lemon dressing and toss gently. ■



Snacking menus are **BETTER** with **FRIES**



Get the recipe

As eating out habits continue to shift, snacking has moved firmly into the spotlight as consumers are prioritising social, informal occasions.

This is especially true in summer, when longer days, outdoor seating and major sporting moments create natural opportunities for relaxed, snack-led visits. From al fresco dining to live sport screenings and World Cup group bookings, these occasions thrive on food that's easy to share and hard to resist.

Fries are perfectly placed to deliver. Versatile, familiar and ideal for loading, dipping and sharing, they turn drinks-

led moments into incremental sales. When paired with the right trending flavours and bold formats, fries become a reason to stay longer, order more, and come back again.

For operators under pressure, snack-led menus offer a smart route to growth – creating memorable experiences without adding complexity in the kitchen. This summer, and throughout the sporting calendar, one thing is clear: snacking menus really are better with fries. ■

1. Circana - State of the EU Foodservice Industry 2024
2. CGA by NielsenIQ 3. Circana EU Foodservice Market Data (CREST*)

DID YOU KNOW?

31%

of out-of-home occasions are socially driven, with socialising now the number one reason people eat out.¹

80%

of pub-goers buy snacks alongside drinks, particularly in the afternoon and evening.²

13-14%

year-on-year growth is being seen in snacking occasions, with demand highest later in the day.³

Free for all



Allergen awareness and restricted diets are moving fast up the catering agenda. 'Free from' is no longer niche, but an opportunity for chefs to build trust, demonstrate skill and gain a real competitive advantage

According to a 2024 report by the Food Standards Agency, around 2.4 million adults in the UK are living with a food allergy, which is around 6% of the population. Unsurprisingly, allergen awareness has shifted from the margins of menu planning to a major consideration, driven by a culmination of tighter legislation, growing dietary diversity and rising consumer demand.

Diners expect transparency, choice and reassurance from both staff and menus. From gluten-free and dairy-free dishes, to plant-based menus and clearly

communicated allergens, the bar has been raised, and rightly so.

Of course the free-from sector isn't limited to those with allergies. An estimated 10% of the UK population now follows a gluten-free diet for a variety of health and lifestyle factors, and each customer has their own individual reasons for their dining choices.

For caterers, a diverse menu is no longer a box-ticking exercise. It's a foundation for trust, a customer expectation and a powerful driver of repeat business. Those who get it right aren't just avoiding risk, they're winning loyalty.

WELL AWARE

The way we talk about allergens has changed dramatically in recent years. What was once handled quietly at the pass is now a core part of menu development and training. Much of this change has been shaped by legislation.

In terms of allergies, the FSA requires the presence of 14 specific allergens to be highlighted on labels. Natasha's Law, introduced in 2021, was a turning point. By requiring full ingredient and allergen labelling on prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) foods, it placed transparency firmly at the heart of food safety. For many operators, it prompted a deeper look at internal processes. Proposed updates such as Owen's Law, while not yet in force, signal a future where clearer communication and accountability are laid out as non-negotiable.

"Many people feel that there has been progress, with more restaurants being proactive with allergy management," says Annette Weaver, Clinical Dietetic Advisor at Allergy UK. "However, improvements are inconsistent and diners still report variability between venues and continued anxiety about dining out."

Obviously safety is the number one priority, but even when allergens are considered, simple oversights, such as diners missing out on part of their

meal because there is no allergen-safe substitute, can leave customers feeling excluded and unhappy.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Confidence in allergen-free food starts with the supplier process, but navigating large product ranges while ensuring compliance with allergen requirements can feel challenging. "We support operators by providing direct access to our Product Data Coordinator, who can

"Innovations in the free-from and plant-based space are really impressive"

guide them through the range and answer specific queries," says Harriet Thursby, Customer Engagement Manager at Turner Price. "We offer standard allergen-free product lists and can create bespoke versions based on the sector or individual customer needs. Our website also has clear product categories to make it easier to find compliant options."

The growing popularity of free-from options has enabled significant ▶



ALL ABOUT ERUDUS

Erudus is a market-leading source of accurate allergen, nutritional and technical product data, bringing ingredients, allergens and nutrition together, into one trusted hub. By keeping information consistent across the supply chain, it helps support safer service and smoother day-to-day operations.

Erudus is available to all our customers free of charge. To get started, simply contact your CFBG member.

Allergy Awareness Week
20th-27th
April

A great time to re-evaluate your menus and try some new allergy-conscious dishes





ALLERGEN CONFIDENCE CHECKLIST

Simple rules and habits to keep diners safe

- ✓ Keep ingredient information accurate and accessible
- ✓ Label allergens clearly on menus and digital platforms
- ✓ Train front-of-house staff to handle questions confidently
- ✓ Eliminate the risk of cross-contamination with clearly segregated prep systems
- ✓ Always offer suitable alternatives. Bread, sauces and desserts are common restricted items
- ✓ Review supplier data regularly and flag changes immediately
- ✓ Encourage open conversations with diners and never guess

developments in free-from food, ensuring no diners are left out. Gluten-free remains the most requested option, but demand also spans dairy-free, nut-free and plant-based dishes. “Innovations in the free-from and plant-based space are really impressive,” says Harriet. “Baked goods, for example, are now so good you can’t tell if they are gluten or dairy free, and overall product quality has improved significantly. We’re also seeing advances in vegan food that isn’t ultra processed and made using whole ingredients.”

STEP UP TO THE PLATE

Despite best intentions and a growing choice of delicious free-from options, catering for restricted diets can still feel daunting. Time pressure, high staff turnover and the sheer complexity of modern kitchens all add strain.

Cross-contamination remains one of the biggest concerns and one of the hardest challenges for kitchens. “Accurate communication and strict cross-contamination controls are essential for keeping allergic diners safe,” says Annette.

The most successful operators treat it as part of their everyday rhythm. In the kitchen, structure is key: dedicated storage, separate equipment, clearly labelled ingredients and defined prep areas reduce risk. Simple habits, such as changing gloves, cleaning surfaces

thoroughly and colour-coded equipment should be the norm. But it’s not just the kitchen that needs to make changes.

CLEAR THINKING

Allergen information needs to be clearly presented and communicated, not buried in small print or part of a nervous conversation at the till.

Digital menus, QR codes and online pre-ordering have all accelerated this expectation. “Clear, written allergen information supported by verbal communication and staff who proactively ask about allergies and can answer questions confidently signal understanding of allergens,” confirms Annette. QR-linked menus and digital platforms allow information to be updated quickly, helping operators stay compliant while keeping menus flexible.

Technology and data are increasingly valuable allies across the board. “Food traceability is now a major focus across the industry,” says Harriet. “Modern ERP systems allow real-time product information to flow from the supplier, through the wholesaler, and straight into an operator’s menu management software. Tools like Erudus – the leading allergen and product data platform – are also crucial, giving wholesalers visibility of every change in a product’s lifecycle.”

Tools that centralise ingredient data

and supplier information can remove guesswork, giving teams confidence in what they’re serving. When suppliers, kitchens and front-of-house teams understand allergens and requirements for restricted diets, communication improves and confidence follows.

LOYAL FOLLOWING

When dietary restrictions and allergen awareness are handled well, the benefits are enormous. Diners who feel safe are more relaxed, more inclined to return, and more likely to tell their friends, too.

Operators who build a reputation for inclusive menus stand out in a crowded market. They attract a broader audience, from allergy sufferers and vegans, to those simply seeking transparency and choice.

Catering for restricted diets doesn’t have to be intimidating. When approached with care, knowledge and creativity, it becomes an opportunity to build trust, showcase skill and future-proof your offering. For caterers willing to lean in and go for it, ‘free from’ isn’t a limitation; it’s a chance to lead. ■



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ENGLISH GARDEN

in a glass

Bring the outdoors in with these delicious floral drinks inspired by our native blooms, berries and herbs

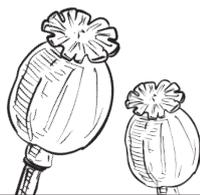
STRAWBERRY BASIL SMASH

Juicy strawberries and fresh basil come together in this aromatic drink that's made for sunny days. Both ingredients are picked at their best in midsummer and we like it with vodka, lemon juice, soda water and a light drizzle of maple syrup, though it's just as enjoyable without the alcohol.



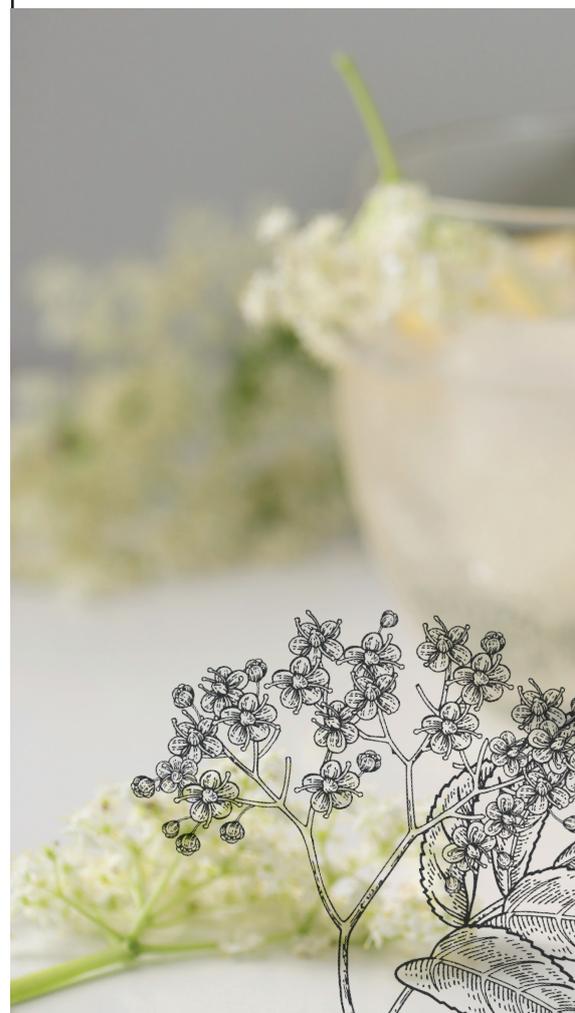
ENGLISH GARDEN

With its frothy cream flowers blooming in late spring, elderflower is an enduring symbol of the British countryside – and a flavour that's still riding high in popularity. The star of the English Garden cocktail, it's paired with gin, apple juice, lime and cucumber for a drink that's crisp and unmistakably fresh. Swap the liqueur for cordial and use 0% gin for an easy mocktail twist.



POPPY SEED SMOOTHIE

Tiny but mighty, poppy seeds bring a subtle nuttiness and crunch to smoothies and shakes. Naturally rich in fibre and manganese, they're a unique way to add texture and nutrition without overpowering. Blend some into a banana smoothie and lightly scatter on top for an on-trend upgrade that looks just as good as it tastes.



LAVENDER LEMONADE

Pink lemonade who? This pastel-purple twist on the summer classic is fun, fragrant and right on trend. Dilute fresh lemon juice with cold water then lightly sweeten with sugar until the flavour balance is right. Add lavender syrup to taste and serve over ice with lavender sprigs or dried petals to garnish.



BRAMBLE

Invented by legendary London barman Dick Bradsell, a Bramble cocktail stirs up memories of blackberry picking along country lanes. Made with two shots of gin, lemon juice, sugar syrup and blackberry liqueur (crème de mûre) over ice, this tart beverage has become a spring staple. For added effect, garnish with frozen blackberries from last autumn's harvest.



ROSE CHAI LATTE

England's national flower has long been used in the culinary world, lending its sweet, floral notes to desserts and drinks. Paired with warming spices, rose brings a softer edge to a classic chai latte. Add a dash of rose syrup to your coffee and finish with dried petals. Serve hot for cosy comfort or iced as a spring/summer refresher. ■



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GLOBAL FORCE

Judy studied at the French Culinary Institute in New York, then went on to work with Gordon Ramsay in London and train at some of the world's most influential restaurants. In 2011, she became the only woman to win Channel 4 show *Iron Chef UK*. Today, she is the founder of modern Korean dining concepts Jinjuu and Seoul Bird, a regular face on UK and US TV and a best-selling author.

works when every single person feels valued, from the pot wash to the head chef. Gratitude, humility and consistency go a lot further than ego ever will.

What would you change about the foodservice industry?

I'd like to see far more women in senior leadership positions; not just in kitchens, but in ownership, executive roles and decision-making seats. When women are visible at the top, it changes culture from the inside out. It creates safer, more balanced workplaces, encourages mentorship and shows the next generation that longevity and leadership are possible without sacrificing identity.

Second, I believe we need to radically improve education around the business of food. Too many talented chefs are set up to fail because they're never taught how to read a profit and loss statement, understand supply chains, source responsibly or build sustainable operations. Cooking is only one part of the job; running a food business is a craft of its own. If we teach young chefs how to think like entrepreneurs as well as artisans, we don't just create better restaurants, we create careers that last.

Your biggest trend predictions?

A continued focus on dishes that feel familiar but are executed with precision and global influence. Sustainability will move beyond a buzzword and into practical kitchen solutions, and Korean flavours will keep evolving from a trend to a pantry staple across the world.

How do you stay motivated?

I stay curious. I travel, I taste, I listen and I keep learning all the time. Right now, in fact, I'm penning this interview while cruising down the Amazon River! ■

LAST LICK OF THE SPOON *with*

JUDY JOO

From Wall Street to Michelin-starred kitchens and global TV screens, chef, restaurateur and broadcaster Judy Joo talks to us about taking risks, trusting her instincts and building a career on her own terms...

Why did you become a chef?

I'd done the finance route, I understood the security of it, but food was where I felt alive. Cooking fed my curiosity, my creativity and my soul in a way no paycheck ever could. At some point, I had to choose passion over practicality, and once I did, there was no turning back.

Was there a moment you knew you'd made the right decision?

Standing on the judging panel for *Iron Chef: Superstar Chefs* was surreal. I was suddenly critiquing dishes made by chefs I had idolised for years; people whose cookbooks I studied, whose careers shaped my own aspirations. It was the moment I thought, yes, this leap was worth it.

Later in my career, being asked to deliver the commencement speech at

Columbia University was a true bucket-list honour. From finance to food, from the kitchen to the podium, it was a powerful reminder that choosing passion can open doors you never even knew existed.

Your favourite food memory?

Watching my mother make kimchi from scratch, using my old baby bathtub, no less – crouched down on the kitchen floor in a full kimchi squat. It was messy, aromatic, communal, and full of love. That ritual taught me early on that food is about patience, tradition and passing something meaningful from one generation to the next.

What lessons have you learned during your career?

Respect is everything. A kitchen only



Schiacciata Romana

Elevate your menu with this authentic Italian sandwich carrier

panesco
keep exploring

What is Schiacciata Romana?

Schiacciata is a traditional Italian flatbread with thin, crispy edges and a soft, airy interior. Made simply with flour, water, yeast, extra-virgin olive oil and sea salt, it brings a Mediterranean flavour and artisanal look to every dish.

Key Features

- Stone baked for superior quality, flavour & crust texture
- Extra virgin olive oil for flavour, softness of crumb and appealing aroma
- Long fermentation for enhanced flavour & dough strength
- Large aeration structure, lighter bread with less density

Why Operators Love it

- Fully baked, thaw-and-serve format for operational ease & reduced waste
- Can be heated or served cold, offering menu flexibility
- Pre-sliced for speed of service and consistency
- Strong dough structure, designed to hold generous fillings
- Range of sizes, styles and toppings to suit different menu needs
- Multi-use across dayparts and menu formats

Our Italian stars

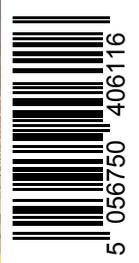
Menu Possibilities

- Sandwich carrier, hot or cold
- Gourmet toasted sandwiches
- Open-topped flatbreads
- Garlic bread
- Ideal as a pizza base
- Dipping bread for sharing

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