



— Volume 3 —

# MENU INSIGHTS

powered by Sysco Menu Services



# get started on your **NEW MENU!**

Your menu is the heart of your restaurant. The best restaurant menus are planned and deliberate - more than just words and photos. It is the only communication in a restaurant that 100% of your guests will see, though only for a few minutes. It is your #1 marketing piece. Profitability analysis is key to knowing how to design a smart menu – let our team help!



## **We are dedicated to working with you to manage your menu creation.**

From the latest trends, analysis and engineering, to design and revisions, we want you to have a positive and insightful experience; learning more about your business and how your menu can be more profitable than ever before.

## **We do more than menus.**

### **Menu Analysis & Consultation**

Partner with one of our industry experts to enhance your profitability.

### **Menu Engineering & Creative Design**

Our professional consultants create on-trend design and layout options to maximize the power of your menu.

### **Menu Boards & Digital Displays**

We create eye-catching and sales-driven marketing collateral to grab your customers' attention.

### **Brand & Logo Development**

First impressions are lasting impressions – our designers will develop a logo that lets your brand speak for itself!

**For more info, check out our website:**  
[www.syscomenuservices.com](http://www.syscomenuservices.com)



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At the heart of  
food and service





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Want more great food related content?  
Check out [syscofoodie.com](https://syscofoodie.com) for  
even more great ideas!

# Sysco | Studio



The image shows a man and a woman in a kitchen or restaurant setting. The man is looking at a laptop, and the woman is holding a pen and a notepad, looking at the laptop screen. In the foreground, a hand holds a tablet displaying the Sysco Studio interface. The interface shows three main sections: '45 Recipes', '5 Menu Engineering', and '11 Recipes'. Below these are four smaller sections: 'Admin - Restaurant Day', 'Recipe', 'Recipe', and 'Recipe'. The background is a kitchen with various items on shelves.

**Better control of your brand**  
Your menu plays a major role in impressing your customers and improving your brand. Sysco Studio takes the guesswork out of creating the most profitable and appealing menu for your business and customers.



## Stay ahead of the pack

Our visual tools keep you ahead of the competition by spotting sales trends, mapping out strategies and exploring what-if scenarios.



## Catalog your favorite recipes

Keep track of profitable dishes in your private recipe locker, and improve staff training with printable recipe cards.



## Better management overall

Sysco Studio has the tools you need in one place to improve restaurant success and profitability. Spend less time on your business and more time building it.

**Ask your Marketing Associate for more information today.**

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# Elevating Breakfast

## Breakfast gets trendy

Unlike traditional buttermilk pancakes, soufflé pancakes are made with an airy vanilla batter and cooked in a pan to create a perfectly toasted exterior and cloud-like center. These pancakes are traditionally served as a snack in Japanese culture and are often accompanied by premium toppings like matcha custard sauce, chewy boba pearls, fresh mixed berries and even traditional syrup and butter. The wobbly, tall stacks are popular among foodies and social media consumers alike for their dazzling aesthetics. Additionally, cinnamon swirl pancakes are having a moment in the trendy breakfast food scene. By taking two iconic breakfast items and merging them together, the cinnamon swirl pancake had a 1-year growth of 36.9%. And between soufflé and cinnamon swirl pancakes, Forbes reports that reviews have increased by 156%.

### **#Soufflepancakes are all the craze.**

NY Times reported soufflé pancakes were posted on social media over 50,000 times.



<sup>1</sup>Forbes - Food Trends 2020

# Nashville Hot

Raising 'spicy' to the next degree



## Nashville Hot has been the go-to seasoning

in recent years. This blend of cayenne pepper, black pepper and paprika has experienced a 4-year growth of 1594.4%<sup>1</sup>. We are not limiting it to chicken though, as cod, brisket, or any sort of batter for fried protein can always use that extra kick. It can also be used for soups and stews.

**But what is the next HOT?** Between Peri Peri, a marinade or seasoning made from African bird's eye chilies, and Aleppo pepper, a Mediterranean and Middle Eastern spice, more hot options are on the rise. Google Trends reported that the popularity of both Aleppo and Peri Peri has increased, but between the two - the latter is preferred.

## The new 'HOT' stuff in town

*Heavy hitters in the fine dining category*



### Peri Peri

Swahili for 'pepper pepper' - A spice blend originating from Portugal and used in African cuisine.

*76th percentile for future growth potential  
(4 year prognosis is above average)*



<sup>1</sup> Datassentials



### Aleppo

Named after the city along the Silk Road. A spice used in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines.

*94th percentile for future growth potential  
(4 year prognosis is strong)*



2



# Korean Flavors

From Korean BBQ to the rise of gochujang

Consumers of the digital age like the idea of exclusivity, especially while dining out – making the Korean grill a growing trend within foodservice. With Korean grill-style service, each customer can personally cook thinly sliced, marinated meats and vegetables over a gas or charcoal grill.

## Gochujang

A spicy Korean chile paste made from fermented soybeans – is a popular ingredient in marinades and sauces at Korean grills and within Korean cuisine as a whole. The rise in Korean food popularity merged with the rise of fermented foods has lead to an interest in fermented condiments like gochujang. Pairing gochujang with more recognized dishes allows for wide-spread acceptability of the trend within American culinary culture.

- ▶ **Menu Implementation Tip:** *Think of gochujang as the new Sriracha! Pair with ketchup or aioli to create a new, trendy flavor profile on your restaurant menu.*



4-year growth 56.3%  
34% Demand in the United States<sup>1</sup>


<sup>1</sup>Technomics

# Vegan or Vegetarian?

Denoting vegan items on your menu

In the course of about three years, the number of people who identify as vegan – meaning they consume no animal-based products (including dairy and eggs) – increased by 600%, according to GlobalData. As this market grows, restaurants will be under more pressure to accommodate vegans and denote vegan menu options that cater to both vegan and vegetarian consumers.

Leading health trends need to be easy to find on the menu. Let Sysco's Menu Services industry experts position your menu for profitability and the most effective menu trends.



The number of people who identify as  
vegan has increased by **600%**

[www.escoffier.edu/blog/culinary-arts/how-important-is-it-to-have-vegan-options-on-your-menu/](http://www.escoffier.edu/blog/culinary-arts/how-important-is-it-to-have-vegan-options-on-your-menu/)



# Entrée Trending: Vegetable Tagine

Derived from Moroccan roots, this vegan and gluten-free recipe incorporates fragrant harissa spices to make an ethnically-inspired, beautiful dish that is sure to please all consumers.

## INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil,  
more for later  
2 medium yellow onions, peeled  
and chopped  
8–10 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped  
2 large carrots, peeled and chopped  
2 large russet potatoes, peeled  
and cubed  
1 large sweet potato, peeled and cubed  
Salt to taste  
1 tbsp harissa spice blend  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp ground turmeric  
2 cups canned whole peeled tomatoes  
1/2 cup heaping chopped dried apricots  
1 quart low-sodium vegetable broth  
(or broth of your choice)  
2 cups cooked chickpeas  
1 lemon, juiced  
Handful fresh parsley leaves

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium heat until just shimmering. Add onions and increase heat to medium-high. Sauté for 5 minutes, tossing regularly.
2. Add garlic and all the chopped veggies. Season with salt and spices. Toss to combine.
3. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes on medium-high heat, mixing regularly with a wooden spoon.
4. Add tomatoes, apricots and broth. Season again with just a small dash of salt.
5. Keep the heat on medium-high, and cook for 10 minutes. Then reduce heat, cover and simmer for another 20 to 25 minutes or until veggies are tender.
6. Stir in chickpeas and cook another 5 minutes on low heat.
7. Stir in lemon juice and fresh parsley. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more salt or harissa spice blend to your liking.
8. Transfer to serving bowls and top each with a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Serve hot with your favorite bread, couscous, or rice.



# Flexitarian Flex

A *flexitarian diet* is one consisting of mainly vegetables with varied inclusions of meat. Plant-based protein alternatives catering to the flexitarian demand are on the rise - mung beans up 15% and hempseed up 170% over a 4-year period.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, NY Post reported that 1 in 3 Americans consider themselves to be flexitarian - almost 109 million people in the US. "Meatless Monday" is an on-going trend to support those who are choosing to limit their meat intake with the flexitarian lifestyle.



**1 in 3**  
**Americans**  
consider themselves  
to be **flexitarian**

Want more info on foodservice trends?  
Check out the **Sysco Menu Services**  
**Podcast** for even more insights.



# Simply Burger

The Sysco Simply Meatless Burger Patty is taking your burger game to a whole new level

The **Sysco Simply Burger** is a vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO soy patty with **18 grams of plant-based protein per serving**, helping foodservice operators deliver a flavorful and on-trend menu offering to consumers seeking plant-based alternatives. The **Sysco Simply Meatless Burger Patty** is a great option to add to your favorite burger recipes. The Ground Bulk option can be used to create tacos, meatloaf, burrito filling and more!

**ONGOING TREND:** Check out our *Menu Insights Volume 2* for more information about Protein Alternatives

Plant-based alternatives are currently on 1.2% of US menus, are expected to grow significantly. 1 year growth +289.9%.<sup>1</sup>



For more information, visit:  
[www.syscofoodie.com/simply](http://www.syscofoodie.com/simply)


<sup>1</sup> Datassentials

# Convenience Convergence

Elevating the convenience store experience with quick-service solutions

Convenience store operators are expected to adapt to changing health trends by utilizing fresh ingredients for on-the-go millennials. To go orders and takeaway options are equally on the rise to meet the demand of customers enjoying meals at home, as opposed to in the restaurant.

According to Food Business News, "Top convenience store chains are basically quick-service restaurants." Convenience stores must provide quick solutions for their consumers. With the majority of consumers living close to convenience stores and gas stations, being well positioned in an on-the-go world is pivotal to keeping up with our fast-paced world.



**93% of Americans live within 10 minutes of a fuel or convenience store.<sup>1</sup>**

Convenience retailers are well-positioned to capture market share from quick-service restaurants.

<sup>1</sup>[www.foodbusinessnews.net/articles/14055-consumer-tastes-are-redefining-convenience-retail](http://www.foodbusinessnews.net/articles/14055-consumer-tastes-are-redefining-convenience-retail)





# Meals on the Go

In food retail, more and more companies are providing meal kits that have everything the consumer needs to make a specific dish at home. With convenience as a primary concern, many major retailers can deliver to consumer's door or meal kits can be picked up at their grocer of choice.

With the digital demand generation increasing, the popularity of mobile food ordering has continued the growth of *ghost kitchens* – professional food prep facilities established solely to produce meals for delivery. Ghost kitchens create an unheard-of opportunity for restaurants and brands – established and new launches - to create trendy, pop-up style experiences for the consumer.



**\$17  
BILLION**

US online food  
delivery market climbs  
toward a projected ...

**\$24  
BILLION  
by 2023<sup>1</sup>**


<sup>1</sup> [www.qsrmagazine.com/technology/are-ghost-kitchens-future](http://www.qsrmagazine.com/technology/are-ghost-kitchens-future)



# Beer IN Food

Protein focused, savory but not sugary

Beer can be found in almost every single establishment across the US, even quick service restaurants. It's used as an ingredient to enhance earthy flavors in savory dishes like soups and batter for fried items, and adds an caramelized flavor to bake goods. While it is only on 10.8% of US menus, growth last year was up 1.3% and projected 2.6% over the next 4 years.<sup>1</sup>



*Sysco Classic Beer Cheese* is another way to make something great even better. Currently only on 2.6% of US menus, last year it grew 29.8% and is projected to grow 109.7% over the next 4 years. Beer Cheese can be used as a dip, sauce or turned in a soup.

<sup>1</sup> [apps.datassential.com/snap/food?q=BEER%20CHEESE](https://apps.datassential.com/snap/food?q=BEER%20CHEESE)





# Natural Alternatives

## Laying off the artificial

Today more than ever, consumers are reading food labels in search for foolproof, wholesome ingredients. Instead of artificial ingredients such as substitute sweeteners, products like honey and agave are gaining traction for their health halo and ability to naturally help with seasonal allergies.

3 out of 4 respondents believe they're following a better diet than they did 10 years ago, and the number one way they say they've changed their diet is by limiting sugar intake.

In fact, **80% of respondents state that they're trying to limit or avoid sugars**, with

the top reported sugar reduction strategy being drinking water instead of caloric drinks and eliminating certain foods and beverages from their diet.

**62%  
of consumers**

said they would pay up to

**10% more**

for a product *without artificial ingredients*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.naturalproductsinsider.com/sweeteners/demand-natural-sweeteners-continues-rise](http://www.naturalproductsinsider.com/sweeteners/demand-natural-sweeteners-continues-rise)

## Kids Menus: Healthy Options

Parents seeking healthier options

Healthy options for kids menus are on the rise. Processed items like hot dogs, corn dogs, burgers, and nuggets are everywhere, but more fresh options including *hummus*, *edamame*, *falafel*, *guacamole*, and *vegetarian items* are being adopted by restaurants and specialty grocers.





# Nose-to-Tail

A new iteration of the farm-to-table mindset

Although a large number of consumers are adapting to vegan and flexitarian lifestyles, the meat-eater consumer population still exists and is equally concerned about sustainable practices. The nose-to-tail movement, using every part of the animal, has changed the way many restaurants source and prep meat. Over the past 4 years, the popularity of lesser-used meats – previously seen as waste – like ears, liver, tongue, feet, and tripe has increased 8.5%.

With the ongoing popularity of French cooking techniques like sous vide and the introduction of nose-to-tail practices, chefs can satisfy even the trendiest of environmentally-concerned consumers.



Ears, belly, ribs, liver,  
tongue, feet, tripe  
and oxtail up

**8.5% in  
4 years<sup>1</sup>**

**ONGOING TREND:** Check out our *Menu Insights Volume 2* for more information about new cuts of beef, french cooking techniques and sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> [www.greatbritishchefs.com/features/food-trends-2020](http://www.greatbritishchefs.com/features/food-trends-2020)



# Matcha vs Ube

A battle of two colorfully elevated dessert ingredients



## Matcha

Matcha – native to Japan – has been commonly seen in teas, lattes, specialty grocers and restaurants as a superfood. Known for its iconic bright green color, matcha has recently been introduced into more mainstream applications and flavor combinations including cheesecakes, white chocolate candies, brownies and more.



## Ube

Ube purple yam – native to the Philippines – is mostly seen in ice cream, pies or doughnuts because of its appealing color and sweet, nutty flavor. According to Nation's Restaurant News, the menu presence of Ube is up 75% over the last four years, with a growth of 33.1%.

### FORECASTING TREND:

**Is Ube the next color craze?**

*There have been reports of Ube introduced into milk teas and lattes, potentially becoming a new matcha!*



# Eyes on the Fries

Fries can be found on almost any menu across the US because of their versatility and ability to pair with any dish. In fact, fries are on 58.5% of all menus across the US and currently in the ubiquity stage – which means they're just about everywhere. Adding an appetizer sampler with a variety of fries and condiments are a great start to a meal that everyone can share.



## Dip. Drizzle. Dunk.

Specially flavored mustards and sauces (like gochujang ketchup) create a unique pairing experience that elevates the typical side of fries. Customers crave a break in the monotony – introduce exciting flavor profiles using familiar vehicles like the French fry.



**PERI PERI FRIES** - Check out our  
Peri Peri Fries recipe on [Foodie.Sysco.com](https://www.foodiesysco.com)





# Make the Most of Your Menu

Establishing strategic menu prices can be difficult, especially if you don't know what to take into consideration when costing dishes. Do you base your prices strictly off food costs? Customer-perceived value? Overhead costs? Our Sysco Menu Services team knows the key to any pricing strategy is found by calculating the exact cost of a menu item. Breaking down the recipe (or plate served) will give you the basis for developing your sell price.

## Food Cost Percentage

### Sell Price based on a Cost Percentage

Traditionally, menu pricing was determined by multiplying the food cost by three. As an old-school rule, food costs would average approximately 30% of menu prices (33% is the industry standard for cost percentage), depending on the type of establishment, but this is a more dated style of thinking.

### Food Costs Will Vary

Depending on the type of item, food costs will vary. Generally, soups, appetizers, desserts and alcoholic beverages will have lower cost percentages than items like steaks, lobster and other premium entrées. This isn't a bad thing, but keep in mind the food cost percentage is only one factor to consider when pricing items.

### Higher Price Points

Fine dining establishments command higher price points than fast-casual concepts and typically use premium ingredients, which means they may feature menu items with higher food costs (up to 45%). On the other hand, a pizza restaurant may consistently achieve a food cost of 20%. The higher price point allows for a greater plate profit, thereby offsetting the elevated food cost percentage.

### Example: Price by %

A chicken entrée with a recipe cost of \$4 and a goal of 33% food cost would be priced at \$12.

All looks good – but wait! Are you leaving profit on the table? What is your customer willing to pay? What price is competitive in your market? There's more to pricing a menu item than food cost percentage!

## Food Cost Margins

It helps if you find the sweet spot with your margins – the average profit contribution by menu items within a certain category. For example, if you determine you should net an \$8 profit on all entrées, and you have the food costs already determined, it's easier to price a dish for profit. You'll want to make sure the price is competitive in your market, and the perceived value of the dish meets expectations at that price.

### Example

An entrée that costs \$5.92 to make (food cost) would then be priced on a menu at \$13.95 (food cost + margin).

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Set Profit   | \$8.00         |
| Cost of Food | \$5.92         |
| Menu Price   | <b>\$13.95</b> |

*TIP: You'll notice that food cost margin focuses on profit rather than food cost percentage. Knowing both pieces of information gives you the ability to make the most informed decision and price new menu items accordingly. Remember, you take profit to the bank – not percentages.*



## Additional Expenses

Think beyond ingredient costs and take into consideration the cost of labor, giveaways, food waste, and spoilage. All of these factors affect your bottom line and menu pricing.

# Make the Most of Your Menu

## Historical Data

Sysco's Menu Services team recommends that you look over your menu prices quarterly. Take note of menu pricing and how your bottom line was affected when planning your next set of changes. Are you keeping up with inflation and the rising cost of food, supplies, and operational expenses?

**When costing menu items and establishing your profit margins, you'll want to keep these additional considerations in mind:**

- Menu items that are in high demand give you more room to play with pricing
- Extras (condiments and sides) should have their own pricing guidelines
- Portion sizes should be consistent to ensure accuracy in profits and customer expectation
- Having a properly trained staff can make all the difference in maintaining food costs and achieving your bottom line
- Regular monitoring of inventories and item sales counts will produce accurate food costs and allow you to make strategic pricing decisions

### Volatility

Volatile items are susceptible to sudden (and sometimes extreme) price fluctuations, and thus, menu dishes with volatile ingredients should be kept to seasonal and limited menus. Be mindful of these ingredients and the dishes that commonly use them.

### Alternative Ingredients

Raising menu prices should not always be your first plan of action. When looking at food costs and margins, evaluate the ingredients used in a dish. A lot of times, you'll be able to swap out a more affordable ingredient or make the portion smaller. If not, then look at raising prices for that menu item.

### Competitive Pricing

As a good practice, you should always be watching the competitive landscape. Go to your competitor's restaurants to take note of their menu, pricing, presentation, and portioning. All of these factors impact customers' value perception and their willingness to pay for items.

## Price Smart

*Don't feel you have to raise every price whenever you revise your menu. Don't apply a general 5% increase; adjust only those items that need it – up or down – to attain the desired outcome. Even correcting just one popular menu item can have a huge effect on your bottom line.*

## Sysco® | MENU SERVICES

Sysco's Menu Services team members are certified menu consultants from the University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, which is consistently ranked among the top hospitality programs in the world. Our team of experts in menu analysis and engineering work with customers every day to uncover opportunities in menus that will help drive bottom line sales growth.

**Interested in learning more about how the Menu Services team can support your business goals?  
Ask your Marketing Associate for more details.**



## Sysco | Studio: "What If" Profit Calculator

How do the items in each category of the menu stack up against each other? What happens if you change a price or increase sales of an item? See live results so you can better plan how to address concerns about your menu pricing or food cost.

Sysco | Studio

DASHBOARD

DESIGNS

MENU ENGINEERING

RECIPES

INGREDIENTS

Menu Engineering > Luncheon > What-if

Luncheon: "What If" Profit Calculator

HIDDEN ☒ VISIBLE

Based on your last month of sales history, Jan 2020.

|                    | AVG MENU PRICE<br>\$7.17<br>+0.15 | AVG FOOD COST \$<br>\$3.15<br>— | AVG FOOD COST %<br>23%<br>— | AVG ITEM PROFIT<br>\$4.02<br>+0.15 | MONTHLY UNITS SOLD<br>2,227<br>— | MONTHLY PROFIT<br>\$13,560.66<br>+210.6 | ANNUAL PROFIT<br>\$162,718.03<br>+2,527.2 |     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|-----|
| Appetizers (6)     | \$10.54<br>+0.45                  | \$4.01<br>—                     | 35%<br>-1%                  | \$6.53<br>+0.45                    | 1,246<br>—                       | \$7,056.90<br>+210.6                    | \$84,682.92<br>+2,527.2                   | ^   |
| ITEM               | MENU PRICE                        | FOOD COST \$                    | FOOD COST %                 | ITEM PROFIT                        | MONTHLY UNITS SOLD               | MONTHLY PROFIT                          | ANNUAL PROFIT                             |     |
| Cheesesticks       | \$7.99                            | \$2.29                          | 29%                         | \$5.7                              | 225                              | \$1,282.5                               | \$15,390.00                               |     |
| Chicken Wings (12) | \$14.99                           | \$8.43                          | 57%                         | \$6.56                             | 88                               | \$577.28                                | \$6,927.36                                |     |
| Chips & Salsa      | \$4.29                            | \$0.84                          | 20%                         | \$3.45                             | 480                              | \$1,656.00                              | \$19,872.00                               |     |
| Chicken Wings (6)  | \$8.99                            | \$3.54                          | 40%                         | \$5.45                             | 142                              | \$773.9                                 | \$9,286.8                                 |     |
| Shrimp Basket      | \$ 13.99                          | \$4.77                          | 35%                         | \$9.22                             | 78                               | \$719.16                                | \$8,629.92                                | ✓ ✕ |
| CURRENT            | \$11.29                           | \$4.77                          | 35%                         | \$9.22                             | 78                               | \$719.16                                | \$8,629.92                                |     |
| Blaine's Pizza     | \$12.99                           | \$4.2                           | 33%                         | \$8.79                             | 233                              | \$2,048.06                              | \$24,576.83                               |     |

Shrimp Basket

\$13.99  
+2.7

\$4.77  
—

35%  
-8%

\$9.22  
+2.7

78  
—

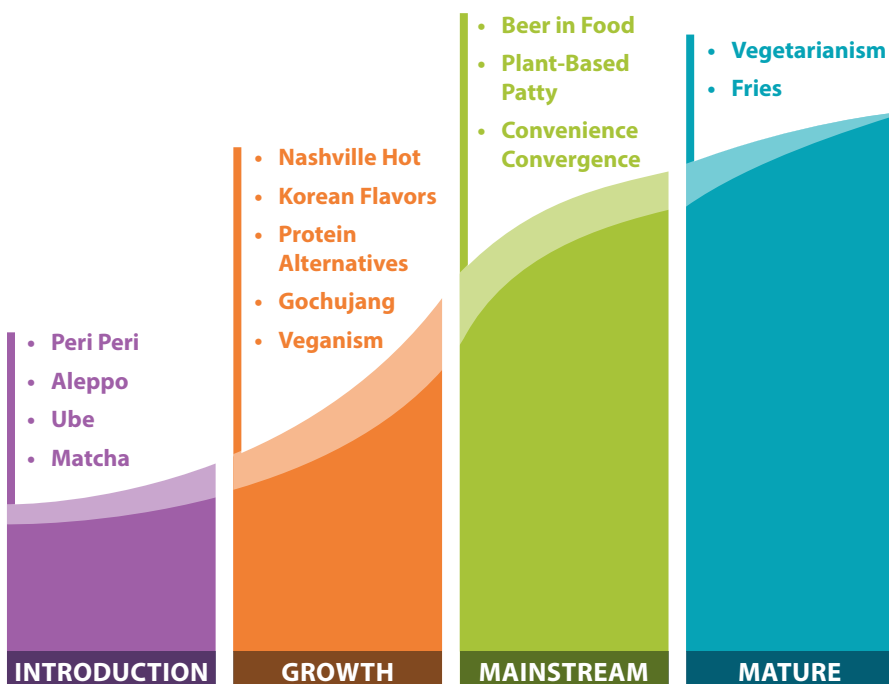
\$719.16  
+210.6

\$8,629.92  
+2,527.2

Dabble with various scenarios. What happens when you change an item's price or increase its sales? Find out!

# Understanding the Flavor Lifecycle

Innovation starts on the left, then progresses to the right



Trends start in the **introduction** phase and come from chef-driven restaurants leading the way in new uses of flavors and ingredients.

Trends move to the **growth** stage as they appear on emerging chain restaurant menus with increased volume.

**Mainstream** trends incorporate what is piquing consumer interest and gaining acceptance on menus.

**Mature** trends are proven favorites that have wide appeal for many different palates.





# Are you prepared for an upcoming holiday or seasonal event?

## Upcoming Dates

**March 17** St. Patrick's Day

**April 5** Palm Sunday

**April 9** Passover

**April 10** Good Friday

**April 12** Easter

**April 24** Ramadan

**May 5** Cinco de Mayo

**May 10** Mother's Day

**May 25** Memorial Day

**June 21** Father's Day

**July 4** Independence Day

**September 7** Labor Day

Ask your Marketing Associate how Menu Services can help market your upcoming event!

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## FOLLOW FOODIE

- The hottest trends in foodservice
- Smart tips to optimize operations
- Marketing ideas to drive new business
- Tried and true Sysco branded recipes

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