**FALL 2020**

**MONEY MOVES**

**SERVICE WITHOUT A SMILE**
How to deliver customer service now and on the other side.

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A pandemic makes college students good for business.

**SAFETY BY DESIGN**
The new normal needs to blend seamlessly.

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**WASTE NOT WANT MORE**
Reduce takeout packaging without compromising values.

**BY THE NUMBERS**
Help for foodservice in recovery mode.

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**KEEP DELIVERIES CRISP.**

**ADD LAY’S® TO YOUR DELIVERY MENU TODAY.**

Gotta have Lay’s

Classics

Takeout means service, presentation and earth-friendly packaging is as important as the food. Get the recipe for Grilled Mushroom Brown Rice Dupbap on page 34.

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**FOOD FANATICS**

**FALL 2020**

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FALL FOOD FANATICS MAGAZINE

As restaurants in many parts of the country close outdoor dining for the season and Fall flavors take hold, our industry will have to tap into the creativity and resilience we’ve shown this year to keep sales and profits growing. An on-trend menu is a must-have, but right now, having the most efficient and streamlined operations is what will help you win.

In this quarter’s issue, we dive first into business stories to help you adapt to present challenges and prepare for tomorrow, followed by food trends aimed at keeping your menus fresh, and closing with examples of chefs and operators across the country working to create a more equitable industry for all.

The “new normal” is no longer new. So, to kick things off, our Money Moves stories get real about what consumers want in a dining experience today, and how you can meet their expectations without breaking the bank. Learn how to deliver high-touch service in a touchless world, take cues from what colleges are doing to attract younger diners, and shift your restaurant’s aesthetic to incorporate safety and sanitation long-term.

Next up, you’ll find food trends to make your menu stand out this season, and plating tips for both dine-in and carryout, so your diner experience remains consistent on- and off-premise. In our cover story, “Get Adjusted,” learn how to streamline your menu for maximum flavor and profit. Then move to the hottest ingredient of the season, the jang family of fermented chilies, like gochujang. Transform your bread, pastry and dessert program into your biggest moneymaker in “Flour for the People.” Then, move to how to do-go-to-alcohol the right way. With all this focus on transformation and to-go, we’ve included some tips on how to reduce our collective dependency on packaging at the same time when single-use everything is at an all-time high.

We close the book with our “Meeting the Moment” section to leave you on an empowered note. If you’ve been wondering how to take your passion for equity and equality to the next level, our “Action-Backed Words” story gives examples of what operators are doing now to create a more diverse industry through hiring, promoting and training. “Bakers with Attitude” profiles chef/activist Paola Velez and becomes the copyright property of US Foods.

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US Foods®
How to deliver customer service now and on the other side

By Alexis Fisher

**On the heels** of a prestigious James Beard Outstanding Chef nomination, David Kinch delivered a stunning blow on Instagram: He rejected it. The chef/owner of Manresa didn’t think his three-star Michelin restaurant in Los Gatos, California, deserved the accolade.

“We have been pretending that we could ... maintain a level of service, equality, and innovation, while welcoming our guests every day knowing that in our hearts that it could never be sustainable,” he wrote earlier this year.

Kinch knew that the pandemic had essentially robbed restaurants of providing a “human touch,” from the welcoming handshake and friendly small talk to embracing loyal regulars. Even the most basic gesture of warmth and friendliness—a smile—is gone, covered by masks.

Off-premise dining and limited indoor or outdoor seating can keep sales afloat, but pragmatic temperature checks and safety protocols can be a service buzzkill.

**EARN AND BUILD TRUST**

Co-owners Curtis Duffy and Michael Muser decided to open Ever, their modern take on fine dining, in Chicago even when the odds seemed to be stacked against them.

“There are very real reasons brought up by COVID that make achieving standards very difficult,” Muser says. “But we’re not in the excuse business, so we fight on.”

That meant providing safety, meeting the highest standards for a quality experience and establishing trust: the tenets of excellent service, which in essence remain true but just amped up.

Muser spent extra time walking the room to determine the best placement for captains to effectively communicate and allow for distance without being too loud or disruptive. Low-key ambient techno rhythmic music was swapped out for Miles Davis because it “felt like the room needed a sense of love and normalcy.”

“A lot of our clients are saying, ‘I haven’t been out to dinner since this started. I’m here because I trusted you’d do this right.’ That is a sense of responsibility that everyone in this industry should be feeling. Not only are (guests) hungry and it is our job to feed them, but to really earn their trust in the safety department,” he says.

Clear communication is essential, Muser says. Guests are greeted genially with a temperature check, offered black masks from trays and told to wear one at all times except when they are eating or drinking. Keep it simple, direct and professional and everyone is willing to comply, he says.

“When we communicate very clearly what we’re going to do that night to the guest, they very much appreciate what they’re being told. They are trusting us with their safety in addition to their birthday, anniversary or proposal.”

Establishing trust is a tenet of quality service at Ever in Chicago.
On the Other Side: 8 Points of Service

1. Establish trust with carefully planned protocols.
2. Consider the tone and approach in the way safety protocols are explained to guests.
3. Keep the communication simple and straightforward.
4. Consider the vibe the music creates.
5. Use technology to better track and connect with customers.
6. Spend time watching service to spot any deviations from safety.
7. Adjust staff training to accommodate new procedures.
8. Followup with customers who order carryout or delivery.

“A LOT OF OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING, ‘I HAVEN’T BEEN OUT TO DINNER SINCE THIS STARTED. I’M HERE BECAUSE I TRUSTED YOU’D DO THIS RIGHT.’ THAT IS A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT EVERYONE IN THIS INDUSTRY SHOULD BE FEELING.” —Michael Muser, Ever, Chicago

PAY EVEN CLOSER ATTENTION TO DINERS

Regulars have always been the mainstay to survival, which is why co-owner Cara Patricia of DECANTsf, a wine bar and bottle shop in San Francisco, decided to get crafty with personalized attention to her clientele.

Tailored newsletters and engaging with customers on Instagram have provided important customer intel, Patricia says. “We keep track of what everyone is buying, so if we see someone buying something, we’ll look at their purchase history and say, ‘You know who would like this?’ This person.’ We buy with customers in mind so we can offer products directly to them,” she says.

Relying on their POS system for details to build better relationships with guests, she and her partner Simi Grewal hand-delivered orders and sent personal text messages to determine the best time frames for arrival. Promotion codes helped drive sales. Customers who had previously purchased specialty allocated wine were sent first grabs on a secret pre-sale, selling out before the product arrived. Working with their distributors and importers, they created a social justice three-pack wine for $55 to donate 100% of the profits to causes like Black Lives Matter and fighting the California wildfires, strengthening their reputation as a small business with values that locals could feel good about supporting. This led to repeat sales and referrals for corporate gifts.

“We want to make things really easy for people. People have emailed us and said, ‘Thank you, I’ve been waiting for this. Thank you for thinking of me,’” she says. “People are getting really inundated with newsletters and it can be very sales-y, so we like to break through with a more personalized approach based on what people might be interested in.”

SPOT THE SMALL STUFF

At Ledger in Salem, Massachusetts, wine director Scott Laflour says that intuition, rapid clean-up, stocking extra supplies and greater attention to details make all the difference in the customer experience.

“Guests are always watching,” he says. “Once you see something unusual or not to code in a normal situation, you’re going to apply that to what you look for moving forward. The goal is to have the guest not see one thing.”

Upfront and Personal

Timed reservations, nonrefundable deposits and no tolerance policies on wearing masks fly in the face of customer service. But diners know that it’s no longer business as usual.

Restaurateurs recommend enacting new policies sooner than later so guests can become accustomed to them. Most importantly, however, is clearly communicating rules upfront, whether on the website, on all communications or upon arrival. For example, requiring a deposit on a reservation, which is applied to the check, can band in the form of a gift card to be used at another time if the reservation is missed. No-mask, no-service models may alienate one customer, but they gain trust and loyalty with others.

Kindness goes a long way at The Parish in Tucson, Arizona, says manager Travia Peters. “During a busy service, we let (diners) know that we are asking everyone to limit their dining experience to 90 minutes because we are currently only seating at 50% capacity. If a table seems to be all done but ‘camping out,’ we might gently remind them (so) that they allow us to clean and sanitize for the next group. We’re not stringent; we don’t want to rub them the wrong way. We’ve had no negative recourse,” he says.
Paying attention to details, such as properly delivered food and drink from the Ledger, top, and followup from Big Grove Brewery are aimed at customer service satisfaction.

Social distancing measures can impact service, such as added time and distance of running food and wine between the kitchen and table—which can double and triple time when the wrong bottle or dish is served. Be sure to compensate for mishaps, Lafleur says.

While it was once considered good service to ensure glasses are always filled, a self-service carafe of water, decanted wine or an ice bucket for a bottle might be more useful for peace of mind and safety, limiting contact for the guest and the server. “It’s about being thoughtful,” he says. “It’s good to be aware of glove maintenance, cleanliness, and showing people that you’re doing that. We change gloves as we wipe things down.”

The restaurant keeps extra masks on hand, which is not their goal but it helps guests who might eye-roll or forget them. In turn, that extra effort often strengthens the sense of customer service and loyalty, which guests show in positive feedback. “People look at that as our care and will take that opportunity to show us that, too, and ask how it’s been for us,” he says. “We have support and understanding handed back, which is beautiful and appreciated.”

**THE ART OF THE FOLLOW-UP**

When the pandemic shut down the 1,200-capacity Big Grove Brewery in Iowa City, Iowa, partner Doug Goettsch pivoted from a self-service model to full-service.

The change provided an opportunity to make improvements and set a fresh start with guests. Along with bumping sanitation and eco-friendly standards that created a safer, more efficient operation, Goettsch increased takeout orders by swapping out the POS system and installing new phone lines. One dedicated employee handles pickup with direct car service, following up with a phone call within 15 to 20 minutes to check in with the customer.

“We use positive energy and maintain our staff morale, which goes over to the guest,” he says. “We encourage that a little warmth goes a long way with people. When they’re safe, everyone comes back. We just try to set the tone for our community.”

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**“IT’S ABOUT BEING THOUGHTFUL. IT’S GOOD TO BE AWARE OF GLOVE MAINTENANCE, CLEANLINESS, AND SHOWING PEOPLE THAT YOU’RE DOING THAT.”**

—Scott Lafleur, wine director, Ledger, Massachusetts

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**BEST-IN-CLASS for TAKEOUT**

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Today’s Gen Z college students are, in a word, conscious.
Not just price-conscious, but health-conscious, earth-conscious and socially conscious. Because of the pandemic, “safety-conscious” now deserves a spot on the list.
Dining halls once known for their unlimited models—all-you-can-eat, whenever, wherever—are switching gears due to safety recommendations, and trading ubiquitous self-serve buffets for carryout, prepackaged or staff-served meals. While campuses are exploring ways to keep their share of student diners, opportunities exist for other foodservice models to grab a slice of this audience, which is more crucial than ever considering the financial impact of the pandemic.
Here’s a look at what’s driving college students’ dining choices right now, on and off-campus.

PRICING
This year’s high unemployment rates are impacting student spending habits. Many have returned to campus with less spending money, whether that’s because they had to forgo their usual summer job, a reduction of on-campus employment or a parent furloughed or laid off. This leaves an already deal-seeking demographic even more hungry for value.
“The retail arm of Michigan dining has actually been working on a whole menu of retail to-go options that are a little more price-conscious in response to that,” says Lindsay Haas, culinary and nutrition support specialist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. “The other thing we talked about quite a bit is when you walk into an all-you-care-to-eat, you feel like you can get your money’s worth. For carryout, we are being very thoughtful about our portions, so those who can’t dine in don’t get a lesser experience.”

Another idea:
Offer a friend-referral student discount or larger portions for lower food cost dishes, such as pasta.

A Pandemic Pause
Some colleges and universities are offering online ordering for their foodservice as an alternative to serving meals in dining halls. Other changes:

OUT
Communal seating
Indoor on campus dining
Traditional cleaning agents
Bulk-sized condiment pumps
Walk-ins welcome
Salad bars and buffets
Soft serve ice cream
Cereal towers

IN
Smaller, more spaced-out tables
Outdoor tent-covered pop-up concepts
Specialty cleaners and electrostatic sprayers
Single-use condiment packets
Reservations required
Carryout or grab-and-go
Prepackaged ice cream novelties
Miniature cereal boxes
Healthy choices
Healthy choices—already popular with Gen Z—have become even more appealing. Ken Toong, executive director of auxiliary enterprises at University of Massachusetts Amherst, saw a 20% increase in salad and comfort food consumption this summer. “In this pandemic, students want to eat healthier in order to enhance their immune systems,” Toong says. “We define ‘healthy’ as consuming more plant-forward items, also less sodium, less sugar and less saturated fat.”

Another idea: Step up meat alternatives and offer roast vegetables as the center of the plate with grains as dinner options.

Comfort foods
Being away from home during a pandemic—especially for homesick freshmen—can be stressful, so students will also seek familiar comfort foods. Cafe Rule, located near Lemon-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, has rolled out weekly promotions around perpetually popular dishes: fried chicken on Mondays, tacos on Tuesdays and discounted pizzas on Wednesdays. “Every college student loves pizza, and the wood-fired oven we have creates an incredible flavor along with our fresh, unique toppings,” says Paul Nance, director of hospitality operations. Offering deals, such as buy one and get one half-priced, also helps.

Another idea: Add chicken soup. It’s the perceived cure-all, sick or not. Or make it a special along with a vegetarian option.

Sustainability
Eco-friendliness is important to today’s college kids, but they also understand that some degree of sustainability must be sacrificed for safety in the short term. For instance, incentives for bringing reusable bags or mugs for drink refills may have to go on hiatus, and disposable packaging bags or mugs for drink refills may have to go on hiatus, and disposable packaging

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With safety at the top of consumer concerns, pandemic-era restaurant design will have to pull off a difficult task: creating spaces for diners and workers that seamlessly integrates safety into the restaurant’s look and vibe. “Make guests feel safe, but also give them a compelling experience,” says Tanya Spaulding, principal of Shea Design in Minneapolis. When states began easing shelter-in-place orders, many restaurants implemented quick-fix distancing and cleaning measures: spreading out tables, installing sanitation stations and maximizing outdoor areas. But now they’ll have to make those changes a natural extension of their spaces, so they don’t look like hasty, temporary add-ons. Similarly, restaurant designers say new restaurants will need to consider the new normal.

TURN THE QUICK FIXES INTO A LASTING LOOK
If a restaurant starts seating patrons in its parking lot or other outdoor space, adding greenery and lighting can make the space more hospitable, and even festive, Spaulding says. “The goal is to make any modification look like it’s always been there, even though we know it hasn’t,” says Shelley Satke Niemeier, interior designer at SPACE Architecture + Design in St. Louis. Instead of propping up a curbside table for carryout, some of SPACE’s clients have installed drive-thru-like panels in their storefront windows. “We don’t want it to look janky,” Niemeier says. To maximize efficiency, the panels are placed near the host stand, so hosts can handle both pickup patrons and in-house diners. Hastily installed sanitation stations will instead need to become permanent fixtures. They could be built with the same millwork used elsewhere in the restaurant. “So it isn’t just some hunk of sanitizer on a shelf, the station is designed into the space,” Spaulding says.

BRAND IT
Tacking up handwritten signs to remind diners to keep their distance from one another probably isn’t that effective—and certainly isn’t attractive. A restaurant can create more engaging visual reminders that use its brand and logo. The messages should be colorful and positive. They might be on chalkboard signs or sandwich boards. “Keep the messaging friendly, simple and on brand,” Spaulding says. Likewise, instead of slapping down duct tape onto the floor to indicate how people should move through the space, work the venue’s branding into those floor cues. Embellish them with lights embedded in the flooring, suggests Griz Dwight, a principal at GraiForm Design Architects in Washington, D.C.

BLUR THE INSIDE-OUTSIDE DIVIDE
Given the higher risk of catching coronavirus in crowded indoor spaces, people understandably feel safer eating
and socializing outside. Studio KDA in Berkeley, California turned a street-side parking spot into an outdoor patio for a client—just by using a few water-filled, concrete traffic barriers at about $150 to $200 each. Permanent parklets can cost $20,000 to $40,000, says Marites Abueg, an architect and principal of Studio KDA. “To save money, we designed a parklet with a wheelchair-accessible table on a partial platform, while the rest of the tables are on the street level.”

Relying on an al fresco-only dining concept, however, isn’t a viable option year-round for most restaurants. Operators will need to find ways to bring the outdoors inside. That might mean adding portable heaters or installing more windows that open.

“Bringing more fresh air into the space will be a critical part of the design of the future,” Spaulding says.

Operators might install greenhouse-like pods outside so each party can sit by itself while feeling visually connected to their environment and their fellow diners. Bonus: Glass pods are easily cleanable.

“Restaurants will blur those lines so customers inside feel they’re outside,” Dwight says.

**DIVVY IT UP**

Off-the-shelf acrylic dividers propped up between tables don’t look pleasant Abueg says, and their utility is questionable. Consider embracing the divider and making it your own by using vinyl film to add color and texture, or even a mirrored film to reflect light. Creating psychological and physical safety while maintaining a sense of hospitality and brand experience is key, she says.

Whatever divider material a restaurant selects, it will have to withstand regular cleaning. But Wilson Associates has dreamt up a conceptual design where dividers’ cleanability isn’t an issue. That’s because they’re made of water. Designer Keiko Matsumoto asked a friend who worked in the food industry in Japan which restaurants were doing well during the pandemic. “He said ramen restaurants because people can go in, eat, get out and not interact with waiters,” says Matsumoto, design director at Wilson Associates’ New York studio.

Taking that as their cue, Matsumoto and her colleagues imagined an establishment where, instead of one central entrance, each party has its own garage-door entrance to its own dining area, with glass panels that only open up to the kitchen when the food is ready. Instead of heavy partitions, waterfalls descend from the ceiling to separate each party. The water walls can be moved to make smaller or larger dining spaces.

**KEEP IT MOVING**

Shuffling furniture to create separation among tables is probably the easiest and cheapest safety design measure. Move booths, which typically line walls, to the middle of the space. That way, diners can get in and out on both sides without climbing over each other. Staff can serve from both sides as well to avoid invading their personal space, Dwight says. “It protects the server as much as the diner.”

**DON’T LET EMPTY SPACE GO TO WASTE**

Restaurants that removed a lot of tables and chairs shouldn’t let all that space sit empty. They can turn it into a small pop-up market to sell some of their own items, like sauces or desserts. They can also fill those vacant spaces with beautiful plants, flowers, herbs and floor lamps.

“Don’t add clutter back in, but make it feel more compelling,” Spaulding says. And, she adds, when choosing new colors or materials, bear this in mind: Because people tend to associate brighter with cleaner, we might see a shift from the recent trend of dark, lush fabrics and wallpapers.
Hold the nuts.
Expect more innovation in taking the dairy out of dairy, from ice cream to cheese and yogurt. We’re not talking nut-based but plant-based that mimics animal milk on a molecular level. Not so crazy now that a burger that bleeds is the norm.

TREND TRACKER
Self-Contained is the hot new buzzword.
Repurposed shipping containers are impacting local and sustainable. Freight Farms uses them as hydroponic farms, making produce no longer regionally or seasonally dependent.

Hold the nuts.
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Belt It Out.
Burger King has rolled out a prototype where food is sent from conveyor belts connected to a kitchen suspended over the drive-thru, the ultimate in contactless delivery that also saves space. The first location is slated for Miami in 2021. Could other concepts be far behind?

Give it up for spelt.
Think of spelt as a softer and subtler whole wheat with a finer grain, making it an easy swap to some no-flavor AP or bread flour.

Now you see me...Now You Don’t.
The pandemic is pushing the pedal on ghost kitchens but in new directions. They are now mobile and prepare signature dishes for restaurants in addition to the old-school model of using current space for a different concept or renting/sharing offsite locations with others.

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?
Touchless has never felt—and looked—so good. Voice and visually activated kiosks are on the rise in response to the fallout from the coronavirus.

Keep on Trucking.
Food trucks have got their groove back. A social media presence paired with a limited menu and the freedom to roam any time of the day means reduced costs, less inventory and fewer workers, which makes them more coronavirus-proof than brick-and-mortar venues.

New service.
 Analysts say the pandemic is providing a historic moment for restaurants and retailiers to improve customer service. Those who adapt, incorporate new technology and develop deeper human connections will emerge on top. See page 4.

TOOLKIT
ON THE RADAR
FADING OUT

Share and Share Alike?
While shared plates and family-style dishes work for eating off-premise, will they be ostracized on-premise? It’s one thing to share a meal with someone you haven’t socially distanced with but another when multiple people are touching the same serving utensils.

Try this instead:
Offer the option to divvy up portions or provide extra smaller plates. Be sure servers communicate the safety options; you’ll score points (aka loyalty) for considering customer safety.

Tipped Out.
In a show of gratitude and altruism, consumers have been tipping well since the pandemic. But will this goodwill last?

Try this instead:
Proponents of no-tipping policies say the increase in tipping, the social climate and the expected changes in the industry make the present a good time to try or revisit a gratuity included policy, which also can help end wage disparities.

It’s fine until it’s not.
Innovation and trends are born from fine dining but given the requirements of social distancing, high unemployment and uncertainty, the segment is sputtering.

Try this instead:
Go to the opposite end of the spectrum like Nate Kuester, a highly lauded young chef who launched a counter-service spot in Flushing, New York’s New Age Market instead of an expected temple of fine dining. BapBap serves seasoned rice (bap) bowls, seaweed-wrapped rolls and soft serve, all for under $20.

FARM TO NO TABLE.
The pandemic’s domino effect is taking “table” out of farm to table, leaving excess product and less income.

Try this instead:
Partner with farms for events. In Wisconsin, Stony Acre and Suncrest farms are firing wood oven pizzas with vegetables and livestock grown on the farm. Call it pasture to pizza.
These are precarious times for chefs, especially independent operators who cannot rely on economies of scale and the resources that larger restaurant groups offer. Streamlining menus and creative adjustments, from ingredient substitutions to production techniques, have been crucial to survival. These ingredients, from sauces and condiments to marinades and spice mixes, can be used in multiple ways, chefs say. Because crisis breeds creativity, these chefs are stretching their boundaries and finding new ways to do more with less.

Some takes:

**Go Low Prep For High Impact**

At Bulrush in St. Louis, chef Rob Connoley runs a forage-driven restaurant, with an emphasis on preserving seasonal ingredients to use year-round. A bumper crop, including imperfect produce, means better prices and requires the investment of time upfront, but it results in preserved goods that last—even in a possible pandemic closure. For example, he turns vegetables that might otherwise be composted into liquid amino. A sweet potato amino that he brushes over whole-roasted cauliflower for his bar menu requires just three ingredients—sweet potato, rice koji and sea salt. It packs a flavorful umami punch that Connoley describes as similar to soy sauce, but with more nuance and depth.

The roasted cauliflower is served in a cast-iron skillet with fall foraged mushrooms and an inserted steak knife for a dramatic presentation. “It’s a high-payout dish with minimal effort,” Connoley says. “It’s such an easy recipe—two minutes of hands-on time and then a couple visits to the oven during baking.” Working in a small space with just himself and his sous chef, recipes like this one, which don’t require constant vigilance, allow them to multitask and be more productive.

**Cut Components Without Sacrificing Flavor**

Chef Sujan Sarkar is also working with a skeleton crew at Rooh’s San Francisco and Palo Alto locations. He’s not cutting any corners, but he’s simplifying dishes to streamline prep for his smaller team in the name of efficiency.

Sarkar continues to make fresh curries every other day, including one for tandoori monkfish, but he’s no longer serving the accompaniment of kadambuttu, steamed rice balls stuffed with monkfish liver masala and topped with seasonal vegetable pickle. The monkfish liver requires a lot of labor and must be made fresh each day, a luxury he can’t afford in a pandemic. “We are working with less people now, so we can’t handle dishes with so many components,” he says. An ember-roasted sweet potato chaat has replaced a more complex lentil-stuffed spiced potato cake shallow-fried in clarified butter. The snack is still topped with garnishes of crispy kale, tamarind and mint chutneys, but Sarkar is forgoing the shattered raspberry embellishment that requires liquid nitrogen to prepare. “Flavor-wise everything is pretty similar,” he says. “But visually and from the technical point of view, it’s a little simpler.”
Cutting Costs, Not Corners

• At Nico Osteria, chef Tim Graham still makes pasta fresh, but he’s forgoing filled varieties and sticking to noodles like angel hair, tagliatelle and rigatoni to save on labor.

• Chef Ken Frank at La Toque is more committed to cross-training than ever, which allows for flexibility if somebody is sick. “Line cooks are spending time in pastry,” he says. “Servers are learning to bartend.”

• Santa Monica Proper Hotel started serving batched bottled cocktails on their rooftop with distinctive twists like blue spirulina ice cubes.

> Reduce Labor With “Mother” Sauces and Pre-Prepped Items

The market-style menu at The Lynhall in Minneapolis allows guests to create individually plated dinners, pairing meat or vegetarian entrees with a la carte vegetable and starch sides. Chef Nettie Colon is still serving the full Lynhall menu, but with a smaller team cross-trained to prepare more dishes at once, she has turned to buying some pre-prepped ingredients to save on labor and minimize food waste. For example, she’s purchasing romaine hearts instead of whole heads of lettuce and chuck flap that’s already trimmed instead of chuck roast.

“When we would portion the chuck roast off to meet what we were serving, we would have a lot of waste that turned into a hash for brunch,” Colon says. “When we closed and brunch went away, we decided that it would be better for us to spend 50 cents more and have a product that had zero waste.”

Colon is still making her piri piri sauce for rotisserie chicken from scratch but substituting more shelf stable piquillo peppers for fresh red peppers. Then, with the addition of just one ingredient— toasting crushed almonds—that piri piri sauce becomes a romesco that’s served with green beans. The piri piri can be used as a mother sauce for other proteins and vegetables. And by using it to make a romesco, Colon has created another foundation that works similarly.

While Colon remains committed to scratch cooking, she’s made concessions for the sake of shelf stability. For now, rather than making aioli from scratch with egg yolks and olive oil, she’s buying Hellmann’s mayonnaise and doctoring it with spices.

> Make Lower Cost Substitutions

When snapper for a 20-year signature dish became unavailable, and the tableside presentation of cracking a salt crust served with sauce vierge, herbs and ogo became inappropriate under social distancing protocols, chef Jeremy Shigekane at Honolulu’s M By Chef Mavro, adapted the recipe to use ono or wahoo. He brines the fish to keep moisture and flavor intact instead of baking it in a salt crust, since he is no longer doing tableside service. Shigekane says that this substitution, along with skipping the peeling and seeding of tomatoes for the accompanying sauce vierge, saves him about 70% on both food and labor costs.

“The new prep is very cost effective,” Shigekane says. “The dish has done well because the flavor and essence is the same, just a little more casual.”

When prices fluctuate because of availability, there’s always a substitution, Shigekane says. For example, a fish may be in season that’s cheaper or the dish can change to include lower cost items and smaller portions of the higher priced protein, such as a fish stew with vegetables.

Other times, it’s best to eighty-six the dish. For now, the days of lower cost dishes making up for high cost ones are over. “It’s about being more creative than ever to do more with less,” Colon says.
Almond Romesco
Chef Nettie Colon
Lynhall, Minneapolis
1 cup blanched whole almonds
Piri piri sauce, see recipe on page 27
Roast almonds on a sheet tray in a preheated 350 F oven for about 5 minutes to release oils. Transfer to a food processor and lightly pulse to lentil-sized pieces. Fold into piri piri sauce. Do not over-process the almonds or they will absorb all the liquid and result in a dry romesco sauce.
Serve with sauteed Broccolini, roasted cauliflower, green beans, grilled meat and fish, roasted turkey and sandwiches.

Green Beans with Almond Romesco Sauce
Chef Nettie Colon
Lynhall, Minneapolis
¾ pound fresh green beans, top ends snipped
¼ cup water
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste
Almond Romesco sauce, above, as needed
In a large skillet, bring green beans and water to a boil over high heat.
Stir in olive oil and cook until the water evaporates, and the beans are bright green and tender.
Sprinkle the beans with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Serve the beans in a platter topped with Almond Romesco sauce and a drizzle of olive oil. Makes 4 servings.

Tandoori Monkfish with Tamarind Alleppey Curry
Chef Sujan Sarkar
Rooh’s, San Francisco and Palo Alto
1¾ tablespoons ginger, minced, divided use
1½ tablespoons garlic, minced, divided use
30 ounces monkfish tail, cleaned
½ cup hung curd
2 tablespoons mustard seed oil
1 tablespoon turmeric
½ tablespoon green chili, chopped
½ tablespoon kashmiri red chili powder
½ tablespoon curry leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Zest of 1 lime
Clarified butter, as needed
Lemon juice, as needed
All Alleppey curry, recipe follows
Cilantro, for garnish
Curry leaf oil, for garnish
Ground ¾ tablespoon ginger and ½ tablespoon garlic into a paste. Slice monkfish into 3 portions for family style or 4 for single servings and marinate with the paste for 1 to 2 hours refrigerated.
Combine remaining ginger and garlic paste, hung curd, mustard seed oil, turmeric, chili, chili powder, curry leaves, salt and zest.
Add to the fish and marinate 2 more hours refrigerated.
Arrange marinated monkfish pieces on a tray lined with aluminum foil. Cook in a preheated 350 F oven for 7 to 8 minutes. Baste with butter and lemon juice.
Place desired amount of curry in three bowls. Top each bowl with a portion of fish, garnish with cilantro and curry leaf oil.
If presenting for takeout, package fish, curry and garnish separately. Makes 4 servings.
To make tamarind alleppey curry: Heat 1 tablespoon coconut oil in a saucepan. Add 1 teaspoon mustard seed and heat until they start to crackle; add 1 sprig curry leaves and saute for a few minutes. Add 2 tablespoons each chopped ginger and chopped onion and saute until translucent. Add ½ cup green mango, ½ cup chopped pumpkin, 1 tablespoon tamarind paste and 1 teaspoon chopped green chili and 1 teaspoon turmeric; cook for a few minutes and add 2 cups Thai coconut milk and ½ cup water. Simmer for 5 minutes; puree and pass through a sieve; adjust seasonings.

TO-GO TIPS
Choose vented boxes that allow steam to escape so delivered food doesn’t lose its appeal, from green beans that can lose vibrancy to fries that turn limp.
Sweet Potato-Rubbed Roasted Cauliflower with Fall Mushrooms

Chefs Rob Connoley and Justin Bell
Bulrush, St. Louis, Missouri

1 medium cauliflower head
¼ cup sweet potato amino, recipe follows
2 tablespoons canola oil
8 ounces mushrooms, such as Hen of the Woods or chanterelles, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 teaspoon flaky salt

Gently core cauliflower to remove the stem while keeping florets attached. Liberally brush with amino liquid. Coat the bottom of a cast-iron skillet with oil and set the cauliflower in the center.

Roast in a preheated 425 F for 45 minutes or until pierced entirely without resistance. While roasting, baste cauliflower with sweet potato amino every 10 minutes. After 30 minutes, add the mushrooms to the skillet, encircling the cauliflower head, drizzling any remaining amino over the mushrooms. Once the cauliflower is baked through, increase heat to broil for 5 minutes or until a dark crust forms. Rest 10 minutes. Finish with flake salt.

Makes 4 servings.

To make sweet potato amino:
Roast 500 grams sweet potatoes in a preheated 400 F oven until cooked through. Cool, peel and discard skin and combine flesh with 500 grams rice koji and 50 grams sea salt in a mixing bowl. Using a meat grinder, run the mixture through with medium die and gently toss to fully incorporate. Move the course mixture to a nonreactive container covered with a towel. Store in a cool dark space for at least 3 months.

*We make our own misos and amino acids as part of our extensive zero-waste program. For a faster alternative you can purchase amino sauces at most health food stores including the most common from Bragg. Amino sauces are umami-packed ferments that have similar characteristics to soy sauce.

Chicken with Piri Piri Sauce
Chef Nettie Colon
Lynhall, Minneapolis

1 whole chicken, about 3½ pounds
4 sprigs thyme
3 cloves of garlic
3 sprigs rosemary
½ lemon
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons kosher salt
2 teaspoons black pepper, freshly ground

Stuff chicken with thyme, garlic and rosemary and lemon. Fold the wing tips underneath the drumettes to form a triangle. Tie the bottom part of the chicken legs together with the string.

Place chicken onto a greased sheet pan or cast-iron skillet, drizzle with olive oil and season well with salt and pepper all over. Roast chicken in a preheated 425 F oven for 15 minutes, lower to 350 F and roast for 30 minutes longer. Serve with piri piri sauce in a small bowl next to the chicken on a platter. Makes 4 servings.

To make piri piri sauce:
Combine 1 cup piquillo peppers, 3 cloves garlic, 2 tablespoons Aleppo pepper, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1½ tablespoons kosher salt, 1 tablespoon cumin seed, 2 tablespoon coriander and 1 tablespoon smoked sweet paprika in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped and drizzle with ½ cup lemon juice and ½ cup red wine vinegar while the machine is running.

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Korean jangs can offer layered flavors to any cuisine

Think of deeply flavored gochujang as a seasoning that provides layers of flavor.
**Braised Mackerel Jorim**

Chef/co-owner Chunghoon Jeong

Paju, Seattle

- 100 grams anchovy extract
- 30 grams kombu
- Jorim sauce, recipe follows
- 1 mackerel or other fatty fish
- Roasted eggplant, pureed
- Pickled yellow and purple carrots, your recipe, sliced

Combine anchovy extract and kombu with 6 liters of water and simmer 30 minutes. Strain. Add jorim sauce and simmer, covered, for an hour. Add mackerel and braise until cooked through. To plate, portion a filet and serve with pureed eggplant and sliced vegetables. Makes 2 servings.

**To make jorim sauce:**

Combine 600 grams gochujang; 100 grams soy sauce; 200 grams mirin; 240 grams sugar; 30 grams Korean chili flakes; 1,000 grams daikon; 200 grams onion; 100 grams garlic and 10 grams ginger. Top with 2 bunches scallions. Simmer for 1 hour; cool and puree.

**GOCHUJANG**

- **The Dish:** Braised Mackerel Jorim
- **The Visionary:** Chef/co-owner Chunghoon Jeong and co-owner Bill Jeong of Paju in Seattle
- **The Application:** “Gochujang is different from the other traditional jangs in that there is a delicate sweetness to it while still having this robust spiciness that often defines Korean food today,” says Bill Jeong. “It’s also so red, which really gives some Korean dishes that color. The gochujang works due to its refreshing spicy taste that pairs well with seafood, yet it’s still comforting when the weather cools. The slight sweetness from the gochujang lingers on the tongue even after you’ve swallowed the last bite of rice,” says Jeong. “We just can’t get enough of this dish.”

- **Why it Works:** “One of the main ingredients in gochujang is rice powder so as it ferments with the other ingredients, a sweet taste from the glucose emerges. The spicy, sweet and savory flavor is so unique and can be used in so many different ways,” Bill Jeong says. “We love to use it in our stews to bring back the flavors we grew up eating at home but we also like to take a more modern approach by mixing gochujang with ketchup for a sweet and tangy taste or for our favorite street food snack, tteokbokki, Korean rice cakes.”

- **Ideas for Riffing:** Pairs well in tomato sauces for pasta or pizza or as a base for stews, soups, stews, and sauce for marinated meat and fish. Add to rice or noodles or to make chojang, a sweet sauce often served with rice, Korean raw fish. Include it for pickling vegetables.

**Hansik,** or Korean food, relies heavily on fermentation. Anju, Korean sauces and pastes made from fermenting soybeans, are the foundation of the cuisine, giving Korean food its unique taste, distinct appearance and health benefits. The jangs have a depth and complexity that develops with time and traditional Korean fermenting techniques. Gochujang (red pepper paste), doenjang (soybean paste), and ssamjang (roughly translates to paste for vegetable wraps) have distinct tastes but all are incredibly versatile, enhancing and enriching just about any food. Take cues from these three Korean and Korean American chefs.

**TO GO TIP**

Packaging components separately allows for a more appealing presentation at home.

Pureed eggplant and pickled carrots provide contrast for spicier gochujang that makes up the mackerel braising sauce.
**DOENJANG**

**The Dish:** Doenjang Beef

**The Visionary:** Chef Andrew Lim and owner Thomas Oh of Perilla in Chicago

**The Application:** “We use doenjang for the Korean classic soybean stew (doenjang jjigae) and also in certain banchans (small dishes, such as perilla leaves marinated in chilies, garlic and doenjang). Pre-pandemic, we had table-side grilling available for our guests and we do a version of it now on our outdoor patio, which includes ssamjang (doenjang is an ingredient) as part of the meal. Oftentimes, our guests like to cook their meats without any marinade or seasoning on them, so the jang on the side acts as a nice punch of savory, sweet and salty,” Lim says.

**Why it Works:** “The doenjang in the braised beef works because the doenjang is packed full of salt and umami, elevating the flavor the meat. The long preparation ensures that the doenjang really works with the juices while eliminating the gamey smell of fat. The braised beef just melts in your mouth while bringing out the sweet, sour and salty notes of the doenjang from the fermentation. Doenjang alone is very savory and once cooked, there is a lot of depth and flavor that wasn’t there before. A lot of Korean food is unique and special in this way because of the addition of the most important and underappreciated ingredient: time. To the untrained nose, the smell can be considered ‘atrocious.’ But for those who grew up with the smell of fermented soybeans, either simmering in the kitchen or lingering from clay pots in the back room, the funk, the pungency and the delicious aroma is home,” Lim says.

**Ideas for Riffing:** Use it as a base for stews, soups and stir-fries or as a rub for grilled meat, fish and roasted vegetables. Works as a dip for crudites as well as a seasoning for mayonnaise and compound butter.

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**Doubanjiang:** similar name, different ingredient

Doubanjiang in Chinese translates directly to “bean paste.” There are two types of doubanjiang: dark brown pastes or red paste. The brown one is a sweet red bean paste, commonly used in desserts, whereas the red is a fermented paste made from soybeans and/or broad beans, flour, salt and chilies. This red paste is commonly used in Sichuan cuisine, as either a sauce, seasoning base or condiment. It’s very chunky in appearance, not like Korean jangs which have a smoother, silkier texture, and turn bright red when cooked in oil. Doubanjiang is closest to doenjang in color and spelling but doenjang is much spicier, saltier and earthier.

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**Doenjang Beef**

Chef Andrew Lim
Perilla, Chicago

2 pounds short rib, sliced into individual portions
Kosher salt, as needed
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
8 cups water
¼ cup garlic cloves, chopped
8 to 12 large pieces dried Korean anchovy 1 cup doenjang (fermented soybean paste) 4x4-inch piece kelp
1 teaspoon Korean chili flakes, plus more for garnishing
Scallions, chopped, as needed
Sesame seeds, as needed
2 cups short grain Korean rice, cooked

Liberally season meat with salt and sear all sides in a braising pan heated with oil until all sides are browned.

Meanwhile, puree garlic with some water; set aside. Remove head and guts of anchovy; set aside.

In a medium pot, add water, garlic puree, anchovies, doenjang, kelp, Korean chili flakes and beef; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to simmer and cook for 2 hours. Discard anchovy and kelp. Check beef for firmness. It should be soft and pull off the bone (should not fall off). Cool and refrigerate overnight to develop flavors.

To serve, heat meat to a simmer, place desired portion in center of a shallow plate or bowl and spoon broth around it. Garnish with scallions, sesame seeds and a pinch of chili flakes with a side of rice. Makes 4 servings.
SSAMJANG

The Dish: Grilled Mushroom Brown Rice Dupbap
The Visionary: Chef Susan Yoon formerly of Orsa Winston in Los Angeles

The Application: “Ssamjang is one of the most delicious sauces ever. Period. It has such a depth of flavor and savouriness that is incredible and hard to replicate in most cooking. It’s a flavor that can be described as bold and super savory but one must experience it themselves to really understand why this sauce is such a favorite. Jangs are fundamental to Korean cuisine, so I use it often in my food at home, whether it’s for banchans (Korean side dishes), stews, rice, or meats.”

Why it Works: “Most of the complexity of ssamjang comes from the two main components of the sauce, gochujang and doenjang which are created using traditional Korean fermentation methods. In contrast to Western techniques of flavor development that rely heavily on the Maillard Reaction, the complexity of Korean cuisine is driven by its multitude of fermentation techniques. Both gochujang and doenjang are savory bombs on their own, but imagine combining them together with nutty sesame oil, alliums and sesame seed. Here, the ssamjang works to bring all the components of the dupbap (Korean mixed rice), playing with the umami of the mushrooms, the nuttiness of the pulled rice and the sweet and sour notes of the pickles.”

Ideas for Riffing: Use as a dipping sauce for cucumbers (Korean gaji) or serve on side with cooked meats. Excellent as a base for banchans (Korean side dishes), stews, rice, or meats.

Grilled Mushroom Brown Rice Dupbap
Chef Susan Yoon
Formerly of Orsa Winston, Los Angeles

6 ounces king oyster mushrooms
6 ounces maitake mushrooms
2 teaspoons sesame oil
½ teaspoon koshihiki salt
Freshly ground black pepper, as needed
3 Italian frying peppers
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon Korean salted shrimp, minced
2 cups brown rice, freshly steamed
2 full sheets toasted seaweed, crushed
2 tablespoons maesil ssamjang, recipe follows
½ cup buchu (Korean garlic chive), sliced
1-inch thick
1 cup perilla leaves, chiffonade
½ cup pickled onion and daikon, recipe follows
2 tablespoons puffed rice or puffed grains
1 egg, soft-boiled

Halve or cut oyster mushrooms into thirds, depending on size. Split maitake mushrooms into 1-inch wide sections. Grill both until tender and lightly browned. Season with sesame oil, salt and black pepper; set aside.

Grill peppers until tender, then slice ½-inch thick. Add rice vinegar and salted shrimp; set aside.

In a large bowl, combine rice with seaweed, sliced mushrooms, grilled peppers and puffed grains. In the center, place half of the soft-boiled egg. Make 2 servings.

To make maesil ssamjang: Whisk together ½ cup doenjang, 2 tablespoons gochujang, 2 tablespoons sliced scallions, 1 tablespoon preserved maesil flesh*, 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, 1 teaspoon sesame oil and ½ teaspoon minced garlic.

*Maesil are sour apricots commonly used to make fermented syrup in Korea. Use salt preserved maesil (umeboshi) or fruit leftover from making syrup. Substitute with 2 teaspoons masuyu from the Korean market if fruit is not available.

To make pickled onion and daikon: Combine ½ medium yellow onion sliced into ¼-inch thick wedges, ½ pound daikon cut into matchsticks and 1 jalapeno sliced width-wise into a heatproof container. Bring ½ cup soy sauce, ½ cup rice vinegar, ½ cup water and 6 tablespoons sugar to a boil and pour over vegetables. Pickle for 24 hours.

--- Chef Susan Yoon formerly of Orsa Winston in Los Angeles

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AlTERNATIVES TO AP LEND FLAVOR, TEXTURE AND A DOSE OF HEALTHY

By Jacqueline Raposo
Photography by Matt Armendariz
Food styling by Adam Pearson
Prop styling by Stephanie Hanes
“AP flour is standard and consistent for baking, but on its own it lacks flavor and depth,” says Kaley Laird, pastry chef at Rhubarb, the Rhu and Benne on Eagle in Asheville, North Carolina.

Emphasis on healthier eating, especially as research suggests a stronger immune system plays a role in fighting the new coronavirus, is leading to greater interest in better-for-you flours. But truth be told, chefs are all about flavor, texture and cost first. If it helps tell their story, all the better.

Alternative flours provide more bang for the buck, and a rising number of local mills are grinding locally grown grains, delivering specific health, flavor and texture attributes.

They also help chefs highlight their region’s history. Benne is named after the sesame-like seed flour that was once a staple of the restaurant’s Appalachian African American community so Laird regularly uses it in her work.

“We want to take these flours out of the health realm and put them in the sexy restaurant cuisine realm,” says Edward Lee, whose restaurants speckle Louisville, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C. “These flours are really fun to work with, and they make your food taste better.”

**TO-GO TIP**
A good fit for carryout food is as important as a plated presentation.

**Mesquite Blondies**
Chef/owner Steve McHugh
Cured, San Antonio, Texas

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup mesquite powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups light brown sugar, packed
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ¾ cup chocolate chips
- ¾ cup pecans, chopped

Sift flour with mesquite and add baking powder, salt and baking soda; set aside.

Blend butter with sugar, mixing well. Add eggs and vanilla, mixing well. Add flour slowly, blending. Batter will be slightly thick.

Spread batter into a greased and floured 9x13-inch, 2-inch pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips and pecans on top and bake in a preheated 350 F oven for 25 to 30 minutes. Cool and slice into desired size.

**ALMOND**

- **What it is:** Unlike rustic almond meal, almond flour is made from finely ground blanched almonds with the skins removed.
- **How it’s applied:** It’s the primary ingredient in French macarons and Italian cookies like biscotti, ricciarelli and pasticcini.
- **Why it works:** At Bayou Bakery in Arlington, Virginia, chef David Guas folds almond into AP flour for his pate sucree and pate brisee crusts. “It adds bite, as you can taste the finely ground nuts,” he says. “And as it takes on color and then dries out, it offers a nice aromatic flavor and finish.” High in sweet oils, toasting before use adds a deeper caramel dimension.
- **Considerations:** With zero ability to bind, another flour or egg is needed for structure. The oils go rancid if not used in time. Not an option for nut allergies.

The rise of specialty diets—and the increase of chefs reporting intolerances of their own—should be enough to adjust the AP (all-purpose) flour bin. But omission is only part of the equation.
COCONUT
> What it is: Milled dried coconut meat.
> How it’s applied: Pastry applications benefit from the flour’s natural sweetness and fine texture, easily subbing into cake and cookie recipes. Its natural creaminess also works for setting up dairy-free panna cotta. Chef Nicholas Elmi of Laurel in Philadelphia says the flour absorbs liquid and dextrinises well, referring to torched meringue. “And you don’t have to add a tremendous amount of sugar.”
> Why it works: Sweet, creamy and light, this powerhouse flour is ideal for gluten-free, dairy-free and low-sugar applications.
> Considerations: Coconut can have four times the fiber of whole-wheat flour. “If you baked a cake two days ago, it’s now going to be super crumbly and dry, even if you altered your ratios since coconut flour absorbs liquid,” warns Laird of how it sucks moisture. Increase liquids and fats accordingly.

MESQUITE
> What it is: Flour ground from both the pods and beans of mesquite wood trees.
> How it’s applied: Mesquite was once a staple of the indigenous tribes of the American Southwest, says Steve McHugh of Cured in San Antonio, Texas. “I use it as a flour, as a sugar and as a spice,” he says. Unfolding notes of vanilla, cinnamon, cocoa, coconut or graham, it has a little bulk and works particularly well in blondies, which don’t require much structure and lean towards caramel-like flavors. It also adds warm spice but not bulk to cornmeal porridge, moles and caramel sauces.
> Why it works: The obscure mesquite shocks in its intensity, history and versatility. “It’s like nothing I’ve ever tasted before,” McHugh says, adding that it entices locals and food nerds who think they’ve tried it all. “I think people are starting to pay attention.”
> Considerations: Mesquite can be bought online from Peruvian and Argentinian producers, but McHugh orders from Barton Springs Mill outside of Austin, Texas, one of the few mills grinding locally foraged mesquite beans.

A true legend in the baking industry and continues to be the standard against which all high gluten flours are measured. Perfects well in bagels, thin crust pizza, hard rolls, and hearth breads.

Learn More at www.generalmillscf.com

More Choice Flours
- Amaranth: Slightly sweet with a malt-like flavor, consider this hearty gluten-free alternative for rich dessert applications and dense hoe cakes.
- Benne: Adds earthiness and a fatty richness reminiscent of a subtler whole wheat or rye. Saltiness and bitterness emerges if used with too strong a hand; watch blending ratios.
- Einkorn: “It’s like an heirloom tomato to a commercial one,” chef Edward Lee says of einkorn wheat to bleached wheat flour. “More flavor, more fiber, more protein.”
- Rye: The workhorse of beers and sourdough breads, adding rye to menu items makes a familiar whole-grain adjustment for diners. And with flours ranging from light to pumpernickel-dark, intensity can be adjusted accordingly.
- Spelt: Think of spelt as a softer and subtler whole wheat with a finer grain, making it an easy swap for AP or bread flour.
- Teff: An ancient gluten-free grain originating from North Africa, teff has an earthy, nutty flavor and works well in sweet chocolate desserts or savory pastas and breads.
**ACORN**

- **What it is:** From oak trees, acorns are leached of their bitter tannins before the nutmeats are finely ground.
- **How it’s applied:** Once a staple of several Native American tribes, acorn was used interchangeably with cornmeal. “Down here, they made acorn cakes,” Elmi says referring to the Lenape trail where Philadelphia crosses. Acorn adds rounded notes of sweet vanilla and slightly bitter hazelnut to his malted acorn waffles, balanced with whipped egg yolk, vinegar and maple, and topped with caviar.
- **Why it works:** Because it’s dense and crisps well, acorn makes a flavorful flour for frying chicken and incorporates well into strongly flavored recipes. It also teaches diners about local history and sustainability.
- **Considerations:** Not many local mills grind acorn, but it’s available online. Because of its density, only use acorn in recipes that fully bake out; underbaking delivers a pasty texture.

**Malted Acorn Waffle, L’Aperge Egg, Paddlefish Caviar**

*Chef Nicholas Elmi*

*Laurel, Philadelphia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malted flour</th>
<th>180 grams flour</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 grams acorn flour</td>
<td>32 grams sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 grams salt</td>
<td>2 grams baking powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 grams vanilla paste</td>
<td>37 grams malted milk powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 eggs, divided</td>
<td>244 grams whole milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226 gram butter, melted</td>
<td>4 egg yolks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon sherry vinegar</td>
<td>1 teaspoon maple syrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste</td>
<td>6 to 7 ounces ice water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sweet Potato-Honey Herb Syrup**

*Makes 2 quarts.*

Combine dry ingredients in a bowl; set aside.

Whip the egg whites; set aside. Beat 2 egg yolks until pale and add milk, butter and vanilla. Slowly emulsify the wet into the dry then gently fold in the whipped egg whites. Spoon into a small preheated waffle pan and allow to cook, following the waffle iron manufacturer’s instructions.

Make “l’aperge” egg by coddling yolks and cream over water bath, carefully avoiding scrambling eggs. Season with sherry vinegar, maple syrup, salt and pepper.

To place, top waffle with a small portion of creamy egg and dollop caviar. Makes 2 servings with extra waffles.

**Benne and Rye Chess Pie**

*Pastry chef Kaley Laird*

*Rhubarb, the Rhu and Benne on Eagle*

*Ashville, North Carolina*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 pound flour</th>
<th>1/2 cup brown sugar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/4 cup melted butter</td>
<td>6 tablespoons buttermilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup maple syrup</td>
<td>3/4 teaspoon sherry vinegar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon cinnamon</td>
<td>1/2 teaspoon nutmeg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sweet Potato-Honey Herb Syrup**

*Make 1 pie and 4 to 5 pie shells.*

Combine dry ingredients and pour into shell. Bake in a preheated 325 F oven for an hour, covering the rim of the crust to prevent burning. Cool, slice and drizzle with Sweet Potato-Honey Herb Syrup. Makes 1 pie and 4 to 5 pie shells.

**Combines:**

- Malted acorn waffles can be dressed up with creamy egg and caviar or topped with crispy chicken and hot honey.
- A classic chess pie gets an update with rye and benne.
Farinata, Crescenza, Roasted Peppers, Rosemary, Lemon and Pecorino
Chef Hillary Sterling
Vic’s, New York

40 ounces chickpea flour
2 tablespoons salt
64 ounces water
Olive oil, as needed
3 ounces Crescenza or mozzarella cheese
2 ounces pecorino, grated
3 ounces roasted or pickled red peppers
3 ounces sautéed onions
Fresh lemon, as needed
Fresh rosemary, chopped, as desired

Combine flour and salt; slowly whisk in water to make a smooth batter. Cover with plastic wrap and allow to sit at room temperature for 3 hours. Refrigerate and use within 24 to 48 hours.

Preheat an 8 or 9.5-inch nonstick or cast-iron pan over high heat (farinata will not rise if the vessel is not very hot). Swirl 1 heaping tablespoon olive oil in the pan followed by 6 ounces batter. Lower the flame and watch the batter set around the edges.

Once the batter is set, (little bubbles will form) flip the farinata using a fish spatula, add another tablespoon of olive oil to crisp up the other side. Place pan in a preheated 400 F oven and wait for the batter to firm, about 2 minutes. Top with Crescenza or mozzarella followed by pecorinos, peppers and onions. Return to the oven and bake a few minutes more until cheese is melted and peppers are warm. Place on a plate, squeeze lemon over the top and sprinkle with rosemary. Makes 1 farinata with leftover batter.

Chickpea
* What it is: Also called besan or gram, this legume flour provides body and bulk.
* How it’s applied: A staple in Middle Eastern and Indian recipes, chickpea makes for a tangy, savory flatbread called socca in both France and India and farinata in northern Italy. “The natural proteins ferment really well, and that fermentation acts as your rising agent,” says chef Hillary Sterling of Vic’s in New York, who keeps a seasonally rotating farinata on her menu. When that fermentation hits a flaming hot pan, the center fluffs while the edges reach a crisp that holds up to massively flavorful toppings.
* Why it works: Chickpea is dense, so it easily binds crepes and crackers and thickens soups and sauces without thinning flavor. It holds its own in high heat, so chips fry with ease.
* Considerations “Chickpea flour can be abrasive on its own,” warns Laird of using it in sweet applications or those that need a gentle crumb.

Gluten-free farinata can be the base for endless possibilities—not just okonomiyaki or flatbreads that include gluten.

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Smart Manufacturing

TO-GO TIP
Reduce packaging by combining individual components for multiple orders.

Smart Manufacturing

TO-GO TIP
Reduce packaging by combining individual components for multiple orders.
Navy-strength gins, overproof rums and barrel-proof whiskeys are taking center stage on cocktail menus across the country. Some beverage pros speculate that the rise in popularity for 100-proof and higher could be the result of the “sober curious” movement; others believe the swing is a natural progression of exposure to a globalized liquor market. Regardless, guests and staff alike are into appreciating and experimenting with these unique spirits. Individual beverage prices range from the high teens to low twenties, so many establishments wondered if they could jump on board, and eventually found that the intensity and depth of flavor, along with the wide range of uses, eased the sticker shock and upped the intrigue.

That’s especially true as bars and restaurants try to return to a new normal. While social distancing has impacted the bar crowd, overproof cocktails feel like a much needed indulgence and learning about ways to use them has been a welcome activity.

“Overproofs allow bartenders to more closely control their dilution rates and therefore, flavor distribution,” says Brian Maxwell of Couvant bar in New York City.

**The Johnny**

**Bartender:** Peter Browne

**Mother of Pearl,** New York City

1 ounce Plantation Stiggins’ Fancy Pineapple Rum

1 ounce Laird’s Bonded Applejack

¾ ounce Granny Smith apple juice

½ ounce demerara syrup

¼ ounce Plantation OFTD

¼ ounce lemon juice

¾ ounce aquafaba

Hard shake with four ice cubes and fine-strain into a fizz glass, then top with soda. Garnish with a dehydrated apple wheel. Makes 1 drink.

Drinks like The Johnny and its apple wheel garnish can be packaged to go.

**Why So Much?**

Overproof spirits tend to sit at a higher price point for a handful of reasons: tariffs and long distillation times. Its higher proof, however, means less volume per beverage so a small inventory goes a long way.
New Orleans. “When you think about, say, a drink that’s made with a 40% spirit that is then strained and strained, you’re diluting that alcohol three times—once in the distillation process, once in the tumbler, and again into the glass.”

**ROOM TO INNOVATE**

Cocktailers are gifted tremendous creative freedom for tinkering with flavor profiles as a result of this dilution rate stability. “I am still working on a batch-based cocktail that I’ve added half an ounce of overproof Guyanese rum to,” says Maxwell. “It provides a concentration of flavor that would otherwise require a higher volume of alcohol and would make for an impractically large drink.”

Maxwell’s tinkering has a wide scope. He says that, though he has seen an uptick in requests for overproof daiquiris and old fashions, he rarely uses overproof spirits as foundational drink elements when designing a menu, preferring to wield a liquor’s intensity in more avant-garde ways. “Use them as seasoning,” Maxwell encourages, noting that his favorite application is in the Ca Défio, a cocktail that calls for using a spray bottle and torch to blast Rum Fire over mezcal, Muscadet and passion fruit immediately before serving. “They raise the octane level,” says Peter Browne, a bartender at Mother of Pearl in New York City. “Easing able to use such a small amount and still have it come across your palate that way is really cool and interesting because they’re not sure what they’re tasting in the cocktail.”

**BUILD A COMMUNITY**

While restaurants probably don’t want to recommend the same procedure for a carryout cocktail, there are many other options. Zoom Happy Hours among coworkers early in the pandemic morphed into restaurants hosting mixology lessons online—an ideal way for bartenders to educate consumers and create a rapport.

In Washington D.C., for example, bartenders from various restaurants host a Quarantine Virtual Cocktail Series on Half Smoke D.C.’s Instagram account. On one live show, Fabian Malone of Left Door and Dougie’s Backyard discussed The Jamaican Godfather, a cocktail made with Wray & Nephew overproof rum, Averna, mango chutney, honey syrup and lime juice.

Many of these drinks and brands have rich and storied histories with their traditional utilization in Tiki, and though modern application widely transcends the genre, Tiki can provide a particularly engaging, culturally instructive backdrop.

Mother of Pearl continued its regular Tiki study classes by socially distancing guests and requiring masks when not sampling drinks. Taking a deep-dive into early 20th century staples opens a world of possibilities for bringing guests up to speed on how the cocktail craft has evolved, and integrating overproof spirits into classic recipes both lends to this goal and allows establishments to bust out the “good stuff” in a way that’s financially accessible.

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

“Overproof cocktails allow you to cater to a wider variety of drinkers,” says Teddi Sutton, a bartender at Wheated in Brooklyn, New York’s Flatbush/Kensington area. Even if it’s for takeout or delivery, Sutton has noticed a recent rise in popularity among more casual imbibers. “Less spirit equals less calories,” he says, “and higher proof equals more bang for your buck.” Sutton notes that this means higher price points don’t dissuade budget-conscious customers. “Weight and wallet watchers love these drinks because they can experience something specialized and indulgent without compromising the lifestyle adjustments they’ve invested in.”

Food pairings, however, can be tricky. Since the pandemic, The Barrel Thief, a whiskey and wine bar, has transitioned to an online store that includes overproof whiskies. To make at home, Goodman advises serving overproof cocktails with starters that allow the drink to take center stage without stepping on any of the entrée’s toes. “You need something that is going to hold up to those flavors but also, it can’t be too dominant,” Goodman says, suggesting barreled-aged cocktails with food. “It helps infuse those flavors a little better and softens the edges the longer it’s in the barrel,” she says. “The barrel-aged Negroni is a favorite to make at home.”

**How to take overproof booze over the top**

A good shake with ice can produce a cold drink without diluting it. If ice accompanies the cocktail, use crushed.

**“THERE’S A LOT OF ROOM FOR CRUSHED ICE TO WORK WITH AN OVERPROOF AS THE DRINK AGES,” says Brian Maxwell of Couvant bar in New Orleans. “It’s the gift that keeps on giving.”**

- Newcomers may not think of an overproof rum as a “sipper,” so offer samples but beware of overserving, says Peter Browne of the Mother of Pearl. Whether the sipper is a newbo or aficionado, sampling will always start a conversation.

- Serve overproof whiskey with an accompanying dropper of distilled water,” says Taryn Goodman of The Barrel Thief in Seattle. For currywurst, include the plastic dropper and directions. Overproofs are meant to be tinkered with.
But winning pizza means far more than ordinary crust and toppings. Pizza has gone from comfort-food staple to shutdown star during the pandemic, upping the stakes.

“The respect level of pizza has gone up, and really incredible chefs are pushing boundaries,” says Thomas Garnick, chef/owner of Denver’s Brava! Pizza. “People are taking the time to respect the craft, the science behind the dough and where good quality ingredients come from.”

From the flour in the dough to the tomatoes in the sauce, choice of California cheese, types of toppings, and the method of baking, a great pizza is the sum of its parts. It all starts with the crust, which is why most chefs perfect theirs before considering other elements.

For some, that means a proprietary flour blend. For instance, Garnick likes the nuttiness that Colorado hard wheat gives his dough. In Texas, Jersey Pies owner Buffy Wimmer uses three flours, including whole wheat and “00” for her thin, New York-style crust. The moisture in the dough and the length of fermentation also plays a role.

“The texture and flavor of the dough can make or break a great pizza,” says Wimmer. “Our crust is crisp on the outside, chewy on the inside, and firm enough to stand up to all manner of toppings. Toppings, sauce and cheese help individualize pizza and provide great flavor, but the crust is the foundation.”

Chefs can blend shredded cheese, from mozzarella and stracciatella to caciocavallo and even cheddar for specific flavor blends and textures.

In New York, Ribalta’s Pasquale Cozzolino started using more domestic cheeses to supplement the imported buffalo mozzarella and fior di latte that make his Neapolitan-style pizza stand out at his Greenwich Village spot. It was a cost-cutting effort, but he also appreciates the flavor nuances that domestic cheese brings.

In Los Angeles, Ronan chef Daniel Cutler sources most of his ingredients from California, the country’s second-largest producer of cheese. From pea tendrils to the cheese made in nearby El Monte, everything from mozzarella and ricotta to stracciutella and caciocavallo, his pizzas can be flavor bombs. Consider his riff on Buffalo chicken wings in pie form, made with housemade ’nduja, lacto-fermented celery and a Gorgonzola cream sauce. However, he still aims for nuance and harmony. Too many toppings and the pie could be soggy—already a challenge for takeout pizza.

“You can’t go overboard,” Cutler adds. “It’s about the layering of flavors but also how you layer the ingredients. You move this style of pizza in very abrupt ways to get from the counter to the oven. If the toppings aren’t properly affixed to the crust...
How to Stay on Top with Pizza

With a universally beloved food like pizza and a scenario where takeout is the only constant for operators, staying ahead of the competition is more important than ever.

“Doesn’t matter if it’s classic Neapolitan, Detroit squares or Chicago deep dish, you can tell a story with any good pizza,” says Thomas Garnick, chef/owner of Denver’s Brava! Pizza.

Here are some takeout considerations, especially for those who believe a wood-fired pie should be eaten right out of the oven:

- Include instructions on reheating.
- Leave the pie unsliced to help keep its integrity.
- Sell pizza kits so customers can enjoy the entertainment value and right-out-of-the-oven experience.
- Consider frozen pizza but watch for moisture, rate of freezing the dough and how the cheese melts both the first and the second time. “When I bite into that reheated pizza, I don’t want it to be a similar experience to a grocery store pizza,” says Garnick.

Flavor and texture begins with the crust, such as the one from Jersey Pie, left, and continues with toppings, including California cheese and the How ’Nduja Want It from Ronan.

The respect level of pizza has gone up, and really incredible chefs are pushing boundaries. People are taking the time to respect the craft and the science behind the dough, where good quality ingredients come from.”

—Thomas Garnick, chef/owner of Denver’s Brava! Pizza

Real Makers

Ingredients for the cutting edge of craft

Chef Thomas Garnick Figured Out How to Turn an Accident Into a Star Attraction.

We were actually trying to make breadsticks out of our pizza dough.

But it stuck together and looked like a star.

So we said...let’s go with that!

We fill the point’s with California mozzarella and pour a gooey California Fontina Fongue in the center for dipping.

Watch this cool technique in real time: realcaliforniadiary.com/learnmore

The Fonduta Cheese that Ronan Pizzetta in Denver
MEETING THE MOMENT /

What “do better” looks like in an era of racial awakening

By Tonya Russell

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Many businesses are rising up to the importance of amplifying Black and marginalized voices. On Blackout Tuesday earlier this year, social media feeds—well represented by influencers—were dark to support the Black Lives Matter movement. But months later, how has that message translated in the foodservice industry?

Numerous restaurants took a stand on social media by vowing to examine their bias and posting Black Lives Matter signs in their restaurants. Others raised funds for various organizations that promote equality while 2,000 people around the world participated in Bakers Against Racism, a virtual fundraiser launched by three pastry chefs, including Paola Velez (see interview, page 60), that raised $1.6 million for ELM. Such measures are indeed noteworthy but what kind of lasting impact will this awakening leave? Four restaurateurs share their actions, providing insight on how to fulfill the much used pledge to “do better.”

Nicole Marquis

Restaurant, HipCityVeg, Bar Bombon and Charlie was a Sinner.

ACTIONS: Supporting the right to vote, anti-racism employee training and fundraising for empowerment organizations (NGO) that support social justice initiatives. Recently created partnerships with African American influencers.

Marquis, the founder of HipCityVeg, a chain of plant-based restaurants in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., takes the right to vote seriously. She’s offering paid time off on Election Day so employees can go to the polls.

Voter registration and encouraging voting are a central part of her company’s marketing plan, which are backed by social media, flyers in takeout bags, e-Hearts to customers and working with Rock the Vote to create awareness. Her workers also will be undergoing anti-racism training this fall, and she is reviewing proposals from groups offering that training. “We’ve also raised and donated money to the Equal Justice Initiative. And we’re doing an NGO fundraiser that all restaurants will participate in to raise more funds and awareness.” The EJI works to rectify mass incarceration, which disproportionately affects minorities. “To make a corporate donation and also donated $1 from every online order placed through HipCityVeg for a whole week.”

Marquis pledges continuing support to fellow Latinx and Black communities. “This is the beginning, and this is going to be an ongoing conversation. That is going to be part of the fiber. We have so many employees of color, and my family is from Puerto Rico. I’ve seen the issues and struggles that they’ve gone through. It’s about time that (change) is really coming to the surface.”

Jose Garces

Restaurateur, multiple concepts in Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey under the Garces Group

ACTIONS: Founded the Garces Foundation to aid undererved immigrant communities that in part helps with advancement to management and restaurant ownership.

A second-generation Ecuadorian American, Garces has a long history of helping the immigrant and minority communities in Philadelphia. His Philadelphia restaurants have been among the best places to work in Philadelphia for 2019.

“A focus on Black ownership and working directly with Black chefs is an important aspect of fostering inclusivity,” Garces says of the foodservice industry. “One of the big things about making the jump from cook or chef to owner is that there is so much that you just don’t know. There may be a space for a business workshop that delves into ‘101 things I wish I knew’ that ties into some of the specific pain points that Black and other minority chefs face, specifically access to capital and leasing.”

He recognizes the value of diversity and strives to create a family atmosphere in the front and back of the house. “The great thing about the food industry is that there is a real sense of inclusivity. There is literally a space for everyone.”

Garces’s objective is to continue to push for a work environment that feels safe for all staff. “One of the most important things we can do is to actively maintain clear standards of behavior and foster an inclusive environment that encourages people to feel comfortable speaking up if there is a situation that makes them uncomfortable.”

Robert Watson

Restaurant group, Restaurateur, multiple concepts in Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey under the Garces Group

ACTIONS: Prominent Black leaders play an active role in ensuring that a healthy work environment is maintained.

“Make your workers feel safe. We need to ensure that we don’t just rely on self-reporting, that our management takes an active role in ensuring that a healthy work environment is maintained.”

—Jose Garces

“Impact from Black chefs is critical,” Watson adds. “I’ve seen the issues and struggles that they’ve gone through. It’s about time that (change) is really coming to the surface.”

Meaningful inclusion from 4 restaurateurs Increasing diversity and fostering inclusivity comes from the top. Some ideas:

* Hire people because you want to be successful but also because you want them to be successful. Don’t hire Black people just give them a job but give them a future.*

—Darnell Ferguson

* There is no better way to share and grow together than over food and drink. Promoting this will bring us closer, foster true unity and understanding in order to combat the inequalities and lack of understanding that continue to exist in our society.*

—Robert Watson

* Diversity and anti-racism training should be incorporated on an ongoing basis as well as amplifying Black voices.*

—Nicole Marquis

Nicole Marquis

Restaurant, HipCityVeg, Bar Bombon and Charlie was a Sinner.

ACTIONS: Supporting the right to vote, anti-racism employee training and fundraising for empowerment organizations (NGO) that support social justice initiatives. Recently created partnerships with African American influencers.
Darnell Ferguson  
Restaurateur, owner of SuperChefs in Louisville, Kentucky, and Superhero Chefs in Tuscumbia, Alabama

ACTIONS: Promoting people of color as a way to even the playing field; hosted the Kings & Queens Unity March to spread awareness about police brutality.

Ferguson was once a sous chef who dreamed of taking the lead. He saw people like himself in the industry—those who work hard and cook food that everyone enjoys—but not in leadership roles. “We play a vital part, but not at the top.”

That changed when Ferguson opened his first restaurant, yet people are often surprised to find out that he’s the owner. For the longest time, he was the only Black owner on the busy Bardstown Road stretch in Louisville, and a rival for the top spot in town.

He knows he’s in a unique position, so his attempts to provide equity for Black people is an ongoing effort. All too often Black people work the same line for 15 years, a reality Ferguson began addressing by hiring a Black executive chef. “The way I hire is intentional. You can go to 90 restaurants in this city, and there could be one Black chef.” Despite great references, his executive chef was never able to advance.

“He is so grateful for the opportunity—and super talented,” Ferguson says. “The opportunities just aren’t out there for Black chefs.”

Robert Watson  
Executive chef for Steak 48

ACTIONS: Partnership with the YWCA to create a culture of equality.

Steak 48 recently became founding members of the YWCA’s Racial Justice League, the longstanding organization’s initiative to fight racism and empower women. With the YWCA’s help, their six steakhouse restaurants with locations in Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia and Scottsdale, Arizona, have added cultural humility and unconscious bias courses for management and staff.

“We believe part of our work is in support of this organization, we are not only enhancing our commitment to philanthropic support but also have included additional real action,” a Steak 48 spokesperson said in a statement.

Watson, the executive chef for the steakhouses, acknowledges that the food industry is diverse, but society still has a long way to go. He believes that the restaurant industry is a “great platform” for growth. “Promoting this (overall equality) will bring us closer, foster true unity and understanding in order to combat the inequalities and lack of understanding that continue to exist in our society.”

The restaurants will do their part, he says, through education, open dialogue and a culture of consideration, he says.

“By truly seeing, hearing and learning about each other, we promise to provide a safe place for all of our employees both back of house and front of house to come to every day and also for our guests to feel welcome and at home. That includes providing peace, understanding, kindness, acceptance, family and equality.”

12  
Percentage of chefs and head cooks in the U.S. who are Black.

Source: Deloitte

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- Minimal prep and mixing
- Superior food safety (no raw eggs)
- 12-month shelf stable
- 12-hour refrigerated hold time on breaded product before frying
- Better adhesion and appearance
- Adjustable thickness
- Minimal prep and mixing
- Superior food safety (no raw eggs)
- 12-month shelf stable
- 12-hour refrigerated hold time on breaded product before frying

APN Description  APN Description
6268031 Original PreDipt 2397453 Beer Batter PreDipt
3128972 Original PreDipt (50lb) 7271802 Zesty PreDipt
5614789 Buttermilk PreDipt 664599 Hot n Spicy PreDipt
8397317 Coconut PreDipt 8980344 Chile Lime PreDipt

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Chef/activist Paola Velez on saying no to no

For pastry chef Paola Velez, supporting Black Lives Matter was a no-brainer. Not only was she angered by longstanding racial injustice, set even more aflame by the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, but she has experienced overt and covert racism in the restaurant industry.

Raised in the Bronx, New York with summers spent visiting family in the Dominican Republic, Velez didn’t see a lot of women of color in management. Working through the ranks meant enduring the degrading, male-dominated kitchen, which spanned from derogatory comments about her appearance to being told that “Black girls can’t be vegan bakers.” This would crush anyone’s soul, but it only made her stronger and more determined to succeed. Like the desserts she creates, Velez is bold and insightful, and a Pied Piper for young chefs trying to make a difference.

Q. You’ve been very candid about your struggles as a woman of color, especially early in your career. What were some of the roadblocks you hit and how did you overcome them?

A. I didn’t apply for pastry chef positions because I didn’t want to deal with the rejection. But once the #MeToo movement happened, I found this new boldness. I figured what’s the worst that can happen? If they say no, they say no. I heard “no” many times until one person didn’t judge my outward appearance and only focused on the techniques and skills that I had to offer. That’s when I was the pastry sous chef for Jacques Torres.

Q. What lessons did you learn from Torres that you’ve applied as a leader?

A. Jacques saw my willingness to learn, to be there and show up, and he rewarded that. That was the first time I saw positive reinforcement for working so hard. He and Hasty (Torres’ spouse) told me I could be creative in the kitchen, that it’s not their rodeo. They gave me a title. I want to give people the same space to create. I want them to be a part of and add to the conversation. I give credit for their dishes on social media. I fought for months to get my pastry sous chef her title because I know the importance of that later on. As chefs, we have to listen to the people who are cooking for and with us.
Q. What women did you turn to for advice?
A. Rose (Previte, owner of Maydan and Compass Rose in Washington, D.C.). When I was furloughed from Kith/Kin, I messaged her and said I have something I need to work through. And after two hours of talking, she asked if I was looking for a job. It all made sense. After working through the African diaspora at Kith/Kin, it’s the perfect time to segue into how the Atlantic slave trade and the Silk Road intersect.

Q. How do you balance being an executive pastry chef and an activist?
A. As people started to recognize me as a pastry chef, they saw things I was doing behind the scenes. My own challenge was understanding that my experience and work technique were valuable. Once I got that down, everything else is just me expressing my opinion. I’m never ashamed of how I feel, especially when it’s for the good of another person.

Q. Is it a challenge rallying your coworkers and colleagues to do the same?
A. When they understand you have the best intentions for human beings, people follow. If I host a bake sale for our local elementary school, the whole kitchen activates. When I did the Dona Dona doughnut pop-ups to raise funds for Ayuda DC, which helps undocumented immigrants get the papers they need, all of my staff showed up and bought doughnuts. And we were all furloughed!

Q. What made Bakers Against Racism so successful?
A. I took some of the lessons I learned from Dona Dona and applied them here. Mostly I knew we had to go big. We only raised about $1,000 for Ayuda DC, and I felt like it wasn’t enough. I figured if we enlisted more bakers and supplied them with the tools to do their own pop-ups, both professional and home bakers could sign up. Everything was available online, it was automated. By the first day of launch, we had 1,000 emails of interest. By the time we launched pre-sales, we had 9,000 emails. In the end we had 2,400 groups participate.

Q. Why do you think activism resonates so much with pastry chefs?
A. We’re there to celebrate with you. We’re the last touch of a meal. Everything we do is to create happiness. I see bakers rallying together to bring joy. We brought a little bit of peace in a chaotic time.

Q. How should chefs and restaurateurs continue to fight for radical change in their day-to-day?
A. Teach how to transition from cook to management roles. Make pathways in the restaurant to bring equity at the table. Listen to diverse voices. The less you’re in a vacuum, the more you’re going to see the bigger picture and impact more lives.”

—Paola Velez

What Happens When You Find Your Voice
Paola Velez
Age: 29
» Executive pastry chef at Maydan and Compass Rose, Washington, D.C.
» Co-founded Bakers Against Racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, which raised $1.9 million for Black Lives Matter through a global bake sale. Also launched Bake the Vote 2020, a similar fundraiser, to ensure a fair election.
» James Beard Foundation 2020 Rising Star finalist.

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**What Happens When You Find Your Voice**

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The longer the pandemic drags on, the more consumers will have to order delivery or takeout. And the more plastic they’ll toss into the trash. Since the pandemic began, single-use plastics have increased by 250 to 300%, the Plastic Pollution Coalition reports. While off-premise dining has been projected to make up 70% of a restaurant’s business over the next several years, no one expected a new coronavirus to surpass that figure overnight, stymieing earth-friendly practices.

Operators, however, can get back on track if for no other reason than to stem financial losses from the pandemic. Take an opt-in, rather than opt-out, approach to disposables so customers must request napkins and utensils. Also, offer that opt-in option on online-ordering platforms. Around the start of the shutdowns, the fast casual chain Just Salad shifted to opt-in on its online-ordering platform, and reduced utensils for pickup and delivery orders by 88%.

On average, a restaurant can save $5,000 a year by taking two simple steps: asking customers whether they want disposable cutlery, condiments, napkins and straws as well as the quantity, and offering the opt-in option electronically, according to Michael Oshman, CEO and founder of Green Restaurant Association. That’s part of a bigger waste-reduction strategy that can be summed up with three R’s, Oshman says: reduce, reuse and recycle. “We as a society focus on recycling, but the first thing is to reduce.”

Paper containers made mostly of post-consumer waste is the simplest way to reuse, Oshman says. “A product made out of waste is better than one made out of a virgin tree or virgin petroleum, so even if it ends up in the garbage, it already has some environmental benefit,” he says.

As for reuse: Reusable containers instantly got a bad rap amid pandemic-related safety concerns, but those fears were unfounded. And while reusables and takeout might sound like an impractical pairing, some startups have been proving just the opposite.

Dispatch Goods in San Francisco; GO Box in Portland, Oregon; Green GrubBox in Seattle; and Rogue To Go in Ashland, Oregon all offer reusable containers for takeout and delivery. With Dispatch Goods, for instance, customers order from participating restaurants that package their food in Dispatch’s reusable stainless steel containers. Customers then toss the containers into Dispatch bins, where they’re picked up and then cleaned.

GO Box provides a similar service, but with plastic containers. “We’re material agnostic,” says Jocelyn Gasoli Quarrell, CEO/owner of GO Box. “We don’t think certain materials are good or bad. We want to use a material to its best utilization, so that carbon emissions, energy consumed and waste generated is reduced across a reusable’s life cycle compared to single-use.” Each GO Box container gets used 200 to 400 times before it’s retired.

That speaks to a thorny truth around eco-friendly packaging: It’s not a simple black and white issue. Consider compostable containers, made from plants such as corn, sugarcane and bamboo. Despite common misconceptions, “compostable” does not equal “biodegradable.” Biodegradable products decompose in nature. Compostable means the product can be turned into compost immediately—but it requires a professional composting facility. And there are only 185 full-scale composting facilities in the U.S. Also, compostables often have liners made of chemicals that don’t break down. In fact, beware of “green washing”—marketing claims that materials, such as...
The line loves plastic. Mise en place neatly fits in “deli containers” and while sturdier ones can be washed and reused, that’s not always the practice. Plastic is functional and seemingly cheap. “But if we considered the environmental costs of plastic, it would absolutely be one of the most expensive materials on the market,” says Rachael Coccia, plastics pollution manager at Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit environmental organization.

There’s some low-hanging fruit to curb the use of plastic, Coccia says. For example:

Do use paper instead of plastic bags.

Do use containers made of post-consumer waste.

Don’t put your food in Styrofoam. “That’s one of the most toxic forms of single-use plastic,” Coccia says.

Don’t create more waste or waste your money by automatically including disposable utensils, straws, napkins and condiments with every to-go order. Most consumers use their own utensils to eat takeout.

Don’t force customers to opt out of getting disposable cutlery with their takeout.

Bioplastics, are more eco-friendly than they are in reality. “If it doesn’t look like the organic material it claims to be, think about the process it took to get it into that state and the process it will take to get it back into an organic compound,” says Rachael Coccia, plastics pollution manager at Surfrider Foundation, a national nonprofit environmental organization based in San Clemente, California. “Bottom line is, if it looks like plastic, it’s probably best to avoid it.”

Goodonya, an organic eatery near the Southern California coast, has been plastic-free for over a decade. It uses compostables. They’re not the ideal product, but they’re certainly not as bad as petroleum-based plastics, says Kris Buchanan, founder/CEO of Goodonya in Encinitas, California. “Compostable is a bit like choosing the lesser of evils,” Buchanan says. “Eventually, compostables will break down. Plastic will never break down.”

Takeout containers might not get more sustainable than those at Moku Roots, a vegan, zero-waste restaurant in Lahaina, Hawaii. It uses the leaves of the banana-like ti plant to wrap items such as sandwiches and burritos. For anything that can’t be leaf-wrapped, the eatery uses a stainless steel container, and charges a $10 refundable deposit.

“On our Instagram feed, people comment a lot on our sustainable packaging,” says Lisa Limb, operations director and managing partner at Nami Sushi. “It’s a marketing investment, she adds.

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“People (especially among younger diners) view the company with higher regard” because it uses compostables, Buchanan says. That’s been the case for Nami Nori, a sushi hand roll bar in New York City.

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45% Food and packaging material account for almost 45 percent of U.S. landfill materials. -Environmental Protection Agency
Getting to the other side of the pandemic may be slow, but progress has been steady. Diners are adapting to change; use the numbers to identify opportunities.

**RECOVERY MODE**

**Price Conscious**

- 50% of consumers say fine dining, casual takeout is overpriced.

**Meal Appeal**

- Family meal and meal bundle preference since May.
  - 45% Appetizers, entrees, sides, and desserts
  - 38% Appetizers, entrees and sides
  - 17% Entrees only
  - 9% Sides only

**What Looks Good**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP MENU CHOICES</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Now</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
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**Remaking Restaurants: Consumers on the changing landscape**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remake</th>
<th>Have tried it</th>
<th>No interest</th>
<th>Would like to try</th>
<th>Would keep purchasing</th>
</tr>
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<td>Affordable takeout from upscale restaurants</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<td>29%</td>
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<td>27%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<td>Pantry staples</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocktail kits</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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**Source:** Datassential

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Crispy from your door to theirs

- 62% of consumers are looking for better fry delivery.*

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- Original ¾” Regular Cut Fries

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- Original ¾” Regular Cut Fries

**Source:** Datassential

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