



Menu Clips

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Tracking Menu Activity
Throughout the
Foodservice Industry

MENU-MINDED: Insider Commentary



Post-Recession Pricing and Menu Strategies

Laura McGuire, Editorial Manager

Today's foodservice landscape is a more rugged terrain than it was five years ago. Although the economy is on the rebound, restaurant sales have been slow to increase and consumers are still bargain-shopping when dining out. In this post-recession environment, operators are finding new ways to offer value and entice customers to visit while still trying to recoup sales. New menu offerings and pricing promotions are two of the primary strategies that restaurants are using to rebuild lost business.

Enhancing a menu is an effective way to drive business. **Steak n Shake's** expansion into the breakfast daypart is an example of a recent strategic menu development. This move is not only broadening the chain's targeted demographic but also enabling it to better compete with midscale competitors such as **Denny's** and **IHOP**, both known for their varied breakfast menus. Although Steak n Shake's reputation is based on its steakburgers and milk shakes, the company has set out to reimage itself as a more broadly appealing concept. The new breakfast menu, available daily from 6 to 11 a.m., includes traditional offerings such as biscuits and sausage gravy; a fruit and yogurt parfait; a three-egg and Cheddar cheese scramble; all-you-can-eat pancakes; and breakfast sandwiches made with biscuits, mini-buns or bagels.

An evolving pricing strategy is another way to gradually increase revenue as consumers begin to loosen their purse strings. At the beginning of the recession, **Morton's The Steakhouse** introduced its value-priced Steak and Seafood Dinner for two, which includes two salads, two single-cut filets, choice of two seafood dishes, choice of one signature potato and one fresh vegetable to share, and two desserts. The meal was originally offered in select markets for \$99 to encourage cash-strapped customers to continue to patronize a fine-dining establishment during the onset of the recession. However, with the economy back on the upswing, some Morton's locations increased the price to \$109.99 at the beginning of 2011. The additional \$10 allows Morton's guests to continue to enjoy the shared meal for a value price, while the decreased discount improves margins for Morton's at a time when food input costs are rising.

Maggiano's Little Italy utilized both menu and pricing strategies with its Today & Tomorrow promotion. The offer, which debuted in select markets in August 2009, allowed patrons to eat one of eight classic pasta dishes in the restaurant and receive a complimentary carryout order of a second pasta dish of choice at the end of the meal. The deal was intended as a limited-time promotion to spur traffic during the recession; however, its popularity encouraged Maggiano's to add it to the menu permanently. The newest version of the Today & Tomorrow promotion allows guests to select from nine classic pasta dishes priced at \$12.95. Maggiano's also circulated a coupon for a free order of Vera's Lemon Cookies for a limited time—in effect offering not only a second meal, but dessert too.

The operators who will succeed in this post-recession environment are the ones who find ways to appeal to consumers through menu enhancements and pricing strategies without hurting their bottom line. Steak n Shake, Morton's and Maggiano's offer just a few examples of how chains are adjusting their pricing and menus to increase traffic and revenues. As foodservice sales begin to climb, operators will continue to roll out innovative promotions that meet customers' need for value while helping the bottom line.

Menu of the Month *Girl & the Goat**Chicago****Taking Chicago's Restaurant Scene by Storm***

The mastermind behind the Girl & the Goat restaurant is Stephanie Izard, who won season four of "Top Chef."

It's been almost a year since the opening of Girl & the Goat in Chicago, and tables are still booked almost two months out. The must-try hot spot is the brainchild of celebrity chef Stephanie Izard, a winner of Bravo's "Top Chef" reality TV competition. Izard's love of fun flavor combinations is evident as she takes comfort food to a new level. Izard and co-owners Rob Katz and Kevin Boehm opened Girl & the Goat in Chicago's trendy West Loop neighborhood during the summer of 2010. They have since received numerous accolades for their inventive menu that pushes the envelope of modern cuisine. In addition to expanding patrons' palates, Girl & the Goat also strives to support local farms. The restaurant employs David Ochs as its "forager" to check out new farms and find interesting products to incorporate into the menu.

The inline restaurant is located on a strip with several other restaurants near a major intersection in Chicago's West Loop, not far from the central business district. The window-paneled exterior is accented with a roundabout door. Above the entry, a black wood overhang displays the restaurant's name in simple white lettering. Directly inside the door is a lounge area with comfortable furniture including oversized couches where guests can relax, have a drink and wait for their party to be seated. The lounge is adjacent to the large wrap-around bar, which is surrounded by several high-back bar chairs. The majority of dine-in seating is provided via tightly packed wooden tables and chairs; two long wooden tables are available for larger parties. Gray booths line the walls. During warm-weather months, additional seating is available on an outdoor patio. The majority of the back wall is occupied by an exhibition-style kitchen, separated from the restaurant by shelves stocked with bowls, plates and serving pieces. In front of the exhibition kitchen are four highly coveted seats, where patrons can watch the line as their meals are being prepared. The simple loft-style interior, with brick walls, raftered ceilings and exposed ductwork, is enhanced by a dark-toned, modern décor package. Walls are accented with brightly colored, cartoonish pictures of people and goats, and artistic light fixtures supplement the natural light provided by the floor-to-ceiling windows that line the front of the building.

The menu at Girl & the Goat is designed for open-minded guests who are willing to try interesting flavors combined in an unusual way. Dishes are all small plates intended for sharing. The main menu is made up of 30 items divided into three sections: 10 vegetarian dishes, 10 fish dishes and 10 meat dishes. Menu items are assembled from common ingredients such as green beans, octopus and pork ribs, as well as lesser-known ingredients including kohlrabi, cod cheeks, skate and pig face. A variety of sausages is made in-house daily. In addition to the regular menu, the restaurant has ever-changing specials. Each specials menu begins with a selection of housemade breads, such as Miso Hungry bread served with miso-Parmesan butter and maple oil, or Beet It bread served with goat-cheese butter and walnut-balsamic vinaigrette. The specials menu continues with a list of fresh oysters, all served four per order. Entrée specials range from escargot ravioli to goat chili to corned beef and crab hash. Dessert offerings are just as creative as the rest of the menu. Options include Sesame Semifreddo with pork-fat donuts and sambal pineapple; Bourbon Apples with cranberry, miso marcona almond and maple-fat gelato; Bittersweet Chocolate with shiitake gelato and toffee crème fraîche; and Blood Orange Sorbet with parsnip pot de crème, pistachio cake and Three Sisters cornmeal crust. Wines are available by the glass and by the bottle. Craft beers and cocktails are also on offer.



The menu offers nontraditional meats for adventurous diners. This oven-roasted Pig Face dish features a sunny-side egg, tamarind, cilantro and potato stix.

A sampling of the menu includes:

Vegetables

- *Pan-Fried Shishito Peppers, Parmesan, Sesame, Miso* (\$7)
- *Roasted Cauliflower, Pickled Peppers, Pine Nuts, Mint* (\$11)
- *Chickpea Fritters, Romesco, Hazelnut Hummus, Sesame, Goat Feta* (\$11)
- *Kabocha Squash Ravioli, Mushroom Raisin Ragout, Brussels Leaves, 'Shroom Crème Fraîche* (\$13)
- *Sweet-Potato Gratin, Rogue River Smokey Blue, Crispy Onions* (\$12)

Fish

- *Hiramasa Crudo, Crisp Pork Belly, Aji Aioli, Caperberries* (\$16)
- *Seared Scallops, Brown Butter XO, Goat Sausage, White Shrimp, Shiitakes, Winter Squash* (\$17)
- *Lamb Sausage-Stuffed Calamari, Sweet Garlic, Sweetbread Crisp, Currant Saor* (\$15)
- *Seafood Fideos, Mussels, Button Clams, Rock Shrimp, Rouille, Stirato* (\$15)
- *Sautéed Cod Cheeks, Maitake Mushrooms, Manquat, Garlic Crunch* (\$16)

Meat

- *Goat Liver Mousseline, Ham Hock Jus, Citrus Marmalade, Crumpets* (\$9)
- *Goat Masala Pizza, Hook's and Frisian Farms Cheeses, Rapini, Cipollini, House Yogurt* (\$16)
- *Grilled Skirt Steak, Chioggia Beets, House Pickles, Wilted Romaine, Salted Goat-Milk Caramel* (\$14)
- *Wood-Oven-Roasted Pig Face, Sunny-Side Egg, Tamarind, Cilantro, Potato Stix* (\$16)
- *Braised Beef Tongue, Masa, Beef Vinaigrette, Salsa Verde* (\$14)
- *Roasted Lamb Shank, Grape Escabèche, Curry Aioli, Flatbread* (\$26)

Operator Briefs



Acapulco's Carnitas Fajita Combo offers guests a sample of popular dishes.

***A&W All-American Food** is testing three **Texas Toast Chicken Sandwiches** in select markets. The sandwiches—available in **Buffalo, Honey Dijon Club** and **BLT** varieties—are served on thick Texas toast with bacon, cheese, lettuce and sauces.

(Burger Business Online 3/14/11)

***Acapulco Mexican Restaurant y Cantina** rolled out a **Carnitas Fajita Combo** for a limited time. The combo features carnitas fajitas, a cheese enchilada, rice, beans and guacamole and is priced at \$9.99. (Company e-Newsletter 3/29/11)

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar added two new **Sizzling Entrées**. The **Sizzling Smokehouse Chicken Stack** features grilled chicken breast seasoned with barbecue spices, topped with shaved ham, applewood-smoked bacon and melted Cheddar

**Limited-time offer*

cheese and served on two corn cakes with a barbecue demi glaze and cheesy corn side dish. **Sizzling Cajun Steak and Shrimp** is a 7-ounce house sirloin grilled with blackened seasonings, served over sautéed onions and red pepper and topped with blackened shrimp and traditional Cajun gumbo with okra, accompanied by a side of red beans and rice. *(Company Release 4/21/11)*

***Au Bon Pain** rolled out new menu items for spring. Items include:

- **Egg Whites and Cheddar Breakfast Sandwich**—three egg whites and Cheddar served on a wheat or white skinny bagel
- **12-Veggie Soup (Vegan)**—diced tomatoes, potatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, carrots, onions, edamame, broccoli, corn, leeks, celery and mushrooms, simmered in a vegetable base
- **Greek Salad**—romaine lettuce, diced tomatoes, cucumbers, red onions, artichokes, Kalamata olives and feta cheese, tossed in a feta vinaigrette dressing
- **Regio Sandwich**—salami, mortadella and capicola with mozzarella, tomatoes, mesclun greens and soffrito vinaigrette
- **Turkey Cheddar Croissant**—oven-roasted turkey, Cheddar cheese and cranberry-walnut chutney in a croissant
- **Golden Raisin and Crème Torsade**—flaky croissant twists filled with golden raisins and French pastry crème and topped with pearl sugar
- **Chocolate and Crème Torsade**—flaky croissant twists filled with chocolate and French pastry crème and topped with pearl sugar. *(Company Website 4/21/11)*

Bahama Breeze debuted several new entrées and adult beverages for spring. New to the bar menu are mojitos in **Strawberry**, **Spicy Mango** and **Lemon Ginger** flavors. Other new items include:

- **Wood-Grilled Chorizo Sliders**—wood-grilled chorizo served on toasted brioche buns with caramelized onions, mustard and melted Manchego cheese
- **Buttermilk Fried Chicken Sliders**—buttermilk-marinated chicken breasts, lightly seasoned and fried, served on toasted brioche buns with pickles and citrus aioli
- **Chicken with Cilantro Crema**—wood-grilled chicken breast served with cilantro crema, mashed potatoes and roasted corn topped with a blend of three melted cheeses. *(Company Website 4/5/11)*



Baskin-Robbins' Firehouse #31 has a hot cinnamon ribbon and hot candy pieces.

***Baskin-Robbins** introduced **Firehouse #31** as its Flavor of the Month for April. The limited-time frozen treat is made with red cinnamon ice cream with a crunchy hot cinnamon ribbon and hot candy pieces mixed with vanilla ice cream. *(Company Website 4/5/11)*

***Benihana** rolled out its **Chef's Special** for April, the **Hibachi Shrimp & Chicken for Two**. Priced at \$36, the five-course meal came with two hibachi shrimp and chicken entrées, onion soup, Benihana salad, hibachi shrimp appetizer, mushrooms, hibachi vegetables, homemade dipping sauces, steamed rice and Japanese hot green tea. Tax and gratuity were excluded. The Hibachi Shrimp & Chicken for Two was available through April 30 at participating locations. *(Company Website 4/4/11)*

**Limited-time offer*

***Bertucci's Italian Restaurant** launched its new **Spring Fireside Specials**. In addition to entrées, limited-time specials also include a **Brick Red Cherry Chocolate Crostata** dessert and **Bertucci's Sangria**, made with Brick Red Placido Primavera Sangiovese with hints of cinnamon and citrus. Entrée selections include:

- **Torta Rustica with Rosemary Sausage**—a ricotta pesto spread on dough and topped with asparagus, rosemary sausage and diced tomatoes
- **1981 Florentine Pizza**—thinly sliced prosciutto, diced tomatoes, mozzarella and oregano
- **Hearty Chicken Sausage Meatballs & Multigrain Penne**—spicy chicken sausage and ricotta meatballs baked in a brick oven and served over penne pasta with creamy tomato sauce and shaved cheese
- **Arugula Salad with Grilled Chicken**—grilled chicken, baby arugula, cucumbers, grape tomatoes, roasted black olives, goat cheese, orange slices, avocado and fire-roasted corn and peppers, tossed in a lemon dressing and topped with a balsamic glaze drizzle
- **Chef's Creamy Chicken Scampi**—grilled chicken sautéed with fettuccine in a lemon-garlic cream sauce and topped with parsley
- **Chef's Creamy Shrimp Scampi**—shrimp sautéed with fettuccine in a lemon-garlic cream sauce and topped with parsley. *(Company Website 4/6/11)*

Boston Market introduced a new sandwich on its menu. The **Pulled BBQ Rotisserie Chicken Sandwich** features pulled chicken in a zesty barbecue sauce and Cheddar cheese. *(Company Website 4/11/11)*



Burgerville's Rosemary Shoestring Potatoes are dusted with rosemary seasoning.

***Burgerville** debuted new seasonal items featuring rosemary and strawberry. The chain's **Rosemary Shoestring Potatoes** are fried, tossed in rosemary-and-garlic-infused olive oil and dusted with rosemary seasoning. Strawberry-inspired offerings are a **Fresh Strawberry Shortcake** dessert—strawberries layered with a handmade biscuit, topped with Sunshine Dairy ice cream or YoCream nonfat frozen yogurt—and a **Fresh Strawberry Lemonade**, **Fresh Strawberry Milkshake** and **Fresh Strawberry Smoothie**. *(Company Website 4/6/11)*

California Pizza Kitchen rolled out a **Roasted Vegetable Salad**. The new salad features roasted artichoke hearts, asparagus, Japanese eggplant, red and yellow peppers, corn and sun-dried tomatoes, served warm over romaine lettuce, tossed with Dijon balsamic vinaigrette and topped with avocado. *(Company Website 3/31/11)*

***Charlie Brown's Steakhouse** brought back its **Parmesan Crusted Sliced Tenderloin** entrée. The dish, priced at \$12.99, was available through April 10. *(Company Release 4/6/11)*

***Chick-fil-A** added a **Banana Pudding Milkshake**, available nationwide through June 4. The milkshake is made with bananas, Nilla wafers, a splash of vanilla and Chick-fil-A's Icedream soft serve, and is topped with light whipped cream and a maraschino cherry. The item is offered in a 14-ounce serving priced at \$2.49 and in a 20-ounce serving for \$2.89. *(PR Newswire 2/24/11)*

***Cold Stone Creamery** launched **Peach Iced Tea** ice cream as its **Flavor of the Month**. The new limited-time flavor is featured in all stores nationwide. *(Company Website 4/13/11)*

**Limited-time offer*

Corner Bakery Cafe introduced two new breakfast items. New to the bakery menu is a **Pecan Sticky Bun** baked fresh every morning. The **Baked French Toast & Eggs** dish features cinnamon-swirled brioche bread baked in vanilla custard and served with scrambled eggs and applewood-smoked bacon. *(Company Website 4/7/11)*

Dunkin' Donuts added **Hearty Snacks** to its all-day menu. Snack selections include new items as well as existing offerings such as **Cheddar Cheese or Cinnamon Raisin Bagel Twists**. New snacks are **Pepperoni and Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks** and **Cheeseburger Stuffed Breadsticks**, as well as warm **Apple Pie** made with a flaky crust. *(PR Newswire 4/4/11)*

El Pollo Loco debuted three new **Premium Sides** to complement its entrées. New sides are **Sweet Potato Fries**, **Sweet Corn Cake**, and **Flame-Grilled Corn** seasoned with chipotle en adobo and lime. *(Company Release 3/25/11)*

***Friendly's** introduced an Easter-inspired ice-cream sundae for a limited time. The **Peeps Sundae** includes three scoops of ice cream and three toppings of choice, covered with whipped cream and topped with a milk chocolate-dipped Peeps Chick. *(Company Website 4/5/11)*

Friendly's launched its newest ice cream, **Graham Central Station**. It combines graham-flavored ice cream with a graham-cracker swirl and crunchy chocolate-covered honeycomb pieces. *(Company e-Newsletter 4/19/11)*

Genghis Grill rolled out a heart-healthy **Dragon Calamari Bowl**, with less than 400 calories. The new item features calamari, Cajun spice, vegetables and Dragon Sauce. *(Company e-Newsletter 4/1/11)*

Gold Star Chili debuted the **Hot and Spicy Mett Cheese Coney**. The new item features a hot dog smothered in chili and hot sauce and topped with jalapeño cheese. *(Company Website 4/20/11)*

***Häagen-Dazs** added **Blueberry Crumble** ice cream and a **Blueberry Pie Shake** for a limited time. The ice cream features blueberries folded into blueberry ice cream with cobbler-crust crumbles. The shake features the Blueberry Crumble ice cream topped with whipped cream and a crumble topping. *(Franchising.com 4/5/11)*

***la Madeleine Country French Cafe** introduced a **Mediterranean Mini Trio** of sandwiches for \$7.99. These bite-sized sandwiches are served on a freshly baked Asiago-pesto roll and come with a choice of side. The Mediterranean Mini Trio includes **Balsamic Chicken**, herbed Parmesan dressing, field greens and tomato; **Country Ham**, pineapple, Dijon mustard, mayonnaise and field greens; and **Smoked Turkey**, pesto, provolone, bacon, lettuce and tomato. *(Nation's Restaurant News Online 3/29/11)*



Maggie Moo's Crumb Cake Fundae is the chain's newest spring-inspired dessert.

***Maggie Moo's Ice Cream and Treatery** debuted a spring-inspired dessert. The **Crumb Cake Fundae** features cinnamon cake topped with Cinnamoo ice cream, caramel sauce, mixed nuts and whipped cream. *(Company Website 4/11/11)*

McDonald's introduced a new **Frozen Strawberry Lemonade** in select markets. The cold beverage is part of the chain's McCafe line of specialty drinks. *(QSR Web 3/25/11)*

**Limited-time offer*

***McGrath's Fish House** rolled out new entrées featuring halibut. Dishes are **Wood Fired Halibut**, **Halibut Parmesan**, **Halibut & Cod Fish & Chips**, **Halibut Raviolis**, **Halibut Florentine** and **Horseradish Dijon Crusted Halibut**. Meal prices start at \$9.99. A **Halibut Cakes** appetizer was also introduced.

(Company Release 4/6/11)

***Moe's Southwest Grill** added heat to its menu with **Spicy Trio** entrées. The limited-time entrées—a **Spicy Burrito**, **Spicy Quesadilla** and **Spicy Rice Bowl**—are made with Jalapeño Sour Cream and Spicy Queso, the latter of which can be added as a side with any regular entrée meal. The Spicy Trio line is available at participating locations through May 15. *(Company Release 3/21/11)*

***Montana Mike's Steakhouse** rolled out five **Shrimply Delicious** entrées for a limited time at select restaurants. Shrimp-inspired offerings are:

- **Shrimp Tortellini**—cheese-filled pasta rings tossed with a scampi sauce and broccoli, topped with lightly seasoned grilled shrimp and served with garlic toast
- **Tilapia with Scampi Sauce**—8-ounce tilapia filet lightly dusted with seasoned cornmeal and topped with creamy shrimp scampi sauce
- **Catfish & Shrimp**—Mike's hand-breaded catfish served with fried shrimp
- **Steak and Shrimp**—center-cut sirloin steak topped with Dijon peppercorn sauce and served with five fried shrimp
- **Louisiana Shrimp Pasta**—grilled shrimp, chicken and spicy smoked sausage tossed in penne pasta with Cajun Alfredo sauce, and served with toasted garlic bread. *(Company Website 4/13/11)*

***Mr. Goodcents Subs & Pastas** added a new **Toasted Pastrami on Rye** sandwich. The sub features sliced pastrami, Swiss cheese, pickles and spicy mustard on rye bread. *(Company Release 4/13/11)*

***Olive Garden** debuted two new **Cheese Filled Soffatelli** dishes as specials. The **Herb Cheese Soffatelli with Sautéed Chicken** features artisan puff pastries filled with five-cheese fonduta and herbs, served with sautéed chicken in a creamy garlic sauce. The **Herb Cheese Soffatelli with Braised Beef** also features artisan puff pastries filled with five-cheese fonduta and herbs, served with braised beef in a balsamic demi-glace. *(Company Website 4/11/11)*

Paradise Bakery & Cafe rolled out a new **Wild Berry Smoothie** that blends strawberries, blackberries, blueberries and black raspberries with Stonyfield Farm organic, lowfat vanilla yogurt. The new smoothie has less than 300 calories and contains vitamins B₆ and B₁₂. *(Company Website 4/21/11)*



Pizza Hut's Ultimate Stuffed Crust Pizza features different toppings inside the crust. (Company Website 4/7/11)

***Pizza Hut** launched an **Ultimate Stuffed Crust Pizza**, a new version of its classic cheese-stuffed crust pizza. The new pizza features three toppings of choice and comes with a crust stuffed with either pepperoni and cheese, or cheese, pepperoni, Italian sausage and bacon.

Potbelly added a new **Grilled Chicken & Cheddar Sandwich** to its menu. The sandwich is made with hand-sliced chicken breast and aged Cheddar cheese. *(Company Website 4/21/11)*

**Limited-time offer*

***Pretzelmaker** rolled out a **Jalapeño Pretzel** and a **Jalapeño Pretzel Dog** for a limited time as part of the chain's national "New Dog, New Kick" celebration. The new hot dog is wrapped in soft pretzel dough and topped with diced jalapeños and zesty spices. (*Franchising.com 4/19/11*)

Quiznos debuted its **Chicken Bacon Dipper** sandwich on the menu. The sandwich features oven-roasted, all-white-meat chicken, bacon, tomatoes and mild chipotle mayonnaise, served on chipotle Jack bread with a side of cheese sauce seasoned with tomatoes, diced green chiles and Mexican spices. (*QSRWeb.com 3/28/11; Company Website 3/29/11*)

***Red Lobster** introduced two new entrées for its annual **Lobsterfest Promotion**. The **Bar Harbor Lobster-and-Shrimp Trio** features a wood-grilled split Maine lobster tail, garlic-grilled shrimp and a Parmesan lobster and shrimp bake, served with broccoli and crispy red potatoes sprinkled with sea salt. The **Grilled Maine Lobster and Shrimp** dish offers a wood-grilled split Maine lobster tail, two skewers of garlic-grilled shrimp topped with lobster butter sauce and wild rice pilaf. (*Company Website 4/11/11*)

Red Mango Yogurt & Smoothies added **Dark Chocolate** frozen yogurt to its product portfolio. The new flavor is made with Ghirardelli dark chocolate and Red Mango's all-natural nonfat yogurt. The chain recommends pairing Dark Chocolate frozen yogurt with fruits such as strawberries, bananas, blueberries and raspberries, and dry toppings such as granola, mochi, coconut and cereal. (*RestaurantNews.com 1/19/11; Company Website 3/29/11*)



Scooter's Coffeehouse's White Bunny beverage is one of many new items introduced for Easter.

***Scooter's Coffeehouse** launched a new Easter-inspired specialty coffee. The **White Bunny** beverage features white chocolate, vanilla and espresso. It can be served hot, over ice or blended. (*Company Website 4/6/11*)

Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill introduced several new menu items. The chain added **Cajun Shrimp Skillet** and **Kettle Chips** to the appetizer menu, and debuted a new **Spicy Garlic Buffalo** sauce for wings and chicken fingers. New entrées are:

- **Buff-a-que Flatbread**—crisp flatbread brushed with a tangy barbecue sauce and topped with a mixed cheese blend, sliced barbecue chicken breast, blue-cheese crumbles and diced celery
- **BBQ Chicken Flatbread**—crisp flatbread brushed with a tangy barbecue sauce and topped with sliced grilled chicken breast, diced red onions, a blend of Asiago and mixed cheeses, and a drizzle of cilantro oil
- **Fire & Spice Pork Tenderloin**—soy- and garlic-marinated pork tenderloin charbroiled, sliced and served drizzled with chipotle barbecue sauce
- **Ginger Teriyaki Pork Tenderloin**—soy- and garlic-marinated pork tenderloin charbroiled, sliced and brushed with a ginger-teriyaki glaze
- **Asiago Chicken Penne**—Asiago-coated chicken breast fire-grilled, served atop penne pasta tossed with sun-dried tomatoes and cream sauce. (*Company Release 3/30/11;*

Company Website 4/11/11)

***Subway** reintroduced its **Chicken Cordon Bleu** sandwich. The sub features chicken, Black Forest ham, cheese and honey-mustard sauce on a choice of bread. Subway also added a limited-time **Raspberry Cheesecake Cookie** to its dessert list. (*Company Website 4/11/11*)

**Limited-time offer*

Wingstop rolled out new **Chicken Gliders** on its menu. The mini sandwiches are made with all-white-meat chicken breast coated in a proprietary seasoned breading, cooked to order and served on a fresh-baked yeast roll with pickle chips. The Chicken Gliders can feature any of Wingstop's nine sauce flavors or can be served plain. Patrons can choose from two, four or six Gliders, or opt for a two-piece Glider Combo meal, served with seasoned fries and a beverage. (*QSR Magazine Online 4/19/11*)

Menu Launches



Denny's Ultimate Bacon Breakfast is one of the chain's new dishes centered on bacon.

***Denny's** unveiled **Baconalia! A Celebration of Bacon**, a promotional menu with bacon-inspired breakfast, lunch and dinner options. Selections that highlight the flavor and texture of bacon include:

- **Ultimate Bacon Breakfast**—six strips of hickory-smoked bacon served with two eggs cooked to order, hash browns and choice of bread
- **Bacon Flapjacks**—hickory-smoked bacon baked into pancake batter, griddled and served with two eggs cooked to order, two strips of bacon and hash browns
- **Pepper Bacon & Eggs**—black-pepper-rubbed bacon served with two eggs cooked to order, hash browns and choice of bread
- **Triple Bacon Sampler**—two eggs cooked to order, hash browns with diced hickory-smoked bacon and Cheddar cheese, and six bacon strips (two hickory-smoked, two pepper and two turkey)
- **BBBLT Sandwich**—triple-decker BLT made with eight strips of hickory-smoked bacon, lettuce, sliced tomato and mayonnaise, served on toasted potato bread with wavy-cut french fries
- **Bacon Meatloaf**—diced bacon baked into meatloaf, topped with hickory ketchup and more diced bacon and served with choice of two sides and dinner bread
- **Maple Bacon Sundae**—a layered sundae made with vanilla ice cream, maple-flavored syrup and diced hickory-smoked bacon. (*Company Website 4/4/11*)

***Outback Steakhouse** launched its **Spring into Fresh Flavors** menu. The limited-time offerings include entrées as well as a **Strawberry Waffle Shortcake** dessert—warm layers of homemade waffle shortcake and almond sweet cream filling topped with strawberries, whipped cream and toasted almonds. Entrée selections include:

- **Alice Springs Chicken Quesadilla**—grilled chicken breast, sautéed mushrooms, bacon, melted cheeses and honey-mustard sauce
- **Chicken Artichoke Flatbread**—crispy flatbread topped with grilled chicken, chopped spinach and artichokes, grated Parmesan cheese and a drizzle of olive oil
- **Hearts of Gold Mahi**—grilled mahi mahi topped with artichoke hearts, sun-dried tomatoes, green onions and a light lemon sauce, served with steamed French green beans
- **Prime Rib & Crab Cakes**—slow-roasted prime rib hand-carved to order and paired with Pacific Rim lump crab cakes, served with steamed French green beans and homemade rémoulade sauce
- **Outback Special & Crab Cakes**—a signature sirloin paired with two Pacific Rim lump crab cakes and served with steamed French green beans and homemade rémoulade sauce. (*Company Website 4/7/11*)

**Limited-time offer*

***Pasta Pomodoro** introduced an **Early Spring Seasonal Special** menu to showcase fresh, local ingredients and artisan meats from San Francisco Bay Area suppliers such as Zoe's Meats and Fra'Mani. Appetizers are **Bruschetta ai Insalata di Mare**, grilled baguette topped with shrimp, calamari, oil-cured black olives, tomatoes, red onion and capers in lemon juice and extra-virgin olive oil, drizzled with salsa verde, and **Zuppa di Fagioli**, heirloom scarlet runner beans, Fra'Mani little ham and cabbage with grilled baguette. Spring-inspired entrée and dessert dishes are:

- **Risotto di Cavolfiore**—risotto with roasted cauliflower purée and Zoe's Meats bacon pangrattato
- **Linguine Granchio**—linguine with Dungeness crab, white wine, tomato, garlic and chile
- **Braised Short Ribs**—boneless short ribs braised in red wine and herbs, topped with gremolata and served over fettuccine
- **Piselli e Pancetta**—sautéed peas with Fra'Mani pancetta
- **Zoe's Bacon Sundae**—local artisan vanilla gelato with Zoe's Meats bacon and chocolate-chip cookie crumbles. (Company Website 3/29/11)

***Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery** paid tribute to firemen with its **Fire Chief Ale** and seasonal menu. Fire Chief Ale is a medium-bodied, auburn-colored ale featuring select caramel and crystal malts and hand-selected hops from the Pacific Northwest. For every order of Fire Chief Ale, Rock Bottom made a donation to local fire departments and related charities. Another featured beverage, **RB's Sweet Iced Tea**, combined Jeremiah Weed Sweet Tea vodka, Beefeater gin, Bacardi Superior rum, Cointreau and Finest Call sweet-and-sour, topped with Pepsi-Cola. The seasonal menu offered **Fire Chief Chili Nachos**, **Kobe Sliders** and a **Fire Chief Combo Platter** as appetizers, and for dessert, a **Triple Chocolate Brownie** topped with vanilla ice cream, housemade caramel and stout hot fudge. Seasonal entrées were:

- **Cajun Fish Tacos**—mahi mahi grilled with Cajun spices in a blue corn tortilla, wrapped with a soft flour tortilla with pepper Jack cheese, lettuce, pico de gallo and Cajun rémoulade and served with black beans and Red Ale rice
- **Kobe Cheeseburger**—an 8-ounce, American-style Kobe beef burger grilled to order and served with Cheddar cheese and a choice of side
- **Blackened Chicken Salad**—blackened chicken over salad greens with Roma tomatoes, cucumbers, raisins, sunflower seeds, balsamic vinaigrette and crumbled blue cheese
- **Cedar Plank Pecan-Crusted Salmon**—seared, topped with a honey pecan crust and served on a cedar plank with a honey-dill cream sauce, lemon rice and seasonal vegetables
- **Chicken Parmesan**—chicken medallions with melted mozzarella, served over linguine and topped with marinara sauce. (Company Website 4/12/11)



Spring ingredients such as artichokes are incorporated into Seasons 52's seasonal menu.

***Seasons 52** introduced its **Savor the Fresh Flavors of Spring** seasonal menu. New offerings combine spring ingredients such as asparagus with gourmet preparation methods and modern plating techniques. Selections include **Artichoke-Stuffed Artichoke Leaves** with arugula, Parmesan cheese and balsamic glaze, and a side of **Grilled Spring Asparagus** served with feta cheese crumbles and olive-pepper salsa. For their entrée, guest can enjoy a **Grilled Lamb T-Bone** served with truffle mashed potatoes and roasted asparagus, or **Roasted Artichoke-Stuffed Shrimp** with wilted leaf spinach, pasta pearls and clam cioppino sauce. Also new to the menu are a **Chocolate**

**Limited-time offer*

Cookies and Cream Mini Indulgence and a **Strawberry Basil Fusion** cocktail combining strawberry-infused Prairie Organic vodka, basil and organic agave nectar. *(Company Website 4/6/11)*

International Cuisines Take the Spotlight

Salvadoran restaurants are offering Los Angeles residents a taste of Central America. **Sonsonate Grill** specializes in seafood dishes and surf-and-turf from El Salvador's coastal city of Acajutla. Its specialty dish is Parrillada Salvadoreña, which includes a seasoned filet of carne asada, tilapia, shrimp and a grilled quarter chicken, served with white rice, sliced avocado, a side salad and beans. Another favorite dish is Pan con Gallina, a chicken sandwich on French bread with a salad of mayonnaise, peppers and watercress, served with a side of carne guisada (a savory tomato-based stew). Salvadoran beers are also menued. **El Santiagueño** restaurant also offers Salvadoran dishes such as Sopa de Pata, a soup of cow's feet, tripe, cabbage, yuca, corn and squash, and Pacaya, palm flowers fried in an egg batter and topped with tomato sauce. A third Salvadoran restaurant, **Mis Raíces**, serves Pitos con Huevo, red pito flowers cooked with eggs. Also served is a Fritada—pig heart, ears, cheeks, tongue and liver blanched and sautéed in tomato, yerba buena (mint) and bell pepper. *(Los Angeles Times Online 3/24/11)*

Ingredients Behind the Menu



Decorated Peeps top an assortment of cookies at Mindy's Hot Chocolate. Source: chicagotribune.com

Chicago chefs have incorporated marshmallow Peeps candy into Easter-inspired dishes. Chef Mindy Segal of **Mindy's Hot Chocolate** topped her cookies with different colored Peeps. For instance, a green chick Peeps sat atop an Oreo and mint cookie, and a pink bunny Peeps was paired with a chocolate raspberry cookie. Chef Thomas Bowman of **iNG Restaurant** also created a new item centered on Peeps. The dish is made by microwaving Peeps for 20 seconds, freezing them in liquid nitrogen and shattering them. The Peeps are then mixed into a buttermilk and waffle ice cream with almonds and dark chocolate and placed on a waffle cone that is filled at the bottom with more Peeps pieces. Executive chef Merlin Verrier at **Grahamwich** offered a sundae of Peeps ice cream with Nutella. The dessert is made by melting Peeps and swirling them into Tahitian vanilla soft serve; the frozen treat is then topped with caramelized nuggets of banana and chocolate Nutella. *(Chicago Tribune Online 4/22/11)*

Los Angeles-area chefs are experimenting with green almonds, which are traditionally associated with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines. Green almonds are only available for roughly eight weeks from late April to mid-June, making them a rare seasonal offering. David Campbell, pastry chef at **Providence**, uses a truffle slicer to cut whole green almonds and serve them as a garnish on panna cotta. Gary Menes has created a tasting menu based on green almonds that may be served starting May 7 at his four-week pop-up concept, **Quartier**, at **Olive & Thyme** in Toluca Lake. The menu starts with a mâche salad with green almond kernels, arugula flowers, fines herbes, Sicilian olive oil and verjus. The main course offers rouget with green almond nutlets, orange confit and grilled fennel. The dessert selection is strawberries with green almond kernels, lime juice and yogurt, drizzled with 50-year-old balsamic vinegar. Jason Mattick of **Palate Food + Wine** slices the whole green almond thin and serves them over diver scallops in a brown butter sauce. And Vinny Dotolo of **Animal** plans to offer a salad of shaved raw green almond and rhubarb. *(Los Angeles Times 4/15/11; AlmondBoard.com 4/21/11)*

Restaurants in Utah are showcasing the egg as a versatile, affordable and craveable ingredient. Eggs have moved beyond the breakfast daypart and can now be found on sandwiches and hamburgers, and even in pasta dishes. In Salt Lake City, **The Copper Onion** uses organic eggs from the local Clifford Family Farms in Provo, UT. Dishes include traditional pasta carbonara made with housemade fettuccine, egg, smoked bacon and cream; a sautéed mushroom plate topped with crispy potato sticks, parsley, garlic and a fried egg; and a green salad topped with a warm poached egg. **The Metropolitan** serves a Wood Fired Hen entrée with fingerling potatoes, a soft-poached egg, frisée and garlic sauce. And at the new **Sunset Boulevard Cafe** in Holladay, the menu includes the “over easy” grilled-cheese sandwich made with Cheddar, bacon, lettuce, tomatoes and a fried egg. *(The Salt Lake Tribune Online 4/19/11)*

Preparation and Presentation Trends

Signature veggie burgers are providing meatless alternatives for hamburger enthusiasts. In New York City, **Burger & Barrel** serves a chickpea-based veggie burger, and **5 Napkin Burger** menus a veggie burger featuring a housemade sauce, pickles, lettuce and tomato, served on a multigrain roll. Barbecue restaurant **Blue Smoke** offers a Hickory Smoked Vegetable Burger with tomato chutney and arugula salad. In Los Angeles, **Umami Burger** offers an Earth Burger made with a mushroom and edamame patty, white soy and truffle aioli, ricotta cheese, cipollini onions, butter lettuce and oven-roasted tomato. **Cru**, which offers a large menu of vegan cuisine, serves South American Sliders made with sprouted lentil-chickpea pulse, Peruvian mojo sauce, butter lettuce and chiffonade of red cabbage on a beignet. *(The New York Times Online 3/22/11)*

New Products Entering the Market

AdvancePierre Foods added Breaded Popcorn Chicken to its portfolio. The white-meat chicken pieces are breaded in wheat flour and spices. They can be used as appetizers or atop a salad, pasta dish or pizza. *(Foodservice Director p85 4/15/11)*



Fishery Products International's FireRoasters Asian Barbecue Salmon is one of six available filets.

Fishery Products International debuted its FireRoasters line of thick-cut salmon, tilapia and cod filets. The filets are available in six versions: Smoky Applewood Salmon, Asian Barbecue Salmon, Thai Basil Tilapia, Citrus Peppercorn Tilapia, Southwest Style Cod and Rustic Italian Cod. The filets feature no trans fats and low sodium content. The salmon and cod filets are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. *(Foodservice Director p80 4/15/11)*

Menu Clips is prepared monthly by Technomic, Inc. to keep foodservice executives informed on emerging menu trends and concepts through the monitoring of menus and more than 40 consumer and trade publications, as well as field visits and original research. Annual subscriptions are \$295. We welcome your comments.

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