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Gordon Food Service®



gfs.ca/ideas



Plan for Success

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

NOVEMBER

01 World Vegan Day

Highlight your vegan menu items and promote earth-friendly products.

09 Try a Chicken Sandwich Day

Spice up your chicken sandwich and offer a platter complete with slaw and a biscuit.

11 Remembrance Day

Salute those who served with a discount or special treat from the menu.

21 World Hello Day

Encourage people to share a social media howdy featuring your restaurant.

DECEMBER

04 National Cookie Day

Promote a holiday cookie decorating kit with all the ingredients for a family event.

17 National Maple Syrup Day

Like anyone needs a reason to celebrate. Maple syrup tatin pie, anyone?

25 Christmas

Help the celebration with takeout charcuterie plates and/or cocktail packages.

26 Boxing Day

Be ready for the rush on the nation's biggest shopping day.

31 New Year's Eve

Decorate, provide party favors, snacks, champagne and let the countdown begin.

JANUARY

Be Kind to Food Servers Month

Celebrate your team for all the success of the past year.

01 New Year's Day

Start the year off with a mimosa or bloody Caesar bar and light fare for those with resolutions.

20 National Cheese Lover's Day

Cheese is king—from queso dip to sandwich topper to charcuterie board and beyond.

27 National Chocolate Cake Day

See National Pie Day, only with chocolate cake.

foodscape™

Welcome to Foodscape, covering the vast landscape of foodservice in a way that meets today's hectic pace. It's all about exploring the things you love and addressing your challenges. Stock up on ideas for special ingredients, innovative dishes and creative preparation. Set the table to deliver a better guest experience, staff efficiency and business growth. From the back of the house to the dining room, out the door and beyond, Foodscape helps you find new horizons.



Win at Winter Holiday Catering

Don't let operational and culinary challenges leave you in the cold.

Holiday season is make-or-break time for most restaurants. While sales may be brisk right now compared to last year, don't underestimate the potential of catering.

Before the pandemic made it essential, off-premise restaurant dining was in growth mode. The desire remains, and operators can build their brand through catering. It requires planning and employing best practices on the operational and culinary sides.

With people ready to indulge during the holidays, you don't want to disappoint, says Timothy Tejuco, a Gordon Food Service® Business Solutions Specialist from Vancouver.

"Help consumers splurge with special offerings, flavours and ingredients that enhance the off-premise experience," he says. "It's possible to build excitement for them and, with some planning, make it manageable for your staffing and service capabilities."

Understand operational catering needs

Everything starts on the operational side. Create a menu that's innovative but easy to execute. This lets you plan labour, prep space and logistics—all key to protecting brand integrity when products leave the restaurant.

These menu tips play into operational effectiveness:

- **Call on speed-scratch/value-added.** Save labour with washed and cut salads, trimmed fruits and veggies or pre-breaded chicken and seafood.
- **Offer prepared dishes.** Save time with heat-and-eat foods prepared ahead and ready for delivery or pickup.
- **Create meal kits.** Package ingredients in a branded box and include a recipe for at-home preparation.
- **Make it a party.** Cookie decorating kits or cocktail packages are easy and profitable add-ons to a meal package. They also can be a party kit by themselves.

To meet demand, restaurants also need to manage the calendar. Labour will be a nightmare if you schedule every party on Friday and Saturday. If possible, offer customers an incentive to book weekday events.

Because labour is delicate, Tejuco recommends motivating your team. "Ask for their input. If they have a stake in your offerings and presentation, they'll be less stressful and more dedicated to success."

Consider culinary catering strategies

On the culinary side, expect an appetite for indulgence during the holidays. For operators, success means identifying strengths and opportunities.

"It's important to align catering menus with your current menus as an extension of your business," says Chef Michael Vilorio, a Vancouver-based Gordon Food Service Culinary Specialist. "Your offerings should expand on things you do really well—these menu items define your concept and set you apart."

The culinary part of the equation, Vilorio notes, calls on equal parts planning and creativity.

1. PLANNING

- **Manage your menu.** Cross-utilize products as well as employee skills and productivity.
- **Match offerings to manpower.** Review your preparation needs and focus on the end product/experience.
- **Use Gordon Recipe.** Cost out ingredients and determine plate price.
- **Know your limitations.** It's the best way to address needed resources and services.
- **Call on experience.** Reach out to past employees or students home from college for labour help.

2. CREATIVITY

- **Upscale menu offerings.** Favourite seasonal flavours include pumpkin, cinnamon, cranberry, sage, ginger, peppermint, sweet potato, eggnog or chocolate.
- **Try sensational shortcuts.** Save time with thaw-and-serve desserts or coffees and shakes with a shot of mint or hazelnut.
- **Innovate with beverages.** The season calls for old-school cocktails or warm drinks like Irish coffee, cider and hot chocolate.
- **Don't overlook trends.** Plant-based options and alcohol-free upscale beverages can differentiate your business.
- **Call on LTOs.** Local and seasonal ingredients work well for limited-time offers, creating "get-it-while-you can" excitement. Cross-utilize regular menu items and test items you're thinking of adding permanently.

"Adding value wherever possible—in the kitchen, on the menu and with the experience—is the best strategy for feeding a holiday crowd," Vilorio says. "It's possible to build your brand without compromising quality."

Ask your Gordon Food Service Sales Representative about operational and culinary strategies to upgrade your catering.



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Puff Pastry



Smoked Salmon



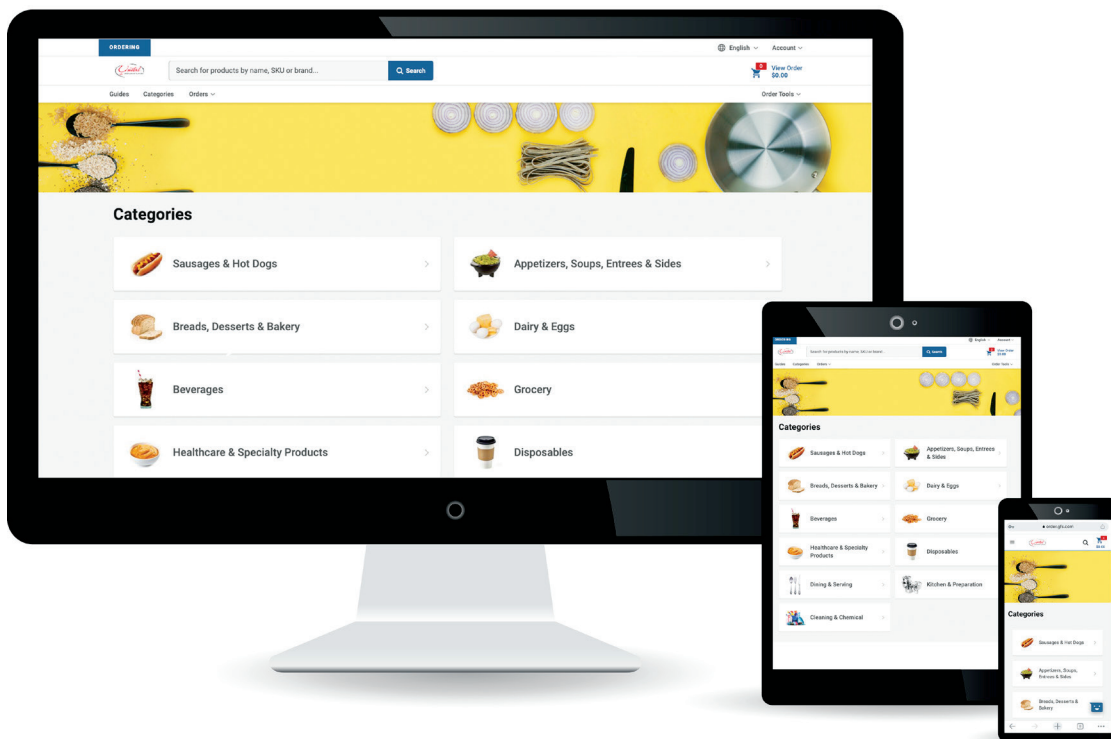
Waffles



Tuna Loin



Pork Back Ribs



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FOOD SERVICE

Make Comfort Food a Menu Star

Three steps to adding appeal and increasing sales with familiar classics.

Comfort food is always in season. As the winter months approach, it's a good time to make comfort food a menu star. It appeals to hungry consumers, and restaurant operators can call on it to simplify purchasing, production and labour issues.

Elevating comfort foods to new heights takes more than just adding time-tested favourites to the menu. As with any recipe for success, it takes a pinch of nuance and a dash of playfulness.

"The right menu offerings, new interpretations and enticing marketing can heat up sales and revenue," says Chef David Evans, a Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialist in Ontario.

He recommends three ways to make comfort food a menu star:

1. **Elevate it**—improve the perception and value for customers.
2. **Create a service mashup**—marry two comfort food icons.
3. **Deconstruct, reconstruct and mash it up again**—get global with it.

Elevating comfort food classics

By definition, comfort food is enjoyable. Even so, getting customer orders calls for a strong menu description. Enhance the guest experience by taking a popular dish and elevating it to star status in a few words.

Weak: Shepherd's pie.

Strong: Shepherd's pie with Guinness demi glace and topped with Stilton mashed potatoes.

Weak: Chicken pot pie.

Strong: Chicken pie, with creamy sauce, French thyme and organic vegetables under a flaky pastry.

"You don't want to overdo it," Evans notes. "But a small investment in one or two very flavourful and perceived exotic elements can send a dish to a much higher level."

Create a new service mashup

Mashups aren't new, but creating them with comfort foods is an excellent way to use resources. Incorporating a new serving style or a traditional carrier creates a new menu option with minimal extra time and expense.

"If you have staff preparing the comfort food dish already, the effort required to increase basic preparation and ramp up the volume is less effort than retooling to create many different dishes," Evans says.



IT ALL ADDS UP

COMFORT FOOD CLASSIC	+	NEW SERVICE MASHUP	=	FUN MENU ITEM
Chicken Pot Pie	+	Spring Roll	=	Chicken Pot Pie Spring Roll
Shepherd's Pie	+	Samosa	=	Shepherd's Pie Samosa
Mac and Cheese	+	Croquettes	=	Mac and Cheese Croquettes
Butter Chicken	+	Flatbread/Pizza	=	Butter Chicken Flatbread

**Mix items up (make Butter Chicken Spring Rolls or Shepherd's Pie Flatbread)*

ADVICE FROM THE FIELD

We asked our specialists what their on-trend comfort food ideas are. Here's some of the creative ideas they shared.

NASHVILLE HOT CHICKEN

Here in BC the trend of Nashville hot chicken is going strong. More and more fried chicken joints are popping up, and a few brands are doing the concept in different ways. A Korean food truck puts together a hot chicken rice bowl, with Korean flavours mixed in. A popular fried chicken spot does the hot chicken on fries, topped with pickled onions, cheese, slaw and spicy mayo. This trend is here to stay.



TIM TEJUCO

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS SPECIALIST

BRAISED SHORT RIB PIEROGI

A great comfort food mashup that features value-added products and works for brunch, as a sharing plate, catering and takeout. The flavours lend themselves well to customization, so every customer can put their own twist on it.



DARREN LEXA

CULINARY SPECIALIST

MEATLOAF LASAGNA

It combines an Italian favourite in lasagna with the comfort of a good homemade meatloaf. This can very well become a signature dish for any mom and pop restaurant. Easy to execute and so indulgent.



STEPHANE RENAUD

CULINARY SPECIALIST



Comfort-food mashups like this Korean Lasagna add excitement with little extra expense or labour.

The practice calls on cross-utilization of ingredients, using them across sections of the menu. The advantages include:

- Reducing labour costs.
- Decreasing the variety of products to buy and store.
- Limiting vendor deliveries (and costs associated with maintaining multiple vendors).
- Keeping inventory low and creating optimum freshness and quality.

How it works: Make extra volume of your chicken pot pie base and use it in a spring roll wrapper as an appetizer or sharing plate.

Deconstruct, reconstruct and mash up

Another way to make comfort food a star is to revamp it.

"It's the menu version of building a hot rod. Pull apart tired menu items

and put them back together as something new," Evans says. "It's exciting and tasty."

An example he suggests uses lasagna. Take the traditional Italian classic, deconstruct it, then reconstruct it Korean-style.

Sauce: Turn the bolognese meat sauce into a Korean bulgogi sauce or barbecue sauce. A white sauce variation could be made using gochujang.

Noodles: Use fried wontons or spring roll wraps as the lasagna noodles.

Cheese: Include a little smoked cheddar to elevate all ingredients.

"It's an exciting and interesting alternative," Evans says. "And you can charge a menu price in line with food costs and the perception of a comfort food menu star."

Need comfort food ideas? Go to gfs.ca/ideas for recipes and strategies to drive profits to your bottom line

Look for the logo:



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Contact your Gordon Food Service® Sales Representative



REACH FOR REVENUE- GENERATING IDEAS

Open the door to sales that go beyond traditional takeout and delivery.

'Tis the season to plan for profiting during the holidays and beyond. Lean into the best parts of the past 18 months, calling on technology and innovation to achieve what's paramount—increasing sales volume and reducing overhead.

"Restaurant operators are experiencing a new era of enhanced takeout and delivery," says Nathan Voulgaris, a Winnipeg-based Gordon Food Service® Business Solutions Specialist. "As your business looks for growth opportunities, there are many options to explore."

He offers eight sales-boosting ideas that can add revenue now and position you for a banner year in 2022.



1. Ghost kitchens

Ghost kitchens. Dark kitchens. Cloud kitchens. Virtual restaurants. No matter what you call them, they're a hot topic for off-premise dining. With lower real estate and menu innovation costs, ghost kitchen momentum is expected to continue. E-commerce platforms for accepting orders and taking payment, along with connections to delivery networks, help operators keep costs low and manage labour needs.



2. Meals at home

Call on meal kits to take the restaurant experience to customers' homes. Options include sous vide, InstantPot, boil in bag and various other retherming or cooking techniques to broaden the offerings, experience and food quality beyond takeout bags and boxes.

"Try partnering with local small businesses and vendors to add a community feel and extra value," Voulgaris says. "You may be able to trade the marketing of their business for 'at-cost' or better pricing of their goods."



3. Cocktail kits

Takeout/delivery alcohol is an option in many areas. Develop at-home kits for wine tastings, martini events, craft cocktails, beer flights, pairings, cooking with spirits, etc. "The holidays are a great time to impact liquor, wine and beer sales," Voulgaris notes. "And don't overlook ways to enhance the in-home spirits experience with fresh garnishes, syrups, tools, tips and tricks."



4. Event in a box

Combine the meal and cocktail kit with decorations, trivia cards, music playlists, candles or other ambiance enhancers. Set the stage for a premium casual dining experience, date night or party (birthday, anniversary or wedding). Encourage cookie swaps during the holidays or include a snowman-building kit complete with hot chocolate or snacks for after the fun.



5. Merchandise and retail

People who pay for your food are likely to want your gear. Shirts, hats, masks or even packaged products like dressings, sauces or spices. "E-commerce platforms make it easy to sell a favourite hot sauce, proprietary miso blend, daily fresh baked options or prepped ingredients like candied nuts or snack mixes," Voulgaris explains.



6. Gift cards

Generate cash flow today with gift card sales. They help bring customers back during the sometimes slower months after the holidays. Make gift cards more appealing by offering \$5 off for every \$50 purchase.



7. Lunch programs

As people head back to work spaces, this may be a good time to enhance or promote your pre-made deliverable lunches. Get the word out to local businesses, medical offices, construction sites, etc.



8. Marketing

Build awareness by promoting everything you do. "Adding a new service will not drive the business, so think of it like launching a business," Voulgaris advises. "Social media is your best friend in this space. Drive excitement with stories, videos and "tag a friend" initiatives to grow your audience and carve your niche while promoting your brand values."

Your Gordon Food Service® Sales Representative can explain ways to get your revenue rolling into 2022.



MEAL KIT OPTIONS

People will welcome the restaurant experience into their homes if you provide the right touches.

AT-HOME KIT IDEAS:

- ☐ Bakeable lasagna trays
- ☐ Oven-warmed meat pies
- ☐ Stuffed/wrapped proteins
- ☐ Soups, stocks, broths
- ☐ Rice dishes
(jambalaya or sushi rice)
- ☐ Lunch kits
- ☐ Breakfasts

KITS FOR SPECIAL DIETS:

- ☐ Protein-packed
- ☐ Gluten-free
- ☐ Vegetarian/vegan
- ☐ Keto-friendly



YIELD
1 serving



PREP TIME
5 minutes



COOK TIME
15 minutes



SUGGESTED PRICE
\$18.00

Pull the covers off pigs in a blanket with this elevated dish that blends the familiar with the fabulous. A puff pastry-wrapped bratwurst sits atop roasted rainbow carrots and a wedge of fermented red cabbage dressed with maple mustard seeds. It's a feast for the eyes and the taste buds.



BRATWURST PASTRY PUFF

INGREDIENTS

1 ct.	Bratwurst, uncooked
1 ct.	4x4 Puff Pastry
1 Tbsp.	Recipe: Egg Wash
4 oz.	Recipe: Fermented Cabbage
1 oz.	Recipe: Maple Mustard Seeds
4 oz.	Recipe: Roasted Carrots

PREPARE THE BRATWURST:

1. Roll a puff pastry piece around the bratwurst sausage link.
2. Brush the puff pastry with egg wash.
3. Place the puff pastry-wrapped bratwurst on a parchment-lined sheet pan.
4. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes, or until the pastry puffs and is golden-brown.

FERMENTED CABBAGE

1 ct.	Cabbage Head, cut into 8 wedges
2 c.	Apple Cider Vinegar
2 c.	Beer
4 tsp.	Sea Salt
2 Tbsp.	Sugar
2 Tbsp.	Pickling Spice

PREPARE THE CABBAGE:

1. Place the cabbage wedges into a container.
2. Boil the remaining ingredients in a pot for 5 minutes.
3. Pour the hot brine over the cabbage and place a plate atop the cabbage to keep it submerged.
4. Cover the container and refrigerate until needed for service.

MAPLE MUSTARD SEEDS

½ c.	Yellow Mustard Seeds
½ c.	White Wine Vinegar
½ c.	Beer
3 Tbsp.	Maple Syrup
1 tsp.	Ground Turmeric
½ tsp.	Kosher Salt

PREPARE THE MUSTARD SEEDS:

1. Combine all ingredients in a pot.
2. Boil for 5 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat, transfer to a covered container and refrigerate overnight.


TO PLATE:


1. Arrange a wedge of fermented cabbage on a serving plate.
2. Top the cabbage with roasted carrots.
3. Spoon the mustard seeds over the cabbage and carrots.
4. Place the bratwurst pastry puff on top for service.


*For the full recipe, search *Bratwurst Pastry Puff* at gfs.ca


Bring a touch of poke to this modern twist on tuna casserole. Smoky tuna tartare, asiago rigatoni, charred broccoli, sweet pea purée and oven-baked cheddar crisps lend a variety of flavour, texture and colour. It's definitely not your mom's tuna casserole.



 **YIELD**
1 serving

 **PREP TIME**
60 minutes

 **COOK TIME**
30 minutes

 **SUGGESTED PRICE**
\$22.00

SMOKED TUNA CASSEROLE

*For the full recipe, search **Smoked Tuna Casserole** at gfs.ca

INGREDIENTS

4 oz.	Diced Tuna
1 tsp.	Smoked Salt
1 oz.	Grapeseed Oil
2¼ c.	Recipe: Sweet Pea Purée
7½ oz.	Recipe: Rigatoni Salad
2 oz.	Recipe: Charred Broccoli
1 oz.	Recipe: Cheddar Cheese Frico

PREPARE THE TUNA:

1. Season the tuna with smoked salt.
2. Toss the tuna and grapeseed oil.

SWEET PEA PURÉE

1 c.	Frozen Peas
1 ct.	Shallots, thinly sliced
1 ct.	Garlic Clove, thinly sliced
1 Tbsp.	Olive Oil
¼ c.	White Wine
1 c.	Water
to taste	Kosher Salt
to taste	Coarse Black Pepper

PREPARE THE SWEET PEA PURÉE:

1. Sauté the garlic and shallots in olive oil until soft and translucent.
2. Add the white wine sauté until it's cooked off completely.
3. Add the water to create a stock and bring to a boil.
4. Remove from the heat, add peas and blend the hot mixture until smooth.
5. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Refrigerate until needed for service.

NOTE: Reserve some thawed frozen peas to sprinkle on as garnish.

RIGATONI SALAD

4 oz.	Rigatoni
3 oz.	Pepper Mill® Asiago Peppercorn Dressing
½ oz.	Asiago Cheese, grated
to taste	Kosher Salt
to taste	Coarse Black Pepper

PREPARE THE RIGATONI SALAD:

1. Boil the rigatoni 1 minute longer than the recommended cooking time.
2. Toss the rigatoni with the dressing
3. Add the grated asiago, season with salt and pepper and refrigerate for service.

TO PLATE:

1. Spread the pea purée onto a serving plate.
2. Place a ring mold on the plate, fill it with the diced tuna and press down firmly before removing the mold.
3. Garnish with the rigatoni pasta salad, charred broccoli.
4. Add the frico and some thawed peas randomly around the plate.



YIELD
1 serving



PREP TIME
12-15 minutes



COOK TIME
15 minutes



SUGGESTED PRICE
\$12.00

What happens when you marry waffles and ribs? Only one of the most perfect tasty unions ever created. The classic comfort of saucy barbecue baby back ribs nestle atop simple tri-corner waffles served with house-made pickles for a picture perfect plate without the need for a pitmaster.

RIBS AND WAFFLES

INGREDIENTS

1 ct.	Slab of Baby Back Ribs
to taste	Kosher Salt
to taste	Coarse Black Pepper
1 oz.	Trade East® Coffee Rub
1 ct.	Waffle, premade
2 oz.	Beer Barbecue Sauce
5 oz.	Recipe: House Pickles & Brine

PREPARE THE RIBS:

1. Remove the membrane from the back of the ribs.
2. Cut shallow incisions behind each bone.
3. Season with salt, pepper and coffee rub.
4. Place the ribs on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper.
5. Heat the oven to 300°F and cook the ribs for 1½ hours, or until you see the meat separating from the bones. Remove from the oven.
6. Carefully remove the ribs and cool until needed for plating.

HOUSE PICKLES & BRINE

¼ c.	Mustard Seed
1 ct.	Garlic Clove, minced
1 c.	Apple Cider Vinegar
½ c.	Water
1 Tbsp.	Kosher Salt
¼ c.	Sugar
1 ct.	Cucumber, sliced
4 oz.	Onion, sliced

PREPARE THE HOUSE PICKLES & BRINE:

1. Combine the mustard seed, garlic, cider vinegar, water salt and sugar in a pot and bring to a boil for 2 minutes.
2. Pour the brine in a container and cool to room temperature.
3. Add the cucumbers and onions.
4. Refrigerate overnight until needed for service.

TO PLATE:

1. Cut the waffle into 4 pieces and place on the side of the plate.
2. Reheat the ribs on a grill and brush with beer barbecue sauce, cooking until it caramelizes.
3. Slice between each rib.
4. Place the ribs on top and off to the side of the waffle.
5. Drizzle more barbecue sauce on the ribs, if desired.
6. Garnish the plate with the house pickles and brine.



Recipes featured in this issue were created by Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialist Michael Vioria of British Columbia. Michael started as a dishwasher 38 years ago and progressed to Red Seal Certified Chef in 1992. His experience running both front and back of the house operations in hotels, casinos, and independent/multi-unit restaurants, give him a diverse perspective in the foodservice and hospitality industries.

Michael is well traveled and has a varied palate, which helps him to support customers by building menus that are unique, conceptual, and on trend. His ability to maximize resources to yield the highest contribution, make him a valuable asset to both Gordon Food Service and its customers.

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