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MARKETING THAT THINKS INSIDE THE BOX pg. 4

2023 A Culinary Trends: GLOBAL MASHUPS & BEYOND | pg. 10



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Four walls restaurant marketing reaches customers already at your tables.

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Helping stressed-out employees helps them ... and your business.

10 2023 culinary trend outlook A new year means

new possibilities for restaurant menus.

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Plan for Success UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

FEBRUARY

04 Homemade Dav

Noodles, vegetables, broth or cream, it's a day to warm customers' spirits with a hearty bowl.

11 No One Eats Alone Day

Encourage guests to bring a family member or friend and offer apps, meals and desserts meant to be shared.

14 Valentine's Day

Set your tables for two and plan an air of romance with indulgent drinks. entrées and chocolate treats.

15 Canada Agriculture Day Plan an all-Canada meal and encourage

guests to post "forks up" selfies to celebrate the nation's bounty.

MARCH

03 Employee Appreciation Day

Name a menu item in their honour and boost morale by publicly recognizing your team members.

24 Shaken or Stirred?

Celebrate cocktails by mixing up fullproof beverages or pouring enticing mocktails to add profits.

APRIL

16 Eggs Benedict Day

Poached eggs are the star, but creativity steals the show. Salmon instead of ham, bagels rather than English muffins ... divine.

22 Earth Day

Put the focus on your natural ingredients or commitment to product sustainability.

26 Pretzel Day

Knots, sticks or buns - there's a place on your appetizer or sandwich menu to add a little twist.

MAY

21 Celebrate Waitstaff Day

Shine the spotlight on your excellent servers. They're a big part of the reason customers become regulars.

28 National Hamburger Day Use this occasion to try out a new burger idea and see if it's worth landing a spot on your permanent menu.

JUNE

03 Whip Up an Egg Day

Get cracking on an easy breakfast dish (quiche, perhaps?) that can stay on the menu all day. Or go all out and offer a soufflé.

05 Try Veggie Burger Day

Plant-based burgers remain popular. Test them on your menu all week and see if they become a favourite.

11 Ears to Corn on the Cob Day

An ear of corn goes a long way to dress up a plate, but corn in all its forms is a great way to add colour to the menu.

22 Onion Rings, Anyone?

Make your own or choose pre-battered options you can fry and serve alongside sandwiches or dinner entrées.

CAPITALIZE ON SPRING HOLIDAYS

St. Patrick's Day - March 17 It's easy being green with minty

beef, cabbage slaw and all things Irish.

Easter - April 9

Plan a big spread for brunch or advertise food your guests can take home for their own celebrations.

Cinco de Mayo - May 5

Taco fiestas are great, but ask your Sales Representative how you can help yourself to a celebration of Hispanic

Mother's Day - May 14

Offer a flower or a dessert special to help families recognize those who bring so much joy and love to their lives.

Father's Day - June 18

Don't mis-steak this opportunity to fire up your char-grill and offer burgers, steaks or barbecue.

Need ideas? Try a combo deal. Offering customers a discount if they bring their Mother's Day restaurant receipt on Father's Day.

Marketing that thinks

inside the box

Four walls restaurant marketing reaches customers already at your tables Every time a customer enters your restaurant, it opens the door to a concept called four-walls marketing — promoting your business to customers already dining there.

Great four-walls marketing enhances the customer experience, turning the visit into something more for the guest and your bottom line. It can add excitement, increase cheque average, encourage a repeat visit or build loyalty.

"At a time when customers are hard to get, you simply can't take for granted a customer who is already there," said Gordon Food Service® Customer Marketing Manager Geoffrey Bonham.

Getting started

The menu is a great vehicle for marketing inside your restaurant, says Vanessa Snyder. She's a Gordon Food Service Menu Specialist who advocates for a smaller menu, done well.

"Because of labour shortages and rising prices, you need a menu you can execute consistently," Snyder said. "A smaller menu means an easier shopping experience for customers and quicker table turns in your dining room."

Another way to improve customer experience and help stressed servers is to utilize QR codes that link to the menu. As guests are seated, they can



review the menu before the server arrives. If possible, allow them to order drinks or appetizers electronically.

Menu inserts or single-sheet menus

for drinks and desserts are a low-cost, high-reward marketing tool. An insert can feature daily or seasonal specials, as well as tease upcoming promotions. A drink and dessert menu that stays at the table tempts guests throughout the meal.

Loyalty and beyond

Table tents are another four-walls marketing tool to promote specials and LTOs, but don't overlook them as an avenue for building a loyalty program. Add a QR code customers can scan to enroll and find out more.

While typical loyalty programs may set you back a free dessert or a discount down the road, they don't have to cost anything.

"Loyalty programs can be built around exclusivity and experiences," Bonham said. "You can invite members to a special wine-tasting or chefdemonstration night, and people will often pay to be the first to try a new wine or a special dish."

Members also can be offered special consideration toward reservations, he explains. Simply hold a couple of tables at your 7 p.m. seating until the last minute for loyalty members. If they call ahead, they skip the line. If not, the table becomes available at 7:05.

Four-walls marketing can be playful, depending on your brand. A game



night, trivia night or vinyl music night — play records by request — are a way to show your creative side.

Build relationships

As people enroll in loyalty programs, reserve tables or engage with servers, be sure to collect customer data. Sevenrooms, a preferred partner with BackofHouse, offers a customer relationship management (CRM) platform to gather insights that can tweak the guest experience.

CRM data works as well for momand-pop restaurants as it does for chains. When staff scheduling and high turnover disrupts server-customer





rapport, CRM data picks up the slack. It can remind your team a party for tonight is celebrating a birthday or anniversary, really loves the crab cake appetizer with zesty cocktail sauce, etc.

"Normally, when people think about marketing budgets, they think outside the facility — TV, billboards, social media," Bonham said. "There, you are in the acquisition game. Getting creative inside your four walls means you can sometimes spend less money, reach people who are already inside your business and are more likely to come back or tell their friends."





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KEEP CALM AND CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH

Helping stressed-out employees helps them ... and your business.



Ask restaurant operators to list staff health concerns, and cut fingers, oil splatter burns, sore feet, aching backs and fatigue come to mind. Mental health is often overlooked because, well, it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb.

The daily restaurant grind is stressful enough. Worker shortages and short-tempered customers take an extra toll. Ultimately, employee mental well-being affects everyone, and addressing staff mental health can improve their lives and your business. Working through physical pain earns rock-star praise — emergency room in the morning, back at work by afternoon. Mental health issues get whispers and sidelong glances.

"We have a stigma to overcome," Erin Boyle said. "Mental health is just as important as physical health. If you are struggling with anxiety, depression or PTSD, that's going to have a physical impact."

She's the executive director of CHOW (Culinary Hospitality Outreach and Wellness), and she has seen how mental health challenges can hurt morale, amplify conflict, create unsafe situations, increase absenteeism and cause turnover.

Daily check-ins, team support

The opposite of absenteeism is presenteeism, in which a staffer shows up but doesn't perform effectively. It can signal mental health troubles and create stress for everyone.

Daily check-ins help managers engage with staffers. Start-of-shift or pre-meal meetings are an opportunity to ask about problems or notice changes in appearance or attitude.

"Don't assume a happy face means a happy person," said Sara Patterson, Gordon Food Service® Canada National Human Resources Manager. "Ask the questions, 'How are you?' and 'How's your stress level?'"

Ultimately, a healthy workplace takes a village. Managers are busy. They can explain policies, procedures and ways to seek help, but they may miss early signs of mental health concerns. That's why Boyle encourages empowering the entire team to support one another with an "if you see something, say something" mindset.

CHOW CULINARY HOSPITALITY OUTHEACH WELLNESS

WELLNESS CHECK IN

Here are some wellness questions you can ask yourself daily:

- \Box Did I get enough sleep?
- Did I take a break from work? Did I press pause?
- Did I stretch or exercise?
- Did I spend time with people or pets I like?
- Did I do something comforting? Watch TV, listen to a podcast, take a bath, etc.
- Did I ask others for help when needed? Lifting, scheduling, running food, etc.
- □ Did I take time to eat?
- Is there someone or something in my life I'm grateful for?
- □ How do I feel at this moment?

These questions can help you start a conversation with a friend, co-worker, or yourself:

- How are you, really?
- What's taking up most of your focus right now?
- Have you ever though that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?
- Have you lost interest in the things that you usually enjoy?
- Are you feeling tired or run down?
- Are you having trouble relaxing?
- Are you easily annoyed?
- Do you feel like something terrible might happen?

Once you've asked, actively listen to the answer.

For more support, visit chowco.org/resources.

Leave therapy to the pros

Managers are encouraged to watch for mental health concerns, but not to be a therapist. In fact, laws prohibit managers from asking some medical and health questions. They can, however, make observations. That's a good way to check in on employees.

"A manager should look for a change in behaviour or attitude," Patterson said. "Make it very conversational – 'Is there anything you want to talk about?' 'How is your family?' questions build a personal connection."

If someone's in obvious stress, Patterson says you can refer them to HR or a crisis hotline. A referral or a phone call can save someone's life.

Boyle agrees, citing advice from the I Got Your Back Project in California: "If someone discloses they are suicidal, ask them, 'Can I call the crisis line with you?' Do all the steps in front of them and then say to the person who answers, 'We just want to know how this whole crisis line works."

This process shows care and concern, plus it opens an avenue for help if an employee struggles outside of work.

Find the best solution

Finding help is easy. Plenty of places,

such as Canada Life's Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, offer online mental health resources.

But mental health programs only work if your team wants it. "It would be a waste of money if all your employees want is an extra day off and a Hulu membership," Boyle said.

If your operation has an HR department, they can explain employee assistance programs or clinical therapy options, Patterson said. People also can call 988, the three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

CHOW offers a list of mental health resources on its site, Boyle says.

Patterson also notes mental health tools are available through the Canadian Mental Health Association, and people can call the nationwide 2-1-1 community hotline for referrals to health clinics, counseling and other personal assistance.

It adds up to improved staff health and a better bottom line. The World Health Organization explains that for every dollar spent on mental health, there is a \$4 return in improved health and productivity.

This content is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended as legal, HR, or other professional advice.

What's your mental health temperature?



Rare	Medium Rare	Medium	Medium Well	Well
- Joy	- Content	- Glad	- Irritated	- Destructive
Happiness	- Proud	Amused	- Frustrated	- Furious
· Confidence	- Relaxed	- Patient	- Tired	- Scared
· Excited	- Hopeful	· Concerned	- Lonely	- Stressed
· Curious	- Calm	- Grumpy	- Disappointed	- Sick
Encouraged	- Thankful	Present	- Discouraged	- Unloved



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What's new? What's next? Chefs and restaurant operators often ask, so we put the question to our experts: What's on the horizon for 2023 culinary trends?

2023

Our Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialists weighed in on what operators can expect in the year ahead. They had some similar thoughts, starting with a reminder that customers want new flavour experiences and are always willing to pay for good food.

"People come back because restaurants are trying new things and taking old recipes and jazzing them up. It's all about evolving the cuisine to its time and place," said Vancouver's Michael Viloria.

Four insights for 2023

Veg-centric sensations. People are pausing on plant-based foods and rediscovering vegetables as a centre-of-the-plate option.

Not limited to vegetarian or vegan, veg-centric can include meat protein in small amounts. The appeal is the flavour notes imparted by aggressive cooking techniques – char-grilling, broiling, smoking, fire-roasting, etc. – and seasonings.

"We're seeing a resurgence in natural plant foods. People are taking cabbage leaves and putting them in a bowl, stuffing them with vegetables, rolling them back, and you've got a cabbage roll dish," David Evans said of the Toronto market. "We're seeing lots of potato dishes, root vegetable dishes being the star instead of being an analog."

Mushroom umami.

Earthy mushrooms have chefs looking beyond portobello burgers and button mushrooms on salads and pizza. "Mushrooms are hidden gems of the produce world," Viloria said. "With all of the varieties out there, it's a meat or protein replacement with room to grow – great on their own, but good in stocks, sauces and even tea."

Enoki, oyster, lobster, chanterelle, shiitake, black trumpet and hen of the woods mushrooms all add umami to the menu, plus they absorb flavours to varying degrees while adding colour to the plate. Viloria also recommends chopping small mushrooms into duxelles that can be cooked off for a bolognese dish, chili or shepherd's pie.





New mashups.

The culinary melting pot continues as people sample unfamiliar cuisines and find similarities. Consider Mediterranean influences on familiar foods. Tomato-based Italian bruschetta becomes Turkish ezme. Traditional pizza becomes a cheeseand egg-filled Georgian bread boat. And it doesn't stop there.

"In Montreal, we have really good Asian food, Indian food, Afro-American food. People from different cultures are putting their own spin on our city's cuisine," said Paul-André Miron Piché. "There's a place that does pho poutine – fries, gravy, bouillon, meatballs, radish, basil, shrimp – a creative twist."

There's also growing interest in foraging and indigenous plant cuisines, Evans said. Three sisters – corn, sweet potatoes and beans – are finding a place on the menu, alongside wild thyme, rosemary and regional herbs familiar to fine French cuisine.

Viloria agrees: "What is trending is a curiosity of what is similar about everyone's cuisine."



Sous vide and pre-cooked

Staffing remains a challenge, so operators are looking at cooked, ready-to-heat options to save labour and time.

"The companies that do sous vide and other pre-cooked meats have really stepped up their game, and



it's something for chefs to explore," Miron Piché said. "The kitchen just needs to re-therm it and glaze it with a sauce to serve – simple, accessible, less-is-more plating."

Other expectations for 2023

Operators will be looking to solve other menu and back-of-house labour challenges in the year ahead.

Chefs are taking a closer look at pickling and fermenting to stretch the menu. Vinegar-brined veggies and the sharpness of fermented kimchi can elevate menu mainstays.

Newfangled charcuterie-style boards offer a high-margin opportunity as a meal or a shareable. Think of them as an Instagrammable version of the grazing table: cream cheese boards, pickle boards, seafood boards, veggie boards and even butter boards.

Staffing challenges also are forcing changes on the culinary side. In addition to the use of labour-saving sous vide and pre-cooked proteins, operators are seeking to increase efficiency and allow chefs to focus on creativity.

"It's quality vs. quantity. Many restaurants don't have the resources to have 30-plus offerings, so they need to re-establish their concept and who they are," Viloria said. "They don't have to overthink. They can still be who they are without being everything to everybody."









ANTICUCHO YAKI SKEWERS

INGREDIENTS

170 g.	Whole Beef Top Sirloin Hearts
28 g.	Recipe: Anticucho Marinade
56 g.	Recipe: Huancaina Cheese Sauce
1 Tbsp.	Markon® Ready-Set-Serve® Cleaned Cilantro

PREPARE THE SKEWERS:

- Cut the beef hearts into 56 g. strips. Add the anticucho marinade and beef hearts to a storage container and refrigerate overnight.
- **2.** Remove the hearts from the marinade and place on skewers.
- **3.** Heat a char-grill to high. Quickly grill the skewers, approximately 2 minutes per side.
- **4.** Place a small pool of huancaina cheese sauce on a plate and top with the skewers.
- 5. Garnish with cilantro.

ANTICUCHO MARINADE

113 g.	Aji Panca Pepper Paste
120 ml.	Gordon Choice® Canola Blend Oil
60 ml.	Gordon Choice Red Wine Vinegar
2 tsp.	Markon Ready-Set-Serve Garlic, minced
½ tsp.	Trade East® Ground Cumin
60 ml.	Soy Sauce

PREPARE THE MARINADE:

1. Add all the ingredients together and place in a storage container for future use.

Beef up the centre of the plate in an economical way with strips of top sirloin hearts soaked in a Peruvian pepper marinade. Skewer the steak, char-grill and serve with a cheesy sauce to lend a colourful pop of flavour.

HUANCAINA CHEESE SAUCE

Gordon Choice Canola Blend Oil
Spanish Onions, diced
Roasted Garlic
Aji Amarillo Yellow Hot Pepper Paste
Evaporated Milk
Queso Fresco Cheese Crumbles
Cheez-It Crackers
Kosher salt
Agave Nectar

PREPARE THE CHEESE SAUCE:

- 1. Heat a sauté pan over medium heat and add the oil and onions. Sauté until softened, about 3 minutes.
- **2.** Add the roasted garlic and aji paste. Bring to a simmer then remove from the heat and let cool.
- **3.** Add the evaporated milk, aji onions and garlic to a blender. Purée until smooth.
- **4.** Add the queso fresco, Cheez-It crackers and agave nectar. Purée until smooth.
- 5. Place in a deli container and refrigerate for future use.



KIMCHI PPANG PIZZA

INGREDIENTS

227 g.	Marinara Sauce
142 g.	Kimchi, drained
1 ct.	Garlic Herb Focaccia Bread, thawed
6 ct.	Gordon Choice [®] Sliced Mozzarella Cheese
as needed	Markon [®] Ready-Set-Serve [®] Green Onions,
	thinly sliced

PREPARE THE KIMCHI PPANG PIZZA:

- **1.** Combine the marinara sauce and kimchi.
- **2.** Layer the mozzarella slices on top of the focaccia bread. Spoon the kimchi marinara over the cheese.
- **3.** Bake in a preheated 190°C (375°F) oven for 5-8 minutes.
- **4.** Remove from the oven, cut into triangle shaped pieces and garnish with scallions.

Focaccia elevates the flatbread pizza experience and gives it an international twist. This creation features rich Italian marinara sauce and zesty Korean kimchi. Serve it as a shareable appetizer or an entrée. Either way, it will be love at first bite.



Consider this a global spin on comfort food. Congee (pronounced känjē) is an Asian rice porridge, which makes a rich filling for this unique chicken pot pie that's finished with a flaky puff pastry topper.

COCONUT CHICKEN CONGEE POT PIE

INGREDIENTS

1 ct.	Puff Pastry Dough
1 ct.	Gordon Choice® Large Eggs
14 g.	Gordon Choice Canola Blend Oil
14 g.	Gordon Choice Carrots, ¼" diced
14 g.	Shelled Edamame
14 g.	Markon® Ready-Set-Serve® Green Onions, thinly sliced
56 g.	Pulled Chicken, thawed
284 g.	Recipe: Coconut Chicken Congee Filling

PREPARE THE COCONUT CHICKEN CONGEE POT PIE:

- **1.** Thaw the puff pastry on a sheet tray lined with parchment. Cut the puff pastry into a circle the diameter of the desired serving bowl.
- Add a splash of water to the egg, whisk to form an egg wash. Brush the puff pastry with the egg wash and bake in a preheated 177°C (350°F) oven for 15 minutes or until golden brown.
- In a sauté pan over medium heat add the oil and saute the carrots, edamame, green onions and chicken.
- Add the coconut congee chicken and a tablespoon or more of water. Stir until completely warmed through and mixed well.
- Add the filling to a serving bowl. Garnish with green onions and place the puff pastry on top.

COCONUT CHICKEN CONGEE FILLING

14 g.	Gordon Choice Canola Blend Oil
2 tsp.	Fresh Ginger, peeled and minced
1 tsp.	Markon Ready-Set-Serve Peeled Garlic, minced
1.6 L.	Chicken Broth
800 ml.	Unsweetened Coconut Milk
794 g.	Jasmine Rice (28 oz. cooked weight)
43 g.	Rice Wine Vinegar
28 g.	Granulated Sugar
to taste	Kosher Salt

PREPARE THE COCONUT CHICKEN CONGEE FILLING:

- **1.** Heat a large pot on the stove with the oil. Sweat the ginger and garlic quickly.
- **2.** Add the chicken broth, coconut milk and cooked rice.
- Boil until the rice breaks down into a porridge consistency, about 30 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 4. Add the rice wine vinegar, sugar and salt.
- **5.** Allow to cook under refrigeration and reserve for future service.

JASMINE RICE

532 ml.	Water
1½ tsp.	Gordon Choice Canola Blend Oil
to taste	Kosher Salt
to taste	Trade East® Ground Black Pepper
340 g.	Jasmine Rice

PREPARE THE JASMINE RICE:

- **1.** In a large pot, bring the water, oil, salt and pepper to a boil.
- **2.** Stir in the rice. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pot. Cook for 10 minutes.
- **3.** Fluff the rice with a fork. Remove it from the pot and reserve for future use.

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