

foodscape™

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BARBECUE:
SMOKE & FIRE
GO GLOBAL
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***Cut costs,
not corners***
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New flavours are entering the scene as global mashups are trending and keeping things hot in the barbecue world.

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Operators are finding easy fixes to lower costs as part of a labour-saving innovation going on across the country.

10 A veg-centric bounty awaits

Veggies are taking centerplate as chefs are creating delicious dishes that will appeal to more than just vegetarian or vegan diners.

FEATURED RECIPES



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Plan for Success

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

JUNE

01 Celebrate World Milk Day

Got milk? Of course you do. Whether it's from a cow, goat, oat, soybean or almond, let guests know of menu items featuring milk.

05 Create a Veggie Burger Day

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

10 Iced Tea Day is Cool

Invite customers to enjoy a spot of tea. Add flavours to enhance the appeal, or create an adult beverage sensation.

18 Father's Day

Create menu specials for dads and families, or donate to charity for every customer wearing blue in dad's honour.

22 Onion Rings Day

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

JULY

01 Canada Day

Deck the tables in red, white and maple leaves. Create a hot dog station. Use toothpick flags to dress up burgers or dessert cakes.

07 Celebrate Macaroni Day

As a side or as a main, mac and cheese is an irresistible comfort food you can add to your barbecue or veg-centric menu.

11 Raise a Glass to Mojito Day

Rum, sugar, lime, soda water and mint are a celebration in a glass. Serve alongside tropical appetizers and dips.

JULY

23 Mark Vanilla Ice Cream Day

Vanilla is a cool, versatile dessert — from apple pie à la mode to a chocolate-drizzled sundae with a cherry on top.

29 Make a Flap with Wings

Try out some of the new Gordon Choice® sauces to enhance wing marinade flavours or to build a signature dip.

AUGUST

01 Girlfriends Day

College friends, work friends, siblings, moms — celebrate the special bonds women share with a meal to mark the occasion.

05 Make a Mustard Day

From salads to rubs to condiments, mustard is a versatile menu star. Call it out as a flavour on your menu mashups.

12 Julienne Fries Day

Change up your fry offering and, one day only, prepare a side featuring crispy, julienne-cut matchstick fries.

18 Sizzle On with Fajita Day

This Tex-Mex creation is ready to be a destination dish, filled with shrimp, steak or chicken and an array of veggies and spices.

29 National Lemon Juice Day

When life hands you lemons, find ways to add a splash of citrus to the menu. Or make lemonade. It all works.



BARBECUE

HEATS UP WITH FLAVOUR MASHUPS

Call it barbecue, BBQ or just plain 'cue, that which we call a roast by any other name is just plain delicious.

Fire and smoke, the oldest cooking method on the planet, is new again as restaurants add global flavour mashups to the barbecue menu. A couple of years after Korean flavours made a splash, new flavours are joining the party.

In addition to barbecue meat in bibimbap bowls with gochujang sauce, operators are branching out and using other Asian flavours. There's Indian butter sauce on barbecue chicken sandwiches, smoked meats added to lasagna, as well as a variety of sauces, seasonings and sides that incorporate global flavours and pair well with smoky, barbecue meats.

"How creative do you want to get? You can pretty much put anything you want in a smoker," said Kevin Green,

a Detroit-area Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialist. "You can smoke a watermelon as a vegetarian option. Just marinate it, smoke it and slice. It looks just like smoked ham on a buffet."

Mediterranean mashups

Traditionally, barbecue is about meat (or seafood) and smoke. This familiar canvas is a great place for chefs to introduce flavour mashups using ingredients uncommon to North American barbecue.

BARBECUE ON A BUDGET

Fanatics fork out big bucks for great barbecue. To reach budget-conscious diners, our Gordon Food Service experts offer advice.

BILL BARKER: “Drop from an Angus brisket to a Choice or no-roll. You don’t really need an Angus cut unless you are using it for marketing.”

ABBY WINDAU: “You can smoke a chuck roast. It’s an underutilized cut that you treat just like a brisket in the smoker. A smoked meatloaf can be a limited time offer.”

KEVIN GREEN: “Short ribs are a value option. Lightly smoke and then braise them. The braising broth picks up a smoky flavour you can use to flavour other cuts.”

ERIN COPELAND: “Choose sides carefully. You don’t need all sides known to barbecue, just a few good ones people can’t resist because they are so good.”

“I’m seeing Mediterranean flavours from Turkey,” Culinary Specialist Bill Barker said. He calls out Meat Moot Smoking, an Istanbul-based chain now open near Chicago.

“They are primarily doing a lot of beef and lamb — necks, shoulders, ribs and leg quarters — no pork or chicken,” Barker noted. “Instead of using sweet or spicy rubs, they use ingredients like cinnamon, sumac and clove.”

The heat and smoky flavour come from natural lump charcoal. There’s no flavouring from cherry, apple or mesquite wood chips. The meats are slow-smoked, then wrapped in plastic and foil to lock in moisture during finishing. The cuts are then served with 14 sauces, including chimichurri, garlic with olive oil, honey mustard, lime and tahini. Sides include eggplant, couscous and spinach pineapple salad.

Stick to barbecue basics

While global spices and seasonings can enhance smoked meats and seafood, don’t go overboard. Extra ingredients and preparations take money and time, which Houston-based Culinary Specialist Erin Copeland says will affect budgets and labour capacity.

“Good barbecuers keep the ingredients and the process simple,” she said. “Keep the menu small by doing five or six meats and five or six sides. If they are super flavourful and well-executed, people will love them and be lined up outside your door and around the corner.”

Instead of expanding the menu, operators can turn to retail for extra income.

“Bottle and package your barbecue sauce or spice rub, sell merchandise and offer cooking classes,” Copeland said. “Those revenue streams can help offset the cost of barbecue.”

Sides: BBQ cash cow

Another profit maker is side dishes. Ohio-based Business Solutions Specialist Abby Windau also sees sides as a vehicle for global flavour. Examples include smoked saffron rice, zucchini fritters with a Greek yogurt dipping sauce, or an ear of smoky elote with chili powder.

The same for mac and cheese — just add some protein with zesty global flavours and you have a meal worth way more than the sum of its parts.



It’s also possible to turn a side into an entrée. Twice-baked smoker potatoes can be served with a small helping of barbecue meat and smothered with cheese or a dollop of sriracha sour cream.

“With good sides that feature colourful, global flavour mashups, you can downplay the fact that you are serving smaller portion sizes of barbecue meat,” Windau said. “If you create exclusiveness — a flavour you can only get here — it will drive traffic.”

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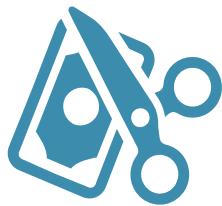
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Simplify to survive the labour crunch

Savvy restaurants have learned to cut costs without cutting corners.



Can you imagine a coffee shop where customers bring their own cups? How about a restaurant where guests arrive carrying personal takeout containers?

It's a way to trim costs without cutting corners on culinary creativity, says Ontario-based Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialist David Evans. And it's all possible in an industry on the lookout for labour-saving solutions that benefit the kitchen and back-of-house staff.

The bring-your-own model is used by some Toronto-area locations to manage dishwashing labour and reduce waste.

"I've seen coffee shops and takeout places that are getting into no disposables and no cash transactions. You bring your own cup, order electronically, fill it up and go," he said. "There also are places where you buy a reusable clamshell container or tiffins that you bring back, exchange and refill."

Labour-saving innovation is taking place all over the North American restaurant industry landscape. Gordon Food Service experts have taken note, and they are ready with insights to help restaurants be at their best in any labour climate.

Make more by using less

Many operators are battling more than a labour problem, they're battling a skilled labour problem. Boston-area Culinary Specialist Derek Seigfried says when the back of house skill level isn't where you want it to be, it's time to look for simple, cost-effective solutions.

He recommends ingredient cross-utilization. It saves inventory and simplifies work in the kitchen.

"If I have a certain type of tomato, how can I spread out that same product so it's used in 10 different menu offerings? It's all about trying to maximize profitability and creativity," Seigfried said. "If you bring in too many specialty ingredients, you get too much overhead and you need people with the skills to use those ingredients."



"You have no waste, minimal prep, plus consistent flavour every time. And with the plus-one, your chef can be doing something else besides cooking barbacoa."

Achieve savings, maintain quality

Being short-staffed is no reason to sacrifice quality. Seigfried and Detroit-area Culinary Specialist Kevin Green say sous vide and plus-one products provide simple and cost-effective ways to clear the labour hurdle. They've become a popular choice because the products have improved greatly in recent years.

"You have high-end chefs working with sous vide pork bellies and pork loin and different proteins," Green said. "It provides a consistently cooked product and allows them to incorporate their own flavouring into it."

The plus-one options add to the appeal. For example, portioned sous vide proteins, such as short ribs with a demi glace in the package or a self-saucing pork shank are heat-and-serve labour savers.

These products fit neatly into menu cross-utilization. Green promotes chicken carnita and beef barbacoa because they can be used in a sandwich, as a taco or in an upscale omelet.

"You have no waste, minimal prep, plus consistent flavour every time," he said. "And with the plus-one, your chef can be doing something else besides cooking barbacoa."

Don't try to do too much

The pandemic forced many businesses to try anything and everything to drive business. As the recovery continues, Evans recommends focusing on basics to reduce labour needs.

"Don't try to do all things for all people. Do simple foods really well," he said.

Green agrees: "That's where a lot of people get in trouble. Instead of trying to compete with the Shawarma place down the street, convince people to come to you because you make the best burger or mac and cheese. I'd rather have one good thing and sell a ton of it than have 15 mediocre things."



GET SAUCY WITH IT

The Gordon Choice® sauce lineup offers time, labour and flavour advantages:

USE THEM ACROSS THE MENU

- As a sauce
- As a marinade
- As a dressing
- As a dip

USE THEM TO EASE PREP

- Reduce and apply as a glaze for fish entrées
- Mix with peanut butter or mayo as a spread

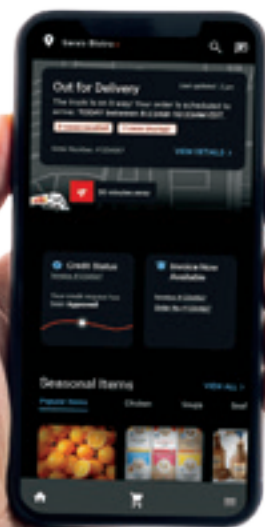
USE THEM TO CREATE CRAVEABILITY

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- Drive repeat business
- Encourage word-of-mouth business



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A veg-centric bounty awaits

Restaurants thrive on vegetable-forward menu creativity.

Old-school vegetables are enjoying some newfound love.

Veg-centric plates give veggies a starring role on the menu, offering guests tasty options and restaurants a way to tame the high cost of meat.

These aren't your grandma's Brussels sprouts. That's because grandma never dreamed of hitting them with a dash of Asian five-spice powder and pan-frying them in bacon grease with sausage bits.

"Customers are still willing to pay for good food. Maybe not the \$50 beef filet, but something different," said Erin Copeland, a Houston-based Gordon Food Service® Culinary Specialist. "As an operator, it requires

creating something unique and delicious at a price point that makes people comfortable."

Veg-centric sits right in that sweet, er, savoury spot. Grilling, roasting, braising, deep-frying and other aggressive cooking methods add a new dimension to vegetable flavour. Adding a protein component elevates vegetables to a centre-of-the-plate presence.

Turn up the veg-centric hype

A challenge operators face is shedding the perception that veg-centric is something more than a vegetarian or vegan menu option.

"Words or pictures are the best way to market vegetable dishes on the menu," Copeland said. "Vegetables

offer lots of colour, and clever, catchy phrases make me say, 'That sounds like something I want to try'."

Here's a few examples:

- ① **"Let's Go Bowling"** invites guests to take a second look at the descriptions for entrée bowls, salads, stir-fry items or veg-centric pasta dishes.
- ② **"Welcome to the Farm-acy"** hints at vegetables, but doesn't exclude pork, beef, chicken, seafood, sauces and beyond.
- ③ **"Knock Me Over with a Feta"** will make people curious about how you're incorporating cheese on the veg-centric menu.



THE VALUE OF VEG-CENTRIC

Menu cross-utilization.

You can use ingredients already on the menu to create each dish.

Higher margins.

Affordable veggies become menu entrées that command higher prices.

Healthy appeal.

Diners looking to eat better can choose vegetables and still enjoy meat flavours.

Veg out on familiarity

Once people are curious, then it's all about dialing up the flavour. A popular choice on menus right now is Mediterranean, with seasonings perfect for veg-centric eating.

"What comes to mind when you think about Mediterranean flavours is freshness — fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, lemon, nuts, parsley," Copeland said. "The dish can include chicken, beef or lamb, with tzatziki sauce or garlic. You may have many of these things elsewhere on the menu already."

Operators also should consider local cuisine. Crawfish are popular along Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, and Copeland has seen them used in veg-centric dishes at Vietnamese restaurants, prepared with sesame oil, star anise and Thai chiles.

Texas also is big on barbecue, and smoky flavour pairs well with vegetables. For a new twist using familiar foods, simply add a few bites of pulled pork or smoked salmon to a dish with corn, potatoes and shiitake mushrooms, then add a ramekin of barbecue glaze on the side.

Veg-centric innovation

With meat costs running hot, veg-centric entrées offer operators a way to use less meat and more vegetables to achieve higher margins. To help, using flavourful value cuts like slow-braised beef tri-tip is an option.

Some operators are finding success with fun plays on dishes that would normally contain meat. Eggplant, mushrooms, hard-cooked eggs, cheese and toasted nuts can stand in for meat at a fraction of the cost, all while adding texture to a dish.

People still seek out good food. Even in a tough economy Copeland expects people will continue to pay for great flavours that make them want to come back to your establishment and veg-centric creations can play a role.

"When it comes to vegetables, it seems hard to innovate," Copeland said. "Break boundaries and try new things. Try new cuts or new cooking techniques. Easy to say. Hard to do. The restaurants who do it will increase their chances for success."





YIELD
about 1
170-g. serving



PREP TIME
5 minutes



COOK TIME
5 minutes

BARBECUE PORK BELLY BAO BUNS

INGREDIENTS

85 g.	Gordon Choice® Cooked Pork Belly, sliced into 28 g. pieces
28 g.	Gordon Choice Applewood Smoked Pepper Barbecue Sauce
3 ct.	Folded Bao Buns
6 ct.	Markon® Ready-Set-Serve® Sliced Radishes
as needed	Markon Ready-Set-Serve Cilantro
1 Tbsp.	Gordon Choice Jumbo Roasted & Salted Cashews, chopped
1 tsp.	Hot Honey Sauce

PREPARE THE PORK BELLY:

1. Sear the pork belly pieces on a flat top griddle or in a deep-fryer.
2. Add the barbecue sauce to a stainless steel bowl and add the heated pork belly. Toss to coat.
3. Steam the bao buns until warm.
4. Place the pork belly into the steamed bao buns.
5. Garnish with radish slices, cilantro and cashews.
6. Drizzle with hot honey sauce.

VEGGIE MASALA BITES WITH PLANT-BASED TZATZIKI

INGREDIENTS

94 g.	Adda Veggie Indian Masala Mix
½ c.	Warm water
1 c.	Gordon Choice® Broccoli
1 c.	Markon® Ready-Set-Serve® Carrots
2 Tbsp.	Gordon Choice Canola Oil
85 g.	Recipe: Plant-Based Tzatziki

PREPARE THE VEGGIE MASALA BITES:

1. In a stainless steel bowl, combine the Indian masala mix protein crumbles and warm water. Allow the mixture to sit for about 5 minutes.
2. In a food processor, pulse the broccoli then the carrots into pea-sized pieces. You may need to do this in batches.
3. Add the broccoli and carrot pieces to the masala mix. Stir to combine.
4. Add one Indian masala mix spice packet. Stir to combine. If the mixture appears dry, add a small amount of water.

5. Form the mixture into 57 g. patties and place on a parchment-lined sheet pan.
6. Refrigerate the patties for 15 minutes to 3 days before cooking.
7. Heat the canola oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the patties and cook for about 2 minutes per side. Cover the pan and cook on low for an additional 3-4 minutes.

SERVE THE VEGGIE MASALA BITES:

1. Place masala bites on a serving platter. Place the tzatziki in a ramekin and serve alongside the masala bites.

PLANT-BASED TZATZIKI

1 ct.	Markon® English Cucumber
6 ct.	Markon Ready-Set-Serve® Garlic Cloves
3 ½ c.	Plain Coconut Yogurt
½ c.	Markon Fresh Dill
3 ½ Tbsp.	Markon Lemons, juiced
3 Tbsp.	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 tsp.	Kosher Salt
1 tsp.	Trade East® Ground Black Pepper

PREPARE THE PLANT-BASED TZATZIKI:

1. Using a box grater, shred the cucumber. Place in a cheesecloth and squeeze out excess liquid.
2. Mince the garlic. Stem and mince the dill.
3. In a stainless steel bowl, combine all ingredients and mix until thoroughly incorporated.
4. Place in a covered storage container and refrigerate for future service.





YIELD
about 22
113-g. servings



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOK TIME
about 5 hours



SMOKED LAMB SHOULDER

INGREDIENTS

4 kg. avg. Bone-in Lamb Shoulder
¼ c. Extra Virgin Olive Oil
56 g. Recipe: Turkish Smoking Rub

PREPARE THE LAMB SHOULDER:

1. Allow the lamb shoulder to thaw under refrigeration for 3 days. Place on a foil-lined sheet pan and rub the outside with olive oil.
2. Using a propane torch, sear the top, bottom and sides. Rub the Turkish Smoking Rub on all sides of the lamb shoulder.
3. With the fat side up, place on a 107°C (225°F) indirect grill or smoker, using only lump charcoal. Cook for two hours.
4. After two hours, wrap the lamb shoulder in plastic wrap then tightly with aluminum foil. Raise the grill or smoker temperature to 150°C (300°F) and place the lamb shoulder back on the grill or smoker for an additional two hours. The internal temperature should reach about 93°C (200°F).

5. Remove the lamb shoulder from the grill or smoker and keep it in foil for about 30 minutes, until somewhat cooled.
6. Remove the foil and plastic. Shred the meat. Either place in a bain-marie to keep warm or in a refrigerated storage container for future service.

SERVE THE LAMB SHOULDER:

1. Place the desired portion of warmed lamb shoulder in a stainless mixing bowl and lightly dust with more Turkish Smoking Rub. Mix to combine.
2. Serve the meat with warmed pita bread, tzatziki, hummus, or Greek yogurt.

TURKISH SMOKING RUB

2 ct. Trade East® Whole Bay Leaves
2 Tbsp. Trade East Rosemary
2 Tbsp. Trade East Thyme
2 Tbsp. Trade East Oregano
¼ c. Kosher Salt
2 Tbsp. Trade East Cracked Black Pepper
1 tsp. Trade East Ground Cinnamon
½ tsp. Trade East Ground Cloves
1 Tbsp. Ground Sumac

PREPARE THE TURKISH SMOKING RUB:

1. Crumble the bay leaves into small pieces and place them in a spice grinder with the rosemary, thyme and oregano. Pulse-grind until the spices are rough chopped but not powder.
2. Combine all the spices in a bowl and mix well to blend. Store in an airtight container for future use.

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