

foodscape™

Chaos Cooking

When global
flavours collide
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Chef Paul-André Miron Piché
Culinary Specialist

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FOOD SERVICE

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Let global flavours inspire your next signature dish.

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Plan for Success

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

04 Labour Day

A Labour Day meal isn't complete without barbecued ribs, grilled corn on the cob and cobbler. Create a picnic-themed menu with ribs covered in Gordon Choice® Barbecue sauce.

15 Flip for National Double Cheeseburger Day

Offer free fries with every double cheeseburger ordered as a holiday special, or serve with Brickman's® Kettle Crunch Potato Chips.

23 First Day of Autumn

Feature some comforting autumn meals on your menu like a Chicken Stew with Dumplings or Gordon Choice buttermilk biscuits.

OCTOBER

04 National Taco Day

Whether it's a taco al pastor, carne asada, barbacoa or a shrimp taco, it's a great day to put them on display. Feature a taco bar or a BOGO taco special to entice your diners.

06 National Noodle Day

A bowl of ramen, a heaping plate of linguine, a piping hot bowl of Udon soup—noodles come in all shapes and sizes. Get creative and come up with a new noodle dish to debut.

09 Thanksgiving

Create a homestyle Thanksgiving menu. Feature a tasty maple cranberry sauce, mincemeat and pumpkin layered pie and offer butter tarts as a dessert.

31 Halloween

Have a little fun with your Halloween specials and offer a \$5 Bloody Mary for adults, or offer free kids meals to kids who dress in costumes.

NOVEMBER

03 National Sandwich Day

Mix it up a little and create a unique sandwich to celebrate the occasion. Put a new spin on a pastrami sandwich, or add some Gordon Choice® wing and barbeque sauces to pulled pork.

06 National Nachos Day

Nothing says November (midway through football season) than a plate of cheesy nachos topped with all the goodies from jalapeños to black beans. Feature a variety of nachos—chicken, steak, ground beef—as a happy hour special.

18 National Apple Cider Day

Feature a fun happy hour drink—maybe spike it with bourbon and stir in a cinnamon stick! The warmth from within will keep your customers wanting to stay a little longer.

DECEMBER

05 Cozy up on Comfort Food Day

Customize a small menu of comfort-food favorites, such as your house mac & cheese, a chicken pot pie, a creamy beef stew or a hearty bowl of chili.

14 National Biscuits and Gravy Day

Nothing beats a well-made Biscuits and Gravy menu item on a cold winter morning. Make this an annual tradition, serving up the southern breakfast every year on this day.

31 National Champagne Day

Cheers! Ring in the New Year with your regulars and newcomers by offering an impressive list of champagne drinks like a Lemonade Mimosa, St. Germain Spritz, a French 75 or a Bellini.



Spice up your menu
with international
pairings and embrace

chaos cooking

If it's 'intentional,' the
melding of global flavours
works, chef says.

It turns out Wolfgang Puck was onto something in the '70s when he introduced uncommon flavour pairings to the masses—a trend known then as 'fusion cuisine.'

Fast-forward decades later, a slightly more aggressive trend known as 'chaos cooking' is taking fusion cuisine "to a whole other level," said Kurt Kwiatkowski, Gordon Food Service® corporate executive chef.

Chaos cooking is blending the food and flavours of different cultures into a single dish. And like so many culinary trends, it was fueled by the pandemic and social media, namely Tik Tok.

"It's something that tells a story," Kwiatkowski said.

Kwiatkowski considers Puck a "pioneer of chaos cooking" who knew how to take global flavours and turn them into mashup masterpieces. Puck is known for creating dishes like Buffalo Chicken Spring Roll or pizza

topped with salmon and caviar.

Paul-André Miron Piché, Gordon Food Service culinary specialist in Québec, is excited to see where chefs today will take the trend. "It's about breaking the mold, breaking boundaries," he said.

Orderly Chaos

Don't let the name fool you: Chaos cooking isn't a result of flavours haphazardly thrown together. It's quite the opposite, Kwiatkowski said. "We're not doing whatever we want. It's intentionally done," he said. The result of mashing together "world flavours" results in endless possibilities, he said.

Chaos cooking is blending the food and flavours of different cultures into a single dish.

He references mashups that include spices and cooking techniques from Italy, Chicago, India and Japan, like the pastrami taco found in New York, or the lox and cream cheese pizza with fried capers originally crafted by Puck at his restaurant, Spago in Los Angeles.

It's important to note, Kwiatkowski said, the authenticity of popular cultural dishes doesn't have to be minimized during the process.

"You can keep the authentic flavours. You might just be delivering it in a different way," Kwiatkowski said.

Miron Piché agrees: "Every culture has a staple dish or a main ingredient they use in their dishes. You just have to try different things."

It's also how the food is prepared.



For the PB&J Wings recipe, see p. 13

The authenticity of popular cultural dishes doesn't have to be minimized during the process.

"Cooking techniques are still important too. This isn't just throwing a dish together or sprinkling some soy sauce on a pasta dish and calling it chaos cooking," Kwiatkowski said. "In the end, flavours matter. That's what's going to rule supreme."

A dash of creativity, a pinch of purpose

It takes two things to create a true chaos-cooking dish: An imagination and even more importantly—purpose. And it takes a lot of skill to get it right, Kwiatkowski said. "Putting a dish on your menu or redesigning your menu to have a lot of dishes that are a result of chaos cooking has been successful when they are done with a specific reason," he said.

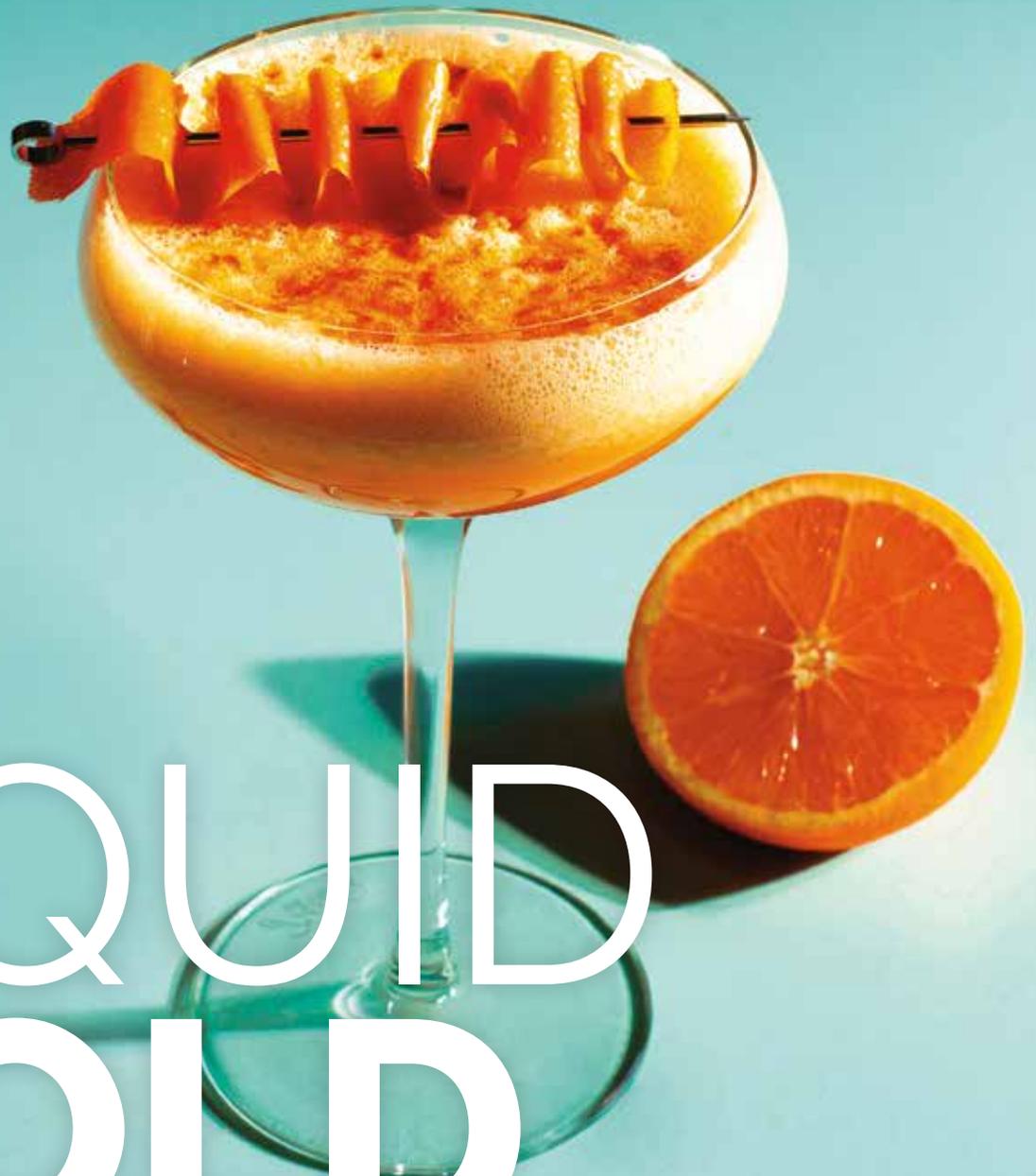
Sheal Patel, the chef behind the Chicago pop-up Dhuuan BBQ, is a great example.

According to an article on the website, Eater, he is one of many chefs driven by the urge to push back against the exception of cooking only the food of their cultural backgrounds. Patel started cooking because he thought Indian flavours paired well with red meats that are more common in America.

"People want to tell a story, and as a customer, a lot of people want to hear and taste what that story is," Kwiatkowski said.

And that's a great place to start for any chef or operator looking to add chaos-cooking dishes to their menu, he said. Take some time to think about what message you want to send or what story you want to tell with your food.





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LOYALTY PROGRAMS

keep regulars coming back,
attract new patrons



Incorporate loyalty programs into marketing plan, experts say.

Let's be honest: Those ratty, ripped and misplaced punch cards aren't doing much to bolster operators' bottom line, and customers are tired of digging through their wallets to find them. That's why true loyalty programs are worth considering, experts say.

Loyalty programs aren't a new concept, but they have really evolved over the years. Today, more effective strategies are replacing the traditional paper punch cards, largely due to technology that's made it

more accessible, according to Back of House.

Teresa Berman, a Gordon Food Service® business solutions specialist, said now there are many effective and simple ways to build a program. Today's strategies tend to be less expensive than traditional advertising, which focuses more on first-time diners, she said.

"Having an easy-to-use platform like a QR code may appeal to tech-savvy diners who crave a deal but want seamless interaction to gain it," Berman said. "A good loyalty program will give operators access to their customer base via contact information that the patron provides."

This enables the operation to be able to push notifications to an email or

as a text—and that costs an operator nothing. "This is a very cost effective way to promote features, launch a new menu or promote the opening of their patio," Berman said.

Eric Schamp, Gordon Food Service business solutions specialist, said the right loyalty programs can result in very useful data for operators. And that data can help them grow in other areas.

"Loyalty programs that utilize technology...are able to analyze data to help them run their business," Schamp said. Some systems allow operators to generate data showing the average dollar amount of guest cheques with a loyalty member versus a non-loyalty member, to see if the program is increasing cheque average.

“They can also analyze how often loyalty members are visiting and what they are purchasing,” he said.

But it does take time—and training—to really understand the data, he said.

“It is critical that the team members are trained on the program so they are comfortable with how it works and can help explain the program to their guests,” he said. “If they don’t understand it, they won’t sell it.”

Build a program that lasts

The goal of a loyalty program is to get those customers coming back and to do that, they need to feel valued, Berman said. “Customers like to feel appreciated and a loyalty program can give them exclusive access to new cocktails or to preview a dessert sampler or even an opportunity to get into a private event, like a new menu launch party,” Berman said.

Another thing to keep in mind is that it’s imperative for operators to consider a loyalty program part of their “overall marketing plan,” she said.



A loyalty program today should target frequent patrons who already “know your operation,” Berman said.

“It’s a promotion to reward your regular customers by enticing them to visit more often and to give them a reason to put your establishment top-of-mind when they are deciding where to go to dine or meet up with friends,” she said.

Nearly 80% of consumers say loyalty programs make them more likely to continue doing business with brands, and members spend 27% more when

the brand establishes a positive emotional connection, according to Back of House. That’s all good news for operators, Berman said.

The bottom line? Loyalty programs should create excitement and should be easy for the customer to use and gain the rewards, she said.

“People are looking for value deals these days and a loyalty program can offer something that your customer wants.”

Creating a successful loyalty program

Eric Shamp, Gordon Food Service® business solutions specialist offers tips on creating a successful loyalty program:

☆ START SIMPLE

Try the point system. Offer the loyalty member a point-per-dollar spent and once they accumulate a specific point amount, they will receive a discount on their next visit.

☆ CUSTOMERS WANT TO SEE RESULTS...QUICKLY

Keep that point total somewhat low so the loyalty member starts to earn discounts. One way to do that is offering \$5 off their next visit after accumulating 100 points.

☆ GIVE CUSTOMERS A REASON TO JOIN

A restaurant could offer \$5 off the next visit or a free dessert just for signing up.

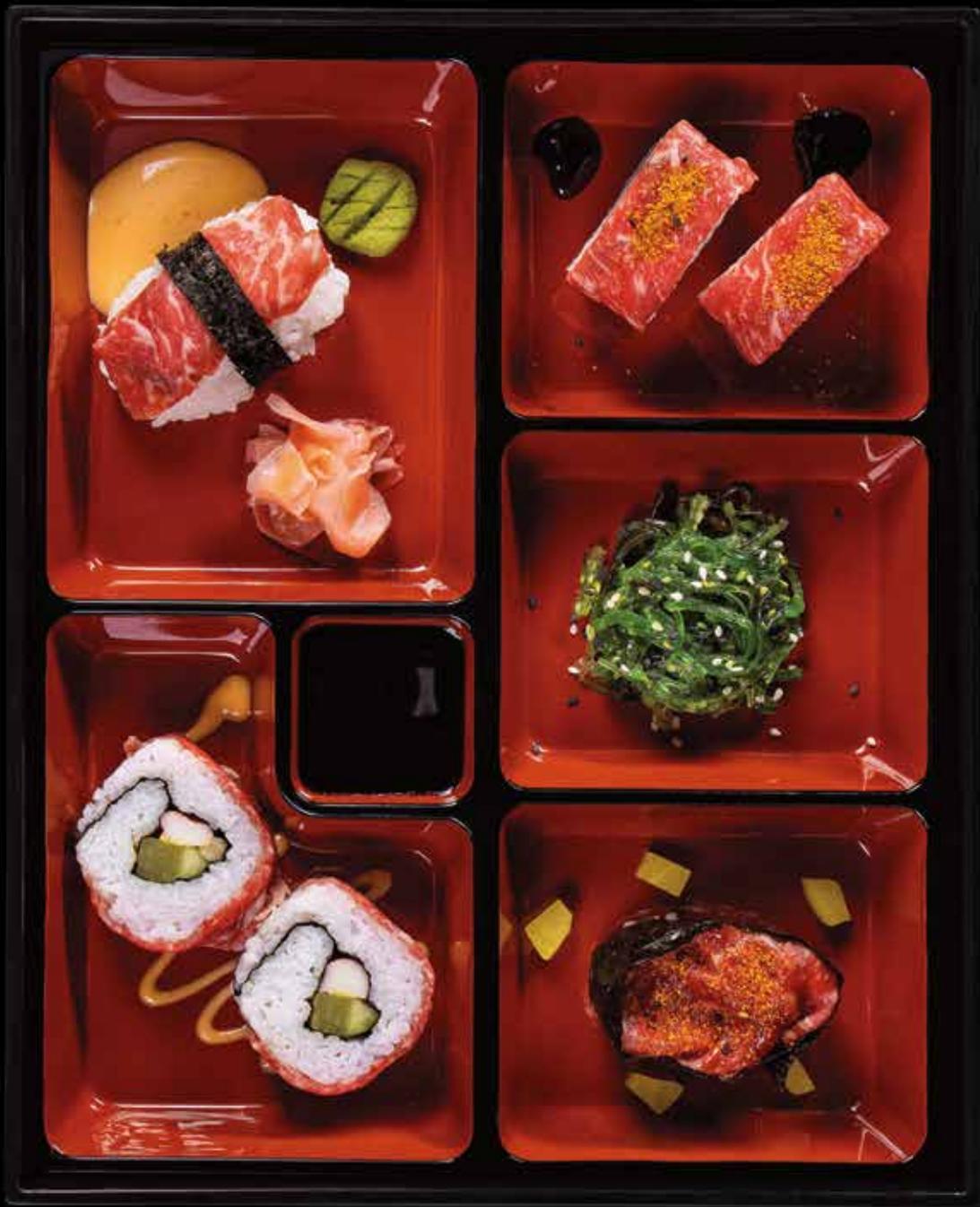
☆ OFFER REWARDS

Reward customers on birthdays, anniversaries, offer exclusive menu tastings or double points on certain days of the week.

☆ REMIND CUSTOMERS

Capture a customer’s email address and use that as part of a marketing strategy. It will keep the restaurant top-of-mind and increase frequency of visits.





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All hands on deck

Industry operators turn to cross-training as a lifeline amid staffing shortage

The line between back and front of house for many industry operators has become blurred as the need for cross-training employees has become crucial for survival.

According to a recent article in the Washington Post, 2 million hospitality and leisure jobs remain open, and while many industries have recovered, leisure and hospitality is still 500,000 employees short of its 2020 levels.

Carolyn Corcoran, Gordon Food Service business solutions specialist, has watched operators work through this struggle.

For the employees who aren't leaving the industry, the benefits of cross-training help them as much as it does the overall operation. "You have a level of security within your job. You have the extra hours and it's guaranteed income. Everybody wins with having cross-training available," she said.

The concept isn't exactly new to the industry, but it's becoming more common and essential for many operators to remain open. "You learn to do the job of two people," she said. "You learn more about the industry and you're more invested in the company."

Teach them and they will stay

Heidi Kise, Gordon Food Service culinary specialist, said she advocates cross-training for many reasons. "Knowledge is power and gives people the opportunity to grow in the organization," she said. "I know it's easier said than done, but explain to staff why it benefits them. That's how you get them on board. When you really believe in it, they will believe in it."

Here is what Gordon Food Service experts suggest:

Be clear: Write out skills needed to be a shift lead, for example, and include any additional responsibilities that may be asked of them.

Reward: Incentivize the employee once he or she masters the additional tasks required of them.

Be specific: Don't over cross-train an employee as you want that employee to stay as specialized as possible. If they are cross-trained in too many positions, they become generalists.

Fear of change halts implementation

Laura Taningco, Gordon Food Service business solutions specialist said some are reluctant to cross-train. "I have operators trying to figure out labour issues, but I haven't had anyone pull the trigger" she said. "It is a fear of change and there is a lot of reluctance to reorganize staff into a non-traditional model."

But Taningco said, if operators embrace change, they will have a "better labour pool to pull from" when there are gaps in shift coverage. "I tell operators that sometimes we have to slow down to speed up. They have to understand and address the root causes of why they are so busy," she said.

The other obstacle operators are facing is that front-of-house employees worry their wages will be affected if they work shifts in the back of house. "It becomes a conversation of how do you get your staff to understand why we should make this change and why would (the employee) want to be cross-trained," Taningco said. "Basically operators need to spell out, 'Here's what's in it for you.'"

Leveling the playing field: Step No.1 in cross-training implementation

Some operators have turned to paying all staff a fair hourly wage and then splitting tips with front and back of house.

"An hourly wage provides a steady income, no matter the guest traffic for front of house, more hours are available to work with cross-trained positions," Taningco said. "And the back of house finally has the opportunity to earn more wages via the tip share as well as learn a new position elsewhere in the restaurant."

It's a win-win for operators and the employee, Taningco said. "It's a real opportunity to gain new skills as well as marketability for future roles in the current operation or in another establishment," she said.



REDUCE LABOUR COSTS AND RETAIN EMPLOYEES WITH CROSS-TRAINING:

› Employee longevity

Employees who learn multiple skills feel valued and see opportunity for growth and that results in less employee turnover.

› Shift coverage

Staff schedules have flexibility and employees can pick up hours during slower periods of the year.

› Promotes efficiency

With a staff of multitaskers, operators should see increased productivity and ultimately less hiring needs.

 **YIELD**
1 6-oz. serving

 **PREP TIME**
15 minutes

 **COOK TIME**
5 minutes



Latin Egg Drop Sandwich

INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp.	Guajillo Pepper Paste
2 Tbsp.	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
4 oz.	Sous Vide Pork Belly
1 c.	Avocado Pulp
3 Tbsp.	Gordon Choice® Sour Cream
3 Tbsp.	Limes, juiced
2 tsp.	Trade East® Granulated Garlic
1 tsp.	Kosher Salt
1 Tbsp.	Six Pepper Blend
½ tsp.	Trade East Ground Black Pepper
3 Tbsp.	Markon® Cilantro, chopped
2 ct.	Sliced Italian Ciabatta Bread
2 ct.	Gordon Choice American Cheese Slices
1 ct.	Medium Shell Egg

PREPARE THE SANDWICH:

1. Mix the guajillo pepper paste and olive oil together and reserve for future service.
2. Grill the pork belly for 2 minutes on each side on a preheated char grill. Remove from the grill and place on a parchment paper lined sheet tray.
3. Brush guajillo pepper paste and olive oil marinade on each side of the pork belly. Keep warm for immediate service or chill for future service.
4. Mix the avocado pulp, sour cream, lime juice, granulated garlic, salt, six pepper blend and black pepper in a food processor until smooth. Add cilantro and then pulse several times to incorporate cilantro. Reserve in a squeeze bottle for future service.
5. Slightly warm 2 slices of bread with a slice of cheese on each piece of bread.
6. Heat olive oil in a non-stick pan over medium heat and cook the egg over medium.
7. Spread 1 Tbsp. avocado crema on each piece of bread then add pork belly and egg.
8. Put the sandwich into a fry holder and drizzle an additional tablespoon of avocado crema on top.

 **YIELD**
9 5-ct. servings

 **PREP TIME**
10 minutes

 **COOK TIME**
about 5 minutes



KURT KWIATKOWSKI,
CEC, CCA, AAC
CORPORATE EXECUTIVE CHEF

Chef Kurt has spent years in professional kitchens, including the award-winning Culinary Services Residential Dining at Michigan State University. He is an accomplished chef who has won dozens of awards, was voted Chef of the Year for the Detroit Chef De Cuisine, and was inducted into the American Academy of Chefs.

PB&J Wings

INGREDIENTS

¼ c.	Gordon Choice® Smooth Peanut Butter
2 Tbsp.	Sesame Oil
1 Tbsp.	Peanut Oil
½ c.	Hot Pepper-Bacon Jam
1 c.	Gordon Choice Grape Jelly
2 c.	Gordon Choice Maple Syrup
1½ Tbsp.	Trade East® White Sesame Seeds
1½ Tbsp.	Black Sesame Seeds
4 lb.	Gordon Choice Bone-In Chicken Wings

PREPARE THE PB&J WINGS:

1. Mix the peanut butter, sesame oil and peanut oil together and reserve in a squeeze bottle for service.
2. Mix the hot pepper-bacon jam, grape jelly, and maple syrup together in a sauce pan and warm over medium-low heat to bring flavours together. Remove and keep warm for service.
3. Mix toasted sesame seeds together for a blend and reserve for service.
4. Deep-fry five chicken wings per package directions. Remove from the fryer and toss with 3 oz. of the jelly mixture. Plate the chicken wings.
5. Top with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter sauce and 1 tsp. mixed toasted sesame seeds.



 **YIELD**
1 7-oz. serving

 **PREP TIME**
5 minutes

 **COOK TIME**
5 minutes



**PAUL-ANDRÉ
MIRON PICHÉ**
CULINARY SPECIALIST

With over 17 years of culinary experience, Chef Paul-André has many cooking styles—from European to pub-style. His colleagues describe him as an unrivalled, creative asset in the kitchen with an avante-garde soul and has a passion for culinary discoveries.

Cheesy Ramen

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp.	Cornstarch
2 tsp.	Cold Water
½ c.	Gordon Choice® Cheddar Cheese, grated
3 oz.	Instant Ramen Noodles, flavour packet discarded
½ c.	Whole Milk
1 ½ tsp.	Gordon Choice Salted Butter
1 ½ tsp.	Gordon Choice Soy Sauce
¾ tsp.	Trade East® Granulated Garlic
½ tsp.	Trade East Ground Cayenne Pepper

PREPARE THE RAMEN:

1. Combine the cornstarch and cold water in a small bowl and set aside for later. Grate the cheese and set aside for later.
2. Put the ramen noodles into a large bowl. Do not use the flavour packet.
3. Boil some water in a pot or a kettle. Pour it into the bowl with ramen noodles and make sure they are submerged. Put a lid on the bowl and set it aside so the noodles soften. If you are using thin ramen noodles, soak them for one minute in the hot water. If you are using thick Korean noodles, soak them for about two minutes.
4. Add milk, butter, soy sauce, granulated garlic and cayenne pepper to a small pot or saucepan over medium-low heat.
5. Once the butter melts and the milk has come to a low rolling boil (approximately two minutes), add the cornstarch slurry. Keep stirring until the milk has thickened and starts to bubble.
6. Turn off the heat and add the grated cheddar cheese and stir until melted and combined with the creamy milk.
7. Drain the ramen noodles and add them to the cheese sauce. Mix well.



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