



SUNNY SIDE UP

Summer Foodservice Trends



SABERT FOOD PACKAGING

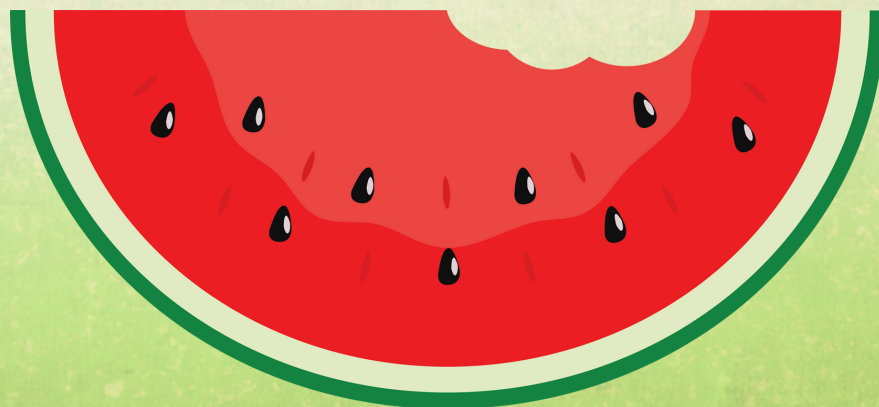
TAKE A BIG BITE OUT OF THE SUMMER MARKET SHARE

Summer is fast approaching, presenting a sizzling opportunity for foodservice operators to boost revenue and outshine competitors.

The data paints a compelling picture for the warmer months. On the bright side, **summer is one of the busiest seasons** for restaurants, accounting for around 25% of annual sales, according to the National Restaurant Association. **Restaurant traffic increases** by about 3-4% during the season compared to other times of the year.

On the other hand, consumers are feeling the heat this year with economic pressures and rising food costs. Recognizing and preparing for these trends will be crucial in capturing the wave of summer spending.

Whether it's catering a backyard party or satisfying on-the-go cravings, this guide will explore how to **leverage the summer season to capture share of mind** and create new opportunities to attract and connect with consumers.





#1: MAKE A SPLASH WITH AN LTO HEATWAVE

91%

of consumers are more inclined to visit establishments that provide new items.*

In a world where value-seeking consumers watch their wallets, limited time offers (LTOs) can be a powerful strategy to drive excitement and build loyalty.

In 2024, the trend is leaning towards globally inspired flavors and health-conscious options. Recent research also suggests that LTOs featuring exotic spices and unique pairings, like mango habanero or tamarind-glazed proteins, are particularly successful in capturing the interest of adventurous diners. Additionally, the demand for plant-based and gluten-free items is rising, with many consumers seeking these options even when it comes to summer treats.

The key to a successful LTO isn't just the product itself but also the marketing. Leverage social media platforms and email to create anticipation and consider offering exclusive promotions to encourage word-of-mouth buzz.

TIP: According to Datassential, September is the hottest season for LTOs. Use the summer to ramp up LTO planning and get a head start on the competition.



Pulp Hinged Containers



Twist & Crispy



Earthtel r-PRO Round Bowls & Containers

LTOs MUST-HAVES

from Sabert

Implementing an LTO strategy presents a myriad of opportunities for culinary creativity. **Versatile food packaging** is a sure way to help streamline operations and craft LTOs that not only draw in crowds but also set the stage for long-term customer loyalty.



Kraft Coffee Clutch®

LEARN MORE: www.sabert.com



#2: MAXIMIZE SUMMER MOMENTS

Summer events, road trips, and barbeques will prompt people to consume more food. Consider launching LTOs and promotions around exciting marketing hooks, such as a red, white, and blue dessert for the Fourth of July or an exclusive item to recognize National Drive-Thru Day, celebrated on July 27.

By capitalizing on the dog days of summer, operators can bring the heat to create a sense of urgency and stay top of mind all season long.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



#3: BOOST BUSINESS WITH SUMMER CATERING

The longer days and warmer weather make it ideal for outdoor events, where catered food can take center stage. Expanding service offerings to include catering for summer occasions can be a lucrative opportunity. From weddings to pool parties, consumers are looking for convenient, high-quality food items to complement their social gatherings.

Think vibrant and colorful menus featuring seasonal produce or offering themed options that align with summer vibes, such as beach party barbeque. Additionally, summer catering can help businesses showcase their versatility and lead to repeat business.



**CATERING
POP-TOP**



**KRAFT POP-UP
CATERING TRAY**



When it comes to catering, presentation is nearly as important as taste. Food packaging can help create a positive first impression and enhance the overall customer experience. Eye-catching and functional solutions can differentiate a caterer in a crowded market. The right packaging should not only look good but also preserve the quality of the food.

With an increasing consumer focus on sustainability, choosing eco-friendly packaging options can enhance a company's image and appeal to a broader client base. Finally, always be prepared to accommodate dietary restrictions with tasty alternatives, ensuring every guest leaves satisfied.

By leveraging these insights, operators can create a 'summer-to-remember' catering event and secure a larger slice of the season's profit pie.

#4: SOAK UP THE SUMMER MENU TRENDS

Seasonal menu introductions are not just about bringing novelty to the table; they are a strategic move to boost sales and customer engagement. By seizing the potential of summer flavors, operators can catch the spending heatwave.

Consider incorporating unique, seasonal offerings that resonate with consumers. Highlighting fresh, in-season local ingredients in dishes can address the growing demand for sustainable and health-conscious eating.

Datassential predicts savory flavors like cherrywood smoked bacon and pollo asado will shine this season, along with sweet flavors like white peach, cookies & cream and guava.

Summer salads are a staple on the menu and tend to sell well during the warmer months. The lighter nature of salads appeals to those looking for a meal that won't weigh them down in the heat. Salads can also showcase seasonal produce at its peak, from ripe tomatoes to sweet corn and crisp cucumbers, attracting customers interested in fresh, high-quality ingredients.

The **versatility of salads** can address a wide range of dietary preferences, including vegan, keto, and gluten-free diners.

Since this season is also prime time for road trips, **operators should factor convenience into the menu.** Grab-and-go, ready-to-heat, and freshly prepared foods can attract consumers looking to satisfy cravings during busy summer days.



Clear On-The-Go Round Bowls



Paper Square Bowls



#5: STAY COOL WITH SUMMER SNACKS

Snacking is having its moment, with Circana reporting close to **half of consumers eat three or more snacks** during the day.

Whether it's a salty or sweet treat, the surge in snacking offers plenty of revenue opportunities for foodservice success.

78% of operators who serve snacks say that they are profitable

77% of operators say snacks sell well

Datassential, 2023



SCOOP UP SNACK SALES

Ice cream is one of the top snacking categories* and consumers are looking for ways to beat the heat with cool and refreshing options. Ice cream also offers a **profitable margin**, making it the right moment to scoop up some ice cream sales.

In fact, **75% of global consumers want to try new and exciting ice creams** and 52% look for seasonal ice cream flavors**. With the added advantage of social media, where whimsical and wow-worthy ice cream photos can go viral, this frozen dessert remains a staple in the summer food scene.

*Circana, 2024

**Proprietary Barry-Callebaut Study, 2023

SNACK SPOTLIGHT

Snacks now have a new sustainable friend. Meet the **EcoEdge™ Snack Spoon**, a perfectly sized spoon for ice cream, oatmeal, soup, parfaits and more. It also serves as an eco-friendly option for coffee and taster spoons.

This snacking companion is part of Sabert's **EcoEdge™ Paper Cutlery line**, pressed paperboard cutlery derived from plant-based FSC certified renewable resources. With a smooth utensil finish and pleasant feel that does not impact food flavor, the Snack Spoon is the ultimate solution for spoonable snacking occasions. Learn more: www.sabert.com.



#6: STAY AHEAD OF THE CLASS

PREP FOR K-12 AND COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY FOODSERVICE OPERATORS

School may be out for summer, but not for K-12 and Colleges & Universities (C&U). The summer presents foodservice operators with the opportunity to **lay the groundwork for the upcoming school year.**

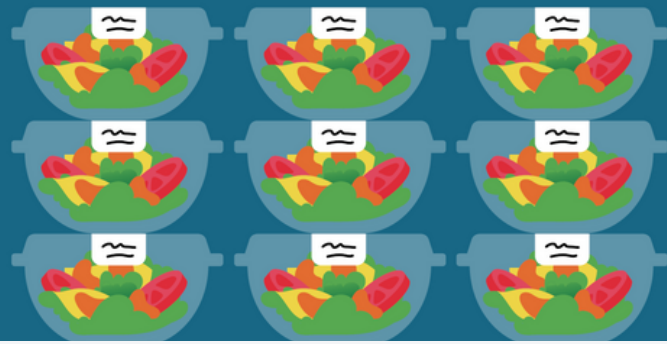
This period allows operators to forecast trends, refine menus and place orders for necessary supplies, such as food packaging. By planning in the summer, foodservice operators can ensure they can provide quick, efficient service and maintain high customer satisfaction from the very first day of school.

While there are some differences between K-12 and college foodservice operations, foodservice plays an integral role in the lives of students and families, no matter what grade the student is in.

Early planning and partnership with food packaging providers can lead to a smoother operation and a better dining experience when the school year begins.



K-12



In the K-12 setting, students and their families have come to rely on foodservice offerings, with **nearly nine-tenths eating at school at least once a week***. K-12 school menus are designed to appeal to young diners, including popular kid-friendly items, hamburgers, hot dogs, sandwiches, and pizza. These items are ideal for quick service and portability, with an emphasis on finger foods and handheld items. Incorporating high-quality, healthy, and fresh food options is increasingly important.

Service in K-12 cafeterias is typically cafeteria-style, with students selecting items from hot bars, cold bars or grab-and-go sections. The cooking itself varies, depending on the district. Some schools rely on pre-made and heat-and-serve foods prepared off-site, while others prep on-site. It's important to understand specific food packaging needs. For instance, compartmented packaging can help keep food items separate for mess-free transport and dual-ovenable solutions can go from freezer to oven for easy preparation. Clear packaging can help merchandise food and encourage consumption.



COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY



C&U campus dining can include cafeterias, coffee shops and vending machines. The popularity of C&U foodservice continues due to the convenience of staying on campus, resulting in **operators seeing a 68% increase in meals served**, with nearly two-thirds of students reporting eating at their college weekly.*

Grab-and-go options are a win, especially as students travel from class to class. Equally important is offering a variety of menu items that cater to different dietary needs and healthy, organic and nutritious offerings. Quality packaging ensures that food remains fresh, safe and appealing to students.

Sustainability is also a factor, especially as legislation continues to unfold. Operators that adopt compostable or recyclable packaging can meet regulatory demands and align with the values of their students and staff, who prioritize eco-friendliness.

**Datassential, 2024*





With Sabert's comprehensive food packaging solutions, operators can always be prepared to serve an endless summer of satisfied customers.

Learn more at: www.sabert.com

