



# MENUS MADE FOR SHARING



*Enhance the social experience for customers – and drive up profits for you!*



*Just as social media is on the rise, social dining is also on the upswing! A snack revolution is influencing menu trends and driving growth in foodservice today. Create a mix-and-match menu that is conducive to ordering different things and sharing. The result is often higher average checks, at the same time that customers see value prices and uniqueness.*

## **BIG PROFITS CAN BE FOUND IN SMALL PLATES**

The increasingly casual approach to dining encourages sharing and a convivial atmosphere. Whether they're designed to whet guests' appetites or make up the entire menu, eye-catching, mouth-watering small plates pack a culinary punch. And, interestingly, operators who have experimented with mix-and-match menus report that patrons actually spend more, because they'll "throw in" another dish or dessert by rationalizing, "it's just a few more dollars..." A menu with a wide variety of options can also encourage repeat business, as patrons can come in for a leisurely full meal on a weekend night, or a light weeknight meal.

# Mini desserts are a blazing hot trend right now.



## RECESSIONARY SHARING

Another reason sharing small plates is so popular is that in the customer's mind, it not only allows customers to eat what they want, it also allows them to spend as much or as little as they care to. Today's customers like sharing smaller portions as a way to economically experiment with different foods and flavors. Over 80 percent prefer that restaurants offer various portion sizes. To encourage re-ordering throughout the meal, consider placing your small plates menu on a table tent. And remember, because sharing often equates to snacking in a customer's mind, a menu made for sharing works for all day-parts including that slow time between lunch and dinner.

## ONE VERY SWEET SHARE

How many times do customers say no to desserts because they're "just too full"? Give your servers something to really sell with a mini dessert program (ask your Account Manager about the Culinary Secrets Dessert Program with plenty of mini dessert options). Mini desserts are a blazing hot trend right now because they solve the "I can't decided what dessert to choose" dilemma as customers can try multiple items, and they're a small – and therefore – justifiable indulgence. House-made mini cupcakes served with a trio of small sorbets or granatas made with fresh, in-season fruit is another way to encourage dessert sharing.

## GO BIG WITH THE SHARING CONCEPT

Small plates, appetizers, and mini desserts aren't the only menu items meant for sharing: The whole meal – including salads and entrees – can be served family-style! Family-style dining is simple to implement, and it provides a novel experience for diners. A common objection to family-style menu options is the concern that guests won't be able to agree on an entrée or salad: The key is to offer a family-style package that includes the selection of two salads, two sides, and even multiple entrees – it's similar to a catering menu.

## NEW FLAVORS AND EXPERIMENTATION

Customers are more interested than ever in trying new flavors and ethnic cuisine. Small plates can be more exciting than entrees because it's a safer level of experimentation for customers, not as big a commitment. Small plates for sharing allow people to try something that maybe they're never had before without risking their entire entrée. The editors at the Food Channel cite "DIScomfort" food as one of the year's top trends. Get guests out of their comfort zone with a small plate, or appetizer menu featuring inventive options that utilize unconventional meats, seasonings, and food from exotic locations such like duck quesadillas, Bahn-Mi (Vietnamese sandwiches), or fresh vegetable samosas.



Big parties love to share, so do couples and smaller groups.