

Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy Canadian foodservice findings for the week of June 8, 2026



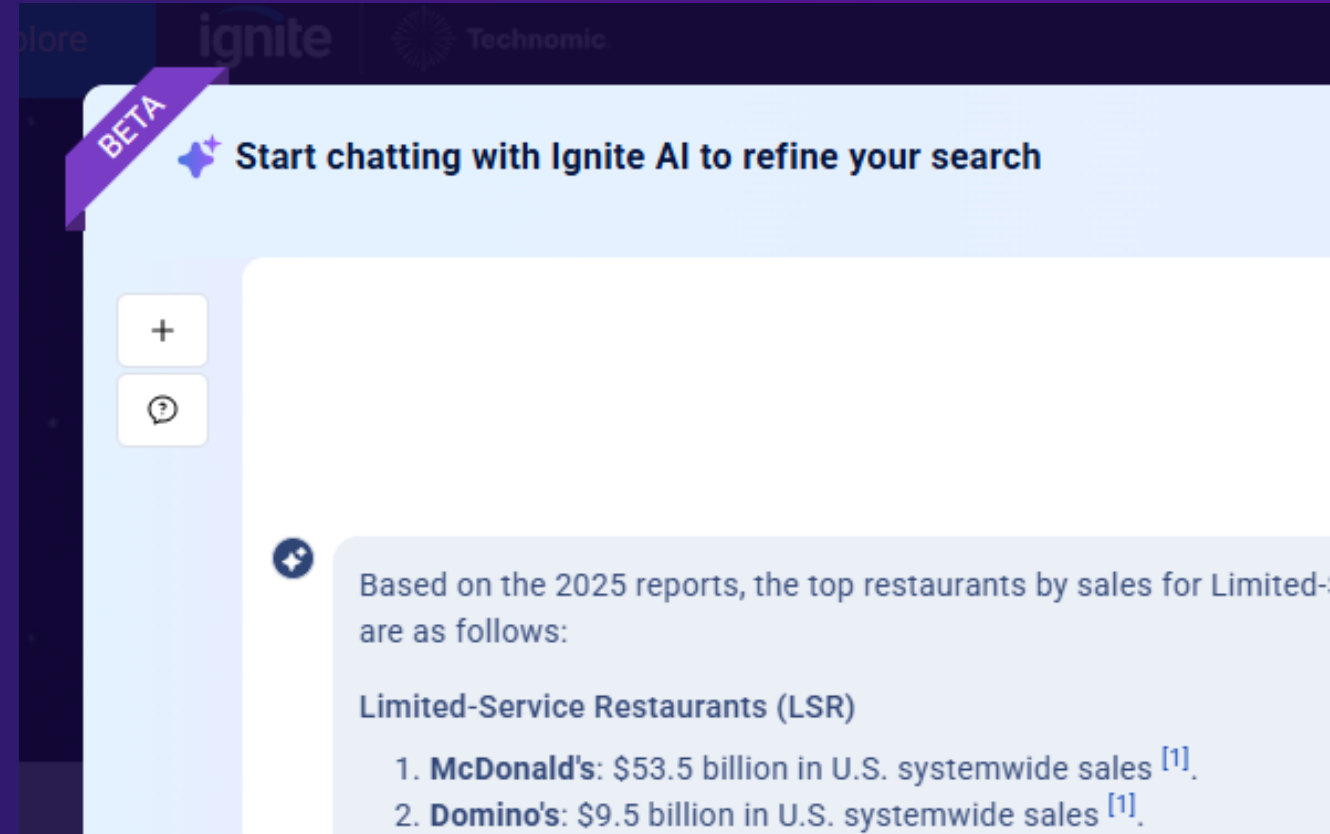
Image Source: Shutterstock

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Ignite AI is live!

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The screenshot shows the Ignite AI chat interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "ignite" and "Technomic" logos. A purple banner in the top left corner says "BETA". Below the banner, a blue header bar contains a star icon and the text "Start chatting with Ignite AI to refine your search". The main chat area has a light blue background. On the left side of the chat area, there are two buttons: a plus sign and a speech bubble icon. The chat content shows a response from Ignite AI, indicated by a star icon in a blue circle. The response text is: "Based on the 2025 reports, the top restaurants by sales for Limited-Service Restaurants (LSR) are as follows: Limited-Service Restaurants (LSR) 1. McDonald's: \$53.5 billion in U.S. systemwide sales [1]. 2. Domino's: \$9.5 billion in U.S. systemwide sales [1]."

Which provinces have the most chain restaurants?

Ontario leads Canada, with 13,748 chain restaurant locations, representing 45% of all chain units nationwide—the highest provincial share. Quebec and Alberta follow, each with approximately 15% of total chain units.

When examining chain density per capita, Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan emerge as the top performers. Alberta demonstrates particularly strong penetration, with one chain location per 1,089

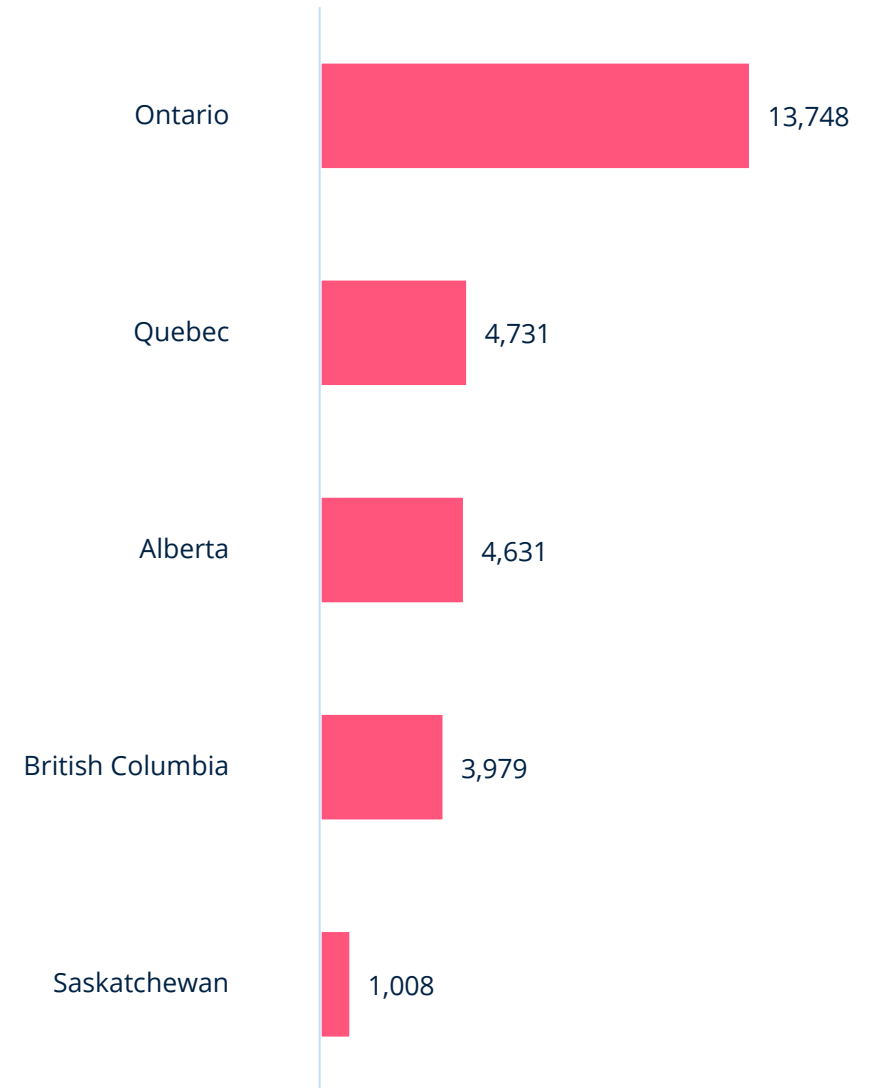
residents—nearly double the density of Quebec, which averages one location per 1,915 residents.

Additional chain restaurant location insights can be found in the newly-released *Province-Level Location Intelligence* report on Ignite.

[Ignite Company clients: Click here for more](#)

Note: Location counts reflect 2025 year-end
Source: Technomic Ignite Company

CHAIN RESTAURANT LOCATIONS BY PROVINCE
TOP 250 CHAIN RESTAURANTS



Ignite Menu

Fastest-growing poultry in the Canadian market

Poultry is highly popular across Canadian menus. Chicken, for example, is not only the top protein on menus but it's also among the top three ingredients overall. Because poultry is so prevalent, operators can experiment with various flavour profiles and preparations. Additionally, poultry can also raise the cheque price, offering operators a profitable menu strategy. For example, the addition of chicken increases the price of a dish by an average of CA\$1.36.

Chicken cutlets lead in menu incidence growth and are featured in sandwiches, chicken Parmesan and dishes with global flavours, including Japanese sauces and Indian curries, for the more adventurous diner.

Jerk chicken and fried chicken are also trending, with both appearing as protein add-ons for boxes, bowls and pizzas. Jerk chicken additionally shows up in burgers, skewers and Jamaican wraps, and fried chicken is often menued as a stand-alone option.

Further, turkey variations are proliferating on menus. Turkey sausage—which especially appeals to those with pork-free diets—is typically served with eggs and breakfast starches. And turkey itself is all over the menu: sandwiches, pizzas and as an add-on protein option across mealparts and dayparts. For a global rendition, turkey is often menued alongside Mediterranean flavours in bowls and wraps.

FASTEST-GROWING POULTRY IN THE CANADIAN MARKET

Q1 2025-Q1 2026

CHICKEN CUTLET

+11%

TURKEY SAUSAGE

+8%

JERK CHICKEN

+6%

FRIED CHICKEN

+6%

TURKEY

+3%



[Ignite Menu clients: Click here for more](#)

Source: Technomic Ignite Menu, Q1 2025-Q1 2026
Image Source: Shutterstock

What do consumers think about Quesada Burritos & Tacos?

Mexican chains hit double-digit growth in 2025. Let's get to know a little more about one Mexican fast-food chain that is, according to its website, 100% Canadian-grown, using Technomic AI:

Quesada Burritos & Tacos is a Canadian quick-service Mexican concept. Over the most recent four quarters, the brand's image among Canadian consumers reflects a strong foundation of trust and likability, with some headroom to grow on emotional and community-driven dimensions.

Core Brand Equity Is a Strength

Quesada performs best on foundational trust-based attributes. Being seen as a trustworthy restaurant (71.5%) and having a likeable personality (70.5%) are the highest-

rated perceptions, indicating strong relationship equity with Canadian guests. An excellent reputation rounds out the top tier at 66.7%, suggesting the brand has built a solid standing in its competitive set.

Advertising and Emotional Connection Are Lagging

The most notable opportunity gap lies in advertising and values alignment. Memorable advertising (46.1%), relatability of advertising (47.6%) and values alignment (50.0%) all trail core equity scores by more than 20 percentage points. Consumers who trust the brand may not be as activated by its communication or feel a deeper emotional connection to it.

QUESADA BURRITOS & TACOS: BRAND IMAGE RATINGS
TOP TWO BOX: % AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE; TOP BOX: % STRONGLY AGREE

Attribute	Avg Rating	Top Two Box %	Top Box %
Is a restaurant I can trust	3.88	71.5%	23.1%
Has a likeable personality	3.87	70.5%	21.9%
Has an excellent reputation	3.80	66.7%	21.6%
Introduces new and exciting products	3.74	64.0%	18.8%
Is unique	3.71	62.0%	19.9%
Has advertising that makes me hungry	3.69	59.9%	20.7%
Is innovative	3.66	59.2%	18.7%
Is socially responsible	3.56	53.0%	14.9%
Has values similar to my own	3.59	50.0%	17.4%
Has advertising I can relate to	3.48	47.6%	15.3%
Supports local community activities	3.52	47.0%	19.9%
Has memorable advertising	3.47	46.1%	17.4%

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Base: 24,000+ Canadian consumers ages 18+
Source: Technomic Ignite AI and Technomic Ignite Consumer, Q2 2025-Q1 2026

Where are fried chicken brands growing?

Bb.q Chicken operator Genesis BBQ reportedly inked a new deal to expand the chain into India. The South Korea-based multibrand operator is now partnering with [SrikG Group](#) to develop the chicken QSR in the market.

California Fried Chicken operator PT Pioneerindo Gourmet International plans to open 20 units in 2026. The [Indonesia-based multichain operator](#) intends to open the units under its flagship chicken QSR, as well as its secondary brands.

Church's Texas Chicken is set to enter China. The U.S.-based chicken QSR is

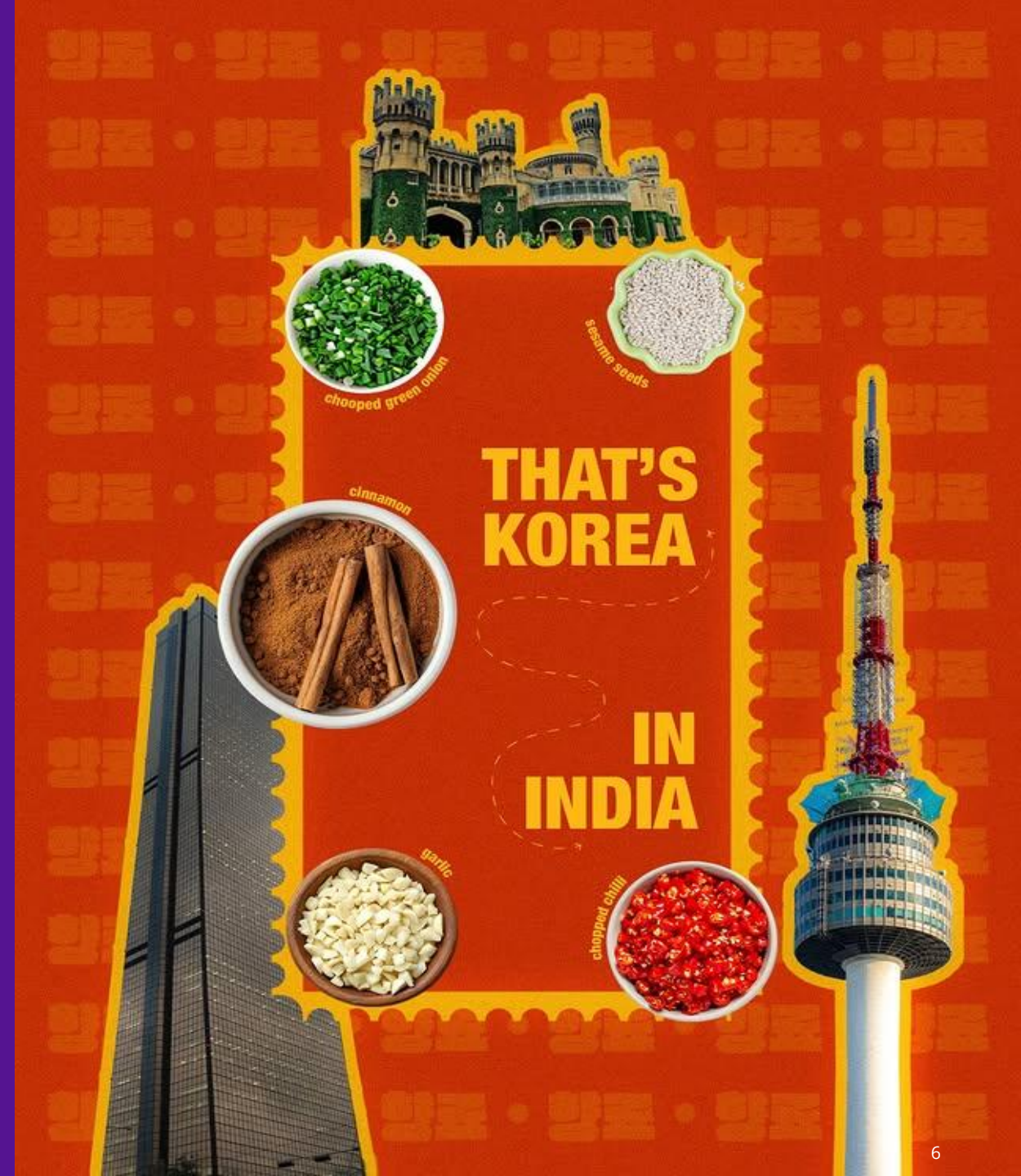
partnering with franchisee [Deke Shengtang](#) to develop at least 600 units in the coming years.

KFC plans to open 100 units in Africa in 2026. The majority of the growth for the [U.S.-based chicken QSR](#) is expected to take place in South Africa.

Lao Xiang Ji expanded into Malaysia—its first international outpost. The [China-based chicken QSR](#)—also known as Hometown Chicken and LXJ—ended 2025 with about 1,750 units on the mainland.

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Image Source: [Bb.q Chicken India Instagram](#)



IGNITE AI PROMPT OF THE WEEK

In each Industry Insights, we ask Ignite AI a top-of-mind industry question and share the answer with you. Copy and paste our prompt or write your own to answer your industry questions in our Ignite.

What insights can be gleaned from the fastest-growing ingredients in beverages at quick-service restaurants?

[Technomic Ignite clients: Click here for more](#)

Source: Technomic Ignite AI

From Q1 2025 to Q1 2026, Canadian QSR beverage menus show a shift toward fresh, botanical and globally inspired ingredients. The growth leaders reflect two distinct trends: garden-fresh, hydration-forward additions (e.g., cucumber, basil and lemon grass) and functional or exotic global flavours (e.g., garam masala, yuzu, turmeric, grass jelly and passion fruit). Notably, a uniquely Canadian touch surfaces, with maple syrup posting 25% operator growth, signaling that operators are leveraging domestic flavours in beverage innovation.

Strategic Insights

Botanical and aromatic ingredients are forming a cohesive trend cluster. Lemon grass (50%), basil (33.3%) and garam masala (20%) are advancing together, reflecting growing inspiration from Southeast Asian beverage traditions. Paired with yuzu's 16.7% growth, this cluster indicates that aromatic, herb-forward drink builds are moving beyond specialty operators into the QSR format.

A distinctly Canadian signal: maple syrup. Growing 25% year over year, maple syrup's expansion in QSR beverage applications signals operators leveraging domestic flavour identity, particularly relevant as premiumization and localized positioning continue to resonate with Canadian consumers.

Experiential texture plays are gaining traction. Cold foam (20%) and grass jelly (25%) both posted solid growth, reflecting consumer demand for elevated textural experiences in quick-service beverages—a trend borrowed from coffee shop and boba culture, and now filtering into mainstream QSR menus.

Functional wellness ingredients are deepening, not just entering. Turmeric (14.3%), kale (22.2%) and carrots (11.1%) are expanding operator presence from already-established bases, confirming that health-forward beverage positioning has moved past novelty and into a durable QSR menu strategy in Canada.

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Have questions?

Reach out to us today.

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