Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy Canadian foodservice findings for the week of Oct. 2, 2023
Answer your most pressing questions on consumer visit behaviour

Explore demographics, preferences and behaviours to understand who is visiting chain brands, why they're going and how brands are performing with Ignite Consumer

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Industry employment remains below pre-pandemic levels

Foodservice employment in Canada rose over 6% year over year in August, contracting slightly from its total the month prior in July. Despite this, the total number of people in the industry workforce is still below pre-pandemic totals from 2019.

Foodservice employment peaked in December 2019, surpassing more than 1.2 million before dipping as low as 600,000 in April of 2020. As of August 2023, employment totals hovered around 1.1 million, or 91% of what it was relative to December 2019.

Total unemployment remains low in Canada at 5.5% but is trending higher than unemployment in the U.S., which hit 3.8% in August.

Additional data and insights for the industry can be found in Foodservice Industry Economic Indicators, updated monthly.

Source: Technomic Ignite Company

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Global options, interesting veggies and nonalcohol beverage ingredients are all increasing on full-service restaurant menus.

Unagi sauce, also called eel sauce, is a thick, sweetened soy sauce that is rising at FSRs. The Japanese sauce is typically appearing on a variety of sushi rolls. Another sauce increasing on full-service menus is mango sauce, also atop sushi rolls, making for a sweet-savoury flavour combination. And these two sauces aren’t the only Japanese ingredients making an appearance in the list of fastest-growing ingredients at FSRs, with ramen noodles also on the rise.

A veggie showing growth on menus is parsnip, a root vegetable with a nutty, earthy flavour. Parsnips are often appearing as accompaniments to beef, pork or lamb dishes.

On the beverage side, grenadine is increasingly appearing on full-service menus, most often in mocktails. The syrup is made from pomegranate and has a deep red colour and sweet-tart taste that can be featured in a variety of beverages. This ingredient’s uptick demonstrates a trend of growing restaurant originals/mocktails (up 22.9% year over year) on menus.

Source: Technomic Ignite Menu, Q2 2022-Q2 2023
Image Source: Shutterstock
Gen Z most likely to pick grocery/retail as restaurant alternative

One out of five Gen Z consumers indicate a grocery or c-store was the alternative to a recent restaurant occasion. Increasingly, Gen Zers think about grocery and c-stores as top-of-mind alternatives to recent restaurant occasions.

Prepared foods from grocery stores can provide variety, while convenience retailers often offer a speedy visit that fits Gen Zers’ on-the-go lifestyle.

Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer

Ignite Consumer clients: Click here for more

Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer
Technomic tracks menu development in five key markets in Europe, both from month to month and from year to year. Below are a few highlights how this region’s activity has fared over the last two years.

Top chains in Europe introduced just over 3,600 new items in 2022, a 20% increase from the previous year’s 3,010 items.

With the exception of Russia, every tracked market notched double-digit increases in year-over-year development.

Spain was a global standout as the market with the third-most rapid increase in new items during this period (46%). Germany, tying for fourth place with Indonesia, similarly stood out, with a 36% increase.

In 2022, operators in Europe released an average 24.1 items per chain, the highest of any tracked region.

European markets held two of the top five spots for items released per chain among all global markets, with the U.K. taking first place with an average of 33.7 items released per chain for that year.

At 1,011 total new items in 2022, U.K. operators had the most active menu development across the region, as well as the third-highest across any tracked region, behind only China and the U.S.

Take a deeper dive into these markets and items with Technomic’s Country Reports.

Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program

Image Source: Shutterstock
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We provide insights into consumer, industry and menu trends in the U.S., Canada and 23 countries around the world.

Our team of experts helps leaders in the industry make complex business decisions, set strategy and stay ahead of the curve.

Have questions? Reach out to us today.

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