Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy foodservice findings for the week of Oct. 30, 2023
Understand current and future menu trends, operator performance tracking and consumer behaviors.

Explore insights
After surging to historically high levels in 2022, foodservice inflation has stayed stubbornly elevated throughout 2023, with monthly increases continuing to outpace the general inflation rate. Consumer foodservice prices rose by 6.0% in September on an annual basis, while general inflation for all consumer items increased by 3.7% during the same period. September marks the 13th consecutive month that the foodservice consumer price index increased at a faster rate than general inflation.

Keep tabs on inflation and other key economic trends in Technomic’s monthly Foodservice Industry Economic Indicators report.
Technomic’s recently published *LTO Monthly Activity* report spotlights three key themes to watch in recently launched limited-time offers.

**September LTO launches increased slightly both month over month and year over year**

September 2023 LTOs increased by 5% compared to August 2023, and increased by 2% compared to September 2022.

**Fruity beverages were popular among top-rated September LTOs**

Beverages featuring fruity flavors, particularly tropical fruits, dominated the top-rated LTO list for uniqueness and purchase intent. Pineapple flavors and lemonade drinks were particularly popular.

**Bacon is trending in the most appealing and most craveable LTOs**

Several items featuring bacon were among the top-rated September LTOs by purchase intent and craveability, including on burgers and in sides (atop loaded potatoes and as stand-alone items).

Source: Technomic Ignite Menu

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**Ignite Menu clients: Click here for more**

Photo by Hybrid Storytellers on Unsplash

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Advertisements that make Gen Z hungry typically feature visually appealing, crave-inducing imagery of delicious food, focusing on the sensory experience of eating. Brands such as Outback Steakhouse, IHOP and Zaxby’s successfully accomplish this by showcasing sizzling steaks, mouthwatering pancakes or crispy chicken in their ads, triggering Gen Z’s taste buds and desire for tasty, indulgent meals. These ads often leverage close-up shots, vibrant colors and high-quality production to make the food look even more enticing.

Brands that frequently promote their newest LTOs are also effective at making Gen Z hungry through their strategic use of visuals, storytelling and the element of exclusivity. Brands such as IHOP and Krispy Kreme often take advantage of the calendar to create their seasonal LTOs.

The element of limited-time availability is often a call to action for many Gen Z consumers anxious to get their hands on the newest items and experience them before they are gone. This, in turn, makes Gen Z more likely to visit the restaurant to battle their fear of missing out.
Technomic recently asked consumers in 25 countries around the world about their preferences for heat-bringing ingredients and flavour profiles. Below are a few highlights:

On a global level, savory-and-spicy and smoky-and-spicy flavour profiles were the two most popular options worldwide, with a respective 41% and 38% of all surveyed consumers indicating a preference for these options.

Other combinations, like sweet-and-spicy and tangy-and-spicy profiles, fared similarly strongly, with 32% and 29% of all consumers interested in these types of foods, respectively. Asia, Latin America and North America consumers consistently expressed the highest preferences for these foods, with Europe and Middle East consumers’ interest concentrated in smoky-and-spicy builds.

About half of all global consumers preferred not-spicy builds, with this figure particularly concentrated in Asia (59%). Japan was a noticeable outlier in this regard as a whopping 80% of all consumers registering a preference for not-spicy foods and 68% selecting the lowest possible spice level.

Conversely, 13% of global consumers preferred very spicy foods, particularly in North America (20%) and Latin America (14%). Mexico was a global standout with 37% of consumers preferring these types of foods, as were Canada and Indonesia (22% each). At 4% of all respondents (more than twice the second-place region, Asia), North America consumers were the most likely to select the highest possible spice option.

Only Technomic tracks restaurant chain news and trends daily across 25 countries in a dozen languages to keep clients informed and ahead of their competition.

Global Navigator clients: Click here for more

Base: 8719 global consumers
Q: What is the highest level of spice you are willing to eat with your food? Select one.
Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program
Since 1966, we have produced in-depth research focused on the foodservice industry. 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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