Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy foodservice findings for the week of May 20, 2024
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Coffee players ranked in Technomic’s 2024 Top 500 Chain Restaurant Report saw a development surge in 2023, as the category’s store count grew by 4.7% to an overall total of nearly 30,700 domestic locations.

Coffee category leaders Starbucks, Dunkin’ and Dutch Bros Coffee led the expansion charge, opening a combined total of more than 950 locations during the year. Emerging players 7 Brew Drive Thru Coffee, Scooter’s Coffee and Ziggi’s Coffee all saw blistering location growth of more than 20% during the year as well.

Unmatched insights and analysis of the industry’s largest chain players can be accessed in Technomic’s recently released 2024 Top 500 Chain Restaurant Report.
With the launch of Technomic’s new Ignite Menu data for the first quarter of 2024, here are some key takeaways from U.S. menus.

Overall, menu item counts are relatively flat year over year, with average item counts for all mealparts showing an increase of 0.7%. Menu prices are increasing across all mealparts except sides with an average growth of 5.7% in the last year.

Plant-based items are back on the list of top 10 fastest-growing proteins, with plant-based pork (+10.9%) and tempeh (+9.4%) showing strong growth. Seafood continues to hold the majority of the spots on the list of fastest-growers with six of the top 10 items, including stone crab (+34.8%), redfish (+25.0%) and sturgeon (+14.8%).

Less common fruit flavors are growing on U.S. menus, with clementine (+40.9%), dragon fruit (+20.1%) and blood orange (+14.1%) all appearing on the top 10 list of fastest-growing flavors.

When it comes to dairy, European influence is strong amongst the fastest-growers, with items such as Emmentaler (+26.1%), Chantilly cream (+20.0%) and Danish blue cheese (+6.7%) on the up and up. Plant-based dairy also showed strong growth, with oat milk (+11.9%), cashew milk (+8.1%), almond milk (+7.0%) and plant-based butter (+7.0%) all appearing on the fastest-growing list.
A trended view of some critical value-based statements may help operators better understand their opportunities regarding pricing power.

In short, the number of consumers who “pay close attention to menu prices” and who “always compare prices before making a choice” are right in line with pre-COVID levels.

This should be considered significant as it helps the industry more confidently carry forward the prioritization of quality, consistency and experience first, while placing less direct focus on menu prices.

Taking price in the current environment carries significant risks, to be sure. However, operators who may be looking for additional justification for pricing action should consider leveraging trusted brand names as consumers are increasingly willing to pay up for household names they know and trust.

Ignite Consumer clients: Click here for more

Base: 25,000 consumers 18+ per quarter shown
Source: Technomic Ignite Consumer

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Technomic recently asked consumers in 25 global markets about the dishes they eat for breakfast, including whether they turn to potatoes for their morning meal. Below are a few highlights:

Globally, 15% of respondents noted that hash browns and other potato dishes were part of their breakfasts at least once every 90 days, though this response varied greatly across and within regions. Whereas only a tenth of patrons in Europe recorded occasionally eating potato breakfasts, this number jumps to a whopping 37% of those in the U.S. and Canada.

Australia (25%) and Southeast Asian countries (17% of consumers on average) make up about half of the top 10 markets for interest in these dishes, with Malaysia, the Philippines (22% each) and Singapore (18%) overindexing both their regions and the global average.

While Latin American markets as a whole showed relatively little interest in most potato breakfasts, Puerto Rico consumers (25%) were the third-most likely in the world to have one at least occasionally and those in Brazil (17%) similarly overindexed. Other markets of note include the U.K., which at 23% of consumers vastly outpaced the remaining tracked European markets (6%), and China, which tied with South Africa to round out the top 10 on this metric.

Get more data-driven insights into breakfast trends around the world with the upcoming Breakfast Global Menu Category Report.

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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