Snacks, The New “Meal” Restaurants Are Serving Up

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Recent research from Mintel Menu Insights found that snacking is the new way to order at restaurants.

Menu items that contain the descriptors â€œsnack,â€• â€œsnackable,â€• or â€œsnackerâ€• have increased by a staggering 1 and growth is expected to carry on as restaurants continue to explore this new trend.

â€œSnacks are providing a huge opportunity right now for restaurants ranging from quick service to fine dining,â€• notes Eric Giandelone, director of foodservice research at Mintel. â€œBy innovating menus with various snacking options, restaurants can boost sales throughout the day and drive guest traffic during non-peak hours.â€•

Consumers are more likely to visit restaurants in the early and late afternoon for snacks, the 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. time slot being most popular with 37% of Mintelâ€™s respondents.

Spending, however, peaks in the early evening. Only 19% of respondents purchased snacks from a restaurant between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., but the average amount spent is $4.26 per person versus only $3.79 across all other time periods.

â€œSnack options need to be appropriate for the time frame,â€• adds Eric Giandelone. â€œHeartier and pricier fare may have r appeal later in the day, while light options may work best in the morning or early afternoon.â€•

The majority of snackers (64%) look for a beverage when snacking, whereas 61% opt for something portable. Meanwhile, just over half (52%) crave an indulgent snack and 50% want something salty to nibble on.

Only 32% of snackers choose a healthy option, which counteracts the health conscious trend that is being seen in the restaurant industry.

Join Eric Giandelone and Joan Holleran on May 19 at 2 p.m. CST for a FREE webinar on Captivating the Consumer: Menu Snacking Innovations.

Source: Mintel Menu Insights

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