



TOP 10

FOOD AND BEVERAGE TRENDS FOR GOLF COURSES

WHAT GOLFERS WANT

Golf is more than just a sport. It's a social occasion - and what social occasion would be complete without a little eating and drinking? Most public golf courses currently offer a standard menu: hot dogs, hamburgers, ham and cheese sandwiches and chips, while private courses with full-service restaurants offer similar menus of breakfast, steaks, sandwiches and other common Western dishes.

So how can you set yourself apart from the competition? All it

takes is a few simple changes to the way you operate your kitchen.

The food that you serve and your dining environment have a large impact on the overall image and reputation of your golf course. By staying current and relevant with your food and drinks menu, and by offering unique and interesting items, you can attract a new crowd of golfers to your course, and entice your current golfers to stay for a meal rather than dining elsewhere.

TOP 10 TRENDS

Food and beverage sales account for 25 percent of revenues at a golf course, so it is essential that your food and beverage department keep up with the latest trends, and incorporate them into your menu.

Since most Canadians are still recovering from the downturn in the economy, inexpensive and comforting foods still top the list of food trends and many consumers are also looking for healthy and low-fat alternatives.



Keeping in mind the needs of your golfers as you design your menu, consider how you can incorporate the following Top 10 Food and Beverage Trends into your menu:

1

SIGNATURE SANDWICHES

Each foodservice operation or restaurant should always have a branded or signature menu item that helps draw in business – a unique menu item that golfers can't get anywhere else.

Create a signature sandwich that will be reflective of your course. This could be as simple as using a special dressing you've created or putting a unique twist on a specific style or type of sandwich.

You need to ensure that your signature sandwich is delicious, so use the freshest ingredients available and make sure it is consistently cooked well so that golfers will know they can count on this delicious sandwich no matter how they've played on the links.

2

HAMBURGERS

Hamburgers are a perennial favourite in more industries than golf. Just ask celebrities!

After winning her Oscar, Sandra Bullock claimed that all she wanted to do was eat a hamburger. After winning eight Olympic gold medals, U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps said that he was going to celebrate by eating a cheeseburger. After a day on the golf course, hamburgers and cheeseburgers top the list of desired foods for many golfers as well.

You probably already offer a hamburger on your menu, but consumers' palates for hamburgers have become much more sophisticated over the years. A frozen meat patty simply won't cut it.

Customers want fresh, handmade patties from local, grass-fed beef, as well as burger toppings like organic tomatoes, salad greens, pickles, onions, and artisan cheeses.

You might also consider making your own condiments such as catsup,

mustard, mayonnaise, and even salsa, which is an increasingly popular topping for burgers. Be sure to include some fresh, hand-cut French fries to accompany the burger, and offer the option of sweet potato fries for more health-conscious eaters.

3

BREAKFAST TO GO/JUICE BAR

As many golfers like to begin their day at the crack of dawn, a quick breakfast is an excellent idea for the golfing clientele. Some guests may choose to sit in the dining room or restaurant for a full service breakfast, but anxious golfers or golfers on a tight schedule might be more interested in grabbing a quick bite and hitting the links right away.

Breakfast sandwiches are always a popular option, but make sure they are fresh, or made-to-order. Consider offering frittatas and omelets wrapped in flatbread or artisan breads. Soggy bacon and rubbery eggs won't impress your customers and may discourage them from making future breakfast purchases.

Package fresh fruit, yogurt and granola in takeaway containers, or bake your own breakfast bars to sell as a quick snack. Consider setting up a fresh fruit juice and smoothie bar, and offer shots of wheatgrass and vitamin boosters to give golfers some extra energy for the course.

4

HIGH-TECH MARKETING

Take advantage of the fact that most of your golfers will probably be carrying their iPhones and Blackberries on the course. Post your regular menu online, as well as the specials from your food stands.

You could take it one step further and allow golfers to pre-order their food a few holes before they reach the food stand. This method would improve the

traffic flow at the food stand, as golfers wouldn't need to wait in line to order their food. You could also send out an e-blast or Twitter message about your daily specials to entice golfers to order something when they reach the food stand.

5

ETHNIC FOODS

Sandwiches and hamburgers are definitely favourites, but as Canada continues to diversify, it is important that our food reflect this trend.

Asian noodle soups and Korean food are already making an appearance on many golf course menus in the United States. Colombian and Peruvian foods are also very trendy this year. Dishes like

ceviche, fish soups and stews, and ingredients like Yuca roots, lima beans, chilies and a variety of tropical fruits are growing in popularity.

For quick snacks in the Asian food category you can sell Japanese rice balls, sushi, dim sum, soft spring rolls and Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches at your food stands.

From Mexico and South America, empanadas, tacos, sopas and tamales are all items that can be eaten quickly without the use of cutlery.

6

GLUTEN-FREE FOODS

With more Canadians suffering from celiac disease, as well as more health and

weight-conscious people trying to avoid gluten and carbohydrates, the demand for gluten-free foods has skyrocketed. This market has grown by nearly 30% in the past few years, and its popularity is expected to continue.

Create a gluten-free section on your menu, and try pairing meat and fish with beans and vegetables, and include more foods made from rice flour, chickpea flour, potato flour or tapioca flour.

As a majority of your members may also be in the 55+ age bracket, you should also consider offering "heart healthy" dishes that are low in sodium, low in fat and low in sugar for members who are suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes or other diseases.

Draw attention to these healthier choices on the menu by placing an eye-catching logo next to the items.

7

LOCAL PRODUCE

If you have sections of your property that are not currently dedicated to the playing area of the golf course, you could take local food to a whole new level and create your own garden.

By growing your own produce, you could also increase your revenues by setting up a Farmer's Market on the weekends to sell your goods. After a round of golf and lunch in your dining room, guests could purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to take home.

Not only would your food and beverage department be able to serve dishes using fresh produce from your own backyard, therefore saving on food costs, but your facility would be regarded as an environmentally-conscious and forward-thinking operation.

Taking it one step further, you would also be able to market your restaurant as a genuine dining destination - not just for your golfers - but for the general public as well.

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8

NEW CUTS OF MEAT

One of the biggest trends in the past few years has been the idea of head-to-tail eating. In order to cut down on food costs, an increasing number of chefs are offering hangar steaks and flat-iron steaks instead of filet mignon and rib-eyes.

Pork shoulder and pork belly are delicious and inexpensive cuts of pork. Cheap cuts of meat can be made tender and tasty through a variety of slow-cooking processes including braising, stewing and slow-roasting.

With these methods, dishes can be prepared well in advance and left in a warm place, freeing up kitchen staff to cook other dishes as they're ordered, especially during busy times. This technique will improve the quality of your food and reduce stress in the kitchen.

9

SCOTCH WHISKEY TASTINGS

Since Scotland is the birthplace of golf, it would only be appropriate for golf courses to feature a variety of Scotch whiskeys on the drink menu. One of the latest trends in the beverage industry is to hold Scotch tastings.

Organize scotch tastings once a month, paired with a multi-course meal, or offer flights of scotch on your drink menu. Such events could also be marketed for bachelor parties, engagement parties and corporate parties.

10

HOMEMADE BEERS & COCKTAILS

Recently, there has been a resurgence of gin and whiskey-based cocktails in the food and beverage industry. Drinks like Manhattans, Old-Fashioneds, Tom

Collins and Gin Fizzes are back in style.

Many of the trendiest bars and restaurants are making their own syrups, grenadines and bitters and creating a new line of old-fashioned cocktails. Homemade beers and other malt beverages are also appearing on more and more drink menus.

STAY CURRENT

You need to remain current with your menu so that you can attract a new crowd of golfers to your course, and entice your current golfers to eat a meal at your facility instead of dining elsewhere.

You should still tailor the menu to meet the needs of your golfers, as each facility is unique, but wherever possible try to incorporate the latest trends in your menu to help increase food and beverage sales.



DIANE CHIASSON

Diane Chiasson, FCSI, president of Chiasson Consultants Inc., has been helping foodservice, hospitality and retail operators increase sales for over 25 years. She provides innovative food and retail merchandising programs, interior design, marketing, promotional campaigns, and much more. Contact Diane toll free at 1-888-926-6655, or chiasson@chiassonconsultants.com or online at www.chiassonconsultants.com.

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