

TRENDS

TO KNOW

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Schreiber.

DIVE INTO

CHEESE AND DAIRY



THE TREND

Cheese and dairy are staples of the American diet, and there's no sign of their appearance on menus dwindling anytime soon. Dairy permeates all menu parts in both sweet and savory dishes alike, with its versatility making it a common ingredient especially on burgers, pizzas, and sandwiches. In fact, cheese is an important component in all dish types (minus dessert) for more than 6 out of 10 cheese-eating consumers, according to Datassential's latest *Cheese & Dairy Keynote Report*. Even with its ubiquitous place within American cuisine, innovation with cheese and dairy can still be achieved by combining new varieties with formats consumers are familiar with. Global cheese varieties like cotija and Indian paneer can pique consumer interest, and the use of ghee in place of butter can be a simple way to diversify dairy use in dishes.

DAIRY REPORT

Dairy products like cheese, milk, and butter are common ingredients in a variety of dishes, but experimenting with not-so-common or premium varieties can liven up such omnipresent ingredients. Cheddar, American cheese, and mozzarella rule the cheese landscape, but 36% of consumers enjoy trying cheeses they've never had before, and 76% would be willing to buy or pay more for premium ingredients, according to Datassential's *Cheese & Dairy Keynote Report*. Inspiration could be drawn from global and even regional varieties such as Midwestern cheese curds (which have grown 31% on app, entrée, and side menus in the past 4 years, according to Datassential MenuTrends), or cotija, a cheese variety from Mexico that has grown 23% over the past 4 years.

MENU INSPIRATION

PANEER MASALA ELOTE PIZZA

Masala Pizza Company |
Chicago, IL (HQ)
Tikka masala, paneer, roasted masala corn,
cheese, and moti sauce.

LONG-COOKED CHICKEN & RICE PORRIDGE

SQIRL | Los Angeles, CA
Chicken & rice porridge made with free-range
organic chicken, Kokuho brown rice, tomato,
dried lime, ginger, turmeric, cardamom ghee,
frizzled onions, and cilantro.

SAMOSA CHOLE CHAAT

Indarra | Huntington Beach, CA (HQ)
Spiced samosa topped with chickpea ragda,
chopped red onions, tomatoes, mint chutney,
tamarind-dates chutney, whole milk yogurt,
shaved scallions & ginger, pickled beetroot,
fresh cilantro, and our crunchy seed dal and
spice mix.

KETO BURRITO

El Pollo Loco | Costa Mesa, CA(HQ)
House-made pimento cheese, hickory-smoked
bacon, fried pickles, lettuce, and tomato.

DATA FILE

CHEESE IS ON 92% OF U.S. MENUS

Datassential MenuTrends

TREND STAGE

UBIQUITY



Because cheese and dairy are found across menu parts and dish types, it's no wonder they're in Ubiquity, the final phase, of the Menu Adoption Cycle (MAC).

Nevertheless, finding creative ways to use trending varieties can open the doors to safe experimentation by combining early-stage varieties with well-known formats, such as using paneer on pizza or premium dairy products in lieu of standard ingredients.

Cheese and dairy products play a versatile role in a variety of cuisines, and they are ever-present on menus. Many varieties of cheese and dairy are familiar to operators and consumers, but those that are lesser known can offer an opportunity for operators to experiment with unique flavors and textures. Operators can draw inspiration from regional or global cheeses without alienating consumers by showcasing them in familiar formats such as pizza or sandwiches.

KEY TAKEAWAY