

TRENDS

TO KNOW

JANUARY 2025

BROUGHT TO YOU BY


Schreiber.

SINK YOUR TEETH INTO THE STATE OF THE MENU

THE TREND

With the new year in full swing, it's important to understand the state of the menu and look back on trends from the previous year, which could inform the year ahead. In 2024, all restaurant segments offered more items per menu, with appetizers and entrées standing out as gaining menu share, with growth across nearly all segments (Datassential's *2024 State of the Menu Report*). Some of the top-growing entrée types in 2024 included pizza, pasta/noodles, entrée soup/stew/chili, and cold sandwiches, all of which present opportunities for showcasing cheeses of all kinds. Notably, some of the fastest-growing terms at chains with 250+ units include: four cheese (up 67% on menus over the past 12 months), chicken wrap (up 43%), smoothie (up 38%), buttermilk ranch (up 27%), and sweet cream (up 27%).

DAIRY REPORT

Dairy is a quintessential element for most menu parts. It ties in with some of the fastest-growing terms at chains (four-cheese, smoothies, sweet cream, etc.), as well as the fastest-growing appetizer types and entrée types. Some of the fastest-growing appetizer types include appetizer quesadillas, deli salad appetizers, and appetizer nachos, all of which are prime vehicles for showcasing various cheeses or cheese sauces. When it comes to some of the fastest-growing entrée types, comfort foods like pizza and pasta/noodles reign supreme and can serve as blank canvases for an array of cheeses and dairy-rich sauces like alfredo.

MENU INSPIRATION

FRIED MAC 'N CHEESE BITES

Arby's | Sandy Springs, GA (HQ)

A premium blend of four cheeses and noodles, breaded and fried until crispy and golden-brown.

PUMPKIN PIE SMOOTHIE

Freshii | Toronto, Ontario (HQ)

Oat milk, butternut squash, banana, pumpkin purée, hemp seeds, and turmeric powder.

TWISTED FLAMINGO

Sonic | Oklahoma City, OK (HQ)

Sprite with cherry and vanilla flavors and sweet cream.

MEDITERRANEAN CHICKEN WRAP

Jimmy John's | Champaign, IL (HQ)

Made with all-natural chicken, Sabra Roasted Red Pepper Hummus, olive tapenade, and crumbly feta cheese.

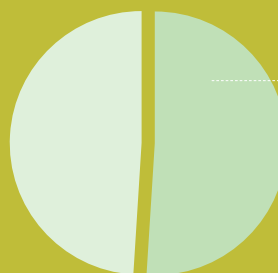
BACON AVOCADO RANCH

STEAKBURGER

IHOP | Pasadena, CA (HQ)

Bacon, avocado, and buttermilk ranch sauce with a four-cheese blend, lettuce, tomato, pickles, onion, and IHOP sauce (mayonnaise, ketchup, and mustard).

DATA FILE



51%

OF CONSUMERS
TYPICALLY PURCHASE AN
APPETIZER WHEN THEY GO
OUT TO EAT AT A
RESTAURANT

Datassential's 2025 Trends Report

TREND STAGE

UBIQUITY



Most of the top-growing item types on chain menus land squarely in Ubiquity. Consider leveraging them as bases for safe experimentation with earlier-stage, trend-forward ingredients. For example, smoothies can be a platform for on-trend, plant-based milks, while buttermilk ranch could be leveraged as a next-level flavor for concepts. Chicken wraps, which tie into convenience, also can be a vehicle for showcasing next-level flavors – think sauces like Korean gochujang or regional Nashville hot, as well as nearly any variety of cheeses.

Take note of the fastest-growing appetizer types (think appetizer quesadillas or appetizer nachos) and entrée types (pizza, pasta/noodles, etc.) as key opportunities for showcasing dairy, as well as examine how some of the fastest-growing terms on chain menus (four cheese, chicken wrap, smoothie, etc.) could help inform menu strategy for the year ahead.

KEY TAKEAWAY