

# FEEDING THE *Holidays*



  
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# 'TIS THE SEASON



for some of the most popular food occasions across the U.S. From football games to family feasts, food can bring people together to create shared experiences that result in mouthwatering memories.

Celebrations and gatherings of all sizes can result in tremendous business-boosting opportunities for foodservice operators, attracting new customers and engaging existing ones. Companies are searching for catering options for employee parties while busy shoppers crave convenience to offset the hustle and bustle of the holiday frenzy.

Whether your foodservice establishment is looking to lean into Labor Day or prefers to focus on family-style meals, this is your ultimate guide to creating food experiences that cater to nearly every kind of celebration.



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# LABOR DAY

## SAVOR THE SUMMER



As the unofficial end of summer, Labor Day celebrations focus on outdoor gatherings and barbecues. Event hosts, grill masters and party guests alike are in a food-focused mindset as they plan to say goodbye to the dog days of summer with savory spreads. Operators can capitalize on the occasion by offering a variety of prepared foods, such as salads, grilled vegetables, sandwiches and fruit platters. Labor Day is also a popular travel holiday, which means shoppers look for appetizers and desserts to bring to their delicious destination.

### SOAK UP THE PREPARED FOODS OPPORTUNITY

**94%**

of consumers expect to make purchases, most of which are food focused, for their celebrations with meat/seafood, fruits/vegetables and side dishes being the most popular items





# SEASON OF SPORTS

## GAME DAY GRUB

Whether in front of a TV or at a tailgate, the height of the sports season will be in full swing. Football, basketball, hockey and baseball playoffs will kick off and so will fan feasts. Tailgating is a popular tradition for sports team enthusiasts to get together before the big game and food is centerfield. In addition to hamburgers, hot dogs and wings, attendees seek side dishes, snacks and other delectable delights to bring with them. Since the weather tends to be cooler later in the season, operators should be ready to provide hotter items such as coffee, hot chocolate or soups. Caterers can also score a tasty touchdown by offering special deals, limited time offers (LTOs) and promotional bundles to generate incremental revenue.

### DID YOU KNOW?

November is National Tailgating Month. Consider using social media, email marketing and digital marketing to entice your tailgating tastemakers.



# HALLOWEEN



## BONE APPETIT

According to the National Retail Federation, Americans spent a whopping \$10.6 billion in 2022 on Halloween-related items, such as candy, decorations and more. This howling holiday is also known for an abundance of costume parties, so operators should make sure to dress up their menus by introducing creepy desserts, spellbinding snacks and limited-time spooktacular items. Food packaging can help make food fa-boo-lous, while keeping treats safe and secure during transport. By embracing the Halloween spirit, foodservice establishments can showcase their creativity and generate consumer buzz.

Numerator, 2022

## TRICK OR TREAT

Drive impulse sales by making sure to merchandise your eerie-sistible options as shoppers are on the hunt for Halloween items.





# BLACK FRIDAY EMPLOYEE EATS

During this sales-grabbing event, retail and distribution center employees across the U.S. work overtime to ensure customers get all the deals they are looking for. Employers often provide snacks and meals throughout this busy shopping season as a thank you to their hard-working staff. From the breakroom to the warehouse, there is a great demand to feed employees around the clock. Since employees are more than likely working different shifts, add-on items such as grab-n-go snacks can help increase the value and margin of a catering order without much-added cost to the operator.



"Feeding employees creates real value for businesses at an affordable cost," said **Diane Swint, Chief Revenue Officer, ezCater.** "Our research shows that food is employees' most appreciated perk, and it can be a powerful tool to motivate and engage teams, especially during busy seasons like Black Friday and holiday."





# GIVING THANKS

## *Family Style Fare*

Thanksgiving is a time for gratitude and enjoying the company of friends and loved ones. Of course, the centerpiece of the day is the Thanksgiving feast. From creamy mashed potatoes to pumpkin pie, families gather around the table to gobble up yummy food and create lasting memories. It takes a lot of preparation and shopping to assemble an incredible meal. Some people showcase their culinary talents and do all the cooking themselves. However, others prefer to take advantage of premade family-style meals and make the day as relaxing and stress-free as possible. Operators have an abundance of opportunities to help shoppers map out their Thanksgiving meal. Consider incentivizing customers to place food orders early through coupons and promotions or carve out a special menu filled with all the trimmings.

*Let's Talk  
Turkey*

**85%** of Americans plan to host or attend a Thanksgiving dinner this year.

The Harris Poll, 2022



# WINTER HOLIDAYS

## *All-inclusive Cuisines*



It's beginning to look a lot like the holiday season! Whether individuals celebrate Christmas, Hannukah or Kwanzaa, this time of year is about coming together, spreading joy and savoring festive delights. As more employees return to the office, companies prepare for holiday festivities to keep their workforce engaged and connected.

To ensure an inclusive event, operators should be prepared to provide a diverse menu of cultural and global options catering to various tastes and preferences. This could include meat-free alternatives or refreshing mocktails. It's also an excellent opportunity to showcase cultural twists on holiday dishes, such as latkes, gingerbread cookies, fruitcake or okra stew.

Whether donning ugly sweaters, exchanging gifts, or simply showing employee appreciation, creating an inclusive catering menu will help make the workplace celebration enjoyable for everyone involved. Let the spirit of togetherness and diversity shine this holiday season.



### *Catering the Celebrations*

About three in five business catering orderers cited **holiday parties** when asked what events they typically order for.





# NEW YEAR'S EVE

## Culinary Countdown



New Year's Eve is a time for celebration and reflection as people bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new.

For the foodservice industry, New Year's Eve presents a golden opportunity to create unforgettable customer experiences, and a well-planned menu can set the stage for a memorable celebration. Capitalize on the occasion by offering special prix-fixe menus or buffet-style options and consider combining traditional dishes and global flavors. For operators looking to attract on-premises diners, creating a memorable ambiance with live music, themed decorations and special deals can help enhance the celebratory (and culinary) festivities. Catering can also be a growth opportunity as New Year's Eve party hosts look to toast the new year with food, fun and friends.

## Eating for Good Luck

Incorporate a few of these lucky foods on your menu to help your customers ring in good fortune.



**BLACK-EYED PEAS**

*Good luck in the form of money*



**NOODLES**

*Symbolize longevity*



**FISH**

*Represents abundance*



**ORANGES**

*Prosperity*



**POMEGRANATE SEEDS**

*Linked to fertility and life*





# VALENTINE'S DAY

## *Romancing the Menu*

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular dining holidays of the year. Whether fine dining or a romantic dinner at home, foodservice businesses can explore many ways to create love at first bite. Develop intimate dining options such as candlelit dinners and special tasting menus or offer packages that include flowers and chocolates to set the mood. For a double dose of love and fun, operators can also cater to customers that aren't necessarily coupled up by providing special offers for besties celebrating Galentine's Day. Ready-to-eat items, meal kits and heat-and-eat meals are also an attractive option for those looking for a cozier night in. From chocolate-covered strawberries to swoon-worthy steaks, prepare to cook up romance with irresistible offerings to attract more business and spread the love.



**About half (49%) of consumers with Valentine's Day plans say they will dine at a restaurant, while 25% plan to order takeout or delivery and 26% intend to cook at home.**



# HOW TO CAPTURE HOLIDAY SALES

Get ready to boost sales and attract new clients! Here are a few tips on how operators can prepare for a profitable holiday season.

## Create a Holiday Business Plan

- Allocate resources
- Offer creative packages
- Promotional incentives

## Target the Right Customer Segment

- Engage past consumers
- Encourage referrals

## Spread the Word

- Marketing signage
- Displays

## Leverage Technology

- Online ordering

## Third Party Promotion

- Social media
- Content marketing
- Customer reviews

## Use the Right Packaging

- Safe and secure
- Maintains food freshness
- Helps merchandise
- Versatile
- Sustainable







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