

Food & Beverage - Phenomenal Sides - By Joe Dunbar

2007-09-10

A quick way to attack food cost issues in almost any operation is through a simple menu upgrade. Rather than attacking entrees, take a hard look at your sides. A few mouth watering sides prepared with less costly ingredients will boost profits every time.

Buffet guests will consume fewer meat and seafood items if they can't resist a great side dish or salad. A la carte operations should charge for the extra special side dish whenever possible. If you offer guests a full meal with their entree choice, offer the top side dish as an upgrade option.

Whenever the guests ask for help ordering from the wait staff, the side should be mentioned along with the entree choices. Perhaps, the dish requires a last minute preparation. Bringing this to the guest's attention can increase orders. Special optional toppings can be used to make an impression.

I believe Durgin Park does a phenomenal job of highlighting mouth watering sides, soups and desserts. Whenever I dine at this historic Boston landmark, everyone in the party raves over the traditional accompaniments. The Corn Bread, Baked Beans, Indian Pudding and Clam Chowder are frequently ordered. Newcomers don't have to guess "what's good?" at Durgin Park. The management offers their recipes for all of these favorites on their website. Whether you enjoy the line upstairs, communal tables, waitresses with an attitude or not, the Yankee favorites are top notch.

The best of the breed barbecue shacks get this concept. Brunswick Stew, hush puppies, slaw, beans, sauces and tea need to be first rate. These dishes will bring customers back and help keep your food cost percentage in line. When we drove to Atlanta last year, my family went 50 miles out of the way to try a BBQ shack recommended by a friend. We still talk about the sides.

Doug's Fish Fry in Upstate New York features fresh fish fried to perfection with three main sides: fries, onion rings and cole slaw. All three are tremendous. This is another place we drive out of our way for whenever we're near the Finger Lakes.

My favorite steak houses all have phenomenal sides. We go for the rillettes on baguette at Les Halles in New York. Sometimes the sauce is the draw. Michael Jordan's Steak House was out of Bearnaise sauce on one trip. We waited until a new batch was made.

America's favorite ethnic restaurants all get it. The Italian style greens in Carmine's New York (huge platter) or Tony Luke's in Philadelphia (optional filling for sandwiches) make the trip worth while. Here in Fairfax, Anita's Bean Dip made with Hatch Valley Chili Verde is a winner. Moby Dick's Kabobs hooks you with the flat bread and yogurt sauce. Char Siu Bao (buns stuffed with barbecue pork filling) are a must when we go for dim sum. Cha Gio (Vietnamese spring rolls) make our visits memorable at our favorite pho shop.

Don't crowd your menu with too many of these fantastic side ideas. You want a few carefully selected winners. Position the items on your menu so they can't be missed and don't keep secrets. The baked beans at Durgin Park are listed as an appetizer. You can get them separately or with your meal.

Joe Dunbar

Dunbar Associates

P.O. Box 579

Fairfax, VA 22038-0579

800-949-3295

<http://www.joedunbar.com>

jdunbar401@aol.com

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article29172.html>

© 1998 - 2007 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html