



MENU QUEST

The Pursuit of Culinary Distinction

Smithfield

Trend Watch

Feature on Fall: Foods That Warm the Appetite.

As cold weather approaches, and people's cravings turn to familiar foods, menus suddenly fill with the hearty and comforting dishes that everybody enjoyed growing up. Comfort food has seen a 28% growth on menus over the past four years, with soups, American-loved fried foods and hearty proteins taking the lead.¹ This is also the time of year when consumers start seeking out a variety of classic holiday flavors and applications. Below we've included some expected comfort foods, and a few that may surprise you.



SOUPS, STEWS & MORE

Soups and stews are a perfect vehicle for protein such as pork, ham or chicken. Comforting meals include the ever-popular mac 'n' cheese and protein-enhanced chilis. These are perfect dishes to warm the cool months. Menus are also starting to borrow from those found worldwide, with ethnic soups and noodles leading the way. Increasing their presence are global favorites such as ramen, pho and shakshuka.



FAVORITE FRIED FOODS

You can fry pretty much anything, but the most craveable dishes are fried and paired with proteins. That's why poutine and dumplings take the lead in this category. Famously imported from Quebec, Canada, poutine is a perfect application to feature pork along with rich sauces and cheese, while versatile dumplings are the perfect bite of satisfying fried food and a variety of proteins.



PROTEINS: RIBS, BACON, FRIED CHICKEN, HAM

From ham to bacon and chicken to ribs, these proteins are among the top meats consumers considered best in comfort foods. Hearty ribs with rich sauces, fried chicken and bacon are all perfect and versatile proteins. Pork and chicken are the most menued proteins and, according to Technomic, younger consumers (35%) are more likely than older consumers to consider pork dishes to be comfort foods.²



MENU QUEST

The Pursuit of Culinary Distinction

Smithfield

Trend Watch

What's In This Fall? Braised Meats!

Braises are a trending dish for fall this year, particularly when they include some emerging ingredients and unique flavors. More specifically, braised proteins have seen a 12% increase on menus over the past four years.³ Braised protein dishes are perfect for the cold seasons and add warmth to any dish.



Tatsoi

An emerging trend on menus, tatsoi is an Asian green similar to spinach and can be served raw or cooked. It has a soft texture with a subtle yet distinct flavor that can stand up to long cook times, and it complements meat dishes such as pork, beef or chicken.⁴



Mole

Mole is another seasonal flavor that can work well in braises, with a growth of 10% across all menus over four years.³ Its richness and complexity is a perfect pair with chicken, beef, lamb and pork.

Ham. Classic Taste Goes On-Trend.

Ham is as popular as ever, and operators are finding new and unique applications to feature its appeal.

Sandwiches are menu favorites, and millions are consumed daily. Operators can easily position some varieties as both nostalgic and modern comfort foods. In particular, remaking some classic sandwiches with modern or upscale twists could drive interest. Enter ham. Grilled cheese with ham, or ham and cheese sandwiches featuring Gouda cheese, or ethnic breads can take sandwiches to the next level.

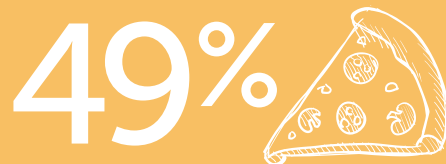
As all-day breakfast is as popular as ever, ham will continue to be menued throughout all dayparts within new and interesting applications.⁵ Pizza for instance. Examples include adding classic breakfast ingredients to pizza, such as egg and ham, or adding pizza toppings to handhelds for a pizza-inspired sandwich for lunch. Or, since pizza is always a popular evening meal, adding ham makes breakfast an every-daypart item.



Ham is the #1 most preferred sandwich meat that consumers will order for lunch and dinner.⁵



Ham & cheese sandwiches are one of the top trending varieties of sandwiches, with 39% of people saying they order this for lunch or dinner.⁵



Overall, 49% of consumers prefer ham as a topping on their pizza.⁶

3. Datassential Menu Trends 2018

4. Foodservice Director, "3 Fall Food Trends to Entice Diners This Fall," 2018

5. Technomic, Sandwich CTR, 2018 6. Technomic, Pizza CTR, 2018



MENU QUEST

The Pursuit of Culinary Distinction

Smithfield

Trend Watch

Savory Pies & Meaty Pastries

Today's consumers are seeking out meals with protein to keep them going throughout the day. They're also craving new foods and experiences but are comforted by familiar options. That's why there has been a growing interest in pot pies and interesting meat pastries. Millennials and Generation Z are the driving forces behind the savory pastry trend, according to Technomic.⁷ Younger diners are more interested in desserts that are adventurous and unusual. Pairing sweet desserts and savory proteins and spices is emerging on restaurant menus. Below are a few standout menu items from across the country.⁷



French Dip Éclairs
Belcampo Meat Co
Santa Monica, CA



Shortrib Beignets
Boeufhaus
Chicago, IL



Country Ham & Red Eye Gravy Danish
High Street on Market
Philadelphia, PA

7. Technomic, Beef and Pork CTR, 2018



Find a variety of meat pastry recipes like the Hammy Scones shown here, and many others, on the Smithfield website. Visit SmithfieldFoodservice.com.

For insights, menu ideas and information on our vast portfolio of fresh and precooked products, visit SmithfieldFoodservice.com

For everything you need to know about Smithfield pork, download our Pork. Solved. app.

