

Trend Watch

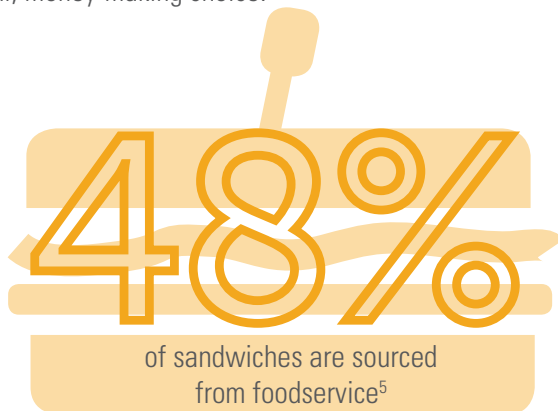
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Getting a Handle on Handhelds

Handhelds might be the most versatile menu application in the food-service industry. There are a variety of proteins and breads that can be used to compile handhelds. Every cuisine has a staple handheld that operators can build on for inspiration, plus, they're popular with consumers. The sandwich, in particular, is consumed more heavily than any other type of food – consumers eat an average of almost four sandwiches a week.¹ The sandwich is also the leading entrée category for top LSR chains and the third leading entrée category for FSRs.²

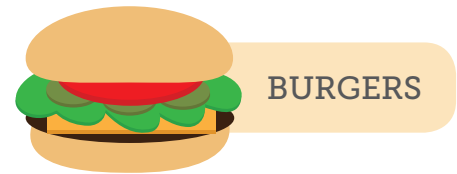
The desire for handhelds is rapidly increasing in the C-store environment as well, with a hefty 62% of consumers demanding more handheld items that are ready-made and kept warm on display, especially during the breakfast daypart.³ At lunch and dinner time, burgers are a top choice for away-from-home meals, with 26% of consumers choosing a burger at lunch and 30% of consumers choosing a burger for dinner.⁴ This is why handhelds are a great menu concept – they sell all day long. You can feature them during any daypart, and they are sure to be a popular, money-making choice.



Pork's Role in Handhelds

Just as you can't have a handheld without a vessel like a biscuit, bun or tortilla, you can't have a handheld without a star protein. Luckily, pork is one of the star proteins in this category. Bacon is the second leading sandwich protein at both LSR and FSR establishments.⁶ Bacon is also the fastest growing protein for handhelds in the LSR environment, up 7% this year.⁷ And ham is making a resurgence as the third leading handheld protein for LSRs.⁸

WHAT'S CONSIDERED A HANDHELD?



1-2, 4-8 Technomic Sandwich Consumer Trend Report 2016
3 Technomic Convenience Store Market Brief Spring 2016

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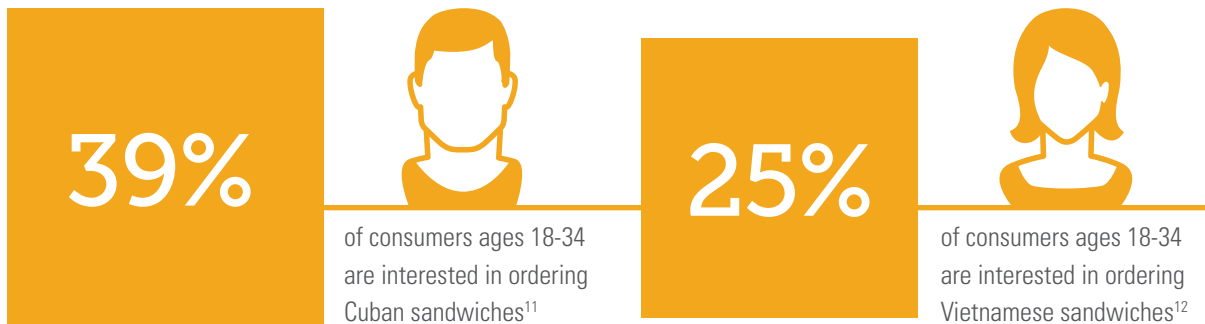


Trending Now: Ethnic-inspired Handhelds

Traditional American-style uses of pork in handhelds include classics like ham and cheese, BBQ pulled pork and the breakfast sandwich, which is probably the most popular sandwich on the market right now. Due to the rise of all-day breakfast – 41% of consumers between the ages of 18 and 34 say they are purchasing breakfast sandwiches away from home outside of breakfast hours more often than they were a year ago.⁹

But this same age group is craving more than the American staples when it comes to handhelds. They want cultural flair – sandwiches that are inspired by Mexican, Asian and Mediterranean flavors. Many of these cuisines feature pork as the staple protein in their handhelds. The traditional Cuban sandwich, for instance, features ham and roasted pork with cheese, pickles and mustard on Cuban bread. Or there's the classic Vietnamese bánh mì that pairs pork with the flavors of cilantro, cucumber and pickled carrots on a baguette.

Consumers want to eat the types of handhelds that are common to ethnic cuisines, too, like tacos, burritos, bao buns and wraps. Street-food-inspired handhelds, like tacos, are becoming especially common on bar menus, and consumers are demanding more Latin-inspired handhelds during snacking occasions.¹⁰



CHECK OUT THE ETHNIC-INSPIRED HANDHELDS THESE RESTAURANTS ARE OFFERING



KOREAN
Seoul Taco
St. Louis, MO
Spicy Pork Bulgogi Tacos

Spicy pork, Korean salad mix, green onion, Seoul sauce, crushed sesame seeds and lime



CUBAN
The People's Pig
Portland, OR
The Cubano Sandwich

Pork shoulder, ham, dijon mustard, pickles, provolone



INDONESIAN
Komodo
Los Angeles, CA
Java Pork Burrito

Indonesian pork rendang braised in coconut milk, served with tomato cucumber salad, green onions, fried shallots

9, 11-12 Technomic, Sandwich Consumer Trend Report 2016
10 Technomic, Snacking Occasion Consumer Trend Report 2016

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Restaurant Spotlight: Sandwiches That Are All About BACON

Bacon ups the wow factor of any dish, and when it's the centerpiece of a handheld, there's no denying the yum factor. The perfection of bacon is proven at Toronto's bacon-only sandwich restaurant, Rashers. The establishment abides by the mantra that "despite its recent surge in popularity, bacon is not a trend—it's a staple...it does not need to be weaved, infused, dipped, liquefied or candied. Bacon is the foundation of our amazing sandwiches, not simply a garnish or add-on."

Rashers takes bacon and either smokes it or turns it into peameal bacon, which is bacon that is trimmed fine, wet cured, rolled in cornmeal and crisped up via grilling or frying. Rashers serves up bacon in 12 varieties of sandwiches, each with a unique array of condiments and fresh toppings. Some hot-ticket items on the menu include:



Hogtown Sandwich

Peameal bacon on a bun with homemade ale mustard.



Winter Warmer

Peameal bacon, sautéed onions, sundried tomatoes, mushrooms, spinach, aged cheddar, and Sriracha on a warmed bun.



Brie and Bacon

Smoked strip bacon with melted Brie and caramelized onions topped with a homemade garlic aioli on a toasted bun.

"Snackifying" Handhelds

With the growth of the snacking daypart, operators are finding that they need to come up with innovative ways to create smaller plates that fill the space between breakfast, lunch and dinner. Especially in the LSR segment, handheld formats and portable packaging are particularly vital for items that are positioned as snacks, as 60% of consumers eat snacks right away, so they need to be quick and easy to eat while walking or driving to their next destination.¹³

sliders

snack wraps

mini hot dogs

