

# TREND WATCH



## Handheld meals are convenient, sharable and fun!

It's a primal instinct. Who among us doesn't like to disregard the formality of forks and knives and just dig in with our fingers once in a while? We all do! And that's because it's just plain fun.

Today, handhelds are bigger than ever. Chefs love them because they're the perfect meal or snack for breakfast, lunch and dinner regardless of the venue. "According to the NRA & NPD Group, 81% of operators report increased profits when they offer handheld items."<sup>1</sup>

Eating with their hands allows food lovers to savor a true sensory experience. As consumers demand more handheld foods, restaurants continually need to find ways to change up their menus to include unique ones. In addition to the customers' experience, handhelds allow chefs to showcase their creativity. Less training, space and equipment are needed, due to their simplicity, which also allow handhelds to be easily adapted for any daypart.

For full service, limited service and fast-casual restaurants, to coffee shops and catering, handhelds are versatile, easy to make and ready to enjoy. Visit [SmithfieldHandsOn.com](http://SmithfieldHandsOn.com) for handheld recipe inspiration.

## Today's Hottest Trends in Handhelds

### APPETIZERS

Appetizers are the fun and sharable small plate classic that is more often than not also a handheld meal. Some of the more popular ones that have shown growth:<sup>2</sup>

**WINGS-** on 44% of menus & still seeing growth

**PORK "WINGS"-** up 25% on menus over 4 years

**RIBS-** on 20%+ of menus

Hint: Make ribs even more handheld-friendly by pulling the meat down the bone a bit and exposing a "handle."





# TREND WATCH

## Today's Hottest Trends in Handhelds (Cont'd)

### SANDWICHES AND WRAPS

Sandwiches are so popular with consumers that Technomic reports that an amazing 37% say they dine on them more than once a week. Below are some interesting developments currently regarding sandwiches:<sup>3</sup>

#### CONDIMENTS

52% of consumers are very likely to try a new or unique sauce on a sandwich,<sup>3</sup> which opens the door for chefs to experiment with new sauces. What's more, housemade or signature condiments offer the ability to be unique and convey freshness. This fact is not lost on consumers, especially millennials, 52% of whom indicate they would order an item if it comes with an original sauce.<sup>3</sup>

#### CARRIERS

Operators continue to rely on breads to drive craveability, showcase uniqueness and justify a premium price point. Ethnic specialty breads like roti, paratha and naan are becoming more commonplace on menus. Even simply housemade breads are trending, as these options add an element of uniqueness.<sup>4</sup>

#### ITALIAN DRIED & CURED MEATS

Meats such as capicola and Genoa salami are growing on lunch and dinner sandwich menus, with capicola +36% on menus, and Genoa salami +6.7% on menus over 2 years from 2015-2017.<sup>5</sup>

#### BEYOND BREAD

Many operators are utilizing "outside-the-box breads" to create a curiosity factor. These include sweet and indulgent carriers, like donuts, croissants, biscuits and more.

### PIZZA AND FLATBREADS

With a preference for pizza that is authentic, typically regional, e.g. Chicago, Naples, New York, etc., 57% of 18- to 34-year-olds eat pizza at least weekly.<sup>6</sup>

Pork toppings are some of the favorite pizza toppings:<sup>6</sup>

**PEPPERONI**  
**69%**



**BACON**  
**55%**



**HAM**  
**46%**



**SAUSAGE**  
**42%**



## What Is Trending in Pizza?<sup>5</sup>

- While pizza is typically seen as a dinner dish, operators can vary the ingredients for breakfast or lunch (sometimes even dessert)
- Nontraditional crusts, like cauliflower, are becoming more popular
- Unique Toppings: Gruyère, dill, vinegar, lemon, peanut, sea salt, applewood, chocolate & pear



# TREND WATCH

## Global Flavors

Eaters are becoming more adventurous as restaurants are continuing to offer more unique handhelds, with many growing very quickly in the past four years. These include:<sup>7</sup>

- +250% Kati Rolls** - an Indian kebab wrapped in a paratha bread
- +69% Bánh Mi** - a Vietnamese sandwich on a French baguette
- +50% Pepito** - very similar to a Mexican torta "sandwich," commonly found in Spain and Latin America
- +49% Cemita** - a popular "brioche" sandwich from Puebla, Mexico
- +37% Doner/Shawarma** - a vertical rotisserie with lamb, beef or chicken, popular in the Middle East
- +31% Arepa** - popular in Venezuela and Colombia, an open-faced sandwich made of corn flour

## Country-by-Country Breakdown of Popular Handhelds<sup>7</sup>

**Mexico:** Torta, Burrito, Taco, Quesadilla, Cemita, Tamale

**Italian:** Bruschetta, Calzone

**Vietnam:** Bánh Mi, Bánh Xèo

**Middle Eastern:** Doner, Shawarma, Kebab

**Spanish:** Pepito

**Latin America:** Arepa, Empanada, Pupusa

**Southeast Asia:** Lumpia, Egg Roll, Satay, Empanada, Bao, Roujiamo

**South Asia, India:** Kati Roll, Paratha, Naan, Samosas, Pakora, Roti, Chapati

<sup>7</sup>. Datassential

## Handheld Menu Highlights



**Ba Le, Chicago, IL**  
Features Vietnamese Bánh Mi sandwiches with mayo, pickled daikon, carrot, onion, cilantro, and jalapeño and topped with any combination of pork cuts, e.g., headcheese, pate, ham, belly.



**Empanada City, Brooklyn, NY**  
Features a Cuban Empanada: filled with perril (slow-roasted pork leg/shoulder), ham and Swiss cheese.

To discover what Smithfield can do to satisfy the handheld cravings of your customers while building business for you, contact a Smithfield sales representative or call 888-327-6526.

Everything you need to know about Smithfield products, recipes and more: Download our Smithfield Culinary App.

