

THE PREP

WITH CHEF SAM

In this issue: how elevating the patron experience can enhance the sense of taste, allowing you to boost the average check.



75%

of diners will pay more for a one-of-a-kind dining experience.

Entrepreneur, How Experiential Dining Offers Unforgettable Customer Experiences, 2023

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ *Engage diners' senses with memorable plating, glassware, utensils, music and ambiance.*
- ✓ *Tell your sourcing story: Spotlight local farms, seasonal ingredients or artisan products to increase perceived value.*
- ✓ *Create shareable moments: Unique plating, over-the-top desserts or cocktail towers are readily snapped and shared on socials.*

"It's not just about flavor – it's about the whole vibe. When you engage more senses, the food actually tastes better, and diners are happy to pay more for the experience."



Combining flavors with sensory stimuli can enhance flavor perception by **up to**

60%!

DLISH, The Art of Storytelling in Sensory Dining: Creating Unforgettable Culinary Experiences, 2024

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ *Play with presentation: Incorporate aroma and sizzle, smoke domes and more.*
- ✓ *Engage scent: Release aroma that primes the palate with fresh herbs or citrus zest.*
- ✓ *Add visual pops: Vibrant sauces, colorful garnishes or dramatic pours make dishes feel more flavorful.*

Welcome to The Prep, our Smithfield Culinary® newsletter packed with insights and actions you can leverage in your operation.

FEATURED LTO IDEAS

Put a new spin on consumer-winning flavors that won't stress your kitchen.



Pork Carnitas & Grits

Swap out the shrimp in this popular dish for a more cost-effective classic.



Mini Bagel Pizza Bites

Add Margherita® Jalapeño Pepperoni to this easy app to deliver the kick customers crave.



Sweet & Spicy Pork Belly Cornbread

Serve up the sweet and spicy trend with a delicious red pepper jelly glaze and indulgent pork belly.

66%

of diners gravitate toward experiential dining when celebrating a special occasion.

Datassential, Experiential Dining Hot Shot Report, 2025

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ **Create a dessert that wows:** Consider sparklers or an over-the-top cake.
- ✓ **Capture the moment:** Offer pre-set food and drink packages designed for birthdays and special occasions.
- ✓ **Add recognition rituals:** Personalized menus or a celebratory garnish to build customer connections.

46%

of consumers like to treat themselves to foods and experiences they **can't** create at home.

Datassential, Experiential Dining Hot Shot Report, 2025

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ **Create indulgent formats:** Oversized shareables or flight-style tastings.
- ✓ **Highlight unique equipment:** Wood-fired ovens, flat-top sizzles or frozen-drink machines.
- ✓ **Throw a seasonal twist** on your tried-and-true offerings.

NEW

from Smithfield Culinary®

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



CHOPPED BRISKET

Made from premium beef brisket, cooked low and slow for deep, rich barbecue flavor.



BURNT ENDS

Crafted from tender, slow-smoked pork shoulder, expertly caramelized for deep, savory flavor in every bite.



JALAPEÑO CHEDDAR SMOKED SAUSAGE

Premium cuts of pork with sharp cheddar cheese and fiery jalapeños, slow-smoked to perfection.

50%

of Gen Z & Millennial diners use social media to **learn about new dining experiences.**

Datassential, Experiential Dining Hot Shot Report, 2025

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ **Engage directly:** Reply and repost user-generated content to build community.
- ✓ **Empower your guests:** Add branded hashtags, in-house signage or QR codes to share their visit.
- ✓ **Design for the feed:** Create visually striking menu items that beg to be snapped.

53%

of Gen Z patrons have interest in early dinner bookings.

OpenTable Survey, 2025

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ **Draw them in:** Rethink pricing and promotions for early diners.
- ✓ **Hook them on new faves:** Offer LTOs to drive trial of new products and recipes.
- ✓ **Create a sense of exclusivity:** Capture the younger generation's fear of missing out.

"Offer up an LTO during off-peak hours. Consider minis and flights, showcasing new flavors alongside your traditional lineup."



75%

of consumers find concepts like tasting menus, live entertainment or culturally specific dining formats very or extremely appealing.

Datassential, Experiential Dining Hot Shot Report, 2025

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- ✓ **Add entertainment to the menu:** From live music to trivia or themed events, make the meal into an outing.
- ✓ **Make it interactive:** Tableside services or DIY garnishes let guests play a role.

Take the first step on these to-do items: Contact your National Accounts Sales rep or reach out to Michael Novelli at Mnovelli@smithfield.com to build your bottom line.

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