



ENTICING CUSTOMERS WITH UNEXPECTED FLAVOR COMBINATIONS

Operators are meeting customer demand for memorable culinary experiences

More than ever, consumers expect operators to provide a memorable experience in their restaurants, from the ambiance and service to the ingredients and flavors in their menu items. One on-trend way operators are meeting customer demand for such culinary experiences is by employing unexpected flavor combinations.

SWEET AND...

“Sweet and savory appeal to two of the five senses human tongues recognize,” says Arlene Spiegel, president of consulting firm Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York. “Along with texture and aroma, they are the building blocks of a flavor profile that creates craveability.”

Other examples of the sweet-and-savory mashup include savory doughnuts, chocolate dessert hummus and savory yogurts with such additions as beets, avocado and harissa.

“Cocktails also utilize the combination by muddling herbs, citrus and sugar to create savory signature drinks,” says Spiegel.

“With knowledgeable consumers looking for the most flavors in every bite, having both sweet and savory in a dish is a winning combination,” she says.

FLAVOR COMBINATION TIPS

1. Follow the rules

The food has to tell a story to make sense. This continuity is important, because although consumers are open to experimenting with exotic flavors and new flavor combinations, they are not embracing “full-blown fusion.”

2. Familiarity is key

Operators seeking to wow customers with edgy sweet-and-savory combinations in their seasonings should also ensure that they have a familiar base underneath it, not two extremes. ■