



Focus On: Food Halls

With diverse cuisine options, nimble operations and pent-up demand, the segment picks up the pace.

Food halls are getting a fresh start, in more ways than one. New ones are opening, some after lengthy delays.

At the Cherokee Casino & Hotel in West Siloam Springs, Okla., a new operation called The Food Hall opened in April, replacing a buffet that shut down in 2020 due to the pandemic, says Arlene Spiegel, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates, who worked on the project.

TRENDS + INNOVATIONS

Specifying off-the-shelf (vs. custom) equipment in the front-of-house and repurposing certain existing equipment in the main back kitchen, which previously supported the buffet, were

a few ways the team overcame supply chain and budgetary constraints at The Food Hall at the Cherokee Casino & Hotel, Spiegel says.

Hot and Cold Holding Cabinets store proteins and other menu items that are prepared in bulk in the main kitchen, to keep turnaround times down. “Guests are able to order at a counter or order from freestanding kiosks at the entrance or order from their phones, which creates a logistical challenge for the kitchen and the counter attendants,” Spiegel says. “With a 90-second to three-minute turnaround time from order to pickup at most of the stations, the use of hot and cold holding equipment was crucial.” ●