

Making the Modern Menu Masterpiece

by | *Timothy L. Bauman, DHCEA, CDM, CFPP*

Menus are a compilation of recipes, and the world of recipes is changing at the fastest pace in history. Food is one way humans define themselves as civilized. Identity in religion, nationality, and ethnicity are intensely intertwined with food. Everything about how humans cook and eat has meaning. So what is taste? There is no one food that is consumed by everyone on earth. Taste is determined by culture, anatomy, and genetics. One person's haute cuisine is another person's pest. All these age-old things we hold near and dear are changing at a pace historically unimaginable.

Making the modern menu masterpiece

is using the new schools of thought to help our patients, residents, and customers *experience flavor*.

Recipes and cooking skills were traditionally passed down from mother to daughter or parent to child, and reflected the people and place where it was made. Many unique cuisines around the world offer a wealth of flavors emanating from the people and their culture. Well...that was then. Now the ongoing continuous reinvention of cuisines and culture in food is being accelerated by ingredient availability, science, and the Internet revolution. This article reviews some of these change factors in food and culture which cause managers in the foodservice industry to react.

What is Culinology?

Culinology—a term that is a registered trademark of the Research Chefs Association—is the blending of culinary arts and the science of food. This growing discipline has evolved from the valuable partnership between culinarians/chefs and scientists who develop today's finest food products. Restaurants, companies, and food manufacturers are developing new recipes affecting and adapting to the new way we eat as an economic pursuit. Basically, they make and market what sells. Food shows are loaded with items not developed by a people from a culture or region, but by work based on the various new food disciplines. Call it innovation at warp speed.

Another area feeding into the process is the study of the *physiology of taste and flavor*. Some of the top culinary schools, such as the Culinary Institute of America, have added this to their curriculum for imaginative students to have a track to run on when developing new food sensations. Food now travels an average of 1,500 miles before being consumed. This has wide-ranging effects, in that cost is up and flavor is down. Availability is also up, and seasonal and regional cuisines based on that new sourcing cross more borders, not being as subject to traditional seasonal constraints. Taste is the sense that perceives and dis-

tinguishes the sweet, sour, bitter or salty quality of a dissolved substance and is mediated by tastebuds on the tongue (Source: *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*). Taste is a big source of pleasure to those we serve, a complex realm of satisfaction both physiological and emotional, much of which is based on memories (Source: adapted from Diane Ackerman, "A Natural History of the Sense"). Flavor includes a food's texture, smell, temperature, color and painfulness (as in spices), among other features (Source: Ackerman). The way science has defined these things allows the food industry to progress using these new well thought-out ideas, concepts, and accumulated knowledge.

Making the modern menu masterpiece is using the new schools of thought to help our patients, residents, and customers *experience flavor*. People are *seeing flavor* in bright colors, proper doneness, juicy appearance, and wisps of steam. *Hearing flavor* means the sounds that influence the perception of flavor such as sizzling plates, fizzy soda or champagne, crunchy snacks, or crisp apples. *Smelling flavor* is very important and often our first impression of food. We recognize hundreds of aromas, and aromas stimulate memories. The absence of the sense of smell limits flavor depth. *Feeling flavor* is our fingers or utensil taking the first step (resistance, slip-

(Continued on page 16)

Choose a DIETARY MANAGER COURSE that fits YOUR needs!

Dietary Manager Course & CDM CEU Courses

Online or By Mail

- ✓ Study anywhere, anytime
- ✓ RD preceptor available (online)
- ✓ Reasonably priced courses
- ✓ Excellent DM exam pass rates
- ✓ Expert instruction
- ✓ More than 36 years experience



"I am thankful for this program and the opportunity that it gave me to make a difference in my life and the lives of 150 other people."

— Derek G., North Carolina

Get Started Today!

1.800.342.8230

www.dietarymanagers.und.edu/dma

UND THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH DAKOTA
Online & Distance Education

Approved by
DMA
DIETARY MANAGERS
ASSOCIATION

Happy 50th
Anniversary,
DMA!

periness, crunch, etc.). Our tongue and the rest of our mouth (teeth, interior surface, and lips) feel flavor. We experience spicy/hot pain munching peppers, and so on. Flavor is the key in achieving success with menu and recipe research and development.

One of the culinary mega-trends of our generation is the accelerating interest in a wide range of flavors from the world's cuisines. We bring the world to those who eat our food, but it's a new world. Even companies that support test kitchens in countries whose native cuisines represent their core product profiles can be seen as developing a new era of food based on the cultures and regions in which they research. Technology now allows companies to test new recipes and menu concepts at speeds and prices that were unimaginable even a decade ago. Innovation, the lifeblood of growth in food service, is becoming more efficient and cheaper. Innovative operations will shift away from traditional menus and recipes as they use the new products and new equip-

ment developed to revolutionize their kitchen operations.

Modern menus increasingly require equipment made to support the revolution, such as fast cook multiple heat method ovens, energy and water efficient equipment, ventilation breakthroughs, equipment modularity, and smart technologies. The convergence of many technologies, such as computerization, new generation kitchen equipment, and changes in patient care, make new products and services increasingly practical. Recipe redesign is focusing on the equipment capabilities adding quality, consistency, and cost-effective production to the end product. Now you can buy value-added products (meaning less scratch cooking) to cook in a computerized oven in a fraction of the time. Culinary schools now teach writing and adapting recipes to equipment, such as ovens simultaneously using as many as three heat-producing technologies. A roast may cook in 45 computer-aided minutes, as opposed to the old-world three to six hours of gas heat.

Where Will This Lead?

As time passes, foodservice managers will shift away from traditional menus to those developed through organized research and development. In noncommercial food service, patients/residents/customers bring into our institutions expectations they form in the home and commercial environment. The mobility and immigration of people bringing their food with them continues to create an expanding breadth of variety. The general population and those retiring now are eating on average a newer cuisine than those before them. The old saying "like mother used to make" is giving way. The old and traditional are transforming through science injected culinary to create the modern menu masterpiece. **DM**

Timothy L. Bauman, DHCFA, CDM, CFPP is director of food and nutrition services at Wood County Hospital in Bowling Green, OH. He also serves as president of Ohio DMA.

Celebrate!

DMA Chapters
Commemorate
Milestone Anniversaries

In 2010, six DMA state chapters will celebrate milestone anniversaries. The following chapters will be toasting these landmark dates:

- Arkansas** 45 years (April 15)
- Florida** 45 years (November 11)
- Oklahoma** 45 years (May 13)
- Wyoming** 40 years (December 1)
- Montana** 35 years (December 22)
- West Virginia** 35 years (October 1)

Congratulations!

to these chapters for their dedication to dietary managers in their state.

