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Summer Menus Dazzle with California Strawberries

Foodservice operators would probably agree that summer is one of the berry best times to feature signature menu items with California strawberries. Strawberry specials help drive traffic with their eye-catching color and bright flavor, and customers also appreciate their collateral benefits: naturally nutritious and appealing to all age groups.

With 96% of consumers eating strawberries¹, foodservice operators can capitalize on strawberry versatility by adding value to a range of summery dishes – from appetizers to dessert. (Note: If your menu is a big hit, no worries! Year-round California strawberry production ensures customers can enjoy menu favorites 365 days a year).

California strawberries make building a seasonal menu a snap. Start off with cool, enticing starters such as **Heirloom Tomato Salad** tossed with fresh strawberries, or a classic **California Summer Salad**, an arrangement of popular California fruits topped with fresh strawberries and chopped pistachios. For entrées, keep it light and simple with **Thai Pork Kebabs with California Strawberry Quinoa Salad**.

To optimize the grill, finish with innovative **Grilled Strawberries with Black Pepper Ice Cream**, which combines sweet and savory flavors into one delicious dessert. **Strawberry Cream Parfait** also makes for a festive

finale, and can be assembled and refrigerated until ready to serve.

Using versatile and appealing California strawberries, foodservice operators have a head start on creating unique signature dishes with broad appeal.²

1 California Strawberry Commission Attitude and Usage Study, Rose Research, 2013.

2 "Diners are willing to pay for signature dishes because 'restaurant meals aren't commodities; you can't buy these items anywhere else.'" Kyle Stock, Businessweek.com

Popular Beverage Trend

According to Technomic, Inc., 35 percent of 1,594 adults surveyed would choose a strawberry-flavored mixed drink or cocktail, making strawberry the most popular mixer in beverages. It's not surprising that customers are finding both strawberry adult beverages (strawberry sangrias, strawberry margaritas and strawberry bellinis) and alcohol-free soft drinks (strawberry lemonades, coolers and smoothies) in independent restaurants and chains across the nation.

Take advantage of a sure-fire customer favorite and try menuing one or more of these creative strawberry drinks:

- Shake up a **strawberry-based tomato beverage** and call it a Bloody Berry
- Muddle strawberries, simple syrup and prosecco into a **Strawberry Muddle Cocktail**
- Add **Strawberry Mint "Ice Cubes" with Yuzu Syrup** for a high impact presentation

For more strawberry summer menu and beverage ideas, visit CaliforniaStrawberries.com.

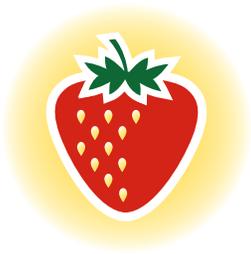


California Summer Salad |

Berry Happy Hour

Happy hour is taking on new meaning at quick service establishments and cafés. Operators are boosting beverage sales of smoothies, iced tea and more with happy hour incentives to encourage a customer visits in quiet business hours.* Try this strategy with special deals on Strawberry Mango Smoothie, Strawberry Coconut Pick-Me-Up and Spicy Sweet California Strawberry Tonic.

* Happy Hour, Minus the Booze, Restaurant Business, April 2014.



New Research Shows Strawberries Still America's #1 Fruit

A 2013 California Strawberry Commission Attitude and Usage Study* shows strawberries remain the favorite fruit for adults and children in US households. Nearly all consumers (96%) are eating strawberries, with over half eating strawberries once a week or more and considered heavy users. Women and younger adults (25-34 year olds) comprise the heaviest users.

The study revealed 52% of consumers are eating strawberries with greater frequency (more than once a week) in 2013 compared to 35% in 2010. Usage at 2-3 times a month also increased from 19% to 25%.

In addition, more consumers plan their strawberry purchases, and 50% confirm that strawberries are one of the healthiest types of fruits you can eat (up from 40% in 2010).

* California Strawberry Commission Attitude and Usage Study, Rose Research, 2013.

Strawberries Top the Nutrition Taste Test

This year, National Nutrition Month® (March) acknowledged a fact most chefs and restaurateurs already know: taste is the most critical element in the individual decision of what to eat. While other factors play a role in the decision-making process, diners are most likely to choose the foods that taste good.

The new frontier is making healthy food delicious using more fruits, vegetables and whole grains in dishes, while decreasing amounts of sugar, fat and sodium. With California strawberries leading the way in fruit popularity and **packed with vital nutrients**, it follows that chefs can optimize strawberry menu versatility to create flavorful and nutritious menu items.

As warm weather approaches, chefs can accentuate the season using cooking techniques that reduce fat, like grilling and poaching. Check out **menu tips** from the California Strawberry Commission that add a healthy halo while boosting flavor and appeal.

Steal This Idea!

Sonesta Hotels Capitalize on Strawberry Popularity

Boston-headquartered Sonesta International Hotels capitalized on rapid growth in **year-round domestic strawberry production** to create ultra-elaborate, signature menus for business meeting breaks. Sonesta Hotels applied their

"Food is Art" corporate credo to California strawberries in diverse recipes suitable for specialty refreshment breaks, weddings, and other occasions.

Debuted at the Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, the Strawberry Break (\$14 per person) has been a hit with meeting planners and corporate groups (25% of groups choose it over other themed breaks). The hotel offers a meeting menu of fresh whole



strawberries with chocolate fondue; create-your-own mini-strawberry shortcake; a Strawberries Romanoff martini; mini strawberry pound cakes; and strawberry Linzer cookies. The strawberry dessert station is ideal for weddings and receptions, with items like chilled strawberry soup in demitasse cups, tuxedo strawberries, strawberry mousse parfaits, strawberry mini-tarts, and bite-sized strawberry cheesecakes.

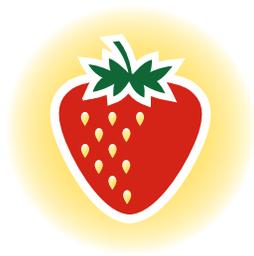
Produce Menu Pluses*

80% of consumers believe restaurants should feature more produce.

78% of consumers say using more produce is a fundamental menu change – not a fad.

50%+ of consumers are likely to order an item featuring seasonal/local/organic produce.

*Innovations and Menu Trends in Produce, Datassential, 2013.



Thai Pork Kebabs with California Strawberry Quinoa Salad

Ingredients

- 1 cup hulled and quartered California strawberries
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, cut into 1/4-inch x 4-inch strips
- 1/4 cup salted peanuts, coarsely chopped, optional
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 16 bamboo skewers
- 1 recipe California Strawberry Quinoa Salad

Preparation

Place strawberries, orange juice, cinnamon, cumin and cayenne pepper in the work bowl of a food processor and puree until smooth. Pour into a medium mixing bowl. Add pork strips, stirring to coat all sides. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Immerse skewers in water for 20-30 minutes (this will keep skewers from burning).

Heat a grill or grill pan over medium high heat.

Thread pork onto skewers and grill for 3 minutes. Turn and grill for an additional 2-3 minutes or until cooked through.

Prepare California Strawberry Quinoa Salad.

Serve kebabs over California Strawberry Quinoa Salad.

Garnish with peanuts and serve with a lime wedge for squeezing.

Nutritional Information

Per Serving: 534 calories; 22 g fat; 107 mg cholesterol; 432 mg sodium; 42 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 44 g protein

California Strawberry Quinoa Salad

Dressing

- 1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup hulled and quartered California strawberries
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Salad

- 1 cup dry quinoa, cooked according to package directions and cooled
- 1/4 cup minced sweet yellow onion
- 1 cup finely shredded Napa cabbage
- 1/2 cup finely diced cucumber
- 1 cup diced California strawberries

Preparation

To make the dressing, place all dressing ingredients in the work bowl of a food processor or blender and pulse until smooth.

Place quinoa in a large bowl. Add onion, cabbage, cucumber, strawberries and dressing, tossing gently to combine.

Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 hours.

Nutritional Information

Per serving: 228 calories; 8 g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 296 mg sodium; 34 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 7 g protein



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