

Food staging strategies

Move healthier options to the FRONT of the serving line in large, fully stocked serving containers to show abundance.

In a self-serve line host healthier options first and closest to the diner and least healthy options to the end and to the back so they have to reach back for less healthy options. Put green options at eye level and unhealthy ones higher, not in immediate view to cut down on impulse selections.

Ensure healthy items are in large serving containers, are restocked and serving utensils are accessible and clean. Put less healthy items in smaller serving containers with smaller, less easy to use utensils so they do not appear as plentiful.

If there is a salad bar, consider putting hot, side dish like vegetables both in the main entrée area and on the salad bar so it is available in two places.

In a serving line, have two lines for the healthiest items and one line for the least healthy items so there is never a wait for the healthy items.

On a menu, list the healthy items at the top of the menu and the least healthy items at the bottom.

Add allergy, calorie and cholesterol information to the menu.

Develop seasonal menus around fresh, in season fruits and vegetables or thematic menus that evoke tradition like hot oatmeal for breakfast and winter squash in lunch/dinner meals during cold months and abundant fresh fruit with breakfast with summer squash in lunch/dinner meals during warmer months.

Place fruit in a clear bowl to draw customers eyes to the choices and availability. Offer cut fruit because people will eat more apple slices than whole apples when presented with a choice. Offer fruit and cut veggies to go where possible.

Ask WHICH vegetable(s) they want not IF they want a vegetable side.

Promotions

-Like Starbucks, do a "Press Preview" and invite local politicians or base personalities to enthuse about the changes. Encourage local dignitaries to try their hand-eat a meal there, hand out fliers etc.

-Scheduled tasting like an open house with people on hand to educate. Have portfolios of photos on hand to show what other dishes look like.

-Piggyback-piggyback on another media event. Like do sampling at a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Social Media

-Testimonies of past and current guests. FAQs

-Reviews on Google, Yelp, Zomato, Trip Advisor

Catering/Buffet/Serving line tips

-Green vegetables are the least stable but most popular. For catering they are typically parcooked in boiling water or a convection steamer, shocked, drained and reheated at serving time.

-Root vegetables are stable and simple to cook and be incorporated into recipes since they do not tend to be popular side dishes.

-Popular side dishes that are appropriate for batch cookery are asparagus, broccoli and green beans.

-Vegetables with long holding ability include braising greens like collards, grilled or marinated vegetables, ratatouille, roasted root vegetables, salads, bean ragouts, summer squash, eggplant.