There’s no denying that breakfast foods are a major story in the foodservice industry right now. McDonald’s is making waves with all-day breakfast, while the brunch trend is in full swing as FSRs continue to turn breakfast into a destination meal. Coffee and bakery cafés are both growth segments, meeting demands for convenient yet high-quality weekday breakfast options. Indeed, breakfast foods are contributing to growth across dayparts and segments. Technomic’s 2015 Breakfast Consumer Trend Report sheds light on why breakfast foods are on trend.

All-day breakfast
Consumers have been craving all-day breakfast for some time, and, as shown below, preference for breakfast foods outside of traditional hours has grown in recent years. However, operators have been wary; will all-day breakfast menus build or cannibalize lunch and dinner sales? Though it’s a fair question, operators may also want to consider breakfast foods’ potential to help drive incremental traffic. Snacking is trending up, especially among 18–34-year-olds, and these younger consumers are especially likely to order breakfast items as a mid-morning, mid-afternoon or mid-evening snack. Positioning breakfast items, particularly sandwiches, as afternoon pick-me-ups can help minimize cannibalization while capitalizing on interest in all-day breakfast.

I enjoy eating breakfast foods at nontraditional times.
Agree & agree completely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>18–24</th>
<th>25–34</th>
<th>35–44</th>
<th>45–54</th>
<th>55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1,500 consumers
Source: Breakfast Consumer Trend Report, Technomic
At full-service restaurants, growing demand for all-day breakfast fare is leading to more breakfast-themed entrées. Most significantly, we have seen a rise in egg-topped brunch burgers at Applebee’s, Brio Tuscan Grille, Denny’s and Slater’s 50/50. In fact, a notable 64% of consumers are likely to order eggs outside of traditional breakfast hours. Following eggs, French toast, pancakes, waffles and potato dishes stand out as the leading breakfast fare at nontraditional hours.

The brunch trend

It’s fair to think of breakfast as two distinct occasions. During the week, consumers are pressed for time and seek convenience. Conversely, consumers want more of an experience on the weekend. Taste becomes more important; ambiance can be a differentiator; and convenience, in terms of quick service and portability, is less of a concern on weekends. Further, food preferences change, with indulgent options being preferred more during the weekend than the week. FSRs are capitalizing on these differences by creating an upscale breakfast occasion focused around quality fare, unique beverages and a comfortable atmosphere.

*Housemade cinnamon roll from Carmel Kitchen & Wine Bar*

*First Watch expanded its line of fresh juices last spring*

What are the main reasons you visit your most frequent AFH breakfast location? Select 6 of 20
**Weekday breakfast occasions**
Cafés have found a niche in catering to busy, on-the-go breakfast consumers during the week. Traditionally, convenience has been the primary factor here, but expectations for these weekday occasions are rising. We showed earlier that quality is a more significant traffic driver during the weekend than the week. However, more consumers now (77%) than in 2013 (70%) say it is important that the breakfast items they purchase during the week are high in quality. This aligns with the general trend of consumers demanding higher-quality options and clean ingredients, even at QSRs and cafés.

**Caribou Coffee** is removing artificial flavorings by the end of 2016 and will use only cage-free eggs by 2020.

As quality becomes more important for the weekday breakfast occasion, speed of service cannot be overlooked; 70% of consumers say it’s important that the breakfast items they purchase during the week can be prepared quickly. Housemade breakfast bars and freshly baked grab-and-go items can help satisfy both quality and convenience demands.

**What’s next for breakfast?**
Through analysis of consumer, menu and industry data, Technomic has identified three outlook trends that will help shape the future of breakfast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-meat breakfast options</th>
<th>Casual-dining breakfast concepts</th>
<th>New beverages on chain breakfast menus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Non-meat breakfast options" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Casual-dining breakfast concepts" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="New beverages on chain breakfast menus" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Approximately 700 consumers
Source: 2015 Breakfast Consumer Trend Report, Technomic
FOODSERVICE HAPPENINGS

New Menu Takes on Sweet and Spicy Flavors

By Anne Mills, Manager, Consumer Insights

In today’s foodservice market, differentiation is key to driving traffic and sales, and flavor innovation plays a key role in standing out from the competition. Over the past few years, the industry has increased its focus on flavor innovation. However, as additional new and unique flavors arrive on the scene, consumers become desensitized to them more quickly. This means that operators and suppliers need to continuously stay on top of flavor trends in order to provide flavorful dishes that capture and maintain consumer interest.

To help keep tabs on flavor trends and stay ahead of the curve, this article highlights both current and up-and-coming flavor trends based on Technomic’s most recent Flavor Consumer Trend Report.

Back to basics
As consumers show increasing concern for artificial ingredients, chains are turning back to the purest basic flavors, such as butter, sea salt and cane sugar. In addition, more of these ingredients are being naturally infused with flavor, such as hickory-smoked sea salt and herbed butters.

Hickory Salt Crusted NY Strip with a hickory-smoked sea salt crust

Honest Tropical Green Tea sweetened with organic cane sugar
Sweet-based flavor combinations
Top 500 chains are progressively using sweet flavors—consumers’ most preferred—to complement a variety of other flavors, including spicy, savory and smoky. Some sweet-based flavor combinations particularly on trend right now include:

- Sweet heat, featuring increasingly spicy heat levels in ethnic chile sauces and fruit-and-chile combinations
- Sweet and savory, such as flavored bacon, savory jams and caramelized onions
- Barbecue and wing sauces with all of the above flavor combinations, plus added sweet-smoky callouts

Two leading chains touting sweet-based flavor combinations are:

- Arby’s, with its Brown Sugar Bacon sandwiches—thick-cut bacon sprinkled with brown sugar

  ![Arby's Brown Sugar Bacon Sandwich](image1)

- Subway, featuring an Extra Long Pulled Pork Sandwich LTO—pulled pork in a sweet-and-smoky barbecue sauce

  ![Subway Extra Long Pulled Pork Sandwich](image2)

Innovative pepper items on chain menus include:

- Taco Bell’s Dare Devil Loaded Grillers

  ![Taco Bell Dare Devil Loaded Grillers](image3)

- Sbarro’s 3 Pepper Chicken Pizza with poblano pesto, roasted red peppers and jalapeños

  ![Sbarro’s 3 Pepper Chicken Pizza](image4)

What’s next?
The following trends are currently emerging in the independent sector and are forecasted to appear at chains over the next year or two.

- Flavors will grow more fluid
- Burnt callouts will replace many smoky callouts
- Harissa will become the new Sriracha

Plethora of peppers
QSRs are leading the charge for pepper innovation. These chains are using fewer “spicy” callouts, instead actually listing the specific peppers in each sauce and dish. Some are even using different types of peppers in a single dish. Going forward, expect to see the current hottest pepper in the world, Carolina Reaper, make an appearance on chain menus.

Continuous staying on top of flavor trends is vital to intriguing consumers and getting them in the door.