



Menus do's and don'ts

Your menu is your most effective marketing tool!

A menu needs to be interesting enough to draw customers into your operation, but it also needs to create opportunities for you to get those customers to spend as much as possible.

Your menu needs to:

- ✓ attract attention,
- ✓ live up to your brand name,
- ✓ sell your most profitable items, and
- ✓ up sell extra items.





Guidelines to develop or change your menu:



1. **Figure out which menu items are your top-sellers**
 - Keep track of what your customers order most
 - Is that item the most profitable or the least?
 - Figure out which menu items will generate the most profit
 - ❖ Make these your signature dishes outlining them on the menu cards
 - ❖ Use photos and write mouthwatering descriptions



2. **Don't: Make a price list**

- If your menu lists all of your items on one side of the page with a line of dots connecting each item to its price, you are inviting your customers to order their food based on how much everything costs. This type of menu allows customers to compare prices on all your menu items, thus unintentionally highlighting all your lower-priced items. Instead, embed the price into the description of your menu item. Don't highlight it, or make it another color. Bottom line, you don't want to attract attention to the price.

3. **Do: Change your menu often**

- You should be updating your menu seasonally. This is not to say that you need to unveil a brand new menu every three months. Keep all of your signature dishes and customer favorites, but take the opportunity to try out new menu items by first offering them as appetizers. If they get good reviews, then make them entrées on your next menu revision. You can also offer daily specials. Consider adding the specials that received the best feedback onto the menu permanently.

4. **Don't: Expand your menu to try to please everyone**

- One of the biggest mistakes that restaurant and foodservice owners and operators make is to try to put too many items on the menu to try to please everyone. A menu is not meant to be a book. Too much choice will confuse your customers, and turn their dining experience into a frustrating one, as well as drive up your food costs.



...Guidelines to develop or change your menu

5. Do: Remember your brand

- Make sure that the design and feel of your menu is also cohesive with your brand. Do the fonts, colors and content give your customers a sense of what type of operation you want to be?

6. Don't: Overprice your menu items

- Make sure that your prices are competitive with other restaurants and foodservice operations in your area. Consider raising your drink prices and lowering your food prices. Customers are more likely to pay closer attention to prices of the food, rather than the price of an iced tea or soda. Customers aren't looking for cheap food; they are looking for good value for their money!!





7. Do: Use separate menus for drinks and desserts

- Use separate menus with great photos for your specialty drinks and desserts. These items can get lost in your main menu, but stand out when presented on their own. Put the specialty drinks and desserts menu on the table, so customers have a chance to look through it before they move onto the main menu. Come dessert time, they will still have that image of the mouth-watering dessert they saw when they first sat down ingrained in their head!





Reuben Sandwiches

Central Alberta based for over 30 years



Original recipe makes 4 sandwiches

Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter

8 slices rye bread

8 slices deli sliced **NOSSACK MONTREAL STYLE SMOKED BEEF Code 717**

8 slices Swiss cheese

1 cup sauerkraut, drained

1/2 cup Thousand Island dressing

Directions

Preheat a large skillet or griddle on medium heat.

Lightly butter one side of bread slices. Spread non-buttered sides with Thousand Island dressing. On 4 bread slices, layer 1 slice Swiss cheese, 2 slices corned beef, 1/4 cup sauerkraut and second slice of Swiss cheese. Top with remaining bread slices, buttered sides out.

Grill sandwiches until both sides are golden brown, about 15 minutes per side. Serve hot.



8. Don't: Do it all yourself

- Consider hiring a consultant to look it over. A few simple changes to a menu could make you thousands of dollars more in profits.

