

Create an Authentic Experience to wow your Customers



Whilst it is crucial to maintain familiar dishes on the menu there is a huge, and growing, opportunity for 'authentic' dishes.

Consumers are now more discerning and educated about food and are conscious about "where" food comes from and "how" it is prepared.

Try these top tips to provide your customers with an authentic experience and help boost your sales:

1 Introduce regional cuisines:

In a recent survey, 51% of respondents said that they would go to a restaurant more often if the menu had more regional dishes.

Although it is common for restaurants to present dishes as part of a uniform, nationalised cuisine, most dishes are as regionally specific and diverse as a country's population. E.g.:



Instead of offering:

- Vegetable Biryani, try instead Hyderabadi Biryani or Awadhi Biryani
- A mixed grill becomes Kashmiri Lamb chops
- Highlight Dal Makhani, Tadka dal, Butter Chicken, Gobhi Aloo as north Indian Specialities; Vindaloo as Goan speciality and Chettinad Chicken or Chicken 65 as South Indian speciality



2 Create chef's specials

46% of respondents in a recent Eating Out study said that they would visit a restaurant more often if there were more Chef's specials on the menu.

Try creating a few "Chef's Special" dishes highlighting the regionality and flavours of the dish along with a brief background on the chef to add to the authenticity.

Even mention that this is what your chefs eat themselves after their shift or it is the Chef's favourite!



3 Offer desserts and beverages to match the cuisine

Try to pair food with regional desserts and drinks which helps boost the authentic experience.

Also, the menu should highlight the background of the dishes/drinks to reiterate the regional focus. E.g.: serving Cobra, Kingfisher, Tsingtao, Singha beer, ras malai, gulaab jaamun, kheer

4 Be more descriptive about the ingredients:

Almost 2/3rds of all respondents in the Eating Out study said they would visit a restaurant more often if they had more information about the ingredients in the dish.

Consider including the region of the ingredients in the description to increase the authenticity even further.

Instead of stating the dish includes chilli, let the consumer know which Region the chillies came from e.g. Chillies from the Andhra Pradesh region (your supplier should be able to help you with this information).

5 Create special dishes for cultural events

Help your customers celebrate key cultural events by serving an authentic dish, and explain the significance of the dishes.

For Chinese New Year, serve dishes which provide 'luck' to the consumer and explain their relevance, such as:

- Displaying Tangerines and Oranges. A tradition which brings wealth and luck stemming from the way the Chinese words for gold and orange sound alike.
- Long Noodles: If noodles are served, then you should keep them as long as possible for long life.
- Serve Nian Goa (year cake made of glutinous rice flour, brown sugar, and oil) as gao sounds the same as the word for tall or high - hence the cakes symbolise achieving new heights in the coming year.

Celebrate Indian festivals:

- Serve a special Diwali "thaali" which is a set menu comprising of a vegetarian meal and rice kheer (rice pudding) as rice dessert is served on all auspicious occasions in India
- Serve a multi-coloured vegetable pulaav or plain rice during Holi as it is the festival of colours.
- Serve "thandai" which is a special milk based cold drink that is served in India during Holi. Whilst it is traditionally served mixed with cannabis, the more accepted version is a concentrate without cannabis that can be added to a glass of milk. This drink is specially prepared for Holi and is a favorite in India. For restaurants serving alcohol, they can add Baileys Irish Cream to it.