



# Foodservice Trends Report

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Q3 2023 QUARTERLY

Grab & Go U. | Creative Pizza Toppings | Snacks Are Back

**Huhtamaki**

# Grab & Go at college campuses:

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## ON DEMAND MEETS ON-THE-GO

Lunch time is over—at least at the traditional noon hour. More college campuses are offering digital ordering and convenience-focused technologies, so students don't have to work around a specific lunch time. "The need for **24/7 access is becoming the norm**," says Paul Kowalczyk, the head of Elixor North America's Education segment. "They want to be able to get something to eat on their time and not just packaged items. We look at some of the machines and concepts that are available—**you can make shakes, cookies, salads, and pizza, and it's fresh.**"

# Rollins College

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Rollins College's C-store at Fox Lodge opened its doors in 2021 and began offering in-house, grab-and-go meals, named Simply To Go. "We have a department dedicated to producing grab-and-go for the C-store. It started with one associate and now we're up to three or four," says Carolina Ossa, Rollins College Marketing Manager. "We try to go beyond the basic Caesar or house salad, try to go **more upscale and build things based on trends,**" says Ossa. This fall, a new and equally-as-fresh menu item will shake things up at the C-store: **salad jars that customers can simply shake, open, and eat.** The college is also introducing seasonal items which will be rotated every two weeks.

# Pacific Dining

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During the pandemic, a food service management group that serves California universities, Pacific Dining, completely redid its grab-and-go program. Before, **grab & go meals were a small part of the dining experience; now they're a main feature.** And they've upped their game since the COVID pandemic. Pacific Dining's grab & go menu now includes eye-catching options such as a caprese sandwich, a Cuban sandwich, grilled vegetables, and a Halal herb chicken salad.

# University of Missouri

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Being able to grab a quick bite on campus is a priority for all students. Naturally, the students at the University of Missouri spoke up and had **two must-haves on their campus dining wish lists: healthier food and more grab & go options.** The university not only listened, but also delivered. The Mizzou Market Central offers prepared grab-and-go items made with fresh ingredients, along with snacks, drinks, and household items. At the Mizzou Market, the **most popular grab & go items are fresh fruit cups** (including a kiwi, strawberry, and blueberry mix), chicken Caesar salad, and cowboy caviar—a creamy-crunchy, salsa-like concoction with beans, veggies, and corn.

# University of Nebraska

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The Selleck Dining Center is proof that you can teach an old dining center new dishes. Built in the 1950s, this dining hall on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) campus was outdated and limited in its functionality. In response, UNL Dining closed serving line access, created their own “ghost” restaurant concept, and **implemented a mobile ordering system** that allowed students to **customize their food order** from the seven different restaurant concepts. The result? Selleck Food Court was the winner of the 2023 FM Best Concept Award in the Best Renovation category because of their solution to creating a dining venue that combined technology with community building. Grab & go meals are changing the fabric of lunchtime and making the idea of mealtimes outdated.

# Pizza toppings get creative:

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## IMPROVING ON PERFECTION

During the pandemic, America's most popular takeout meal was pizza. According to Statista, consumer spending hit a near-20-year high in 2020. It's safe to say every community across the country has their go-to pizza place. And today, pizza chains are going beyond the average pizza topping and getting more creative. One example, **Blaze Pizza offers over 35 unique toppings:** goat cheese, artichokes, and garlic pesto sauce are just a few. Even Papa Johns carries some meaty toppings, including Philly steak and beef for meat lovers.

# Pizza Hut

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Pickles have been a popular flavor in the food world for a while and now, Pizza Hut is joining in on the fun. But who introduced pickles to pizza first? Pizza Hut currently offers pickles as a pizza topping, but Papa Johns introduced their own cheeseburger pizza with pickles in 2014 that they brought back as an LTO in 2020. Quite the pickle. But these days, **Pizza Hut's creation** includes buttermilk ranch dressing, and is topped with **cheese, breaded chicken breast, sliced white onions, spicy dill pickles,** and **Nashville Hot seasoning,** and then finished off with an **extra drizzle of buttermilk ranch dressing.**



# Round Table Pizza

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Pineapple as a topping will always be a hot topic among pizza lovers. And Round Table Pizza went all in and added two new pineapple-centered pizzas: Maui Zai™ and Hawaiian. **“Pineapple continues to grow in popularity as a pizza topping** so we thought it would be fitting to play into this trend for the warmer months,” says Kent Russell, Vice President of Marketing at Round Table Pizza. “While both the Maui Zai™ Pizza and Hawaiian Pizza feature pineapple, they each have their own special kick to them. We hope our fans eat up these delicious offerings for their summer gatherings and celebrations.” The Maui Zai™ Pizza features ham, bacon, pineapple, tomatoes, and red and green onions in a Polynesian sauce.

# Rapid Fire Pizza

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A question as old as time: burgers or pizza? Rapid Fired Pizza’s answer: both! Consumers no longer have to choose between the two when ordering their new Deluxe Double Cheeseburger Pizza. With the best of both flavors, their handmade dough and fresh seasonal ingredients are combined with ground beef and topped with shredded mozzarella and cheddar cheeses. “**Rapid Fired Pizza has always been about giving people what they want—great food without the compromise: quick and fresh, high quality, and affordable,**” explains Mike Kern, Rapid Fired Pizza CEO.

# Sarpino's

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Another foodie debate: Chicago hot dog or Chicago pizza. With Sarpino's new Chicago Hot Dog Pizza, you get both. Their new creation has yellow mustard, onions, relish, tomatoes, and celery salt—all on a pizza featuring Vienna Beef hot dogs as well as Sarpino's made-from-scratch dough and hand-shredded signature cheese blend. **"We wanted to create a unique pizza** to tie into summer and **highlight the great flavors of a Chicago-style hot dog** made with love and care using our premium, hand-crafted ingredients. Also, who better to partner with on this pizza than Vienna Beef, the king of Chicago hot dogs," adds Rebecca Kroupa, Sarpino's USA director of R&D and operations training. From pizza to hot dogs, many of the foods we enjoyed as kids have been revamped with creative toppings for our grown-up palates.

# Snacks are Back:

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## DID THEY EVER LEAVE?

If you look at the data, snacks are back in a big way. Wetzel's Pretzels CMO Kim Freer noticed two data points intersecting at a clear point. **90% of Americans** are **trading out a meal for a snack** at least **once per week**. And snacking has tripled in the last decade. The snacking trend was climbing before the pandemic; however, once the crisis was in full swing, the craving skyrocketed. As of today, "everyone seems to be trying to cram more into the same 24 hours—taking the kids to soccer practice, having nighttime commitments, trying to work out, doing your actual work job," Freer says. "It's part of a more millennial, Gen Z mindset, too." "Eating more often in smaller portions. But it's also that accessibility and ability with the flexibility we all have."

# Dunkin'

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The world runs on Dunkin'. And bacon. The iconic coffee chain **recognized the country's craving for sweet peppery bacon and delivered.** Dunkin' announced an array of new menu items, including strips of sweet-pepper, crispy bacon that are served in a sleeve for on-the-go snacking. Snackin' Bacon is anything but boring. "For anyone who's seeking a satisfying snack but is stuck with a sad selection at their desk, office kitchen or vending machine, **Dunkin' is adding some extra sizzle to its menu,**" the chain said of its new bacon sleeve. Snackin' Bacon features eight half-slices of bacon crafted to be enjoyed any time of day.

# Burger King

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Remember McDonald's snack wraps? Unfortunately, they were discontinued back in 2016 and it doesn't look like they're bringing them back any time soon. However, Burger King is picking up where their competition has left off, but with a twist. The king of fast food will **launch three new Royal Crispy Chicken Wraps**, each of which includes a piece of crispy white-meat chicken, tomato, and lettuce in a soft flour tortilla. Customers can choose from the classic wrap, the spicy or the honey mustard. BK's chief marketing officer says **each wrap is like a "snack-sized" version of the Royal Crispy Chicken sandwich.**

# Sonic

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Sonic Drive-In is putting their spin on the beloved Buffalo chicken dip. Featuring the iconic flavor of buffalo chicken dip packed inside a golden-brown crispy wonton-style wrapper, **Buffalo Chicken Dip Bites are sure to be a hit.** “From tailgates to family celebrations, Buffalo chicken dip is always a craveable favorite. In developing the new Buffalo Chicken Dip Bites, our Culinary Innovation team took that same mouth-watering flavor and packed it into a **golden-brown crispy wrapper for an unforgettable snacking experience** that can be enjoyed anywhere, anytime,” said Mackenzie Gibson, Vice President of Culinary & Menu Innovation at Sonic.

# Pei Wei

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When it comes to a winning snack during football season, chicken wings are hard to beat. And the team at Pei Wei's **is ahead of the game with their New Honey Sriracha Wings**. Each juicy, bone-in wing is cooked to perfection, then wok-fried in a sweet and fiery Honey Sriracha sauce. "What really makes these wings unique is the sauce process. Anyone can cook wings, but what sets Pei Wei apart is our ability to caramelize the Honey Sriracha sauce over a 1,600-degree flame before tossing in the wings to finish" says Alfredo Pinon, executive chef at Pei Wei Asian Kitchen. These wings are the first to take flight in a new rollout, with new flavor profiles and additional sizes later this year. The takeaway? No matter the time of day, or time of year, **snacks are gaining in popularity as a quick meal or a bite to bide time in between meals.**



# Signoff:

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Snacks, quirky pizza toppings, and grab-and-go meals on campuses have become prominent staples in daily life —a trend that doesn't look to be slowing anytime soon. Huhtamaki North America's extensive line of food service packaging is here to help accommodate customers' busy lives. Together, we can help you make the most sustainable food packaging choices for your business and more importantly, your consumers. Follow us and stay at the forefront of these trends to build your business and navigate the ever-changing foodservice landscape. **Together, we can make a difference where it matters by redesigning the future of sustainable packaging.**

# Q3 Trends Report Resources:

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- SLIDE 2 <https://www.food-management.com/colleges-universities/5-tech-things-tech-advances-making-247-college-dining-reality>
- SLIDE 3 <https://www.food-management.com/grab-and-go/grab-and-go-gets-fresh-and-trendy-rollins-college#menu>
- SLIDE 4 <https://www.food-management.com/colleges-universities/energizing-grab-and-go-menu> <https://www.food-management.com/colleges-universities/energizing-grab-and-go-menu>
- SLIDE 5 <https://www.food-management.com/grab-and-go/university-missouri-market-goes-big-grab-and-go>
- SLIDE 6 <https://www.food-management.com/colleges-universities/best-concepts-university-nebraska-dining-venue-combines-new-tech-traditional>
- SLIDE 7 <https://www.eatthis.com/pizza-chains-most-unique-toppings/>
- SLIDE 8 <https://www.nrn.com/top-500-restaurants/pizza-hut-introduces-pickle-pizza>

# Q3 Trends Report Resources:

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- SLIDE 9 <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/news/round-table-pizza-spotlighting-island-vibes-its-menu>
- SLIDE 10 [https://www.franchising.com/news/20230602\\_rapid\\_fired\\_pizza\\_introduce\\_a\\_new\\_deluxe\\_double\\_cheeseburger\\_pizza.html](https://www.franchising.com/news/20230602_rapid_fired_pizza_introduce_a_new_deluxe_double_cheeseburger_pizza.html)
- SLIDE 11 <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/news/sarpinos-pays-homage-roots-chicago-hot-dog-pizza>
- SLIDE 12 <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/exclusives/wetzels-new-concept-twist-its-best-parts>
- SLIDE 13 <https://whdh.com/news/dunkin-announces-new-menu-items-including-bacon-snack-sleeves/>
- SLIDE 14 <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/8064621/burger-king-new-royal-crispy-wraps/>
- SLIDE 15 <https://stories.inspirebrands.com/sonic-buffalo-chicken-dip-bites/>
- SLIDE 16 <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/wings-have-landed-at-pei-wei-asian-kitchen-301891330.html>