

THE VALUE OF FRESH MUSHROOMS

THE HIDDEN TREASURE ON YOUR MENU



☛ Moroccan Mushroom Sliders ☛
KIMBALL JONES (Napa, CA)



MUSHROOM MATH

Some examples of food cost versus menu price:

☛ Moroccan Mushroom Sliders with Chermoula-Marinated Portabellas and Tomato-Harissa Jam, *Kimball Jones, food and wine consultant, Napa, CA*

FOOD COST: 28%
MENU PRICE: \$5.00

☛ Kobe Sliders with Hawaiian Sweet Rolls, *Chef-Owner Cheng Lin, Hayashi Sushi & Grill, Georgetown, TX*

FOOD COST: 35%
MENU PRICE: \$10.00



There's no question that the economic downturn has consumers eating out less frequently to save money. For foodservice operators, this means a delicate balance of food costs, aggressive pricing and customer satisfaction.

Mushrooms can help add value and sophistication to menu offerings, at a lower cost.

In the QSR sector, mushroom burgers serve up a premium perception and price:

- ☛ *Mushroom and Swiss Steakhouse Burger, Burger King, \$5.00* vs. \$1.29 hamburger*
- ☛ *Gourmet Mushroom and Swiss Burger, Wendy's, \$5.00 vs. 89 cent junior hamburger*
- ☛ *Portabella Mushroom Six Dollar Burger, Carl's Jr., \$6.00 vs. \$2.99 hamburger*

*Prices based on San Francisco/Bay Area stores and include tax

MUSHROOMS: THE CASH CROP

Consumers believe fresh mushrooms enhance everyday meals. According to Rose Research, even in tough economic times, mushroom retail sales are on the rise—up 4.3 percent in 2008. In fact, mushrooms join tomatoes and broccoli as consumers' top three favorite vegetables.¹

Mushrooms' versatility means more uses, less waste and greater cost-savings for foodservice. Mushrooms fit into any cuisine or day part.

"Mushrooms have helped me create completely new tastes for Moe's, while cross-utilizing ingredients already in the system, which keeps costs down." — *Dan Barash, director of research and development, Moe's Southwest Grill*

A TASTE OF VALUE

According to *Nation's Restaurant News* (NRN) industry research, fresh and flavorful spell value to the consumer.²

"We get a lot of feedback about our mushroom tasting menu, particularly about how flavorful, distinctive and satisfying the mushrooms are. Whether they're a focal point or a subtle accent to a dish, mushrooms add value to the overall dining experience."

— Chef Todd Humphries, Martini House, St. Helena, CA

Mushrooms are a protein extender, allowing chefs to cut back on costly meats while enhancing the flavor and value perception.

"Mushrooms are a sexy way to get more out of expensive meats. You can use a smaller portion of protein, but keep that deep, earthy flavor by pairing it with mushrooms, which helps control your food cost at the same time."

— Chef Mindy Segal, HotChocolate, Chicago, IL

Food cost is only part of the equation: Value-added cuts like de-stemmed and pre-sliced mushrooms from your distributor can help cut down your labor costs.

GROWING SALES

Promotions are more attractive than ever to consumers. According to recent studies, 76 percent of consumers seek out special offers at restaurants.³

The Mushroom Council and Applebee's franchises' "Make Room for Shrooms" promotion featured 99 cent add-on sautéed mushroom toppers to support the profitability of a fixed-price entrée promotion.

"We far exceeded our sales expectations of mushroom toppers, add-ons and items. [The program] received unanimous raves from our field operations and marketing teams."

— Diann Banaszek, marketing partner, Apple American Group LLC

¹ Rose Research (2008). *Fresh Mushroom Attitude and Usage Tracking Study Findings*, 43-46. Retrieved from http://www.mushroomcouncil.org/export/sites/default/ConsumerResearch/FRESH_MUSHROOM_PRESENTATION-May2008.pdf

² *Nation's Restaurant News* (2008). *Foodservice Industry Market Overview*, 94. Retrieved from www.nrn.com

³ American Express MarketBrief (March 2009). *The Economic Situation and Its Continued Impact on Restaurants*, 3. Retrieved from www.technomic.com/marketbrief

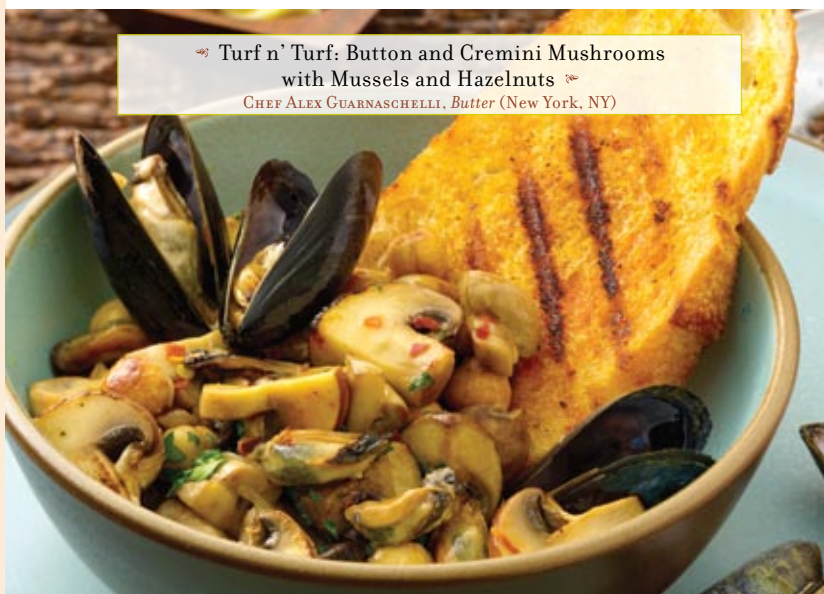
❧ Mushroom Trio Labretti ❧
Pandini's



"There's something about the comfort food connection between mushrooms and pasta that our guests really respond to. A significant portion of the pasta category sales come from just two mushroom pasta dishes." – Robert D' Orsi, director of product development and corporate chef, Pandini's



❧ Turf n' Turf: Button and Cremini Mushrooms with Mussels and Hazelnuts ❧
CHEF ALEX GUARNASCHELLI, Butter (New York, NY)



For additional recipes, information and resources, please visit: www.mushroominfo.com/foodservice