

How to Make the Most of Cream, Yogurt & Cheese

Give dairy products the credit they deserve. Consider how important cream, yogurt and cheese are to your operation. They can boost profits with versatility and appeal.



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Dairy products represent a product category that's often treated as an afterthought. But with interest in meatless options and healthy sources of protein on the upswing, it pays to pay attention to cheese, yogurt, milk/cream and other dairy products.

The Signature Power of Cheese

With hundreds of kinds of cheese available in the world, *milk's leap to immortality* is also capable of helping a recipe make the leap from generic to signature. Cheese can stand on its own in specialties like grilled cheese sandwiches or fondue, and it can add value to foods as varied as omelets, vegetable dishes and burgers. In fact, calling out a cheese by name is a great strategy for setting a menu item apart—and supporting premium pricing—whether it's a Wedge Salad with Gorgonzola Dressing or Greek Shrimp with Tomatoes and Feta.

There's also global appeal to be captured by promoting menu items made with such cheeses as Asiago (Italian), Camembert (French) or Manchego (Spanish).

Because most vegetarians enjoy cheese, it's easy to menu vegetarian entrees by adding cheese (and protein) to vegetables, pasta or grain dishes.

Yo, It's Yogurt!

Once equated with ethnic cooking and hippie diets, yogurt has hit the big time. This is especially true of tangy Greek yogurt, which has become increasingly popular here in the United States in recent years.

Whether you use Greek or traditional yogurt, this creamy treat can be used in a variety of interesting ways:

- As a substitute for sour cream in dressings, dips and marinades
- In a sauce such as yogurt-dill sauce for salmon

- As a condiment on sandwiches, instead of mayonnaise
- In baked goods such as zucchini bread or coffee cake
- In popsicles and other frozen desserts
- As a garnish for hot and cold foods, including popular items like nachos
- Instead of cream in stews, soups and pan sauces
- To lighten ground meat mixtures
- In chicken and tuna salad
- Layered with granola and fruit for breakfast
- In shakes and smoothies

Cream Sauces and Soups

Rich, creamy sauces and soups represent the essence of comfort food.

Cream or “white” sauces such as béchamel and veloute are some of the most versatile sauces in the kitchen. They bind foods in mixtures and envelop them in moisture when used as a sauce. They are also extremely versatile, with a rich but neutral flavor that works as-is with all kinds of foods, including fish, chicken, pasta and vegetables. And they can be turned into more flavorful products with the addition of ingredients such as wine or cognac, sauteed mushrooms or onions, lemon or another citrus, chopped fresh herbs, tomato, cheese, garlic, mustard, horseradish, wasabi and much, much more.

Cream soups are another extremely versatile menu specialty, adding an elegant dimension to the category in such recipes as cream of chicken or this Roasted Cauliflower soup. Many operators who feature soups prominently on their menu rotation include a cream soup whenever possible. And if you master one recipe for cream soup, such as potato, it’s easy to swap in another ingredient, such as mushroom or broccolu.