



SAN-J

HOW TO CREATE A HEALTHY RESTAURANT MENU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

If you know where you're going, go ahead and click on a chapter.

How to Create a Healthy Restaurant Menu	1
Chapter One: Common Dietary Restrictions	3
Chapter Two: Nutritious Ingredients	8
Chapter Three: Ingredients in Food to Avoid	11
Chapter Four: Healthy Food Substitutions	14
Chapter Five: Salad	18
Chapter Six: Healthy Bowls Recipes	21
Chapter Seven: How to Add Flavor to Food	25
Chapter Eight: How to Market Your New, Balanced Menu	29
Sources	33



HOW TO CREATE A HEALTHY RESTAURANT MENU

A healthy restaurant menu will look different for everyone. Diets, trends and popular ingredients or dishes can shape how a person views healthy meals or lifestyles. Ultimately, your definition of healthy menu options should align with your customer's ideas and reflect what they enjoy eating. Creating a healthy menu could mean updating current dishes, starting fresh with new ideas or finding a balanced combination of the two to craft appealing options and nutritious dishes.

WHY TARGET DIET-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS?

Eating more healthful foods is becoming more mainstream, and consumers across the board enjoy nutritious meals from their favorite restaurants. When you target diet-conscious consumers, you can broaden your customer base by welcoming those with dietary restrictions while still appealing to your longtime customer base.

People with dietary restrictions often struggle to eat at many restaurants because they can't find food that will satisfy their needs and keep them full. Using clear labels and expanding meal options can help you grow to include this typically

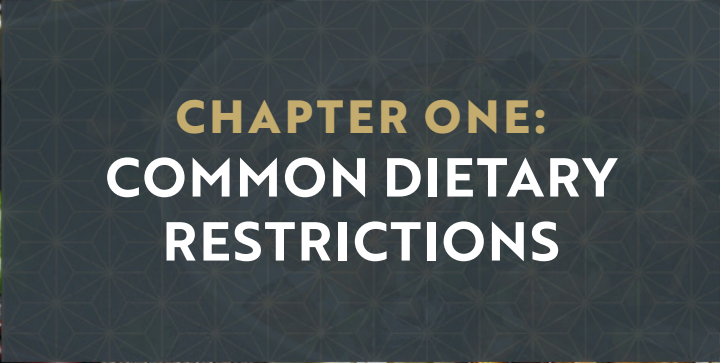
underserved market while encouraging those without restrictions to eat whatever they find appetizing.

SHOULD YOU ADD HEALTHY MENU ITEMS OR CHANGE YOUR WHOLE MENU?

Updating your menu by reimagining current dishes and adding new options can help you build the menu your customers want to see. Integrating nutritious ingredients adds fresh flavor while keeping those fan favorites that keep your customers coming back for more on the list.

However, starting from scratch with new recipes can show your customers you're making a significant investment to reflect their tastes and preferences. Opt for whatever will boost your business and satisfy the hungry people who walk through your door.

You can revamp your menu or completely rebuild from the ground up. This guide shows you how to make a healthy menu for your customers by discussing common dietary restrictions, healthier substitutions, ingredients to avoid, nutritious ingredients and ways to spice up your dishes.



CHAPTER ONE: COMMON DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Understanding common dietary restrictions and popular health diets can help broaden your customer base. You can better serve consumers without limiting your menu. Discover the restrictions and diets to consider when updating your menu.

WHAT DIETS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN CREATING YOUR MENU?

Dietary restrictions can lead many consumers to opt for one restaurant rather than another. People enjoy smiling at the table while their loved ones choose between a few meals they'd love to try. Yet, many people are unsatisfied with the few options that can satisfy their diets at a restaurant. Whether people have dietary restrictions or follow specific diets, consider these diets when crafting your menu.

MOST COMMON DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Here are some of the most common dietary restrictions to keep in mind when creating or adjusting your menu:

GLUTEN-FREE

Gluten gives viscosity and elasticity to baked goods and is one of the many proteins in wheat, barley and rye. Currently, around 6% of the United States population has gluten sensitivity, which can cause stomach pains, indigestion and nausea. Many others without this sensitivity try to avoid gluten to attain what they feel are healthy diets that encourage weight loss or a better lifestyle.

If you offer gluten-free dishes at your restaurant, you can rely on gluten-free starches, flour and grains. You can craft a new gluten-free menu or update your recipes with alternatives that encourage those with this sensitivity to try some of your fan favorites.

MOST COMMON DIETARY RESTRICTIONS



Gluten-Free



Dairy-Free



Vegetarian
or Vegan



Allergies



Kosher

DAIRY-FREE

People who follow a dairy-free diet may have lactose intolerance, making them unable to consume most dairy products. Between 30 and 50 million Americans have this dietary restriction, and simple changes can make your dishes suitable for a broader consumer base. Try these at your restaurant:

- ✓ **Lactose-free milk**
- ✓ **Clarified butter or ghee**
- ✓ **Fermented dairy products**
- ✓ **Hard, mature cheeses**
- ✓ **Vegetarian or Vegan**

Vegetarian or vegan diets are plant-based diets that avoid meats, fish and poultry. A vegetarian diet is an umbrella term to describe others, and a vegan diet is a type of vegetarian diet. Some vegetarians may consume eggs or dairy products such as whole milk, butter or yogurt. Vegans avoid all animal and animal-derived foods, including honey, fish-derived sauces and gelatin.

You can appeal to vegetarians and vegans by offering plant-based dishes. Emphasize vegetables, seeds, nuts, fruits and grains. Provide delicious salad options or get creative with plant-based protein sources to fill their plates.

ALLERGIES

Food allergies can have a range of effects, from minor to deadly. Common food allergies include soy, wheat, peanuts, fish and eggs. There is no way to tell what allergies your guests might have, but you can still provide them with a worthwhile experience. Swap common allergens for alternatives or keep these items separate from other ingredients and equipment in the kitchen. You can also craft alternative menus for dishes without these allergens if you rely on one or more of them for several dishes.

KOSHER

A kosher diet refers to Jewish dietary principles. Those who follow this diet avoid certain animal products, including pork, and don't mix meat and dairy. A kosher diet also uses specific slaughtering methods, blood prohibition and separate equipment for different foods. You must ensure your business uses the proper techniques to appeal to people who follow kosher diets, including keeping ingredients and equipment separate from other foods and utensils.

MOST POPULAR DIETS

Many people follow popular diets to achieve their weight loss or fitness goals. While you should not feel required to satisfy these diets, aligning some meal options with them can create an appealing menu for your customers. Here is a list of diets you're likely to see in your customer base.

KETO

This low-carb, high-fat diet promotes weight loss and encourages a caloric intake of 70% fat while restricting carbs to between 20 and 50 grams daily. Fill your menu with non-starchy vegetables, low-sugar fruits and lots of protein to satisfy this diet.

MEDITERRANEAN

Mediterranean diets promote non-processed, fresh foods like fish, olive oil, chicken and vegetables. Keep this diet in mind when you offer salad, fish and non-meat dishes.

PALEO

Those who follow the Paleo diet consume fresh fruits, vegetables, grass-fed meats, nuts, seeds, seafood and healthy oils. They avoid legumes, processed foods, potatoes, refined sugar, salt and dairy. You can satisfy this diet by swapping processed foods for non-processed alternatives and sourcing ingredients like meat and vegetables from local farms that grass-feed livestock and deliver fresh produce.

ALKALINE

People on an alkaline diet avoid foods that become acidic after consuming them. Vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts fill their plates, but they avoid many other foods. It might be helpful to craft an alternative menu to satisfy the alkaline diet and fill it with flavorful dishes consumers can enjoy.

TIPS FOR DIET-CONSCIOUS MENUS

When updating your menu to include more diet-conscious food options, you want to ensure you're clear about which options will satisfy different needs. Keep these tips in mind for your menu:

- ✓ **Use symbols:** Add a legend to your menu to let customers know when they can choose grilled meats and fish over fried or sautéed options. You can use a "V" to tell consumers when dishes suit vegetarians or vegans. Use a similar letter system to indicate other diets. Choose symbols for each restriction, alternative or diet you want to highlight.
- ✓ **Make substitutions:** You can satisfy many diets by making healthier substitutions to your ingredients. For instance, use natural fruit juices in recipes and cocktails, opt for high-quality oils when cooking, and offer side options like vegetables, brown rice and legumes rather than potatoes or processed grains.
- ✓ **Source from local farms:** Stay away from processed foods and opt for grass-fed livestock and produce from local farms. Advertise your commitment to fresh ingredients and fill your menu with these options.
- ✓ **Detail nutrition labels:** You may not want to list every ingredient in each dish, but you can provide calorie counts and advertise low-fat or high-protein options to appeal to those seeking to maintain a specific regimen.

READ ON TO LEARN WHAT INGREDIENTS TO USE IN YOUR MENU

Awareness of popular diets and food sensitivities is the first step in creating a diet-conscious and healthy menu. In the next chapter, we'll discuss what ingredients should fill your menu, so you can begin crafting nutritious dishes your customers will love.

Check out our recipes if you're looking for inspiration. You might find new foods to incorporate or an alternative to one of your classic dishes.



CHAPTER TWO: NUTRITIOUS INGREDIENTS

The healthiest foods will provide your customers with essential vitamins and minerals that make them feel good and give them energy throughout the day. This chapter discusses what food is healthy to eat and what makes them worthwhile ingredients.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Most people know that fruits and veggies are healthy but don't always know why. Additionally, some fresh produce is better for your body than others, which is why some people avoid certain foods and consume more of others. Here are some healthy foods for your menu and why they benefit your customers.

- ✓ **Broccoli:** This veggie is a source of phytonutrients, calcium, fiber, phytonutrients and folate. Broccoli has anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer qualities, making it a nutritious and tasty ingredient.
- ✓ **Kale:** Kale is a leafy green veggie, and you can incorporate it into many dishes, like smoothies, juices and soups. This green provides vitamins K and C and is a weight-friendly ingredient that can satisfy many diets.



BERRIES

Although phytonutrients are not essential for survival, they can help **maintain bodily functions** and **prevent disease**.

- ✓ **Avocados:** These bright green fruits are high in fiber and contain high amounts of healthy fats and lower levels of carbohydrates. They're rich in vitamins B, K and E. They can increase good cholesterol levels and improve nutrient absorption.
- ✓ **Leafy vegetables:** Eating leafy green vegetables can significantly reduce cardiovascular risk factors. Raw, lightly boiled or steamed leafy greens provide natural antioxidants. These veggies also contain iron, manganese, calcium, potassium, copper, zinc, niacin, selenium, phosphorus and vitamins A, B-6, C, E and K.
- ✓ **Sweet potatoes:** These potatoes are a great source of fiber, potassium and carotenoids. They make excellent main meals or side dishes and bring a natural sweetness to any dish.
- ✓ **Beans:** Pink, pinto, navy, and black beans are excellent fiber boosters full of folate. Beans can reduce your risk for cancer, aid in preventing diabetes and help satiate people after consumption.
- ✓ **Berries:** Many berries offer an abundance of phytonutrients. Although phytonutrients are not essential for survival, they can help maintain bodily functions and prevent disease. For example, blueberries are rich in antioxidants, fiber and phytonutrients.

PROTEIN

Every cell in your body needs protein, which is why we often think of protein as the building blocks of life. Protein aids development and growth and helps maintain good health. You can find protein sources in many foods and ingredients, but some offer additional benefits while others do not.

- ✓ **Fish:** Oily fish contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help your heart and can lower blood pressure. Additionally, oily fish like anchovies, sardines, mackerel, herring, trout and salmon can also aid inflammatory conditions like arthritis.
- ✓ **Chicken:** Chicken is one of the best sources of protein. You can prepare it in various ways, and it contains all nine essential amino acids. This nutrient-dense protein source can strengthen bones, promote heart health, build muscle and aid in weight loss.
- ✓ **Eggs:** These highly-versatile protein sources offer vitamins B-12 and B-2, which can preserve energy and generate red blood cells. Additionally, eggs provide choline, which is important for cell membranes.
- ✓ **Nuts:** Nuts offer many nutritious benefits. Each kind provides a different combination of vitamins and minerals that aid the body. Almonds provide fiber, iron, vitamin E, magnesium and calcium, while Brazil nuts contain zinc, magnesium, vitamin E and vitamin B-1.

USE NUTRITIOUS AND HEALTHY INGREDIENTS IN YOUR DIET-CONSCIOUS MENU

You can incorporate nutritious and delicious ingredients into your menu in several different ways. The ingredients in this chapter have multiple health benefits and can satisfy many diets your customers may follow. For more menu inspiration, browse our recipes for tasty ideas your customers will love, and keep reading to discover which ingredients you should avoid.



CHAPTER THREE: INGREDIENTS IN FOOD TO AVOID

Many ingredients on the market can aid in the cooking process or offer a cheap alternative, but they are not always beneficial for your health. Some of these foods can cause harmful effects, and you should avoid them in your dishes. Check out these ingredients to avoid in food on your menu.

HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP

You can find high fructose corn syrup in foods such as juice, breakfast cereals, soda, snacks and candy. This sweetener comes from corn but can cause serious health issues if you consume too much, making this ingredient one of the worst additives in food that you should avoid.

High fructose corn syrup can increase liver fat and boosts the risk of diabetes. It can also increase blood sugar, decrease insulin and trigger inflammation. This ingredient does not offer minerals or vitamins, meaning it deposits empty calories that can lead to weight gain without any nutritional boost.

HYDROGENATED OILS

Hydrogenated oils, also known as trans fats, make foods and oil more shelf-stable. These foods can last much longer in your cabinets and pantries but are not suitable for your body. These oils can increase inflammation and the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

You should avoid trans fats as much as possible and be aware of the amount you use in your dishes, if any. Many baked goods, coffee creamers, crackers, potato chips and fried foods contain hydrogenated oils, so rethink these recipes if you feature them on your menu.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Many fad diets and weight loss trends encourage people to use artificial sweeteners in their beverages and meals. However, some sweeteners can cause health concerns and contribute to weight gain. Additionally, one study discovered these sweeteners were linked with increased cancer risk.

ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES

You might use products with artificial preservatives in your kitchen to keep items longer on your shelf. They may help you prevent some forms of waste, but they don't improve the nutritious quality of your meals. Preservatives prevent premature decomposition but are not always beneficial for consumption. Products that list artificial ingredients, like artificial colors and flavors, can contain chemicals that negatively impact your body and lead to serious health issues.

SUGAR

Too much sugar in any form can have adverse effects on your body. High cholesterol, obesity and diabetes can also result from too much sugar. Sugar is a flavor enhancer that makes you want to keep reaching for more. You can combat this by looking for natural juices, flavors and spices to enhance your dishes to satisfy your guests without compromising their health.

ENRICHED WHEAT

Enriched wheat products contain no bran or endosperm. Dishes made with enriched wheat will not have the essential vitamins and minerals people need, like fiber, vitamin B or E. Whole wheat should always be the first ingredient in your grain products.

MARGARINE

Margarine may contain trans fats, which can lead to heart disease. Additionally, different brands can contain various amounts of salt and saturated fats. Stick margarine is likely to have more saturated fat than a tub or liquid margarine, but you should consider skipping this ingredient altogether.

CANNED SOUPS AND VEGETABLES

These may not seem like ingredients to avoid until you look closer at the nutrition labels. Some canned soups have high levels of salt, which can lead to elevated blood pressure and heart or kidney diseases. Additionally, canned vegetables and soups can have more fat and calories than their fresh alternatives. If you're making veggies or soups in your kitchen, take the time to make them from scratch. Your customers will thank you for it.

AVOID THESE UNHEALTHY INGREDIENTS IN YOUR DIET-CONSCIOUS MENU

This list of food ingredients to avoid is not exhaustive. You should avoid many other foods in your dishes to adapt to a more nutritional menu. Thankfully, these ingredients have healthier substitutions, which you can discover in the next chapter. You can also look at these nutritious and delicious recipes to fill your menu or shop our products for alternatives in your kitchen.



CHAPTER FOUR: **HEALTHY FOOD** **SUBSTITUTIONS**

Simple swaps on your menu can upgrade your dishes in a nutritious way. Some alternatives may mean finding better products, while others mean using your current ingredients differently. You can find plenty of healthy food alternatives that enhance flavor and fill your customer's plates with delicious and nutritious food that makes them feel good. Check out these healthy substitutes for your menu.

BROWN RICE OVER WHITE RICE

White rice has fewer nutrients and fiber than brown rice. This simple rice switch can make a big difference in your dishes and make your consumers feel more satiated. Brown rice also has magnesium, which can help control blood sugar levels.

APPLESAUCE OVER OIL

Instead of using oil for your baked goods and sweet treats, you can use applesauce. This substitution is an excellent way to reduce calories while keeping a consistent flavor and texture. Be sure to use unsweetened applesauce in your recipes. Sometimes, you can use applesauce instead of sugar, eggs or butter.

EGG WHITES OVER WHOLE EGGS

Eggs are full of protein, but skipping the yolk can help give your customers more health benefits. Egg yolks have fat and cholesterol, while the whites contain significantly fewer calories and are pure protein. Swapping to the whites can lower the fat and calories in your dishes while still providing flavor. If you use this method, use two egg whites for each egg in your recipe.

WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR OVER WHITE FLOUR

Whole wheat flour is made of whole grains, which are more beneficial than white flour. You can use both flour types equally, so you don't have to modify your recipes. You can also mix half white and half whole wheat flour in your recipes to use up your excess white stores.

LEAN MEATS OVER FATTY MEATS

Lean meats have fewer saturated fats than fatty meats. By choosing leaner cuts for burgers, meatloaf, meatballs and chili, you can keep your guests' plates full of delicious meals while reducing the components that can cause health issues.

LOW-FAT MILK OVER CREAM

Crems can increase the risk of high cholesterol because they contain a lot of saturated fats. Swapping for low-fat products can reduce these risks and still create the desired texture for your meals. Use these healthy alternative foods in soups and sauces to reduce fat and calories.

FRESH SPICES OVER SALT-BASED SPICES AND HERBS

Many salt-based herbs and spices have more sodium than people need. Using fresh herbs and spices will ensure your dishes still have all the flavor without the extra salt.

Using **fresh herbs and spices** will ensure your dishes still have all the flavor without the extra salt.



LOW-FAT CHEESE OVER FULL-FAT CHEESE

This tip is similar to the low-fat milk tip we listed above. Swapping full-fat dairy products for low-fat alternatives is an excellent way to keep your guests full without sacrificing their health. In many cases, you can't tell the difference between the two, and your guests will love their classic meals all the same.

GRILLED CHICKEN OVER FRIED CHICKEN

You may have some crispy chicken meals on your menu, but breading and frying chicken adds fats and calories from oils and can contribute to weight gain.

Grilled chicken loses fat as it cooks, making it an even healthier protein source. Additionally, cooking chicken this way provides zinc, potassium, iron and magnesium, so your guests can enjoy a flavorful dish with added health benefits.

LETTUCE WRAPS OVER BUNS AND TORTILLAS

One of the quickest ways to cut calories is by swapping bread for lettuce wraps. Lettuce has far fewer carbs and sodium and is better for digestion. You can update your menu by offering tacos, burritos, burgers, quesadillas and wraps on lettuce or in lettuce cups instead of a starchy alternative.

ADD THESE SUBSTITUTIONS TO YOUR RESTAURANT MENU

The substitutions you choose for your meals should enhance flavor, and you can find great alternatives from San-J. Contact us to learn more about using these substitutions in your menu. For inspiration on using these alternatives, check out our recipes and keep reading to discover great salad and food bowl ideas.



CHAPTER FIVE: SALAD

Building a salad can be simple. Tossing together ingredients and dressings can make a filling bowl, but many make the mistake of using extra ingredients they don't need or piling cheeses and fried foods until the dish becomes unhealthy. Crafting a great salad with nutritious ingredients can be fun, and you can create many exciting combinations.

HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT SALAD

Salads can be an excellent way to serve a refreshing and healthy dish with vitamins, minerals and vegetables or fruit. However, many people make these common mistakes that diminish their salad's nutritional value:

- ✓ **Overload on toppings:** Croutons, cheese, bacon bits, crispy noodles and fries have appeared on many salads, adding extra sodium, calories and fat.
- ✓ **Deep fry the protein:** While grilled chicken and other meats have nutritional value, deep frying the protein source involves adding oil and breading that loads the dish with fat and unnecessary calories.

- ✓ **Serve large portions:** Too much of anything can be bad, even salads. Serving large bowls of salad can add additional calories your customers don't need, especially if you're choosing to add more meat, cheese and toppings rather than leafy greens.
- ✓ **Drown it in dressing:** A well-proportioned salad only needs a little dressing, but many restaurants overload their salads with dressing or pour too much into side containers, adding additional salt, sugar and high amounts of saturated fats.

Don't make the mistake of decreasing your salad's nutritional value. Learn how to make a good salad by following these tips:

START WITH THE BASE

Prepare your salad by laying a leafy bed of greens. Skip the iceberg lettuce and opt for flavorful kale, cabbage and rich-colored greens instead. Don't be afraid to use more than one type to keep it interesting and colorful.

ADD SOME ADDITIONAL PRODUCE

Brighten your salad with fresh ingredients. You can choose dried, raw or roasted veggies and fruits to top your dish. Stick with non-starchy vegetables, like cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers and broccoli. Then, add flavorful produce like onions, pickled vegetables and olives.

CHOOSE A PROTEIN

Protein can give your salad the nutritional boost it needs. Adding a protein source can make your guests feel satiated and bring more flavor to the dish. Avoid deep-fried options and those with high amounts of saturated fat. Ensure you offer various protein sources to accommodate customers who don't eat certain meats or animal products.

INCLUDE SOME HEALTHY WHOLE GRAINS

Quinoa, brown rice and whole-grain pita are excellent ways to incorporate this food group into your dish. Refrain from the traditional fried croutons and opt for foods that can provide energy. Be sure to offer gluten-free alternatives to satisfy all your guests.

ADD A CRUNCH

You can add a delicious crunch to complete this soft meal without opting for fried options. Seeds, baked legumes and nuts can give that extra flavor and pack a nutritional punch. You can also add spices and herbs to create flavorful combinations for every salad.

DRIZZLE YOUR DRESSING

Dressings can pull your dish together, but adding too much can diminish the other flavors and nutritional value. You don't have to serve splashes of vinegar to keep salads healthy, either. Create special house dressings using ingredients like apple cider vinegar, honey mustard, lemon juice and olive oil that impress your guests and enhance their meals. Contact us to learn more about how our delicious ingredients can complete your salads.

LEARN HOW TO MAKE A GREAT SALAD FROM SAN-J

Complete your salads with delicious ingredients that pack a punch. You don't have to stick with the typical recipes for your menu. You can check out San-J's recipes for salad and meal inspiration to add to your menu. Find nutritional and delicious ingredients that keep your guests coming back for more.



CHAPTER SIX: HEALTHY BOWLS RECIPES

Filling bowls are becoming more popular, and many restaurants opt for nutritious ingredients that add tons of flavor. As with any healthy dish, adding some foods rather than others can diminish their value, so be sure to fill your bowls with high-quality ingredients.

COMMON TYPES OF HEALTH BOWLS

One of the reasons health bowls are growing in popularity is that there are so many different ways to make them. You can create recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner bowls that stand out on your menu. Take a look at some of these popular bowls.

- ✓ **Asian bowls:** Complete Asian bowls with cabbage, noodles, protein, veggies, cilantro and Asian cooking sauces.
- ✓ **Taco bowls:** Many taco bowls are filling, delicious one-pan meals. Meat, rice, pico de gallo, peppers, avocado and sour cream complete these protein-filled bowls.
- ✓ **Mediterranean bowls:** Quinoa, tomatoes, cucumbers and house-made sauces create unique flavors that keep your guests coming back.

- ✓ **Poke bowls:** Poke bowls are an excellent alternative when sushi-grade fish is outside your menu budget. These bowls are inexpensive, and you can create them in various ways.
- ✓ **Burger bowls:** Burger bowls are a common menu item, and you can make yours stand out by skipping the fries and onion rings and adding more veggies.
- ✓ **Smoothie bowls:** These bowls are great for breakfast and lighter fare. Berries, Greek yogurt and seeds, granola or nuts create a refreshing bowl every time.
- ✓ **Burrito bowls:** Skip the tortilla and add extra protein and veggies with this bowl. Fill it with brown rice and offer several protein options to cater to many guests.

HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT BOWL

Follow these easy steps to make a delicious bowl every time:

CHOOSE HEALTHY CARBS FOR THE BASE

Whole grains make an excellent bowl base. These foods are filling and can provide long-lasting energy. Brown rice, quinoa and noodle options are an excellent place to start. Build your bowl around the base and fill it with unique flavors.

ADD SALAD GREENS

Some salad greens can enrich your bowl with nutrients and give your guest a refreshing taste with every bite. Spinach, herbs and lettuce are great places to start, but watch your flavor combinations to create the best flavor.

PICK YOUR STAR PROTEIN

Half a cup of protein will continue your bowl-building. You can opt for grilled chicken and other meats, but be sure to include non-meat options as well. Tofu, eggs, beans and lentils can shower your bowl with tasty flavors and rich textures.

ADD VEGETABLES

The next bulk of your bowl should be tons of delicious and nutritious vegetables. Tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, carrots, pumpkin and edamame can line the sides of each bowl to showcase the fresh produce you choose. Try incorporating three or more colors to keep each bowl bright and beautiful.

PICK YOUR STAR PROTEIN

Be sure to include non-meat options as well. **Tofu, eggs, beans and lentils** can shower your bowl with tasty flavors and rich textures.



TOP WITH A CRUNCH

Nuts and seeds might only take a small portion of the bowl, but they add a crunch that completes each bite. Choose healthy fats that boost flavors and bring the dish together.

DRIZZLE WITH SAUCE

A few spoonfuls of dressing are all you need to complete your bowls. You can keep it as simple or get creative with different combinations. Spoonfuls of olive oil or vinegar might be enough for some bowls, but others might call for Asian flavors or creamy textures.

ADD BOWLS TO YOUR DIET-CONSCIOUS MENU

You don't have to start from scratch to craft unique bowl ideas. Some recipes on your menu can easily become a unique bowl with fewer calories, fat or sugar. Whether you want to reimagine your current options or find a jumping-off point for brand-new ideas, we've got you covered. Check out San-J's recipes, and transform your menu with interesting bowls for your guests.



CHAPTER SEVEN: HOW TO ADD FLAVOR TO FOOD

Adding flavor to food can transform each of your meals. Rich combinations and textures can enhance the natural flavors of each ingredient. However, the key to adding flavor is ensuring you don't add too much. Sauces, condiments and some ingredients can add extra calories and fat, so you must be sure to incorporate nutritious ingredients. Learn how to flavor food with these additions.

SAUCES

Sauces can complete pasta meals and meat dishes with a savory combination of flavors. Some restaurants make the common mistake of overloading their food with sauces, drowning plates in extra calories. Make or enhance your sauces in-house and opt for fresh ingredients, herbs and spices. Additionally, be sure to measure each scoop. Try San-J products if you're looking for more nutritious sauces for your meals.

FRESH AND DRIED HERBS AND SPICES

Spices and herbs are powerful. Their aromatic essence and rich flavors can transform even simple dishes. Less can be more with intense spices, so play around with recipes to find what works best for your meals. You can cook protein with nutritious oil and spices and skip the extra salt and calories without sacrificing flavor.

ZEST

Fruit zest, like orange or lemon, can be perfect for salads and other dishes. All you need is fresh produce and a grater. You can top meals with garnish and make your dish look beautiful while enriching flavors at the same time.

ACIDS

Citrus and vinegar acids can play a significant role in healthy cooking. These ingredients don't have unnecessary fats, calories or sugars, so get creative with your combinations. Acids act like salt and can meld flavors while brightening other fresh ingredients, helping your dish stand out in taste and sight.

HEAT

Peppers and other intense ingredients can add spice and flavor to your menu. You can chop different varieties on the plate or find hot sauces to drizzle. Hot sauce typically has few calories and low amounts of fat or carbs, making it a healthy way to enhance your food.

CONDIMENTS

You don't have to eliminate condiments to stay healthy — you just have to find ones that add nutritional value. Mustard, chutney, bean purees, horseradish and salsas can give excellent flavor bursts without the fat that many other condiments have.

COOKING METHOD

How you cook your meats and veggies can affect how they taste when you serve them. Pan-searing and broiling can intensify meat flavors. Roasting vegetables can produce a smoky flavor. Topping with herbs and spices can enhance these flavors if you cook with them.

ONIONS AND GARLIC

Garlic and onion have intense scents and flavors. Cooking with these ingredients can bring out the natural tastes of other ingredients and lace each bite with flavor. You can also use them to create rich sauces for poultry and meat your guests will love.

FLAVORFUL INGREDIENTS

Bold ingredients can act similarly to spices and produce natural aromas and flavors that make dishes unique and delicious. Pomegranate seeds, cilantro and chipotle peppers can spice up any dish and create powerful combinations your guests won't be able to resist.



CONDIMENTS

You don't have to eliminate condiments to stay healthy — you just have to find ones that **add nutritional value.**

KEEP YOUR MENU NUTRITIOUS BUT FLAVORFUL WITH THESE TIPS

Cooking with flavor is an art, and your delicious and nutritious combinations can captivate your customers. Reimagine your current menu with a new palate of spices, herbs and flavorful ingredients, or find bright and refreshing recipes to create a new food selection.

Finding the right products is critical when learning how to season food. At San-J, we know all about creating health-conscious meals, and you can contact us to find San-J products for your kitchen.



CHAPTER EIGHT: HOW TO MARKET YOUR NEW, BALANCED MENU

Once you've made significant menu changes, you have to get the word out about it. You want to appeal to current customers while enticing new guests to try your food. Restaurant menu advertising can take time, but you can broaden your customer base with the right techniques. Give these strategies a try when marketing your menu.

DETERMINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Before deciding how to market your restaurant, you must determine your target audience. Who you want to attract affects your tone, messages and complete marketing campaign. You may be seeking those who have dietary restrictions or are looking for more nutritious options, but you should also determine your customers' age range and demographic. If you don't know your target audience, research competitors and consider implementing surveys to get a better idea.

MAKE YOUR MENU AVAILABLE ONLINE

Many people looking to find lunch or dinner spots will complete a quick online search to find restaurants nearby that have the food they're craving. Making your menu available online can help potential guests decide if you have what they're looking for and compare your options to other businesses. An online menu can broaden your customer base and help get your name on other platforms.

HIGHLIGHT HEALTHY MENU ITEMS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

You might be making significant changes to your menu when switching to a diet-conscious food selection, and you should be sure to let your devoted customers know what they can expect from you. This way, they can get excited to revisit you and easily share the news with their friends and family.

INCLUDE DIETARY INFORMATION ON THE MENU

One of the easiest ways to ensure you can satisfy all your customers is by adding dietary information to the menu. Identifying dietary information lets your guests decide which options meet their needs and minimizes the questions they need to ask your staff, making their dining experience much more relaxing.

TRAIN STAFF TO TALK ABOUT THE NEW MENU

Menu marketing will only be successful if your entire staff is on board. Your team should be able to promote new items just as confidently as they do with any other dish. Each team member should understand how the kitchen cooks the food, what ingredients you use and what substitutions are available. It could be especially beneficial for your staff to taste the new items before they go on the menu so they can answer questions guests might have.

CREATE A DIET-FRIENDLY MENU WITH SAN-J

Creating a diet-friendly menu is a worthwhile process that can expand your customer base and ensure you provide your devoted and new customers with delicious and nutritious dish options they'll love. Of course, before you start menu marketing, you must determine what recipes you want to incorporate, which means finding high-quality ingredients to enhance your meals.

If you're looking for nutritious and delicious ingredients, shop for products from San-J. We offer alternatives for your kitchen that are gluten-free, organic, non-GMO, and vegan. Contact us to get food service sizes of San-J products.

CREATE YOUR NEW MENU WITH SAN-J

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION



CREATE YOUR NEW MENU WITH SAN-J

We hope these tips for creating a health-focused restaurant menu have given you plenty of ideas about where to incorporate new recipes and how to develop diet-conscious food options to satisfy your guests.

This guide described various dietary restrictions and popular diets to consider for your menu. Using these ingredients, cooking methods and flavor ideas, you can reimagine your current dishes or find fresh ideas for new menu items. We also discussed some foods you should avoid in your kitchen and which ingredients offer nutritional benefits and delicious flavors.

Crafting a new menu can be simple when you have the right ingredients and products. At San-J, we offer ingredients to flavor your dishes without losing nutritional value. Our company's legacy began in 1804, and we've continued to grow into a family-oriented solution for the food industry.

We know it's important to understand what's in your food, and we want to help you become aware of healthier alternatives that can enhance your dining experience. Our mission is to bring a smile to every table, and our products do just that. Our sauces enhance all types of ingredients, from meat to poultry to vegetables and tofu, so you can always add flavor to each of your dishes. Contact us for more information about our products and begin crafting a diet-conscious menu.

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