

HEALTHY BAKING AND PASTRY

MENU R & D CHECKLIST

This **Healthy Baking and Pastry Menu R & D Checklist**, created by The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), is an outgrowth of the CIA's **Principles of Healthy Menu Research & Development**, developed in collaboration with leading nutrition researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health's Department of Nutrition with input from the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Bakers, pastry chefs, and other baking and pastry industry professionals are encouraged to use this checklist, along with the principles, to facilitate an approach to healthy product and menu development that both reflects the leading edge of nutrition research and embraces the best of the world's culinary, baking, and pastry arts.

New, healthy menu items and initiatives should be designed to complement current customer favorites – to increase, not decrease guest choices – recognizing that in order for such new directions to be sustainable they need to develop an enthusiastic following among current or new customers.

- ❑ Eliminate trans fats (from partially hydrogenated oils) from your kitchen, and from the products you buy from suppliers. Labeled a “metabolic poison” by leading nutrition researchers, getting trans fats (from partially hydrogenated oils) off your menu and out of your supply chain should be your number one priority.
- ❑ Offer a selection of healthier menu choices along with those celebrating indulgence, with options all along the spectrum from indulgent to healthy.
- ❑ Include options for smaller portion sizes and reduced-calorie choices on pastry and dessert menus.
- ❑ Leverage small amounts of indulgence – ingredients and preparations that are less healthy – for maximum impact. Experiment with the “pastry flip” where the fruit that formerly garnished a rich, indulgent dessert becomes the main attraction, and the indulgent dessert becomes the garnish.
- ❑ Minimize saturated fat, such as from butter and cream. Substitute with unsaturated fat from healthy plant oils wherever possible. When you use dairy products, they should be mostly low-fat or non-fat. Healthy baking and pastry menu items do not

have to be low in fat, just low in saturated fat (and with no trans fats from partially hydrogenated fats).

- In commercial baking, replace trans fats as much as possible with unsaturated plant oils. If using tropical oils, do so sparingly as they are high in saturated fats. If using oils that have gone through an interesterification process, recognize that this process is untested in the general population with respect to long-term health impacts.
- Feature as much fruit as possible on menus – fresh, dried, frozen, or canned (wherever possible without added sugar). Ideally, these should form the bulk of your menu, and the majority of your ingredients. Mix up the types and colors of fruits you use, to maximize the variety of phytonutrients in your preparations. Look for opportunities to include selected vegetables as appropriate.
- Reduce sugar and other calorie-laden sweeteners: the less, the better. Add sweetness wherever possible from fruit, and minimally processed fruit purées, dried fruit pastes, and juices.
- Use whole grains wherever possible. 100 percent whole grain is best; 50 percent or even 30 percent whole grain is better than none. Minimally processed, intact whole grains are better than finely ground whole grains – and both are much better than refined white flour. Explore whole grain white wheat flour and other healthy flour initiatives.
- Highlight nuts (peanuts, almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, and other nuts), nut flours, nut butters and pastes, and nut milks – which are rich in healthy, unsaturated fats and high in phytonutrients. Nut butters and oils can be one of your best bets to add richness, pleasing mouth feel, and flavor to your healthy menu additions. Respect the seriousness of nut allergies.
- Understand that your customers are being urged by scientists to consume one or more good sources of omega-3 fatty acids every day – so be sure to include walnuts, canola and/or soybean oil, and flaxseeds (whole, ground, and/or oil) in your product formulations.
- Experiment with healthy legumes and legume flours and milks, from beans, dried peas, and chickpeas to soy milk, tofu, soy flour, and other soy-based products.
- Use eggs in moderation. Understand that among the pastry triumvirate of eggs, butter, and cream, eggs are by far the healthiest ingredient.

- When chocolate, which is high in healthy phytonutrients, appears on your menu, feature it most often as dark chocolate – and use it with as little added cream, butter, and sugar as possible.
- Use wine and spirits (for those that consume alcohol) to add flavor and complexity to your menu if you like, recognizing their health value.
- Discover possibilities around healthy, natural plant-based thickeners and stabilizers to create appealing textures and mouth feel.
- Look to the baking and pastry traditions of the Mediterranean, Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere for flavor strategies – from the use of spices and aromatics to baking with olive oil – that are at once healthy and seductive to your customers.