

bowls that make the **world** go round

The explosive growth of bowl concepts on the menu shows no sign of slowing down. Here's how you leverage global flavor inspiration to innovate on this menu staple.



Huevos Rancheros Breakfast Bowl
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™

consumers love bowls!

Bowl concepts appeal to a wide range of tastes and are customizable and portable, making them perfect for today's 24/7, on-the-go lifestyle.

The popularity of bowls shows no signs of waning, growing 21% on menus since 2011 and predicted to grow 11% in the next four years.¹

See how you can elevate and innovate the bowl concepts on your menu to capture your fair share of bowl profits.

95%

Bowls are predicted to outperform 95% of all other foods, beverage and ingredients over the next four years.¹

go glo-bowl

International flavors are becoming mainstream—as the pandemic kept people from traveling around the world, consumers' desire to travel with their taste buds grew.

Consumers are highly interested in seeing global versions of entrees as well as rice and noodle dishes,² making bowl concepts the perfect format for showcasing international inspiration on your menu.

37%

of consumers ate a globally influenced food within the past week.²

50%

Bowls are found on half of ethnic menus.¹

Keep reading for three areas of international inspiration to incorporate your menu.



1

asian cuisine

While Chinese cuisine is one of the top three global cuisines across demographics (along with Italian and Mexican food),¹ Asian cuisine in general is favored by consumers. **Thirty-eight percent of consumers' last global dish was Asian-influenced**, which is significantly higher than all other global regions.²

Asian flavors and bowls are a natural pairing on menus considering how centrally rice plays in Asian cuisine, according to Chef Ben Lee, Director of Culinary Services at Creative Food Solutions, a full-service food innovation consultancy.

“Rice works really well with Mexican and Asian cuisines because it’s a cultural staple. In East Asian countries—Japan, China and Korea in particular—it is the main meal, where all the dishes that come with it are side dishes that complement the rice.”



Asian Stir Fry Bowl
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™

1

asian cuisine

Here's how some operators are showcasing bowls in Asian cuisine.

PANDA EXPRESS
Mapo Tofu with Beyond Beef Bowl

APPLEBEE'S
Crispy Orange Chicken Bowl

Asian flavors & ingredients trending in Savory Bowls²

Emerging	Trending	Popular
Kimchi	Sweet chili sauce	Curry
Nori	Seaweed salad	Ginger
Pickled ginger	Jasmine rice	Sriracha
Ponzu	Korean barbecue	General Tso
Tobiko	Ahi tuna	Edamame
Sushi rice	Snap peas	Sesame
Sesame oil	Peanut sauce	Kung Pao
Furikake		

1

asian cuisine

Top 2 Asian ingredients on lunch/dinner bowl menus ³	4-Year Growth ³
Poke	+791%
Sushi	+41%

Recipe inspiration from BEN'S ORIGINAL™



Bibimbap Bowl featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™ INTERNATIONAL GRAINS® Quinoa & Ancient Grain Medley



Poke Bowl w/ Brown Rice featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™ Asian Style Brown Rice

2

mexican cuisine

Mexican food is another perfect match for bowl concepts on the menu as it also incorporates rice into many dishes. Bowls are strong growth, with a 20% projected increase over the next four years.⁴ Beef bowls in particular are expected to soar on Mexican menus, with a projected four-year growth of 302%.³

While Mexican food has had longtime popularity, regional Mexican cuisine and Mexican comfort food are both becoming more well known as consumers discover new flavors and formats from social media, from dishes like eloté and birrúa to flavors like tajín and chipotle.



Chicken Taquito Rice Bowl
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™

“Two of the greatest aspects of Mexican fare are its portability and the complex flavors that emerge from simple ingredients,” Chef Mike Buononato, Senior Vice President of Creative Food Solutions. “Operators who effectively capture these can amplify their takeout and delivery.”

2

mexican cuisine

While bowls are a common format on Mexican menus, there are still plenty of ways for you to innovate on Mexican bowl concepts with trending ingredients and regional Mexican formats.

Pancheros Burrito Bowl

**El Pollo Loco Grande
Avocado Chicken Bowl**

Mexican flavors & ingredients trending in Savory Bowls³

Emerging

Poblano
Queso fresco
Pepita

Trending

Chimichurri
Chorizo
Cotija
Carne asada

Popular

Pinto bean
Green onion
Salsa verde
Chipotle
Carnita
Cilantro

2

mexican cuisine

Recipe inspiration from BEN'S ORIGINAL™



Mexican Quinoa and Chicken Bowl
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™



Elote Bowl
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™

3

mediterranean cuisine

Another area where bowls are experiencing rapid growth on the menu is Mediterranean cuisine. With a projected four-year growth of 105%, bowls are on 40% of Mediterranean menus.⁵ Rice bowls in particular are projected to grow 203% over four years on Mediterranean menus.⁵

The combination of bright flavors—tangy, floral and spicy—inherent in Mediterranean food is a great match for bowls, which provide a natural format for layering flavor. Mediterranean dips, such as hummus, baba ganoush, muhammara and labneh, and entrees, like falafel, kofta and shawarma, also lend themselves to the bowl format.



Ancient Grain Tabbouleh Salad
featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™

3

mediterranean cuisine

Mediterranean flavors & ingredients trending in Savory Bowls³

Emerging	Trending	Popular
Tabbouleh	Kalamata olive	Feta
Harissa	Greek yogurt	Tzatziki
Mint	Baba ganoush	Cucumber
Eggplant	Falafel	Chickpea
Lamb	Tahini	Pesto
	Couscous	
	Shawarma	

45%

On lunch/dinner bowl menus, hummus has a projected 4-year growth of +45%.³

3

mediterranean cuisine

**Bowls are becoming a go-to for fast casual
and other Mediterranean restaurant menus.**

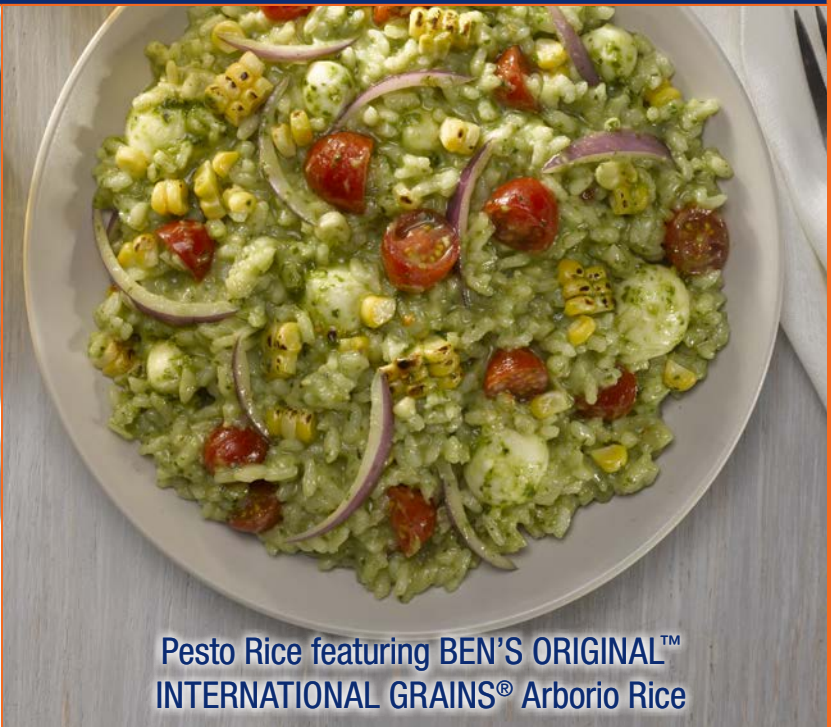
Chopt Mediterranean Bowl

Cava Grain Bowl

Recipe inspiration from BEN'S ORIGINAL™



Warm Tahini Lentil Bowl featuring
BEN'S ORIGINAL™ Harvest Vegetable Pilaf



Pesto Rice featuring BEN'S ORIGINAL™
INTERNATIONAL GRAINS® Arborio Rice

crafting crave-a-bowl concepts

Tip 1:

It's All About the Base

The base of the bowl forms the foundation of the dish. That's why rice is one of the most popular bases for bowls—44% of bowls are rice entrees.¹ Rice provides the structure needed for the rest of the dish.

“A good rice bowl, no matter what approach you're taking, needs to have structural integrity. It's similar to how key the quality of the bread is in a sandwich. If the meat and vegetables you put into your sandwich are amazing, but if the bread is sub par, it ruins the entire sandwich. Rice bowls are the same way. In a rice bowl, the rice needs to be the star of the show. It needs to have structural integrity when you're biting into it. It can't be mush; it can't be overcooked. It's got to have that right bite.”

Looking to introduce a bowl concept your guests will love? Here are two tips from Chef Lee on how to ensure your bowls keep them coming back for more.

Tip 2:

Incorporate Balance and Texture

In crafting any dish, it's essential to consider the balance of salt, acid, sour, fattiness and heat, but it's especially important in bowls, as they provide opportunities to layer flavor.

It's important to have flavor contrast, from saltiness and creaminess to acidity to sourness.

“You need to have all those elements, but in addition, I like freshness in a rice bowl, similar to sushi, you want a fresh piece of protein on top of your rice.”

Another way to make bowls craveable is adding extra texture in addition to the rice.

“Aside from ease of eating, one main element that makes bowls so appealing is the variety of textures. An essential component of the mixing of textures is the final topping, which adds visual appeal and crunch to each bite.”³

It's not too late to capitalize on the soaring popularity of bowl concepts. Bowls are the perfect, versatile format for elevating your menu with the global ingredients your consumers are craving.

**Learn more about how BEN'S ORIGINAL™
Rice & Grains are a perfect foundation
for your bowls.**

**Ben's
Original™**

**PERFECT
EVERY TIME™**

1 Datassential SNAP, March 2022

2 Savory Bowls, Menu Adoption Cycle, March 2022, Datassential

3 The World of PM Bowls, Datassential, April 2021

4 The World of Mexican Cuisine, Datassential Report Pro, April 2021

5 The World of Mediterranean Cuisine, Datassential, April 2021