

Mother's Day and Easter

Spring into action

Consumer research shows that Mother's Day is the second most popular calendar-driven reason for eating out, after a family birthday, with Easter Sunday at number six



With Mother's Day falling on Sunday 26 March, followed a few weeks later by the four-day Easter weekend starting with Good Friday on 14 April, operators need to have an appropriate food and drink offer in place to maximise sales

As three-quarters of consumers are willing to spend more when eating out to celebrate a special occasion such as Mother's Day and Easter – 40% are prepared to pay up to £30 more per head – there is a huge opportunity available to operators who make dining experiences memorable for consumers.

"Not only is there the immediate profit potential to consider, but it will also lead to repeat business," says Robert Harrison, Sales Director Gourmet-Northern Europe, Callebaut. "In fact, 94% of people would be likely to return to an establishment that made them feel special."

Tony Holmes, Bestway Wholesale's sales director for retail and foodservice, agrees: "Mother's Day and then the Easter weekend mark the end of winter and the start of the spring season, giving operators the opportunity to showcase their new seasonal food and drink offers. Now is the time to promote your wider offer and encourage repeat business right through the year."

Tony has some top tips for operators to ensure both Mother's Day and Easter are till-ringing successes:

- Promote menus and offers on websites and social media, as well as posters and chalkboards
- Offer a set price per head for a family meal to encourage larger groups
- Make Mother's Day special with a complimentary glass of bubbly for mum - and grandma - when they arrive to eat
- Clean up outdoor eating areas so you are ready to make the most of the spring sunshine if it arrives
- Give customers a reason to come back with offers such as a two-for-one midweek meal or free glass of wine with dinner the next time they book.

Attracting and retaining custom

With two huge calendar dates looming for the industry, it is important to ensure that all aspects of your offer are as honed as possible. *EC* caught up with Steven Pike, Managing Director of HospitalityGEM* who has the following advice for quick service restaurants, bearing in mind that not all customers who eat out of home on special occasions want to spend hours over a meal.

1. Be prepared

In an age when consumer expectation is high, but time is poor, operators must be aware of the factors that influence the guest experience within the QSR sector and how this can be managed.

2. First impressions

When new customers take a look through the window to be greeted by a menu lacking familiar items, they are less likely to come in. Ensuring that more traditional favourites remain widely available – such as sandwiches, wraps and toasties – will help to encourage a customer's first visit. Once people are confident in your offer, they will be more inclined to experiment with adventurous dishes and alternative choices.



3. Flexibility

Foods that are perceived to be healthy, but don't sacrifice taste, are increasingly popular. 77% of diners look to eat a healthy meal, such as a superfood salad at lunch time. But taste will often trump perceived healthiness when it comes to deciding whether to order the same item again.

4. Pace

Speed of service is crucial to time-poor consumers. Our research has revealed that 46% of diners cite "taking too long to bring drinks or food" as the third most-influential guest grievance when eating out. Staff training, efficient process design and a concise offer are three factors that could help to improve this element.

5. Quality

Disappointing food has been identified as the top guest grievance among consumers who regularly eat and drink out. While QSR are efficient by nature, this should not have a detrimental impact on quality of product. Choosing dishes that can be prepared in advance or quickly will improve the guest experience and encourage referrals.

6. Brand differentiation

In a saturated market, brand differentiation is fundamental to securing custom and encouraging return visits. Online activity is key to this, with almost two thirds of diners searching online for reviews before visiting. Online review sites provide an ideal platform for brands to start a conversation with guests – once they understand your brand, advocates can evolve into ambassadors.

** HospitalityGEM is one of the UK's leading experts in Guest Experience Management (GEM).*

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Don't forget desserts

"Desserts present a key opportunity. Recent research shows that 78% of people would be more likely to treat themselves when out for a special occasion, while a third of consumers think there should be more desserts targeting special occasions on menus," says Callebaut's Robert Harrison. "Make it a chocolate dessert and two-thirds of people would be more likely to order it."

Calbeaut's Development Chef, Julie Sharp, has created '10 Ways To Make It Special', a series of videos demonstrating recipes, techniques and simple tips – including an Easter egg that melts to reveal a hidden centre when hot chocolate sauce is poured over it."



Visit www.fortheloveofchocolate.com for this intriguing chocolate egg recipe



French patisserie provides a light, colourful dessert

The videos are available on Callebaut's chocolate hub – www.fortheloveofchoc.com – along with an animated infographic highlighting the key research findings.

In addition to chocolate, French patisserie is becoming increasingly popular. "Petit-fours, macarons and Choux aux fruits come in fresh Spring colours that can be served together to make a very pretty afternoon tea or dessert with seasonal appeal," suggests Jon Turonnet, Foodservice Sales Manager, Brioche Pasquier.

"With the current trend continuing for mini desserts, it seems that consumers are continuing to opt for smaller and lighter choices," continues Turonnet. "However quality and indulgence is still key. The delicate size and decoration of French patisserie ties in with this trend and there are numerous ways to serve these sophisticated and beautiful products."

With increasing numbers of people requiring 'freefrom' options on the menu, it is important they are catered for. Almondy offers a good selection of gluten-free desserts, while a visit to Demuths Vegetarian Cookery School's website (www.demuths.co.uk) will provide plenty of inspiration for both vegetarian and vegan recipes. The **Sticky Toffee Pudding** looks particularly mouthwatering.

Operators pull out all the stops

Here is a quick look at what some have planned to attract footfall on Mother's Day and over the Easter weekend

The Bull, Beaumaris – will be serving an exclusive Mother's Day menu, along with handing out complimentary gifts to each table, from local toiletries supplier Cole & Co. Guests will also be treated to performances from a harpist who will be playing in the Brasserie from from 1-4pm.

The Bull will be hosting its first ever Easter Bonanza aimed at attracting families. Activities include a Children's Easter Egg Hunt, face painting, egg decorating and a visit from the Easter bunny.



Lamb at The Bull, Beaumaris - a member of The Great Inns group

Worcester Whitehouse Hotel – is offering a special Mother's Day Weekend City Break. Families are encouraged as the hotel is offering a private family dining experience that weekend.

The Lantern Room restaurant, Edinburgh – is offering a special Mother's Day Afternoon Tea experience at £16.95 per person including a glass of fizz.

Holiday Inn London, Kensington Forum – is offering a special Mother's Day lunch. At £30 per person, customers will enjoy an all-you-can-eat roast dinner, with prosecco and live entertainment.

Metropole Hotel & Spa, Llandrindod Wells – special Mother's Day menu includes homemade vine tomato and red pepper soup, roast rib of beef with Yorkshire pudding and rich pan gravy; baked aubergine and roast vegetables with a Welsh cheddar cheese sauce; grilled fillet of sea bass with crab sauce and crushed new potatoes; and warm bara brith bread and butter pudding with orange syrup and vanilla ice cream. There are also spa gift vouchers and afternoon tea vouchers designed as gifts for Mum.

For Easter, the Metropole has devised family-friendly breaks, catering for families who want to be together in a spacious room with a sitting area, and also for those with older children who want their own rooms. Families staying over Easter are able to use the hotel pool, gym, sauna and steam room free of charge.

Metropole Hotel & Spa, Llandrindod Wells



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PINK COCKTAILS

Thanks to Bols for the following pink cocktail suggestions

COSMOPOLITAN

25ml Bols Triple Sec
25ml Vodka
30ml Cranberry juice
Juice of half a lime

Glass: Martini

Garnish: Flamed orange zest

Method: Shake all ingredients with ice and fine strain into a pre-chilled glass



FRENCH MARTINI

30ml Bols Raspberry Liqueur
30ml Vodka
30ml Pineapple juice

Glass: Martini

Garnish: Raspberry

Method: Shake all ingredients with ice and fine strain into a pre-chilled glass



THE STRAWBERRY FIZZ

15ml Bols Strawberry Liqueur
Top with Champagne/Prosecco

Garnish: Strawberry

Method: Serve in a Champagne flute



Step into Spring with deals from Bestway



THE BEST WAY TO GROW YOUR FOOD & DRINKS BUSINESS

To support its customers, Bestway is promoting a range of food and drink products targeting both Mother's Day and Easter menus, as part of its regular two-monthly Price Hold Guarantee.

Products ideal for family lunches on Mother's Day and Easter Sunday include:

- Four Gilberts Lamb Shanks in either Rosemary & Mint or Rosemary & Red Wine sauce - £10.99
- A 60 pack of Aunt Bessie's Yorkshire Puddings - £3.99
- 2.5kg Aviko roast potatoes - £2.99
- Selected Essentially Catering portioned frozen desserts - £6.99.



Pink for Mums

A nice bottle of pink fizz is bound to hit the spot with many mums and Bestway is here to help.

- Royal Rosato, Bestway's own hand-picked selection, is just the thing to make Mum feel like a queen. It offers stylish berry fruit flavours from the north of Italy with an off-dry finish
- Also from northern Italy, La Gioiosa Rosea comes from one of the leading producers of Prosecco. While this can't be called Prosecco itself, being pink, it does deliver a light, fresh fizz that is sure to hit the spot
- JP Chenet Ice Sparkling Rosé is, as the name suggests, designed to be drunk over ice. Despite this, it loses none of its flavour as you get further down the glass. Slightly sweeter in style, it is packed with fruity red fruit notes.
- To really spoil her, look no further than Champagne. Bestway stocks the iconic Laurent Perrier Rosé, which simply oozes style. "There is no better way to make Mother feel special," says Bill Creighton, Bestway's Wine Category Manager.

Bestway Wholesale operates a dedicated telesales hotline (01738-646666) for orders plus nationwide deliveries.



Caterers can also order online at www.bbfoodservice.co.uk