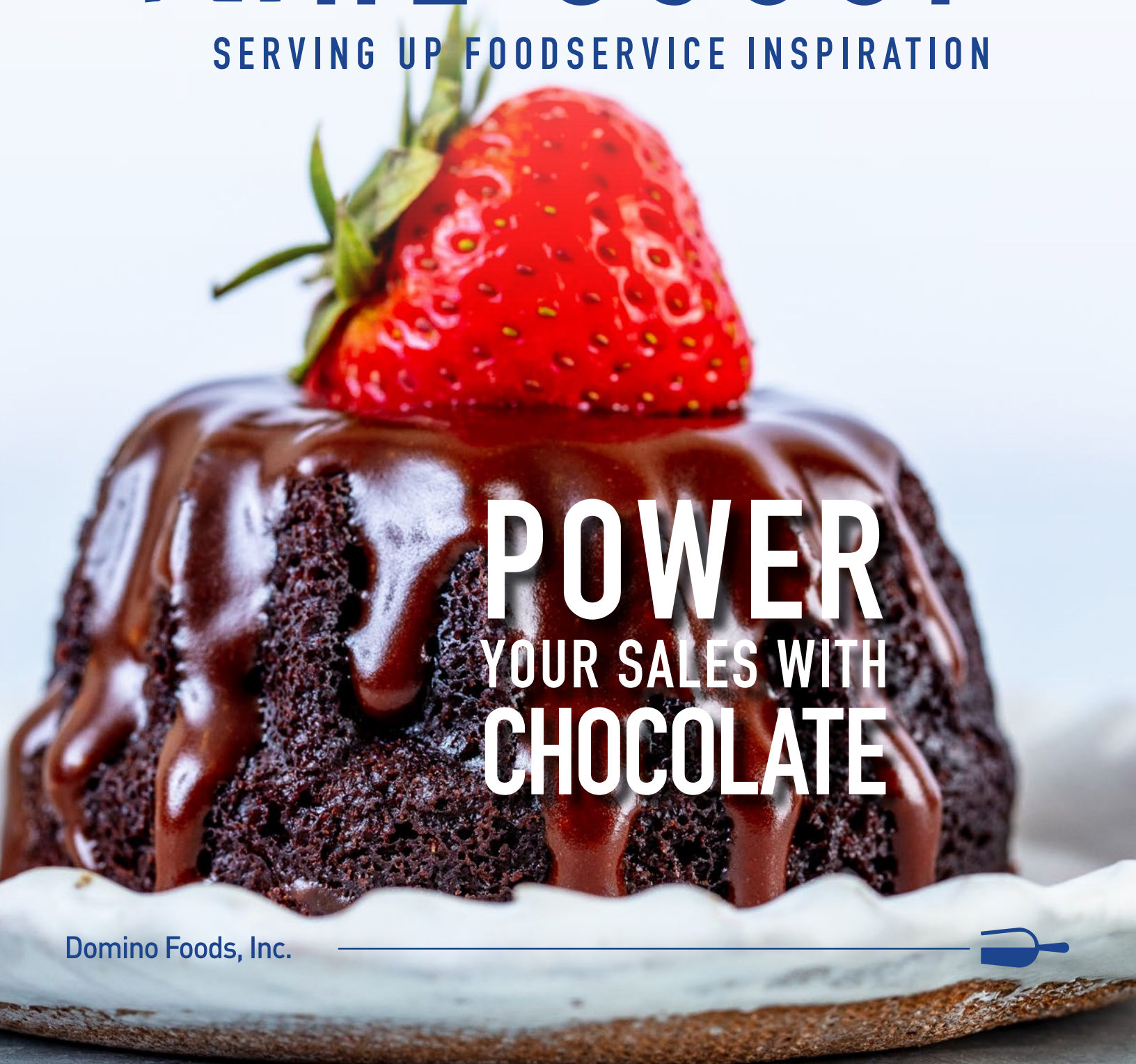




THE SCOOP

SERVING UP FOODSERVICE INSPIRATION



POWER
YOUR SALES WITH
CHOCOLATE

Domino Foods, Inc.





SWEET-INTEL



INTRO TO CHOCOLATE TRENDS

A hero ingredient for the confectionary category, chocolate is the number one most common flavor on dessert menus, and it's not going anywhere. With a current menu penetration of 72%, chocolate has seen a four-year growth of 6% across dessert menus in the U.S.¹

Even a tiny drop of chocolate is irresistible. Chocolate chips have seen a 19% four-year menu growth.¹ And while 86% of consumers have had a dessert in the last week, don't forget that chocolate is versatile and has applications beyond the dessert menu.¹



INDULGE WITH CHOCOLATE

Although chocolate is a feel-good comfort food, it's not just its taste that makes consumers happy. Studies show that chocolate can improve mental and emotional health, providing a sense of comfort.² Seventy-two percent of consumers agree that confections are an important part of their emotional well-being, as many seek out indulgent chocolate moments.²

80% OF CONSUMERS ARE EATING THE SAME AMOUNT OR MORE CHOCOLATE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE PANDEMIC.²





CHOCOLATE FOR BREAKFAST

Here's an up-and-coming restaurant trend: Dessert-inspired dishes are in the adoption phase on breakfast menus. As most breakfast starches tend to be sweet, it is common to see flavor trends from dessert find their way into the category. From chips in pancakes to sweet drizzles over entrées, chocolate is perfect for indulgent brunches.

Chocolate is not only one of the most common ingredients on breakfast menus, but within the past year, it's seen menu growth of 24%.¹ Consider adding chocolate to unlikely dishes, such as oatmeal or smoothie bowls. Incorporating chocolate into already sweet dishes like French toast and crêpes can also be a good way to satisfy consumer cravings for sweet.

**CHOCOLATE SYRUP
HAS SEEN A MASSIVE
FOUR-YEAR MENU GROWTH OF**

123%¹

CHOCOLATE

FOR EVERYONE



Ready for menu innovation? As consumer dietary habits evolve, operators will need to innovate with dishes that deliver great taste and meet specific dietary needs. Forty-five percent of consumers are attracted by vegan desserts, and gluten-free is trending. In fact, in top cake varieties, gluten-free ranks fifth, with a four-year menu growth of 43%. And 54% of consumers are willing to pay more for gluten-free cookies.¹



Vegan Gluten Free Walnut Brownie, [click here](#).



CLASSIC CHOCOLATE BEVERAGE COMBINATIONS

Don't forget a classic flavor combination: chocolate and coffee. Chocolate is a hero ingredient on coffee menus, with a four-year growth of 25%.¹

Appeal to consumers by allowing them to specify the type of chocolate used in their coffee, adding that extra touch of indulgence. While the typical mocha is a coffee menu must-have, white and dark chocolate flavors are trending.¹



CHEF'S CORNER



For each edition of The Scoop, we bring you exclusive insights from Eleonora Lahud, research chef from ASR Group.



ELEONORA LAHUD | Research Chef, ASR Group

Eleonora has a degree in Food Science and is a Certified Baker from the American Institute of Baking, with management studies in Barcelona, Spain. She has experience working with leading global food companies in research & development, technical sales, consumer engagement, and catering.

WE ARE STILL WORKING TOWARD A RETURN TO NORMALCY. WHAT ASPECTS OF CHOCOLATE MAKE IT A GOOD INGREDIENT FOR THIS ENVIRONMENT?

Chocolate is comforting and indulgent. We are living through very stressful and unpredictable times. Consumers are seeking comfort and small indulgences to cope with everyday life. Consumers are looking for that sweet pleasurable moment to boost their mood.

Dark chocolate is perceived as healthy due to its antioxidants; consider offerings emphasizing health and wellness. Design offerings for dietary needs like plant based or gluten-free. This strategy makes business sense since these dietary needs continue growing year after year.

Consumers are also inclined to nostalgic flavors like birthday cake or s'mores. Consider adding these offerings to your menu.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT CHOCOLATE CAN BE LEVERAGED ON AN OPERATOR'S MENU BEYOND DESSERTS?

Consumers love chocolate. Chocolate desserts are certainly a best seller on a menu. But why not bring chocolate to the front of the page? Consumers are looking for experiences, moments that they can share with family and friends on social media. Provide them with that opportunity by offering chocolate dishes throughout the menu. Here are some ideas:

- Brunch:** Chocolate pancakes or waffles paired with crispy bacon or pork belly can attract customers.
- Barbecue:** Chocolate can be considered in rubs, marinades, and sauces due to its complex and versatile flavors.
- Throughout:** From acid to bitter, or roasted, spicy, and sweet, chocolate is an ingredient that can provide exceptionally rich flavors to your dishes; Mexican mole is a great example.
- Beverages:** Consider adding to your menu interesting offerings like Mexican Hot Chocolate in which you add a little spice to your drink. Unexpected flavor combinations are always exciting.

WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE FLAVORS, SPICES, FRUIT/FLOREALS, ETC. THAT ARE EMERGING?

Unexpected flavor combinations are always exciting, and chocolate is always a great vessel to experiment. Chocolatiers are combining chocolate with ingredients like bacon, smoked salt, matcha, and ginger. These flavors can be transferred to baking applications for an interesting new flavor in your menu. Consider fresh baked chocolate chip cookies with crispy bacon or a smooth and creamy chocolate mousse with sugared ginger.

Consumers are also very interested in sustainable and ethical business practices. If the chocolate you are sourcing is single origin and adheres to the practices mentioned before, make sure you communicate this information to your customers.



SWEETLY DISTINCT



SALES-BUILDING IDEAS FROM ASR GROUP

When it comes to chocolate, it isn't just a perennial favorite. With applications far beyond dessert, it can really please crowds and increase sales. Here are a few insights and ideas to do just that.

Sweet Seasonal Specials

Mother's Day is coming – consider offering seasonal limited-time offers relevant to chocolate to attract customers and increase sales. The focus of the day is to make mothers feel special, and what better way to do that than to reward them with a sweet and indulgent favorite? So this Mother's Day, try offering up special chocolate desserts—it's a win-win!



Favorites with a Twist

Although chocolate is a classic favorite that dominates dessert menus, 75% of global consumers want to try new and exciting chocolate experiences.³ Try offering up unique chocolate combinations or global creations to meet this demand for classic chocolatey flavors with a unique twist. For example, one café in Texas offers a sweet and salty pie for their chocolate-loving customers. Their a unique mash-up: Chocolate cookie dough is in a lard-based pie crust, mixed with caramel and chocolate chips, then sprinkled with sea salt. This decadent dessert is completed with a scoop of ice cream.



Keep Sales Moving with Handheld Options

According to Datassential, handheld ready-to-eat desserts offer the highest sales and margins. Fully 60% of operators say that desserts help drive profits. However, the varieties that require less prep or can be eaten on the go (such as chocolate chip cookies and ice cream) comprise the best-selling varieties and have the highest margins.

FEATURED RECIPE



MOCHA CRÈME BRULEE

Created by: Caroline Kolaja
Executive Chef of George Trois Group

A unique twist on a classic, our Mocha Crème Brulee recipe is chocolatey and decadent with hints of espresso. Turbinado sugar is added to create a crispy, sweet crust.

HOW TO MAKE:

Serving size: 6

Ingredients:

- 125 grams Dark Chocolate 64%-70%
- 350 grams Cream
- 1 teaspoon Instant coffee
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla
- 85 grams Domino® or C&H® Granulated Sugar
- 4 Egg yolks
- Florida Crystals® Turbinado Sugar, as needed

Instructions:

1. Slowly melt the dark chocolate over a double boiler. Set aside but keep warm.
2. Measure cream, instant coffee and vanilla in a sauce pot.
3. Whisk together sugar and yolks in a bowl. Prepare an ice bath large enough to accommodate the entire mixture.
4. Bring the cream mixture to a boil. Slowly whisk the cream mixture into the yolks.
5. Return to heat and cook until 175°F, quickly whisk in the melted chocolate, strain and cool over the ice bath.
6. Allow to cool slightly before portioning into individual ramakins.
7. Let set for 3 hours (or overnight).
8. Sprinkle the top of the custards evenly with turbinado sugar. Use a blow torch to caramelize to a medium brown color.
9. Return to the fridge for 5 minutes and then serve.



FEATURED PRODUCT



This month's featured product is a versatile sugar that can be used in a wide range of applications. **Domino® Light Brown Sugar** and **C&H® Golden Brown Sugar** have a buttery, caramel flavor, along with a moistness that makes this sugar ideal for baked goods, such as cookies, spiced cakes, and brownies. In savory dishes, light brown sugar imparts rich flavor, color, and sheen when used as an ingredient in dry rubs, stir fries, glazes, and marinades.

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To learn more, contact your ASR Group sales manager or visit us at dfifoodservice.com.



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