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E-GUIDE



THE ART & SCIENCE OF

# Menu Planning

Creating a good menu takes more than just throwing all your signature dishes into a sheet of paper. Learn how to create a menu that will satisfy your customers and boost sales in this comprehensive guide.



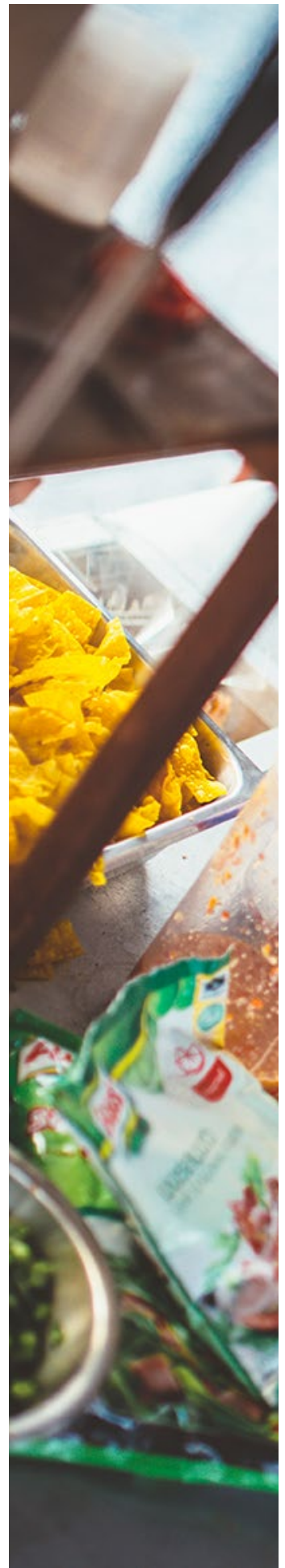
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## Know Your Guests

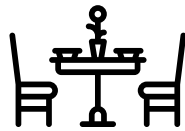
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You need to know your diners before you start planning your menu, because after all, the menu is designed for them. Consider these questions as you think about your diners:



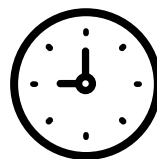
### Who They Are

Do you know what your diners like or dislike? What is their spending power? Create your menu knowing what your customers will prefer and can afford.



### Why They Eat Out

Are your diners in a rush and looking for a quick-bite? Or do they have time to spare to fully enjoy a good, long meal? Tailor your food items according to the preparation time needed.



### When They Eat Out

People will eat out for all sorts of reasons - be it celebrations, business lunch, romantic nights out or even family gatherings. Do your diners have a reason to keep coming back?



### What They Eat

Diners in Southeast Asia can eat up to five meals a day. Are you able to provide the type of food they are looking for, at specific meal times.



# Range of Food

## YOUR ABILITY TO DELIVER

Don't worry about impressing customers with a wide range of dishes. Instead, focus on delivering quality food **consistently**, even if it means having a short menu.

When thinking about what food item to offer, consider these:

- Kitchen size
- Equipment
- Skill level of kitchen assistants
- Budget

**4 to 12 dishes per section is ideal** - any more than that will make it difficult for your customers to choose.

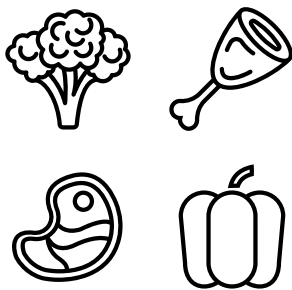
“With the easy accessibility of modern ingredients, you don't have to create certain things from scratch. This helps to maintain the consistent quality of the meal while reducing cost in terms of time and ingredients you would need to make them from scratch.”

**Chef Richmond Lim (Malaysia)**



Photo credit: <https://goo.gl/NQ3qgX>

## AVAILABILITY OF INGREDIENTS



Every good dish starts from good, fresh ingredients. **Maintain good relationships with a supplier that you can trust.**

Find out what produce is available in your region throughout the year, so that you can create dishes around only the freshest ingredients. You should also take note of the different ingredients that are available only during certain seasons so that you can prepare special menu items.

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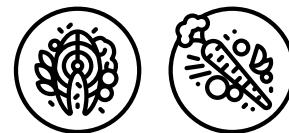
# Trends & Presentation

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**Trends** indeed come and go, but the job of a chef is to always **deliver the best to the customers**. Keeping up with trends in the food industry gives your customers reason to keep coming back because they know they can expect something new and fresh.

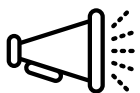
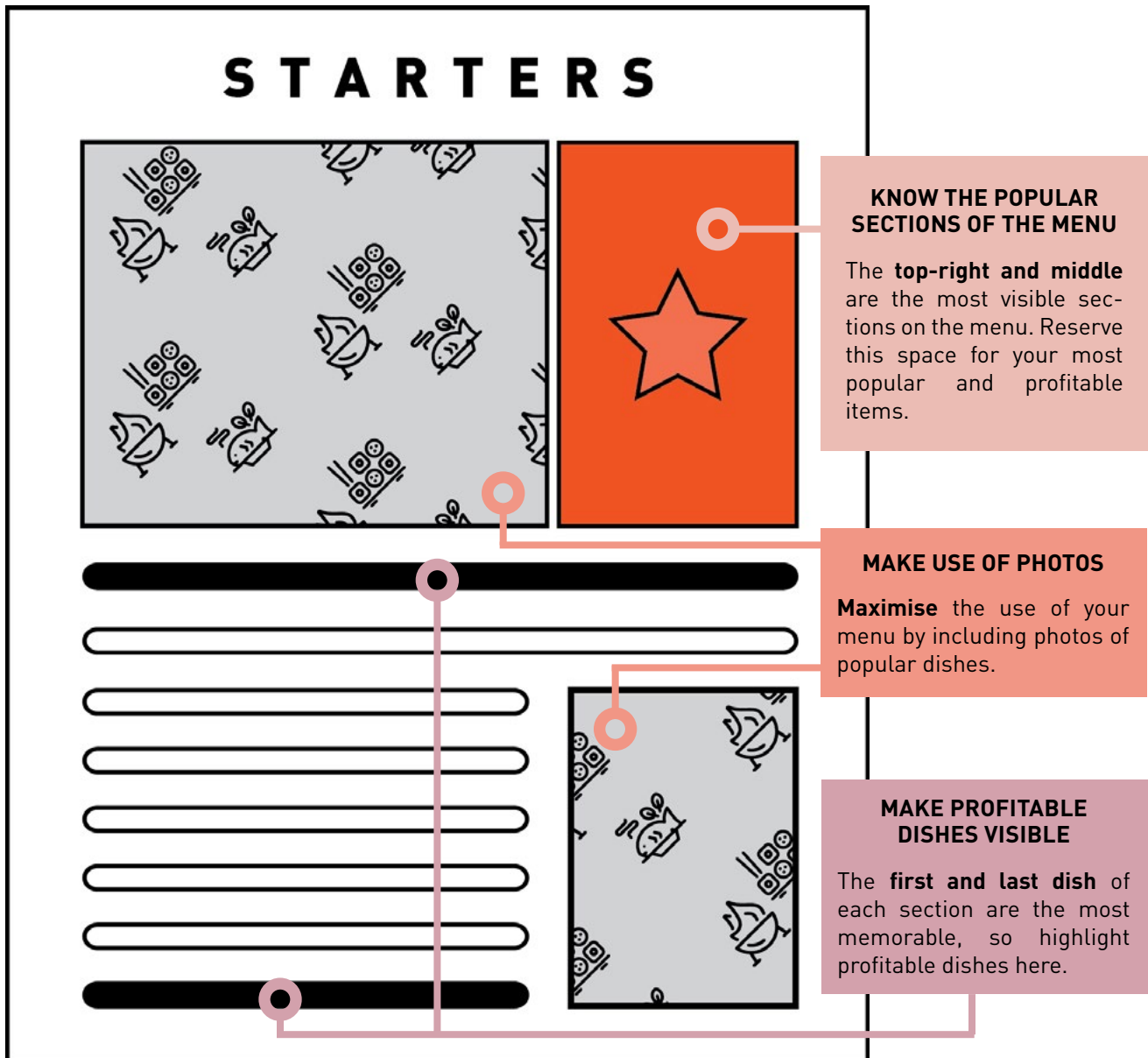
A quick Google search or a scroll through social media will give you plenty of ideas for trendy food, but if you're more adventurous, don't limit yourself to just blindly following trends - **be the next trendsetter yourself**.



When it comes to attracting more diners, **presentation** is something that you should take note of regardless of the seasons and trends. They say that we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but let's face it - we all do. The most important tip for presentation is simply to **keep your plates clean**. Keep your presentation style simple, so that customers can focus on what's most important - your food. Also, this way, your staff or assistant can easily replicate it.

# Business Profits

No one goes into F&B hoping to make quick profits - we do it for the love of food. Yet, as business owners cum cooks, we so very often scratch our heads when trying to figure out how to make a profit so that we can continue serving food. Here are some ways to use your menu to boost sales of some of your most profitable dishes.



## PROMOTE YOUR SPECIALS

If you're running a promotion or have come up with a special menu, present them clearly. Also, ensure that all your staff know about the promotion or special menu item so that they can inform your customers.



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# Creating a Balanced Menu

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Creating a balanced and healthy menu doesn't mean that you're only serving salad. It simply means that you have just the **right amount and variety**, so that your customers can always find something to order.

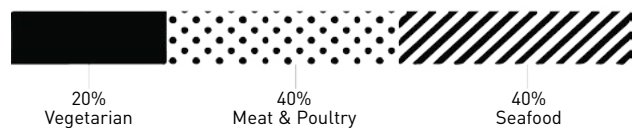
## 1. Size

Bigger isn't always better. As mentioned previously, a long menu can make it difficult for your customers to decide and order, and also for your kitchen to deliver.



## 2. Ratio

Strike the perfect balance in your menu by offering just enough variety. Before you start cooking up recipes, think about how many vegetarian or meat dishes you want to serve. Here's an example of a balanced ratio that you can have for your menu (feel free to adapt it to your customers' needs):



## 3. Healthy dishes



As customers become more health-conscious, it is important for eateries to provide them with delicious options when they choose to dine out. Don't just throw a salad together and call it a day - put thought and effort into creating a dish that even the meat lovers will enjoy.

# Menu Design

We've covered everything that you should take note of when it comes to what you should put on your menu - but you still need to turn that into a proper menu that your customers can hold! Not everyone can hire a designer to do up a fancy menu, but neither does everybody need one. Simply keep your menu design **simple and easy to read**.



## Menu sections

Plan your menu according to the way that you would serve a meal - from starters to desserts. This makes it intuitive for your customers, so they know exactly where to find what they want to eat.



## Font choice

Your menu should be easy to read even under dim light. Choose an easy to read font that isn't too fancy and make sure that your font size is big enough to be read.



## Material

In the business of food, things can get messy. Paper menus tear easily when it gets wet or dirty from food spills. Laminating your paper menu is an affordable way to maintain your menus for much longer.





# Unilever Food Solutions

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