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Footsteps to Airport Foodstops

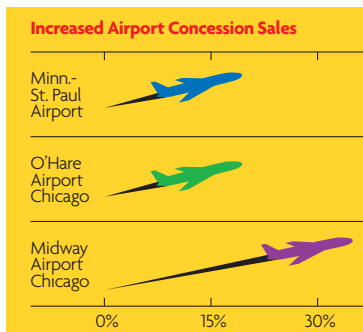
First came the removal of shoes at security checkpoints; then came the removal of meal service from a large majority of flights. And travelers arriving at airports earlier than ever due to increased security procedures are not only spending more time waiting for their flights, they're spending more cash. For the foodservice industry, the benefits are two-fold; in addition to catching more meals at airport restaurants, passengers are also purchasing meals that are easily transferable on board flights, or, as new trends on the horizon indicate, they will be purchasing their meals directly onboard their flights.



Free in-flight meals are quickly becoming a perk of the past.

While the number of travelers is down from exactly a year ago, shops and **sit-down restaurants placed in post-security areas of some of the nation's busiest airports have not only recovered from pre-Sept. 11 levels, they are thriving.** Concession sales, in particular, are up 15 percent compared with a year ago at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, for example, and up more than 30 percent at the city's Midway Airport, according to a recent Chicago Sun-Times article. At Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, food and beverage sales have enjoyed a 15 percent increase from last year, while food and beverage sales at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport are already ahead \$5 million for 2003, according to the Fort Worth Star Telegram.

What does this mean for foodservice operators? Increased competition for increasing food sales opportunities. And patrons are starting to witness a widening variety of airport cuisine available for the taking.



What's being served. A recent survey conducted by the Washington, D.C.-based Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine found that restaurant meal offerings in the nation's airports run the gamut, from healthy and creative options to greasy and standard fast-food fare, with a little of everything in between. And, by the very nature of airport eateries supplying a wide variety of menu options for an increasing, highly mobile customer base, foodservice operators invariably face a new set of challenges with a heightened sense of mobility and need for speed while cooking and serving customers in often small-sized kitchens.

The dynamic dining landscape. Faced with smaller kitchen footprints, an increasing customer base, and added food varieties to work with, foodservice operators must find equipment solutions that keep up with the pace of an ever-changing set of customer demands. As noted in a recent issue of

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*“There is no love sincerer than the love of food.”
~ George Bernard Shaw*

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Food Management magazine, **the kitchen of tomorrow is being built by the force of two primary influences:** that of an open cooking environment in which customers can “see and smell food assembled at the last minute, or into a smaller footprint, with value-added convenience products reducing the need for multiple cooking steps and machines.”

CookTek is continuing to assist foodservice operators, in airports and beyond, to step up to the proverbial “customer plate” by offering induction technology as a favorable solution for these challenges by way of the company’s induction cooktops. Our cooktops provide for fast, safe, clean cooking, usage flexibility and cheaper operating expenses in terms of removing the need for hoods and additional ventilation systems, a significant concern for airport kitchens with limited space. The flexibility of portable induction cooktops also provide for an ideal solution to operators seeking fast, safe, easy-to-clean, low maintenance and energy-smart equipment for daily operations. **CookTek’s induction cooktops also allow airport foodservice concepts to achieve a great amount of heat in short periods of time in limited environments such as small, but high-traffic airport foodservice kitchens.** With single- and double-HOB induction cooktops in both free-standing and countertop drop-in models, CookTek’s offerings provide for a variety of space- and speed-challenged quickservice food preparation options.

Data collected by The Center for Airport Management LLC, as published in a recent issue of *Airline Revenue News*, found an additional trend appearing in airport food concession behavior studies: **“...people utilizing an Asian quickserve concept spend an average of 23% more time eating than those patronizing burger units...”** (“Gaining Precious Knowledge from Transaction Time Data,” *ARN*, 9/01). Directly in step with this trend, CookTek’s Induction Wok models allow foodservice operators not only the option of drawing larger airport crowds with the “cooking as entertainment” concept, but also for the same benefits of speed, flexibility, safety, cleanliness and ease-of-use as found with flat-top induction cooktops while providing the additional appeal of cooking Asian food with Asian equipment as a total dining experience.

Speed continues to be in high demand by hungry consumers, especially during peak meal hours. According to a Meal Consumption Behavior 2002 study conducted by the National Restaurant Association, **breakfast is least likely to be commercially prepared as customers avoid their first meal of the day due to reasons such as time, weather, parking and ease of access. However, once travelers are already in an airport environment, such factors cease to exist, and the**

opportunity for foodservice sales growth increases exponentially. Whether travelers have time for hot, sit-down breakfasts, or even made-to-order omelettes-on-the-go, foodservice concepts which “cater to what consumers really want” (Patty Moore, President of Sonic Drive-In chain, *R&I*, 6/15/02), will stand to see increased popularity amongst travelers with any amount of time on their hands.

In short, for foodservice operators willing to “travel the extra mile” for travelers embracing airport dining establishments, the speed and flexibility of CookTek’s induction cooking systems will no doubt prove to be welcome and much appreciated tools for foodservice concepts seeking high-flying profits from the ground up. ●



From left: Dan McNerny, CEO, and Matt Rausenberger, COO, of Mindworks, Santa Clara, CA; Tricia Cleary, Director of Marketing, and Bob Wolters, Jr., CEO, of CookTek, Chicago, IL.

CookTek at Inc. 500 Conference

CookTek recently attended the 21st annual Inc. 500 Conference and Celebration held in Rancho Mirage, CA, in honor of 2002 Inc. 500 award recipient companies. The three-day event included featured speakers, interactive breakout sessions, roundtable discussions and an awards ceremony and black-tie gala, providing ample opportunities for attendees to network with their professional peers and to learn and take valuable lessons home.

Representing CookTek were President Bob Wolters, Jr., and Director of Marketing, Tricia Cleary.

Out of 500 companies recognized, CookTek landed on the list for the first time in 2002 as #270. ●

Spot the Cooktops – CookTek on TV

CookTek induction cooktops have been helping professional chefs cook up some excitement on several recent nationwide television programs.

- Chef Tory McPhail, Executive Chef at the famous New Orleans restaurant, Commander’s Palace, recently helped viewers celebrate Fat Tuesday by cooking up a couple of Mardi Gras-themed meals on a free-standing CookTek induction cooktop, model MC-2500, during a weekend edition of “The Today Show” on NBC-TV.
- Gordon Elliott, celebrity host/chef of the Food Network’s “Follow that Food” show in February spotlighted Chicago’s dessert bar, Sugar, using a CookTek free-standing, single-hob induction cooktop to melt chocolate.
- Emmy-award winning Chef Ming Tsai of The Food Network’s “East Meets West” and Chef-Owner of the Blue Ginger restaurant in Boston also appeared on “The Today Show” on March 13 when he sampled several seafood creations on a CookTek free-standing MC-2500 cooktop for show hosts Katie Couric, Matt Lauer and Ann Curry.
- The Food Network spotlighted CookTek’s FlashPak™ Pizza Thermal Delivery System and the benefits of using heated delivery at the recent International Pizza Expo in Las Vegas.
- Chef/Author Rebecca Charles appeared on “The Today Show” on April 4th’s cooking segment remarking she’d never worked on an induction cooktop before (CookTek’s), but it was “Amazing!”

Be sure to keep an eye out for future CookTek cooktop appearances during cooking segments on a variety of televised programs! ●



Chef Bruce Hannover of Purdue University and Chef Michael Huffer of Notre Dame recently competed in the Midwest Regional NACUFS Culinary Challenge while utilizing CookTek induction cooktops. This year’s challenge was hosted by Ohio State University.



CookTek’s Mark Lang and Jeff Gradus share a Kodak moment with President Pablo Andrade and Oscar Reyes of Losemex.

New CookTek Distributor in Mexico

CookTek recently partnered with a new distributor for the Mexico region, called Losemex. With seventeen years of experience in the foodservice industry, the company maintains a strong relationship with international and domestic chains, and dealers.

A service training session was recently organized and held in Mexico City, attended by 25 technicians from a variety of independent agencies, dealers and Losemex employees throughout the central area of Mexico, including Guadalajara. With CookTek National Accounts Director for the Eastern Region, Mark Lang, and Electronics Technician Jeff Gradus leading the intensive one-day seminar, the group gained a great deal of knowledge about CookTek products and ended the day with a hearty lunch and a certificate of participation. Future plans include additional training sessions for professionals from the northern and southern regions of the country, as well. ●

Trading Spaces

CookTek recently wound up another successful pizza industry event at the 19th annual International Pizza Expo in Las Vegas, NV. As usual, a great turnout was seen with 5,100 attendees and 4,100 exhibiting personnel manning 950 booths.

Be sure to visit CookTek at the **National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show at Booth #4424**, May 17-20, 2003, in Chicago. We’ll have plenty of products and live cooking demos to provide excitement for all CookTek fans. ●

*“The second day of a diet is always easier than the first. By the second day you’re off it.”
~ Jackie Gleason*

CookTek on Location

The CookTek Creative Team was recently hard at work on set with renowned professional food photographer, Scott Payne. The project? A new CookTek brochure. The deadline? Yesterday. The biggest challenge? Not eating the subject material.

With a team consisting of several professional chefs, a food stylist, two photo assistants, a props master, models, culinary students, a culinary school dean and master chef instructor, a producer and the photographer himself, the CookTek photo shoot was quite a production. Shooting in-studio at Scott Payne Studios (www.scottpayne.com) in downtown Chicago and on location at Kendall College in Evanston, Ill., surrounded by cooking equipment, camera equipment and chocolate and cheese for last-minute team emergencies, yielded a group of exceptional photographs which will be available for viewing in CookTek’s new company brochure set to debut shortly. Be sure to request a copy or download it online at www.cooktek.com! ●



“Life-work balance” takes on a new meaning for photographer Scott Payne.

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