

## Make Sharable Your New Mantra



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**The new key to appetizers is shareability. Learn how this concept can affect your operation and put patrons in the party zone, ready to order more.**

Call them appetizers, call them snacks, call them small plates, call them finger foods. Small, savory, shareable bites have become one of the most robust categories on food service menus.

According to the Technomic "Starters, Small Plates & Sides Consumer Trend Report 2015," this so-called Left Side of the Menu (LSM, including starters and small plates) is undergoing a number of key developments:

- Interesting starters and small plates encourage customers to share
- Engaging appetizers and small-plate formats will appeal for social meals
- LSM premiumization will increase incremental sales
- Consumers will demand more innovative starters and small plates

That gives food service operators lots of fertile ground for developing their own distinctive offerings. "Handheld foods and snacks continue to provide versatility and profit opportunities for all dayparts and menu types," says [Brian Dragos, Minor's® corporate executive chef](#), who shares several pointers for maximizing the category:

1. Remove any mention of appetizers; use the description "shareables" instead.
2. People usually come to a restaurant because they are hungry. Have servers approach tables with a welcoming statement such as, "Welcome to Brian's, could I get you some of our new Korean BBQ Wings or Pad Thai Shrimp? They're awesome to share and you'll have something to taste while you look at the menu."

3. Make shareables flavorful, quick to prepare, and pretty to look at!
4. Customers want bold flavors, whether in traditional items or in traditional items with a new twist, like Korean tacos or sushi burritos.
5. Think of street food as the best route to inspire and market snacks—they offer the kind of salty, spicy, crispy, hot, crunchy, and sour flavor experiences that customers crave.

Positioned as such, almost any menu item can be merchandised to share, from old favorites such as nachos, mozzarella sticks, or chicken wings to a bubbling hot gratin dish full of macaroni and cheese, accompanied by four forks.

## 51 Fun Ideas for Finger Foods:

### Dips and Dunkables

- Hummus and pita
- Clam dip and chips
- Spice mixtures such as dukkah with crudites
- Spinach-artichoke dip with baguette

### Bread-Based Specialties

- Crostini and bruschetta with toppings
- Flatbreads
- Pizza
- Bread with a spread, such as biscuits and pimento cheese

### Specialty Fries and Chips

- Poutine
- Frites with dipping sauces
- Colorful housemade beet and zucchini chips
- Potato “tots” with toppings

### Savory Bites

- Bite-size crab cakes
- Cocktail meatballs
- Jalapeño poppers
- Bacon-wrapped pork belly or scallops
- Lamb chop “lollipops”

### Easy Additions

- Flavored popcorn
- Marinated olives
- Smoked nuts
- Housemade snack mix
- Smoked fish
- Glazed bacon strips

### **Samplers**

- Assorted fried vegetables
- Meat-and-cheese plates
- Combo plate of best-selling appetizers

### **Shellfish By the Piece**

- Shrimp
- Oysters and clams
- Crab claws

### **Sliders and Other Minis**

- Burger variations
- Pulled pork
- Mini grilled cheese

### **Vegetable Specialties**

- Whole steamed artichoke with sauce
- Stuffed mushrooms
- Housemade pickles
- Avocado fries with crema dipping sauce

### **Pub Food**

- Scotch eggs
- Hot pretzels with cheddar cheese sauce
- Sliced sausages with signature mustards

### **Retro Classics**

- Deviled eggs
- Crab or cheese puffs
- Mini hot dogs, with or without a pastry crust

### **Asian Inspirations**

- Dim sum
- Egg rolls
- Shrimp toast
- Satays

### **Mexican Favorites**

- Taquitos
- Guacamole
- Street tacos
- Chicharrones (fried pork skins)
- Empanadas

Source: Technomic Starters, Small Plates & Sides Consumer Trend Report 2015

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## GET STARTED

- Nestlé Professional offers a wide range of products that can be used to create crave-worthy shareables, including [Minor's Latin and Asian sauces and flavor concentrates](#); [Maggi® Seasoning and Spicy Seasoning](#); [Chef-mate® cheese sauces](#); [Trio® gravies and sauces](#); [Stouffer's® dips and Macaroni and Cheese](#); and [Hot Pockets®](#).

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- The new [Snacking Action Station \(PDF\)](#) from Nestlé Professional offers a wide range of flavors, proteins, sauces, toppings, and more, with portion sizes that fit the snacking trend.

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## TRY THIS

Here are some recipes to get the shareables ball rolling:

- [Deviled Eggs](#)
- [Steakhouse Poutine](#)
- [Buffalo Chicken Cheese Dip](#)
- [Red Curry Mussels](#)
- [Crispy Calamari with Alfredo Sauce](#)
- [Szechuan Wings](#)

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## CHEF DRAGOS RECOMMENDS

- Gorditas (small flour tortilla pockets filled with flavorful fillings—"My favorite is *deshebrada*, which is shredded beef and chiles").
- Thai Garlic chicken (super thin coated fried boneless chicken tossed in Thai garlic sauce, served on a sweet vinegar cucumber salad).
- Torta Adovada (mini Mexican sandwich with marinated adobo pork, cabbage, and Chihuahua cheese).