

# Takeout Stars: Smoothies and Other Drinkable Snacks



**Serve blended specialty beverages, smoothies, and shakes, as a meal accompaniment, as a meal replacement or simply as a liquid snack. That’s versatility! Learn the latest trends.**

Blended specialty beverages like smoothies, shakes, and malts have multiple roles in beverage takeout programs. In addition to serving as a refreshing accompaniment to food, the premium beverages can do double and triple duty as desserts and breakfast replacements.

They’re also just about perfect as snacks. And thanks to lifestyle changes related to the novel coronavirus, people are snacking more. In fact, according to Technomic, 27% of consumers report snacking more, including 37% of Gen Zers and 31% of Millennials.<sup>1</sup>

The average price of a smoothie on U.S. menus is \$5.20,<sup>2</sup> while a shake or malt weighs in at \$4.90.<sup>3</sup> This price point represents good value relative to all snacking menu items—averaging \$7.60<sup>4</sup>—and in the case of smoothies, can also address consumer demand for better-for-you options. In addition, many patrons are already well acquainted with grabbing a blended beverage to-go as a snack.

## Smoothies Showcase Ingredients

From stalwarts like banana and strawberry to emerging flavors like prickly pear, cucumber, and turmeric, it’s all about the ingredients with smoothies, especially when made available in customized formats.

According to Datassential, the following flavors and ingredients have enjoyed the most growth over the past four years<sup>5</sup>:

Strawberry	+4%
Banana	+2%
Mango	+5%
Blueberry	+26%
Coconut	+24%
Apple	+17%
Peach	+7%
Chocolate	+33%
Peanut butter	+62%
Kale	+77%
Protein	+24%
Acai	+43%
Passion fruit	+27%
Lemon	+13%
Carrot	+10%

Other emerging smoothie ingredient categories that include greens and herbs (basil, parsley, mint, romaine, wheatgrass, seaweed); plant milks (coconut, oat, and cashew); tropical fruits (dragon fruit, kiwi, guava); spices (turmeric, ginger, cayenne); alternative sweeteners (maple syrup, agave); and functional or better-for-you ingredients (tahini, matcha, hemp, chia, seed butters, coconut oil).

## **Innovative Milkshakes**

When it comes to milkshakes, creativity sells, as consumers embrace indulgences beyond vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry. This is especially true with LTOs (limited-time offers), which take advantage of seasonal flavors like peach and pumpkin, or special events like St. Patrick's Day.

Consumers have a lasting interest in all things nostalgic, yet gravitate toward fun twists on the familiar. Updated shakes are an easy way for operators to play on this expectation. This includes flavored and plant-based alternatives, branded mix-ins like cookies and candies, and unexpected ingredients like horchata, green tea, and date. Calling out locally popular ice cream by brand name is another big trend.

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There is also a move toward better-for-you milkshakes, including vegan varieties that make use of dairy-free ingredients, such as almond, cashew, coconut, and other nut milks, as well as outside-the-box options like hemp milk. Vegan ice cream and whipped cream will also provide an option for consumers who want to indulge in a dairy-free treat.

Malted milkshakes offer another nostalgic treat, especially in traditional flavors like chocolate and vanilla<sup>6</sup>. Adding malted milk powder to milkshakes also adds craveability.

Sources: 1. Technomic 2020 Generational Consumer Trend Report. 2. Technomic Ignite, Smoothie (2020). 3. Technomic Ignite, Shake/Malt (2020). 4. Technomic Ignite, Snacking Items (2020). 5. Datassential SNAP! Smoothie Flavors (2020). 6. Datassential SNAP! Malted (2020).

*The information provided is based on a general industry overview, and is not specific to your business operation. Each business is unique and decisions related to your business should be made after consultation with appropriate experts.*

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## **MAKING IT PORTABLE**

- Invest in clear plastic takeout containers with domed lids to showcase beautiful colors and layered mix-ins, and to allow room for garnishes like whipped cream
- Provide wider diameter single-serve wrapped straws
- Put it all online for order-ahead convenience and quick pickup
- Consider offering smoothie kits for at-home prep

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## **TRY THIS**

- Accessorize milkshakes with enticing garnishes such as caramel corn, fresh fruit, cookie crumbles, or syrup drizzles
- Consider using text marketing to entice customers to come in for a smoothie or milkshake between meals
- Thicker shakes and smoothies work better as a snack or meal replacement