

Seafood as a snack: How to use fish between meals

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By Rob Corliss

Modernizing your menu is not about re-inventing the wheel. It is about perpetually executing subtle recipe and preparation shifts and generating new meal occasions and purchases -- all of which keep your operation current, engaging and craveable in the mind of consumers.

Modernizing your menu in 2015 means understanding that snacking is poised to change the foodservice landscape. Consumer eating habits are shifting, blurring and expanding standard meal periods. The operator mindset needs to shift as well – delivering on these new trends. This brings opportunities to operators and a platform of creativity for chefs.

Five snacking areas of focus, where you can modernize your menu via optimizing your seafood offerings, include: **portion size** -- smaller portions resonate in snacking and consumer patterns are increasing to eating 5+ times per day vs. 3 times per day; **health-wellness cues** -- craveable health is becoming more prevalent across foodservice; **beverages** --there can be myriad of beverage pairings with seafood-based snacks; **optimizing existing snacking occasions and creating new occasions**; and **positioning a feature at various meal periods** such as breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner, late night or between any of the above.



Mixing two trends -- seafood with artisanal toast. Photo: Shutterstock

Below are on-trend culinary execution areas to incorporate seafood into the above snacking areas of focus:

Artisan Toasts – with a seafood feature

There is a casual comfort, back to basics appeal with this trend. Restaurants are now even creating \$5 toast creations and toast tasting flights.

Veggies – seasonal/local

- Pair seafood with veggies to maximize the growing appeal of veg-centric offerings.
- Pair local/regional seafood with local/seasonal veggies

Brunch-Inspired Offerings

- Snacking helps to drive the emerging brunch trend
- There is also a socialization play, which you can market
- Pair seafood with craft beers and spirits



Sandwiches can be a good snack. Photo: Shutterstock

Sandwiches – will continue to be menu drivers

- Lobster rolls or variations thereof with other seafood
- Soft-shelled crab sandwich
- Crispy/tempura fish
- Seafood burgers

Appetizers/Small Bites – look at “on the go” seafood bites

- Seafood snacking opportunities are endless. Think portability and convenience.
- Crab cakes
- Fritters
- Ceviche
- Popcorn shrimp paired with chicken or steak
- Noodle bowls, hand held



Seafood in a soup -- the perfect snack. Photo: Shutterstock

Soup – utilize seasonal cues and right size/value portions and bundling

- Gazpacho
- Chowders
- Broth-based soups

Tacos – continue to dominate the menu landscape (especially with seafood)

- Grilled, roasted, seared, fried cues – all have mass appeal
- High end offerings can bring premiumization to snacking - seared ahi tuna, lobster, shrimp, crab, fish varieties
- Hot/cold complementary ingredient combinations
- Incorporate regional & global cues



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Chef Rob Corliss is a three-time James Beard House guest chef with over 20 years of experience across multi-disciplines that include running world class resort hotels, launching new restaurant concepts, working in top foodservice marketing agencies and currently owning his own culinary consulting company ATE <http://www.7ate9.biz>. With an energizing passion for food, ATE is focused on flavor innovation; with the daily goal of connecting people to their food, environment and wellness. For more information contact Chef Rob at: robcorliss@7ate9.biz

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