Food in the Fast Lane

The fast pace of American culture defines every aspect of our lives, from how we communicate with others, to how we shop and eat. As life’s speed increases, so does our dependence on food we can eat on the go.

An entire segment – fast food – evolved to meet our demand for convenience and quick service. Today, QSR is the largest and fastest growing segment in the foodservice industry. Competitors are offering more variety, higher quality and globally-influenced foods at every daypart with the rapid service that customers expect.

In fact, according to NPD, Americans use QSR an average of 112 times per year for off-premise occasions, nearly three times as often as they eat on-premise. This last year, off-premise traffic at QSR grew 1% while on-premise traffic remained flat. And drive-thru demographics are changing. While consumers 25-34 visit drive-thrus most often, consumers over 35 increased their drive-thru visits this last year according to NPD. Plus, while you might suspect that males are the heaviest users, females actually account for 56% of QSR drive-thru traffic.

But grab & go cuisine has gone far beyond the drive-thru window. Today, off-premise visits account for 61% of restaurant traffic. Of that, carry out is the largest segment followed by drive-thru and then delivery. With demand at an all time high, it is critical for restaurants in all segments, not just QSR, to introduce and market convenience menu items.

Quick Service Restaurants Up The Ante

Quick service and fast casual restaurants are exploring new ways to up the ante. Panera and Potbelly are testing drive-thru windows in several locations. Burger King looked to the casual segment to introduce the industry’s first bone-in rib at a fast-food chain. Subway introduced a complete breakfast line in 2010 to reach the on-the-go morning consumer. While Fazoli’s is testing new grab & go products like pasta wraps, one of which is a sausage and pepper penne. Expect to see even more convenience products like empanadas, baos, Asian burritos and even skewers that appeal to the convenience needs of a broad spectrum of consumers.
Sit Down Gets Moving

While family and casual restaurants have been building their carry-out business for years, one of today’s top foodservice trends is the acceleration of grab & go cuisine at full service restaurants. Off-premise dining at casual dining restaurants accounts for 15% of all traffic, which is almost 965 million occasions. Applebee’s, Chili’s and Ruby Tuesday are just some of the casual segment leaders who have worked to build curbside and carryout programs. Denny’s has been an innovator in grab & go package design, and, along with Huddle House, is testing restaurants with drive-thru capabilities. Bob Evans has been in the carry out business for over a decade, and most recently introduced Family Meals to Go which includes their signature Pork Meat Loaf. While Mimi’s recently introduced its Family Ham Feast takeaway dinner, which serves 6-8 for $79.99. The heat and serve meal includes a spiral-cut, bone-in quarter honey ham with a honey-Dijon glaze as well as salad, rolls, vegetables and dessert.

With everyone from restaurants to convenience stores to supermarkets trying to grab a bigger portion of the take-out business, here are some trends to watch:

1. **Restaurant Food Coming To You:** With the significant size of the market and more time-pressed consumers, restaurants will look at different strategies to enhance their carry-out business. Innovative new programs and packaging will be developed throughout the industry to make it easier for consumers to get high-quality restaurant food. Even fine dining will look at this opportunity. Several models already exist, including Eataly in New York and Radius in San Francisco. Eataly features many to-go options including roasted pork with rhubarb, sugar snap peas, cabbage and honey
vinaigrette. Radius offers three dining options for the consumer — a restaurant that serves dinner, a café that serves lunch and a takeout area, all in the same location. Eat-in guests can dine on pork torchon with white bean puree and huckleberry gastrique as well as honey-brined pork tenderloin with crispy pork belly, pickled shiitakes and apple cider gastrique. Those on the go can choose from pressed pork belly on green onion slab with apricot mustard, caramelized onions and arugula or a honey cured ham baguette. The bottom line is restaurants don’t want to miss any opportunity to capture a greater percentage of traffic and they will diversify to do so.

2. **Street Food Right Around the Corner:** Street food is the ultimate grab & go cuisine. Food trucks in major metropolitan areas are serving adventurous food, and they have the ability to travel to the customers. Trucks serve a variety of hand-holds like tacos, carnitas, arepas, wraps, falafel, crepes, steamed buns, satays, samosas and soups from around the world. The exploding popularity of street food has led to high profile chefs introducing their own trucks, such as the popular L.A. Boarder Grill Truck by Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger. Not only are chefs taking street food to the masses via food truck but they are adapting traditional street food for dine-in menus as well. Rick Bayless opened XOCO in Chicago to feature the street food of Mexico, including tortas, churros, caldos and breakfast options like huevos rancheros and torreja. Qdoba’s Street Tacos LTO was also inspired by Mexican street food and provided guests with specialties like slow-roasted green chile pork carnitas with onion-cilantro relish and lime. Lettuce Entertain You has had great success offering “hot Asian buns” in the style of Chinese street food at Wow Bao. The list goes on and on and consumers can’t get enough. With so many cuisines to try and trucks to find, the possibilities seem endless.

3. **Healthy Grab & Go:** Healthy eating is in, and the fast food, and take-out category has a definite opportunity to add a nutritional influence to their food. The on-the-go consumer is looking for nutritional foods that will fill them up but won’t slow them down. Whether it is healthier sauces to complement slow-cooked meats, adding vegetables to simply prepared protein-based tacos and wraps, “stealth health” or smaller portion sizes, consumers are demanding better food with less calories. Subway, which positions itself as the healthy sandwich option, recently introduced egg whites as a grab & go breakfast item and Dunkin’ Donuts continues to add menu items to its DDSmart take-out menu. As consumers look for healthy grab & go options operators will rise to meet their demands.

4. **On-Premise Goes Off-Premise:** The non-commercial segment will continue to explore new ways to generate revenue through grab & go opportunities. Colleges, hospitals and corporate cafeterias are developing new retail strategies to take advantage of their
time-pressed constituents. The University of Pennsylvania sells up to 80,000 meals a week in their retail facility. Paradise Valley Hospital in Scottsdale, AZ has developed a Health for Life Meals To Go program where, twice a week, people can order meals like rosemary pork loin for $5.50 with 450 calories or less and 600g of sodium. The need for quick options extends far beyond the commercial segment.

5. **New Technology for Faster Food:** Innovative restaurants are already committed to new technology. Mobile ordering for a number of chains is available on iOS devices and coupon texting is becoming more common. Pizza Hut has tied in with EA Sports to feature ordering applications in video games. Smaller stores are planning pick-up windows. Double drive-thrus offer improved, high-tech computerized systems. In addition, chains will look at new ways to help consumers get good food faster. One franchisee of McAlister’s Deli is testing a stand-alone drive-thru store in Midland, TX. Through rush period they can handle 75-80 cars an hour, and the store achieves a higher check average than stores with dining rooms. And more is on its way – chains know that faster ordering technology coupled with better order accuracy is the best way to connect with Millennials. It effectively increases brand loyalty among a generation that eats on the run.

As life gets faster, grab & go cuisine will become an even larger focus of foodservice. The size of the opportunity is significant and no chain or independent wants to miss an opportunity to better serve their guests.
Marination Mobile

Marination Mobile, known as “America’s Sauciest Food Truck,” has been delivering delicious grab & go street food to the hungry lunch-goers of Seattle since 2009. Kamala and Roz, co-owners of the Marination operation, serve up a Hawaiian-Korean fusion cuisine that earned them the title of Good Morning America’s “Best Food Cart 2009.” Their food truck was such a hit that in 2011 they opened a permanent location, Marination Station, near downtown Seattle. These ladies have found great success serving up dishes like spicy pork tacos – a take on traditional Korean bulgogi – and roast kalua pork sliders.

We tracked down Marination Mobile to get the scoop on running a food truck and how they’ve made SPAM one of their menu favorites.

NBP: How did you get your start in food trucks? How long have you been running Marination Mobile?
MM: Marination Mobile has been in business for a little over two years now, and brick and mortar sister, Marination Station opened its doors summer of 2011.

NBP: What do you think of the recent food truck explosion? Why do you think the trend is so popular?
MM: We are totally in love with our mobile community; our fellow truckers, and the guests we feed. As for the popularity ... folks are broke! You can approach any food truck and feel pretty sure that the menu isn’t going to cut into your rent money. And we’re seeing some serious talent walk away from pedigree kitchen jobs to man a mobile cart, so it can feel a little bit like a brush with celebrity.

NBP: Marination Mobile was voted the best food truck in America by Good Morning America – what do you think set you apart from the competition?
MM: Well, out of the trucks we were up against, we were the only one serving pork! Our spicy pork taco was the dish that clinched the title for us. Coincidence? You decide.
**NPB:** How important is social media to your business? How do you use it to drive traffic?

**MM:** It’s extremely important. More than driving business, we use it to keep in close touch with our community. We take food suggestions (“bring back the pork torta!” is a big one), we get help finding locations to park the truck, we chitchat with a few thousand awesome people, and most importantly, if someone has a gripe it’s very easy to reach us and we’re able to address it immediately.

**NPB:** Your menu is short and sweet. How often does it change?

**MM:** We keep the menu the same, and run weekly specials.

**NPB:** What is the hardest part about cooking in such a constrained space?

**MM:** Where to set the beer.

**NPB:** In April you opened Marination Station, your permanent location. How has that been received by fans of your food truck?

**MM:** On our opening weekend, we trended on Twitter! (Our social media gal tells us that’s a big deal.) That was pretty exciting as it showed us how much our Marination Mob was talking about our opening. But we definitely have a massive base of “truckees” who hit up the truck location that is convenient for them rather than journeying to the Station. We opened the Station in Capitol Hill which is Seattle’s most densely packed neighborhood. We’d had a hard time finding a reliable truck spot so our presence there was sporadic at best, although the desire was high. The Cap Hillers have treated us very well so far, but we have capacity to do a lot more.
**NPB**: What are the primary differences you’ve noticed between serving the Mobile’s grab and go food and the sit-down service of Marination Station? What is the atmosphere like? Does the clientele differ dramatically?

**MM**: Our clientele is the same at both places because we serve all walks. Old, young, middle, every color, every job, every tax bracket. We’ve got pro athletes on one end, and a homeless guy on the other end who spends his change on kalbi tacos when we’re in his area. His name is Calvin. He makes our day as much as anyone.

**NPB**: How do people react to the price point of your Mobile menu? Does that price point differ at the Station?

**MM**: We got into this biz wanting to crank out really awesome, fresh, unique, super tasty food for $2, which people really loved. We had to raise our prices $0.25 across the board a few months back because food and gas prices are so out of control. So, we took to our Facebook page about a month before we raised prices to let folks know it was coming, and get a sense for the climate it would create. The reaction from our community was ahhhh-mazing. The best comment was “You could double your price and I’d still be there.” Prices are the same at the Station and on the truck. We want to be consistent; reliably cheap and tasty.

**NPB**: What are the best sellers at Marination Mobile? How did you expand the menu for Marination Station?

**MM**: I know this is going to come as a surprise, but our best seller is the kalua pork slider. Kalua pork is Hawaiian style braised pulled pork. It's smoky and a little salty and we put it on a Hawaiian sweet roll. We also sell out of the spicy pork torta on a daily basis. The only difference between the truck and the brick and mortar is that at Marination Station we are able to run more specials along with beer and wine.

**NPB**: Pork figures prominently on your menu – how do your kalua and spicy pork options perform compared to your other menu items?

**MM**: Pork trumps everything! Anything we do with any kind of pork is a top-seller - when we do the Spicy Pork Torta special it sells out every day. When we don't have it, the regular pork options outsell everything by a noticeable margin. We channel our love for pork into our pork marinade. All the feedback tells us it shows.

**NPB**: You cook Korean-Hawaiian Fusion food, which includes items like bulgogi and SPAM. How do first time customers react to these types of foods that they may be unfamiliar with or never eaten before?

**MM**: People are pretty open and curious. I guess they figure the long line is there for a reason. And when you’re taking a chance on a new cuisine, and that chance is going to cost you less than $5, it’s an easy adventure to swallow. Plus, it’s like everyone is in it together. If two girls are standing in line asking each other if they know what this or that is, inevitably
someone in front or in back of them is going to chime in. We can probably thank the surge in cooking shows on TV for opening that conversation across the greater public, making people comfortable asking questions and trying new things. Thanks Food Network! Thanks Cooking Channel!

NPB: What would each of your last meals be and who would prepare it?
MM: We’d probably eat our last meal together. I’d make it, and I’m not just saying this because you’re asking - but without a doubt there would be hefty dose of pork. Maybe a Study of Pork: shoulder, rib, loin... I mean, why not? If it’s our last meal, might as well eat the entire pig!

NPB: If people are in Seattle, where can they find you?
MM: They can find the truck by following us on Twitter, @curb_cuisine, or on Facebook, http://www.facebook.com/#!/marinationmobile. Or they can swing by Station at 1412 Harvard Ave (between Union St & Pike St).
Pork Celebrated Chef Jose Garces

Americans love food, but their relationship to it is constantly changing. Family dinners and brown-bag lunches used to be the norm, but in today’s fast-paced world, sitting down to a home-cooked meal is a luxury for many. Breakfast is eaten in the car or on the train to work, and lunches are eaten over desks. Faced with this grab and go lifestyle, foodservice professionals have had to rethink their traditional offerings, and few are as innovative as Chef Jose Garces.

The James Beard Award winner for Best Chef Mid Atlantic, Iron Chef and two-time Pork Celebrated Chef already owned and operated five Philadelphia restaurants and another in Chicago when he opened Garces Trading Company in 2010 to rave reviews. The combination bistro, wine shop, bakery and market features both a sit-down menu and quality food to go. Garces is also behind Guapos Tacos, a food truck offering Mexican street tacos to hungry Philadelphians. Whether his food is served in-house, at home, or on the corner, Jose Garces is dedicated to fresh ingredients and first-rate flavor.

We caught up with Jose to discuss restaurant versatility, the food truck explosion, and the best ways to eat pork on the go.

NPB: Tell us about your restaurants?
Chef: Amada, an Andalusian tapas bar, was my first place. I opened it in 2005. Then came Tinto, a Basque wine bar and restaurant, Distrito, a modern Mexican restaurant, Chifa, a Latin-Asian restaurant, Village Whiskey, a whiskey bar and restaurant, Garces Trading Company, a European-style gourmet market-cafe and JG Domestic, an artisanal American restaurant, in Philadelphia. In Chicago I’ve got a Catalanian tapas bar and restaurant, Mercat a la Planxa. And we have a taco truck, Guapos Tacos, which feeds the crowds in the streets of Philadelphia.
NPB: Garces Restaurant Group is already successfully running eight restaurants and a food truck, any plans for the opening of new concepts or are you taking a breather?
Chef: I don’t think I’ll ever stop dreaming up new concepts and new directions for our group, but sometimes it’s also really nice to sit back for a moment and enjoy what we’ve achieved over the past few years. Our focus, as always, remains serving our guests as best we are able, whether in our existing restaurants or in any new ones we may debut in the future. As long as we continue to exceed their expectations, the sky is the limit for us.

NPB: Garces Trading Company is a great spot for top-notch food to go, but it also has sit down menus and a welcoming atmosphere. Why do you feel this versatility is important? Do you think more restaurants are going to be using this format in the future?
Chef: I hope so! Garces Trading Company has been such fun for me, because it’s a new step in my life-long love affair with great ingredients. The Trading Company allows me to bring top-notch olive oils, vinegars, charcuterie, cheese, chocolate, coffee and more to my guests for them to enjoy in the restaurant with us, but also to bring home and share with their families. There’s an intimacy to that that really appeals to me.

NPB: Your food truck, Guapos Tacos, has been hitting the streets of Philadelphia for almost a year now. Has it been successful for you?
Chef: Guapos Tacos has been nothing but fun – right up to the near-constant line of guests taking photos of the truck and their tacos and sharing them on Twitter. I love having my guests visit me in my restaurants, but I also really enjoy bringing my food to them and being a part of their celebrations, whether it’s a street-side snack or booking the truck for a private event.

NPB: Tell us about Guapos’ recent stop at the Dave Matthews Band Caravan. Do you have more plans to attend similar events?
Chef: We don’t have any other major events booked at this time, but we’re always open to attending a great party – and the DMB Caravan was a great party. We got to meet a ton of new friends, and the entire GRG team enjoyed seeing the bands and getting down to some great tunes. Dave, of course, was amazing – after taking some time off from touring, he came back strong and put on an awesome show. And many of our fans from Philadelphia and elsewhere joined us, making for a truly memorable weekend in Atlantic City.
**NPB:** How have you used Garces Trading Company and Guapos Tacos to expand GRG’s catering offerings?

**Chef:** Our catering department is a new venture, and a very exciting one: we’re taking the dishes that we serve in the restaurants and bringing them to off-site events, making our food accessible to our guests in an entirely new way. Working on Garces Trading Company’s Picnics To Go and Guapos Tacos allowed us to experiment with the best ways to serve our guests and care for them in a new and different environment, and we’re taking that knowledge and know-how and translating it into a hospitable catering department.

**NPB:** How have you used social media to get the word out about your restaurants?

**Chef:** I tweet! You should, of course, follow me (@ChefJoseGarces) and also Guapos Tacos (@GuaposTacos), along with the rest of the restaurants (@GarcesGroup). We also email interested foodies a quarterly newsletter with happenings in all the restaurants and around town, to keep them apprised of what’s new and exciting.

**NPB:** You are obviously well established in the restaurant business but what opportunities do you think the food truck craze gives to those trying to get started?

**Chef:** Food trucks are so different from restaurants; on the one hand, there’s much less to manage when you’re not actually inviting people in, but on the other hand, so much more is out of your control (what if it rains?) For me, it’s been a fun and low-key way to share my food without maintaining an additional piece of real estate. The best advice I can offer someone looking to operate their first truck: learn as much as you can about the process before jumping in, and then do so fearlessly. It’s fun!
**NPB:** Besides food trucks, what other trends are you seeing in grab and go options?

**Chef:** Our Garces Coffee Kiosk has been a huge success. Located just beside JG Domestic in the Cira Centre, it's a grab-and-go stand with sandwiches, pastries and of course, our custom-roasted coffee drinks. As people learn more about food, their tastes develop and mature, and suddenly, that crummy lukewarm coffee from any old gas station just won't do. It's our way of bringing quality products to diners on the go, just as we do in the restaurants for a sit-down meal.

**NPB:** In your time in the restaurant business, what changes have you seen in the way people eat? Is being a “quick” option more important than ever?

**Chef:** It's been an interesting few years for restaurants. Fine dining is less and less the pinnacle of the experience of eating out; more and more, people want delicious, top-quality food in an environment that's friendly and welcoming, not stuffy or stiff. ‘Quick’ is often key for more casual options, but our small plates style also makes it easier to pace your meal yourself, rather than letting the restaurant do it for you. You can enjoy a leisurely tasting, or simply stack the table with goodies and go to town.

**NPB:** How do you use pork in your grab and go offerings?

**Chef:** As a devoted pork lover, of course, I'm attracted to all things charcuterie: prosciutto, jamón Serrano, chorizo. We love to create sandwiches with these treats on house-baked baguettes – and they sell like hotcakes! – as well as house-ground sausages for breakfast sandwiches and of course, pork tacos from Guapos.

**NPB:** What is your favorite pork dish being offered at your restaurants right now?

**Chef:** It's impossible to choose just one, so I'll go with a classic: our roasted suckling pig at Amada, served with a host of Andalusian veggie sides and carved tableside by the chef. I always try to create the perfect plate for each guest – some of the crispy skin, the succulent meat, herb-roasted fingerling potatoes, charred green onions with salbitxada, spinach and garbanzo beans, and rosemary white beans with ham. There's no better meal to share with a group of friends!

**NPB:** What would your last meal be and who would it be prepared by?

**Chef:** Homey favorites such as arepas and empanadas, prepared in my family kitchen with my wife and children. With a side of pork belly, of course!
Featured Chef Recipe

PORCHETTA DI TESTA, SAUCE GRIBICHE AND MICRO ARUGULA

Ingredients

For Porchetta

1 LARGE PIGS HEAD, FRESH BLACK OR BERKSHIRE PIG
1 1/2 cups kosher salt
1 teaspoon cure salt #2
1/4 teaspoon fennel seed, ground
1/4 teaspoon white pepper, ground
1 TBL rosemary, fresh, finely chopped
1 TBL thyme, fresh, finely chopped

For Gribiche

3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 TBL lemon juice
1/2 TBL capers, chopped
1 TBL parsley, fresh, finely chopped
Method for Porchetta
1. De-bone the pigs head whole, starting under the jaw line, lay out flat, skin side down
2. Remove the ears and boil in water for two hours, remove and cool down
3. Remove the tongue and reserve
4. Make cure mixture with the salt, cure salt, ground fennel and white pepper
5. Rub cure mixture on to the meat side of the face
6. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 14 hours
7. Rinse cure off the head, season head with rosemary and thyme
8. Lay out the tongue and ears on top of the meat side of the face
9. Roll the face into a roulade; the ears and tongue should all be rolled inside
10. Tie with butcher twine Cryo vac and sous vide for 20 hours at 175 degrees Fahrenheit
11. Remove from water and shock in an ice bath
12. Remove from cryo vac bag and keep refrigerated

Method for Sauce
1. Gribiche Mix all ingredients together, season with salt to taste

Serving Suggestions
Method for Plating
1. Slice Porchetta thin, lay out flat on the plate
2. Garnish the top of porchetta with 1-2 tbls of sauce gribiche, micro arugula and Maldon salt
3. Note: serve on chilled plate
Featured Grab & Go Recipe

ROASTED PORK LOIN SANDWICH WITH BROCCOLI RAAB & FONTINA CHEESE

Ingredients

Pork Loin Preparation

2 POUNDS PORK LOIN, BONELESS CENTER-CUT PORK LOIN
1 cup yogurt (peach)
2 fl oz lemon juice, fresh squeezed
1 teaspoon cloves, ground
1 teaspoon nutmeg, ground
1 TBL cardamom, ground
1 TBL allspice, ground
to taste salt & pepper
as needed Brioche Buns, toasted with butter
as needed Fontina Cheeses, shaved
2 bunches broccoli raab, sauteed with olive oil, salt & pepper
Preparation

Cooking Directions

1. In mixing bowl, combine yogurt, lemon juice, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, allspice, salt and pepper. Mix well to combine.
2. Add Pork Loin and marinate for 1 hour.
3. Evenly grill pork loin to achieve well browned crust and char.
4. Finish in oven if needed until 138 degrees.
5. Rest 3-5 minutes set prior to slicing.

Serving Suggestions

1. On bottom of toasted bun, layer grilled pork.
2. On top center of pork, evenly place sautéed Broccoli Raab.
3. Top Broccoli Raab with Fontina cheese and place under cheese melter.
Featured Grab & Go Recipe

PORK SHAWARMA IN PITA WITH TZATZIKI

Ingredients

Pork Shoulder Marinade

2 POUNDS PORK COLLAR BUTT, BONELESS, THIN SLICE AND POUNDED
4 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon black pepper, ground
1 teaspoon allspice, ground
1 teaspoon cardamom, ground
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, ground
1 cup yogurt, plain
2 fl oz lemon juice

Tzatziki

1 pound yogurt, plain, strained for 1.5 hours in cooler
1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, fine chopped
pinch kosher salt
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 TBL extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
5 each mint leaves, chopped

as needed pita bread

Garnish
as needed radishes, thin sliced
as needed sugar snap peas, julienne
as needed tomatoes, chopped
as needed parsley, chopped

Preparation

Cooking Directions

Marinate Pork:
1. In mixing bowl combine garlic, seasonings, yogurt and lemon juice, mix well to combine.
2. Submerge pork and marinate for 1 hour.

Tzatziki:
1. Squeeze liquid from cucumbers.
2. In mixing bowl, combine strained yogurt, cucumber, salt, garlic, olive oil, vinegar and mint.
3. Mix well to combine.

Pork Preparation:
1. On Griddle or Grill, place marinated pork for 5-8 minutes, turn as needed until an internal temperature of 138 degrees, rest before serving.

Serving Suggestions
1. Place pork in pitas and top with Tzatziki, radish, sugar snaps, tomatoes and parsley.
Featured Grab & Go Recipe

PORK SHOULDER, HAM EYE & PORK BELLY SPRING ROLL

Ingredients

Lemongrass Marinade

2 each lemongrass, chopped
6 cloves garlic, chopped
4 each ramps, chopped
4 fl oz oyster sauce
4 fl oz soy sauce, sweet
2 fl oz fish sauce
4 OZ WT PORK SHOULDER, SLICED
4 OZ WT PORK BELLY, SLICED
4 OZ WT HAM EYE, SLICED

1 pound rice vermicelli noodle

as needed rice paper
4 oz lettuce, shredded
1-2 each daikon, peeled, julienne
1-2 each carrots, peeled, julienne
1-2 each cucumber, peeled, julienne
1 oz wt mint leaves
as needed peanut hoisin sauce, prepared
as needed chili lime sauce, prepared

Preparation

Cooking Directions

Lemongrass Marinade:
1. In mixing bowl, combine all ingredients & mix well to combine.
2. Marinate pork for 1 hour.

Rice Vermicelli Noodle:
1. In salted boiling water, cook noodles for 5-8 minutes.
2. Drain & rinse in cold running water, set aside.

Spring Roll Preparation:
1. Grill pork until 138 degrees internal temperature.
2. Dip rice paper in warm water to soften.
3. In center of rice paper, place noodles, lettuce, daikon, carrots, cucumber, mint and pork.

Serving Suggestions
1. Roll up and serve with peanut hoisin sauce and fish sauce.
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While family and casual restaurants have been building their carry-out business for years, one of today’s top foodservice trends is the acceleration of grab & go cuisine at full service restaurants. Off-premise dining at casual dining restaurants accounts for 15% of all traffic, which is almost 965 million occasions. Applebee’s, Chili’s and Ruby Tuesday are just some of the casual segment leaders who have worked to build curbside and carryout programs. Denny’s has been an innovator in grab & go package design, and, along with Huddle House, is testing restaurants with drive-thru capabilities. Bob Evans has been in the carry out business for over a decade, and most recently introduced Family Meals to Go which includes their signature Pork Meat Loaf. While Mimi’s recently introduced its Family Ham Feast takeaway dinner, which serves 6-8 for $79.99. The heat and serve meal includes a spiral-cut, bone-in quarter honey ham with a honey-Dijon glaze as well as salad, rolls, vegetables and dessert.

With everyone from restaurants to convenience stores to supermarkets trying to grab a bigger portion of the take-out business, here are some trends to watch:

1. **Restaurant Food Coming To You**: With the significant size of the market and more time-pressed consumers, restaurants will look at different strategies to enhance their carry-out business. Innovative new programs and packaging will be developed throughout the industry to make it easier for consumers to get high-quality restaurant food. Even fine dining will look at this opportunity. Several models already exist, including Eataly in New York and Radius in San Francisco. Eataly features many to-go options including roasted pork with rhubarb, sugar snap peas, cabbage and honey
vinaigrette. Radius offers three dining options for the consumer — a restaurant that
serves dinner, a café that serves lunch and a takeout area, all in the same location.
Eat-in guests can dine on pork torchon with white bean puree and huckleberry
gastrique as well as honey-brined pork tenderloin with crispy pork belly, pickled
shiitakes and apple cider gastrique. Those on the go can choose from pressed pork
belly on green onion slab with apricot mustard, caramelized onions and arugula or a
honey cured ham baguette. The bottom line is restaurants don’t want to miss any
opportunity to capture a greater percentage of traffic and they will diversify to do so.

2. Street Food Right Around the Corner: Street food is the ultimate grab & go cuisine.
Food trucks in major metropolitan areas are serving adventurous food, and they
have the ability to travel to the customers. Trucks serve a variety of hand-helds like
tacos, carnitas, arepas, wraps, falafel, crepes, steamed buns, satays, samosas and
soups from around the world. The exploding popularity of street food has led to high
profile chefs introducing their own trucks, such as the popular L.A. Boarder Grill Truck
by Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger. Not only are chefs taking street
food to the masses via food truck but they are adapting traditional street food for
dine-in menus as well. Rick Bayless opened XOCO in Chicago to feature the
street food of Mexico, including tortas, churros, caldos and breakfast options like
huevos rancheros and torreja. Qdoba’s Street Tacos LTO was also inspired by
Mexican street food and provided guests with specialties like slow-roasted green
chile pork carnitas with onion-cilantro relish and lime. Lettuce Entertain You has had great success offering “hot Asian buns”
in the style of Chinese street food at Wow Bao. The list goes on and on and
consumers can’t get enough. With so many cuisines to try and trucks to find, the
possibilities seem endless.

3. Healthy Grab & Go: Healthy eating is in, and the fast food, and take-out category has a
definite opportunity to add a nutritional influence to their food. The on-the-go consumer
is looking for nutritional foods that will fill them up but won’t slow them down. Whether
it is healthier sauces to complement slow-cooked meats, adding vegetables to simply
prepared protein-based tacos and wraps, “stealth health” or smaller portion sizes,
consumers are demanding better food with less calories. Subway, which positions
itself as the healthy sandwich option, recently introduced egg whites as a grab & go
breakfast item and Dunkin’ Donuts continues to add menu items to its DD Smart take-
out menu. As consumers look for healthy grab & go options operators will rise to meet
their demands.

4. On-Premise Goes Off-Premise: The non-commercial segment will continue to explore
new ways to generate revenue through grab & go opportunities. Colleges, hospitals
and corporate cafeterias are developing new retail strategies to take advantage of their
time-pressed constituents. The University of Pennsylvania sells up to 80,000 meals a week in their retail facility. Paradise Valley Hospital in Scottsdale, AZ has developed a Health for Life Meals To Go program where, twice a week, people can order meals like rosemary pork loin for $5.50 with 450 calories or less and 600g of sodium. The need for quick options extends far beyond the commercial segment.

5. **New Technology for Faster Food**: Innovative restaurants are already committed to new technology. Mobile ordering for a number of chains is available on iOS devices and coupon texting is becoming more common. Pizza Hut has tied in with EA Sports to feature ordering applications in video games. Smaller stores are planning pick-up windows. Double drive-thrus offer improved, high-tech computerized systems. In addition, chains will look at new ways to help consumers get good food faster. One franchisee of McAlister’s Deli is testing a stand-alone drive-thru store in Midland, TX. Through rush period they can handle 75-80 cars an hour, and the store achieves a higher check average than stores with dining rooms. And more is on its way – chains know that faster ordering technology coupled with better order accuracy is the best way to connect with Millennials. It effectively increases brand loyalty among a generation that eats on the run.

As life gets faster, grab & go cuisine will become an even larger focus of foodservice. The size of the opportunity is significant and no chain or independent wants to miss an opportunity to better serve their guests.
Marination Mobile

Marination Mobile, known as “America’s Sauciest Food Truck,” has been delivering delicious grab & go street food to the hungry lunch-goers of Seattle since 2009. Kamala and Roz, co-owners of the Marination operation, serve up a Hawaiian-Korean fusion cuisine that earned them the title of Good Morning America’s “Best Food Cart 2009.” Their food truck was such a hit that in 2011 they opened a permanent location, Marination Station, near downtown Seattle. These ladies have found great success serving up dishes like spicy pork tacos – a take on traditional Korean bulgogi – and roast kalua pork sliders.

We tracked down Marination Mobile to get the scoop on running a food truck and how they’ve made SPAM one of their menu favorites.

**NPB:** How did you get your start in food trucks? How long have you been running Marination Mobile?

**MM:** Marination Mobile has been in business for a little over two years now, and brick and mortar sister, Marination Station opened its doors summer of 2011.

**NPB:** What do you think of the recent food truck explosion? Why do you think the trend is so popular?

**MM:** We are totally in love with our mobile community; our fellow truckers, and the guests we feed. As for the popularity ... folks are broke! You can approach any food truck and feel pretty sure that the menu isn’t going to cut into your rent money. And we’re seeing some serious talent walk away from pedigree kitchen jobs to man a mobile cart, so it can feel a little bit like a brush with celebrity.

**NPB:** Marination Mobile was voted the best food truck in America by Good Morning America – what do you think set you apart from the competition?

**MM:** Well, out of the trucks we were up against, we were the only one serving pork! Our spicy pork taco was the dish that clinched the title for us. Coincidence? You decide.
NPB: How important is social media to your business? How do you use it to drive traffic?

MM: It’s extremely important. More than driving business, we use it to keep in close touch with our community. We take food suggestions (“bring back the pork torta!” is a big one), we get help finding locations to park the truck, we chitchat with a few thousand awesome people, and most importantly, if someone has a gripe it’s very easy to reach us and we’re able to address it immediately.

NPB: Your menu is short and sweet. How often does it change?

MM: We keep the menu the same, and run weekly specials.

NPB: What is the hardest part about cooking in such a constrained space?

MM: Where to set the beer.

NPB: In April you opened Marination Station, your permanent location. How has that been received by fans of your food truck?

MM: On our opening weekend, we trended on Twitter! (Our social media gal tells us that’s a big deal.) That was pretty exciting as it showed us how much our Marination Mob was talking about our opening. But we definitely have a massive base of “truckees” who hit up the truck location that is convenient for them rather than journeying to the Station. We opened the Station in Capitol Hill which is Seattle’s most densely packed neighborhood. We’d had a hard time finding a reliable truck spot so our presence there was sporadic at best, although the desire was high. The Cap Hillers have treated us very well so far, but we have capacity to do a lot more.
**NPB:** What are the primary differences you’ve noticed between serving the Mobile’s grab and go food and the sit-down service of Marination Station? What is the atmosphere like? Does the clientele differ dramatically?

**MM:** Our clientele is the same at both places because we serve all walks. Old, young, middle, every color, every job, every tax bracket. We’ve got pro athletes on one end, and a homeless guy on the other end who spends his change on kalbi tacos when we’re in his area. His name is Calvin. He makes our day as much as anyone.

**NPB:** How do people react to the price point of your Mobile menu? Does that price point differ at the Station?

**MM:** We got into this biz wanting to crank out really awesome, fresh, unique, super tasty food for $2, which people really loved. We had to raise our prices $0.25 across the board a few months back because food and gas prices are so out of control. So, we took to our Facebook page about a month before we raised prices to let folks know it was coming, and get a sense for the climate it would create. The reaction from our community was ahhhh-mazing. The best comment was “You could double your price and I’d still be there.” Prices are the same at the Station and on the truck. We want to be consistent; reliably cheap and tasty.

**NPB:** What are the best sellers at Marination Mobile? How did you expand the menu for Marination Station?

**MM:** I know this is going to come as a surprise, but our best seller is the kalua pork slider. Kalua pork is Hawaiian style braised pulled pork. It's smoky and a little salty and we put it on a Hawaiian sweet roll. We also sell out of the spicy pork torta on a daily basis. The only difference between the truck and the brick and mortar is that at Marination Station we are able to run more specials along with beer and wine.

**NPB:** Pork figures prominently on your menu – how do your kalua and spicy pork options perform compared to your other menu items?

**MM:** Pork trumps everything! Anything we do with any kind of pork is a top-seller - when we do the Spicy Pork Torta special it sells out every day. When we don’t have it, the regular pork options outsell everything by a noticeable margin. We channel our love for pork into our pork marinade. All the feedback tells us it shows.

**NPB:** You cook Korean-Hawaiian Fusion food, which includes items like bulgogi and SPAM. How do first time customers react to these types of foods that they may be unfamiliar with or never eaten before?

**MM:** People are pretty open and curious. I guess they figure the long line is there for a reason. And when you’re taking a chance on a new cuisine, and that chance is going to cost you less than $5, it’s an easy adventure to swallow. Plus, it's like everyone is in it together. If two girls are standing in line asking each other if they know what this or that is, inevitably
someone in front or in back of them is going to chime in. We can probably thank the surge in cooking shows on TV for opening that conversation across the greater public, making people comfortable asking questions and trying new things. Thanks Food Network! Thanks Cooking Channel!

![Image](image.png)

**NPB:** What would each of your last meals be and who would prepare it?

**MM:** We’d probably eat our last meal together. I’d make it, and I’m not just saying this because you’re asking - but without a doubt there would be hefty dose of pork. Maybe a Study of Pork: shoulder, rib, loin... I mean, why not? If it’s our last meal, might as well eat the entire pig!

**NPB:** If people are in Seattle, where can they find you?

**MM:** They can find the truck by following us on Twitter, @curb_cuisine, or on Facebook,[http://www.facebook.com/#!/marinationmobile](http://www.facebook.com/#!/marinationmobile). Or they can swing by Station at 1412 Harvard Ave (between Union St & Pike St).