CREATIVE CONCEPTS

JULY 2017 | ISSUE 47 | THE INDUSTRY CONCEPTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD!
DISCOVER THE LATEST, CRAZIEST THEME PARK & STATE FAIR CONCEPTS.

Star Wars-inspired lightsaber churros are new to Disneyland.
53% of consumers are interested in seeing amusement park foods at restaurants and supermarkets.

DATASSENTIAL RESEARCH
THE MENU ADOPTION CYCLE

Datassential’s Menu Adoption Cycle (MAC) is a framework for understanding, predicting, and leveraging food trends. A trend’s life cycle is defined by where that trend shows up, starting at fine dining restaurants and then eventually finding its way to mainstream supermarket shelves and beyond.

**RETAIL**

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<th>MAC STAGE</th>
<th>INCEPTION</th>
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<td>Trends start here. Inception-stage trends exemplify originality in flavor, preparation, and presentation.</td>
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<th>MAC STAGE</th>
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<td>Proliferation-stage trends are adjusted for mainstream appeal. Often combined with popular applications (on a burger, pasta, etc.), these trends have become familiar to many.</td>
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<td>Adoption-stage trends grow their base via lower price points and simpler prep methods. Still differentiated, these trends often feature premium and/or generally authentic ingredients.</td>
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<th>MAC STAGE</th>
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<td>Ubiquity-stage trends have reached maturity, and can be found across all sectors of the food industry.</td>
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**FOODSERVICE**

- Ethnic Independents
- Fine Dining
- Gastropubs
- Chef Casuals
- Food Trucks
- Upper Casual
- Casual Independents
- Fast Casual
- Lodging
- Casual Chains
- Colleges
- Quick Service Restaurants
- Grocery Deli
- Convenience Stores
- Corporate Cafeterias
- Family Restaurants
- Healthcare
- K-12 Schools

**DATASSENTIAL’S CREATIVE CONCEPTS: AMUSEMENT PARKS**
Datassential’s MenuTrends data is reported using two key measures: **Penetration** and **Incidence**.

**Penetration**

*% of Restaurants that serve that food, flavor, or ingredient.*

This is a measure of adoption. Increases in penetration indicate that more restaurants are adding the item to their menu.

Penetration is the most important statistic and the best indicator of trend movement.

**Incidence**

*% of Menu Items that feature that food, flavor, or ingredient.*

This is a measure of versatility. A restaurant adding yet another chicken dish to its menu will result in an increase in incidence.

Incidence is a supporting statistic, to be used as a complement to penetration.

**Example: Chicken**

Chicken is found on 96% of all restaurant menus, and is featured in 11% of those dishes.
Ohio-based Kings Island (owned by Cedar Fair and declared the second-most visited seasonal amusement park in the U.S. in 2016) recently opened a new restaurant in its Soak City Water Park area called Island Smokehouse that’s included in their All Season Dining plan visitors can purchase (dining plans are appearing increasingly at other amusement parks too). Island Smokehouse showcases a menu created by chef Nathan Gushulak that includes smoked pulled pork, shrimp, wings, and more, all cooked on a wood-fired smoker.

**WHY IT MATTERS**

Both amusement parks and fairs are hotbeds for operators to get innovative and showcase the latest up-and-coming food trends. In this issue, see how ordinary foods can be transformed into unique, one-of-a-kind options. By marrying two well-known items that are not typically paired together, operators can attract consumers’ attention. The Texas State Fair capitalizes on this strategy by showcasing cinnamon rolls with bacon strips combined as one in their award-winning Fried Bacon Cinnamon Roll. Similarly, amusement parks are taking foods and beverages to the next level with glowing cotton candy at Disney, over-the-top artisanal milkshakes at Universal Studios’ CityWalk, unique non-alcoholic sodas created by mixologists at Hersheypark, and more. Also gain inspiration from themed concepts appearing at amusement parks, like Universal Studios’ Wizarding World of Harry Potter, which uniquely features Butterbeer and pumpkin juice that adds an experiential element for customers. In this issue of Creative Concepts, both operators and manufacturers can learn from the many innovative, Instagram-worthy concepts covered.

**EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF AMUSEMENT PARK & STATE FAIR FOODS AND FLAVORS**

To keep up with the competition for consumers’ (and their kids’) attention and dollars, many amusement parks have been modernizing and adding hugely ambitious new lands like the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios and Star Wars-themed lands (which are set to open in 2019) at Disneyland and Disney’s Hollywood Studios. Through these concepts, amusement parks aim to entice kids to experience the brands and properties they love, with food playing a major role in establishing an immersive experience. Both Disney and Universal Studios have nighttime-oriented, iconic boardwalks with themed restaurants featuring renowned chefs and brands that have upped their food game.

Today a wide range of dining options are available to amusement park visitors, from small kiosks to quick-service restaurants to multi-course fine dining concepts, plus restaurants at the often-attached hotels and campgrounds. Many of these places now are known for leveraging really crazy, creative, and over-the-top dishes that reflect the thrills and fun associated with the venues, which can be a lesson for any operator looking for an Instagram-worthy dish. Most amusement parks are also now hosting festivals (SeaWorld has a Seven Seas Food Festival and Six Flags has a Food and Brew Festival) that provide customers with a sampling of global concepts, along with a variety of beer and wine options that often are brewed locally.

In this issue of Creative Concepts, we’re going to explore innovative trends in fried foods featured at a variety of amusement parks and fairs (think fried Jell-O), as well as unique beverages like boysenberry-flavored beer, less common meat options like alligator bites, pork parfaits, and more. Also, step into magical worlds inspired by movies, like the new Pandora – The World of Avatar that recently opened at Disney with accompanying themed restaurant concepts that showcase a glowing, Instagram-worthy cocktail topped with boba, an ingredient that has grown over 135% on menus in the past four years, according to Datassential MenuTrends. Both manufacturers and operators will additionally gain inspiration and insight from concepts that have withstood the test of time, like Knott’s Berry Farm and Knoebels Amusement Resort.
ALLIGATOR BITES
Yes, it's really alligator meat. Breaded and deep fried to legendary peculiarity.

KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT
Elysburg, PA

ESSENTIAL DATA

WHAT DO CONSUMERS THINK ABOUT AMUSEMENT PARKS?

OF CONSUMERS WANT TO SEE AMUSEMENT PARK FOODS AND FLAVORS AT RESTAURANTS OR SUPERMARKETS

HAVE RECENTLY VISITED AN AMUSEMENT OR THEME PARK

MENU APPEAL
We tested menu items from this month’s Creative Concepts with 1,000 consumers. Let’s see how they scored:

DOLLYWOOD
Pigeon Forge, TN

CINNAMON BREAD
Fresh loaves of our famous buttery, sweet cinnamon bread made in a working grist mill.

LEGOLAND
Billund, Denmark (HQ)

GRANNY’S APPLE FRIES
Warm, Granny Smith apple fries, dusted with cinnamon and sugar and served with sweet whipped cream dipping sauce.

KNOTT’S BERRY FARM
Buena Park, CA

FUN STICK
Fried cheesecake on a stick with boysenberry topping (available at Knott’s Berry Farm’s Boysenberry Festival).

DISNEYLAND RESORT
Anaheim, CA

SWEET CORN NUGGETS
Topped with beef chili, spring onions, and sour cream (from Disney’s California Adventure Food & Wine Festival).

KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT
Elysburg, PA

ALLIGATOR BITES
Yes, it’s really alligator meat. Breaded and deep fried to legendary peculiarity.
After taking his daughters to different amusement parks throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Walt Disney established Disneyland theme park in 1955 in Anaheim, CA. The concept proceeded to take off and expanded to feature eight themed “lands.” Following up on the success of Disneyland, the second Disney park, Walt Disney World Resort, opened in 1971 in Orlando, FL. Currently Disney boasts a total of six theme park locations around the world, in addition to water parks, golf courses, a camping resort, a cruise line, and more. Today the Walt Disney Company is divided into four different business segments, including Parks and Resorts, and according to Forbes, Disney ranks in at number seven on the World’s Most Valuable Brands list and is one of the most recognizable brands in the country.

Across its unique segments, the company maintains its innovative and creative reputation through not only its various retail items and attractions (including roller coasters, water slides, shows, and fictional lands brought to life, like Disney World’s just-opened Pandora – The World of Avatar and the upcoming Star Wars lands to be built at both parks), but also its numerous experiential dining concepts. What child hasn’t dreamed of being a guest for dinner at the castle from Beauty and the Beast and consuming the Grey Stuff Lumiere calls “delicious”? Disneyland visitors have the option to try the Grey Stuff at the Red Rose Taverne (according to our data, 60% of consumers are interested in trying it), and at Gaston’s Tavern, self-described by Disney as “the manliest of manly places,” customers can taste LeFou’s Brew of frozen apple juice topped with all-natural passion fruit-mango foam. Another recently-opened Disneyland restaurant is 21 Royal, which provides consumers with what Eater describes as an “ultra-deluxe experience” in a space originally designed as a private residence for Walt and Lillian Disney. The venue serves only 12 people per night, and for $15,000 the group can dine on a menu that’s specially crafted to a theme the guests choose. Throughout the numerous Disney concepts, visitors can find just about anything they might have a taste for — at Jiko, located in Orlando’s Animal Kingdom Lodge, African-influenced fare like piri piri chicken echoes the wildlife reserve theme, while it’s all about cones at Disneyland’s Cozy Cone Motel (five giant construction cone-shaped pavilions offer treats, like chili-stuffed bread cones and cones filled with everything from churros to pretzel bites).
FRIED PICKLES WITH DIPPING SAUCE
Dill pickle spears dipped in parmesan and panko fried golden brown and served with a house sauce.

CARNATION CAFE

CHILAQUILES
Layers of corn tortillas with refried beans, scrambled eggs, and green sauce garnished with queso fresco, sour cream, onions, and cilantro.

RANCHO DEL ZOCALO

CHURRO FUNNEL CAKE
House-made funnel cake topped with cinnamon sugar, caramel, and whipped cream.

HUNGRY BEAR

BBQ TOFU
Crispy and seasoned with our signature rub and tossed in BBQ sauce served with our signature baked beans and choice of one additional side.

RIVER BELLE TERRACE

DOLE WHIP FLOAT

ALOHA ISLE

MENUTRENDS INSIGHT
According to Datassential MenuTrends, fried pickles have grown on menus more than 52% over the past four years.

CARNATION CAFE

FRIED PICKLES WITH DIPPING SAUCE
Dill pickle spears dipped in parmesan and panko fried golden brown and served with a house sauce.
EPCOT FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL
Located within Disney World and running from August through November, the Epcot Food and Wine Festival offers a wide variety of global cuisines along with music and events. Hosting celebrity chefs and tasting booths starring foods from across the globe, this festival is one of the most anticipated events held at Walt Disney World, according to Disney Touring Plans. Each booth is inspired by a country and focuses on a few of its iconic dishes – the Greece booth offers signature spanakopita, while Scotland features Traditional Scottish Lamb Stew with Neeps and Tatties (a classic Scottish dish consisting of turnips and mashed potatoes), and Australia showcases Australian Grilled Lamb Chops (pictured at left). The layout at the festival allows consumers to try over 30 booths of globally-inspired food without ever leaving Disney. In addition to global foods, the Chocolate Studio booth at the festival also features on-trend Liquid Nitro Chocolate Almond Truffle with warm whiskey caramel.

PANDORA – THE WORLD OF AVATAR
Pandora – The World of Avatar is a new land at Disney World and recreates the exotic tastes and flavors found in the Pandora world featured in the movie “Avatar.” Refreshment lounge Pongu Pongu, (meaning “party party” in the Na’vi language), offers sweet snacks as well as “out-of-this-world” beverages that glow, like the Night Blossom cocktail that is topped with passion fruit, boba, and an “Unadelta Seed” light which glows. As guests travel through the Valley of Mo’ara, they’ll find other innovative eats like the Slow-Roasted Sliced Grilled Beef Bowl topped with crunchy vegetable slaw and boba balls (pictured above).

DISNEY SPRINGS DINING
Neighbor to the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, Disney Springs is a “timeless and vibrant place” known for its outdoor shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. The complex offers a wide range of internationally-inspired cuisines from many different operators. Chef Art Smith’s Homecomin’ serves trendy “farm-to-fork” cuisine that showcases Florida-inspired options, like the Thigh High Chicken Biscuits. Additionally, fine dining at Wolfgang Puck’s Grand Café features an upscale American menu with items like classic Steak and Frites (pictured above), along with Puck’s signature Asian and Californian-inspired flavors.

BENGAL BARBECUE
Bengal Barbecue, located in Disneyland, is known for its wide variety of jungle skewers, including the Safari Skewer (bacon-wrapped asparagus) and the Chieftain Chicken Skewer (with a Polynesian sauce), as well as on-trend poke, which is leveraged in Ahi Poke Spring Rolls. The rice paper wrap consists of marinated ahi tuna, lettuce, carrots, Thai basil, and creamy wasabi mayo and is accompanied by a ginger dipping sauce. According to Datassential MenuTrends, poke has risen 20% on menus this year alone. Refreshments like the Pomegranate Piranha Lemonade (featuring mango and pineapple flavors and topped with fruity foam) are also showcased.
Founded in 1961 by Angus G. Wynne, Six Flags (named after the six countries’ whose flags have flown over Texas at one time or another) is the largest regional theme park chain, boasting 18 locations with roller coasters, water parks, and more across the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. This month Six Flags New England hosted a Food and Brew Festival for the first time, which showcased a variety of sampling stations around the park with dishes like corn on the cob, walking tacos, fried mac n’ cheese balls, an innovative cinnamon sugar dessert cornwich (flavors included warm apple, blueberry, and strawberry), Homemade Hard Lemonade, and over 50 beers with local options from Wormtown Brewery, Old Planters Brewing Co., and Broad Brook Brewing.
Hersheypark
HERSHEY, PA

BACKGROUND
Referred to by the Lebanon Daily News as “the sweetest place on earth,” Hersheypark, founded in 1906 by Milton Hershey (creator of the Hershey Chocolate Company), originally opened as a leisure park for company employees. After 60 years, management expanded the leisure park into a full-blown public theme park. Just this year, Hersheypark opened the Hershey Triple Tower, which showcases three drop towers of varying heights next to each other, a first in the U.S., Hershey notes.

WHY IT MATTERS
This year Business Insider named Hersheypark one of the top 20 most popular amusement parks in North America because of its family-oriented atmosphere, kid-friendly rides, roller coasters, as well as Hershey’s Chocolate World (next door to the park), which features a chocolate factory-themed tour. The dining scene at Hersheypark boasts over 60 venues, from a kosher option to shaved ice stands to full-service Hersheypark Place, which features dishes like loaded fries, Maryland Crab Cakes, and a Chocolate BBQ Burger that tops a 100% Black Angus beef burger with chocolate BBQ sauce along with applewood-smoked bacon and cheddar cheese with an onion ring garnish. Recently, Hersheypark debuted the first permanent location of BBLz, a concept where visitors can watch “Bubble Makers” (mixologists) create unique, non-alcoholic beverages combining Pepsi soft drinks with whimsical confections (the All-Day PBJ combines grape soda with sweet cream foam, Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups, and peanut butter). The park prides itself on having withstood the test of time, largely due to the founding principles Milton Hershey established, such as giving back to the community through dedicating financial resources and time to non-profit organizations and families in need.

According to Datassential FLAVOR, 77% of consumers like BBQ sauce, and 89% of consumers like chocolate. The combination of the two at Hersheypark is an innovative way to bring the consumer-favorite condiment to the next level.
Standing 80 feet high, Hershey’s Triple Tower is the first choose-your-thrill triple tower in the U.S. and consists of Hershey’s, Reese’s, and Hershey’s Kisses towers.

Founder’s Way Funnel Cake features a wide variety of flavors, including the signature Hershey’s Chocolate and seasonal choices like the Pumpkin Funnel Cake pictured.

The Donut Waffle Ice Cream Sundae from Turkey Hill Creamery in the Pioneer Frontier Food Court.

BBLz is a new whimsical beverage experience located at Kissing Tower Hill that features unique flavor and ingredient combinations.

Hershey’s Chocolate World is located just outside the main gates of Hersheypark and features the Hershey’s Chocolate Tour with free admission.
Universal Studios’ original theme park, Universal Studios Hollywood, opened in 1915 in Universal City, CA, beginning as simply an opportunity for visitors to tour the studio. Rides, restaurants, and shops weren’t added until 1964. However, the main attraction for many visitors is still the backlot tour and chance to be on-set. In 1990, in an attempt to rival Disney, Universal decided to open a full-blown theme park and expanded to a second location (Universal Orlando Resort) in Orlando, FL. Today it features the additional Universal CityWalk as well as Islands of Adventure that are based on various fictional worlds from movies and brands like “Jurassic Park.” The latest attraction to open at Universal is the Volcano Bay water park with 18 new rides.

According to Eater Miami, the highlight of Universal Studios Orlando is the food at the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. The theme park was so well-received by consumers that it now spans across two parks in Universal that are connected through the Hogwarts Express train. On the Islands of Adventure lies Hogsmeade, where it’s perpetually winter with snow topping the village’s roofs. Hogsmeade includes concepts like Honeydukes Sweet Shop (seller of the iconic chocolate frogs) and Three Broomsticks with adjoining Hog’s Head Pub, a darkly-lit bar that’s best known for its Butterbeer and pumpkin juice (non-alcoholic beverages that mimic those mentioned in the books and movies). The newer Diagon Alley is located in the Universal Studios part of the park and includes shops like Ollivanders where visitors can purchase replica wands like those used in the movies and features restaurants like Florean Fortescue’s Ice-Cream Parlor (ice cream flavors vary from Earl Grey tea to lavender to Butterbeer frozen yogurt) and the Leaky Cauldron, which showcases British favorites like bangers and mash.

Beyond the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, at the CityWalk (a dining and retail destination open to the public) is Steampunk-themed Toothsome Chocolate Emporium & Savory Feast Kitchen, a full-service restaurant, bar, and confectionary that opened in 2016 and is known for its gourmet chocolate, creative cocktails, and artisanal milkshakes with unique flavors like Bacon Brittle and Brownie Bark. Currently Universal Orlando Resort is looking to construct a sixth hotel by 2018 that will feature a “rooftop bar and grill, offering small plates and craft cocktails,” according to the Travel Market Report.
The foods and beverages found at the Wizarding World of Harry Potter were taste tested by the author of the novels, J.K. Rowling, and approved as “up to Potter standards,” Forbes notes.

Universal Studios’ Leaky Cauldron, based on the restaurant Harry Potter and his friends would dine at in the books and movies, features Beef, Lamb, & Guinness Stew, which is served in a bread bowl (according to survey data, 39% of consumers are interested in trying it).

Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans (essentially jelly beans with flavors ranging from classic banana or watermelon to unconventional earwax or soap) from Honeydukes Sweet Shop are inspired by the candy eaten by the main characters in the Harry Potter movies/novels and provide customers with a similar experience to what the characters imaginably had.

The Great Feast showcased at Three Broomsticks is meant to be shared and includes a fresh garden salad tossed in signature vinaigrette dressing, a combination of rotisserie-smoked chicken, spareribs, corn on the cob, and roast potatoes.

A wide range of desserts are available at Three Broomsticks, but highlights of the menu are Butterbeer Ice-Cream and Butterbeer Potted Cream, a butterscotch and whipped cream-topped pudding that comes in a glass jar.

Butterbeer (non-alcoholic) is the signature beverage found at the Hog’s Head Pub. It comes in a variety of preparations including frozen, hot, and with or without a souvenir mug. Bon Appetit describes frozen Butterbeer as “a cream soda-flavored slushie with butterscotch foam.”
SEAWORLD PARKS
LOCATION: Orlando, FL (HQ)

SeaWorld Parks’ nine locations are known for their family-friendly environment and aim to provide a zoological-themed experience with a special focus on underwater creatures. In addition to roller coasters, water parks, and live dolphin shows (in 2016 SeaWorld announced that they would be discontinuing the killer whale shows), SeaWorld features a wide array of dining opportunities (the founders originally intended to construct an underwater restaurant, but those plans fell through and were replaced by the first park in 1964), including a new Seven Seas Food Festival that premiered in Orlando this year. The festival ran from February to May and provided customers with a taste of international cuisines, including Asian (Bingsu Salted Vanilla Ice Cream topped with caramel popcorn); Brazilian (Churrasco made with grilled skirt steak with chimichurri and garbanzo frito); Mediterranean (Smoked Cured Salmon on a potato cake and topped with sweet dill mustard); Polynesian (Loco Moco, which combines grilled spam, white rice, scrambled egg, and brown gravy); as well as a large assortment of wines and 55 local and international craft beers. Multi-dish samplings were also available ($40 for 10 or $55 for 15).

BUSCH GARDENS
LOCATIONS: 2

Busch Gardens (originally a subsidiary of Anheuser-Busch) is owned and operated by SeaWorld Parks, with the Tampa, FL, location home to more than 12,000 animals, in addition to showcasing various roller coasters (in 2016 the latest coaster, Cobra’s Curse, opened), white water rafting, ziplining, and more. The Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival held this past spring included concerts, as well as tastings at 13 pavilions, which showcased duck fat truffle fries, lobster tarts, the Lamb Burger Slider (pictured left and made of seasoned ground lamb on pita bread with feta cheese spread, cucumber, tomato, and olive), 70 craft beers, 65 different wines, and more.
La Farm Bread Truck showcases Hot White Chocolate Mini Baguettes on a stick, drizzled with dark chocolate.

Deep Fried Jell-O from S2 Concessions.

Brown Lace Sugar Cookies featured at the fair’s Breads, Cakes, Cookies & Candy competition.

Jamaican Jerk Barbeque Wings, offered by Cool Runnings Jamaican Cuisine.
BACKGROUND
The Texas State Fair, beginning in 1886, has become one of the most highly attended state fairs in the country today, bringing in over $50 million in revenue, according to Dallas News. The New York Post reports that the Texas State Fair ranks number one in the top seven state fairs in America and is most widely known for its annual Big Tex Choice Awards, where state fair concessionaries are invited to debut their latest and greatest edible creations.

WHY IT MATTERS
The Texas State Fair typically begins the last Friday in September and is open for 24 days. Since 2005, the Big Tex Choice Awards has named winners based on two criteria – best tasting and most creative. Taking home the gold for best taste in 2009 was Fernie’s Deep Fried Peaches and Cream (pictured below). Keeping up with the fried food trend in the latest 2016 contest were the State Fair Cookie Fries, a whimsical concept featuring fry-shaped cookies with sprinkles, awarded “Most Creative.” Another innovative dish that appeared at last year’s Texas State Fair was Fried Jell-O (cherry-flavored Jell-O in a panko-crusted breading that was flash-fried and dusted with powdered sugar), awarded “Best Taste.” In addition to contest foods, the Texas State Fair also offers concessions like Fried Oinkers (fresh slider roll with Texas pulled pork and a sweet chili pepper barbeque sauce) and the Bacon-Tilla (a bacon-woven tortilla filled with a beef taco).
MENU INSPIRATION
FROM TEXAS STATE FAIR’S
BIG TEX CHOICE AWARDS

LONE STAR PORK HANDLE
Hand-cut bone-in pork chop marinated with rich pork rub, dipped in Texas Lone Star Beer batter, smothered in bread crumbs and deep fried. Finished off with a bourbon barbeque glaze.

CHOCOLATE TRES LECHES CAKE
A slice of chocolate tres leches cake soaked in buttermilk batter, and fried to perfection. A light sprinkle of cinnamon topped with whipped cream, fresh strawberry slices and peaches are drizzled with syrup.

CARIBBEAN PINEAPPLE KORN-A-COPIA
Marinated grilled chicken and shrimp served over a bed of yellow Caribbean fried rice and topped with a tropical salsa and pineapple rum glaze. Served in a pineapple half shell.

DEEP FRIED ALLIGATOR’S EGG NEST
Rich alligator meat, Monterey Jack cheese, chopped jalapenos, onions and garlic. Rolled in bread crumbs and deep fried golden brown, served atop a nest of shoestring potatoes and drizzled with chipotle sauce.
DATASENSATIONAL’S CREATIVE CONCEPTS: AMUSEMENT PARKS

WHAT CAN’T YOU FRY?

Deep Fried Grilled Cheese Sandwich Bites, Wisconsin State Fair.

Crunchy Croissant French Toast, Oklahoma State Fair.

Deep Fried Mini Cinnamon Roll Pops, South Carolina State Fair.

Deep Fried Butter Balls, The Big E.

Deep Fried Cookie Dough, Kansas State Fair.

Candied Bacon Doughnuts, Minnesota State Fair.
Cedar Point, named after the abundance of cedar trees in the surrounding area, is the flagship of the Cedar Fair amusement park chain and the second oldest operating amusement park in the U.S. After opening in 1870, the seasonal park has grown by leaps and bounds, with 16 rollercoasters, 70 rides, and 3.6 million visitors (making it the most-visited seasonal park in the U.S.). It’s also the only park in the world with 5 coasters over 200 feet tall. This July the amusement park opened their new 18-acre water park that features a variety of water attractions, particularly slides. In addition to the recently added Cedar Shores Water Park, the park partnered with a variety of local organizations to create their newest recreational sports development – the Cedar Point Sports Center. The Sports Force Park at the Cedar Point Sports Center will showcase a miniature golf course, trampolines, ropes courses, an outdoor activity center, and more. Further developments like waterfront bike trails on Lake Erie are also planned to launch in the future.

Home to over 40 different foodservice operators, the park offers a variety of QSR options like Dairy Queen, as well as other chains like Starbucks and TGI FRIDAYS. Casual fine dining options like Bay Harbor at the Cedar Point Marina (which specializes in seafood, with local options available like the Local Erie Perch that’s lightly breaded and deep-fried) is a hotspot for a sit-down meal. Additionally, Cedar Point’s 3rd Annual Brew and BBQ Festival will kick off this year with a sauce-making contest and demonstration on innovative ways BBQ sauce can be used from “Food Network” chef Damaris Phillips.
Dollywood is a theme park located in the Knoxville-Smoky Mountains, owned by Dolly Parton and Herschend Family Entertainment. The park consists of ten different themed areas that narrate the historical eras and culture of east Tennessee. The Country Fair area of the park features fun, fair-inspired rides like the Wonder Wheel. However, Dollywood offers more than just rides to its visitors – local crafts and music performances by Dolly Parton and her family are iconic elements. In addition to the variety of Southern-style dining options within the theme park, like the new Front Porch Café, a number of festivals like Barbeque and Bluegrass are hosted at Dollywood each year, showcasing award-winning barbeque vendors and bluegrass musicians.
Knott’s Berry Farm (owned by Cedar Fair) started as a berry stand in 1920, run by Walter and his wife Cordelia Knott. During the Depression when berry prices spiked, fried chicken, accompanied by the introduction of attractions visitors could preoccupy themselves with while waiting for the dish, became integral to Knott’s (which, up until 1968, offered visitors free entry). LA Weekly notes that Knott’s was “one of the first theme parks of its kind… serving as inspiration for Disneyland (and all subsequent Disney parks).” Today it’s known for its Old West theme and innovative food business (owned by Smuckers), showcasing a variety of iconic boysenberry-flavored cuisines (boysenberry latte anyone?). To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Ghost Town section of Knott’s held an auction to sell authentic items from its early days.

**Why It Matters**

The roller coasters and other attractions found at Knott’s Berry Farm have been at “the forefront of the industry,” according to LA Weekly, featuring thrilling rides like the Xcelerator and Silver Bullet. Knott’s notes that its “once small family farm has grown into today’s 160-acre family fun destination,” showcasing a theme park, a waterpark with seven new slides, and a hotel. In addition, Knott’s hosts an annual Boysenberry Festival Knott’s that features familiar foods and beverages with innovative twists like boysenberry-flavored pizza, ice cream, fry bread, BBQ meat on a stick (there’s an actual stand at Knott’s called Strictly-on-a-Stick, which offers a wide range of foods on sticks like boysenberry corn dogs), and more. For visitors looking for more traditional eats, there’s Mrs. Knott’s Chicken Dinner Restaurant, self-described as one of the largest in California, which has been serving chicken dinners (including handmade biscuits, a side salad, choice of cabbage or cherry rhubarb, three pieces of fried chicken, and mashed potatoes with gravy) since 1934. Today unique boysenberry cocktails are also available to pair with meals.
Knott’s Boysenberry Festival puts a spin on churros by adding boysenberry filling. According to Datassential MenuTrends, churros have grown 37% on menus over the past four years.

The Boysenberry Cookiewich Sandwich helps familiarize consumers with boysenberry by using it as a flavor in a well-known cookie sandwich.

Comfort foods like pizza feature boysenberry-flavored sauce instead of traditional tomato sauce.

The corn on the cob showcased at the festival uniquely is covered in boysenberry butter. It could serve as a twist on other corn on the cob creations like elote, which is appearing increasingly on menus, growing more than 132% over the past four years, according to Datassential MenuTrends.

Keeping with the boysenberry theme, Spurs Patio showcases boysenberry-flavored beer.
LEGOLAND (originally established in 1968 in Billund, Denmark; the first U.S. location opened in San Diego, CA, in 1999) is a chain of family theme parks owned partially by LEGO, as well as British theme park company Merlin Entertainments. It’s marketed towards a younger demographic with some locations featuring a water park or aquarium. Today there are eight different branches across three continents. Every park includes a LEGO mini-land and world landmarks made from millions of genuine LEGO bricks. Certain rides are modeled after a particular line of LEGO sets, like the Dragon Coaster, which is based on the Knights’ Kingdom Lego set (above). Depending on your location, each park offers a wide variety of food and beverage options, such as Pumpkin Crepes (top left) from City Park Creperie at LEGOLAND California or LEGO Block Frappes (above right) in Japan.
Founded by Henry Knoebel and still family-owned and run today, Knoebels Amusement Resort has been operating for over 90 years. It is touted as “America’s largest free-admission amusement park… with classic roller coasters, kid-friendly rides, swimming, camping, golf, and more.” The resort boasts over 60 attractions, including an iconic carousel that dates back to 1913, as well as the Haunted Mansion, a dark ride that was covered by the Discovery Channel. Last year, Knoebels won the Golden Ticket Award for “Best Food” and “Best Carousel” from Amusement Today. The amusement resort also notes that they’ve received best food awards from Amusement Today 15 times over the past 17 years.

**Why It Matters**

Knoebels Amusement Resort features a picnic grove (inspired by Knoebels’ location in a valley that was once a frequented picnic venue) where visitors can feel free to unpack their own food and enjoy a meal they prepared themselves, rather than having to purchase food within the resort. Gas stoves are available for rent or guests can set up their own grill too. However, since the resort endeavors to remain family-friendly, it does not allow alcohol in the picnic area. If consumers don’t want to undergo the hassle of packing their own food to eat at Knoebels, there are a number of dining options within the resort, including snack joints for a grab-and-go meal, the Alamo Restaurant (known for its extensive sandwich menu with gluten-free offerings), and the Nickel Plate Bar & Grill, which serves alcoholic beverages, such as signature cocktails like the Nickle-Tini (a combination of Blue Curacao and spiced rum served in a cinnamon and sugar-rimmed glass), in addition to gourmet burgers like the Firebox (made of pepper jack cheese, jalapenos, thick-cut bacon, lettuce, tomato, and red onion with sriracha mayo), and Frickles (tangy and crunchy deep-fried pickle slices paired with house-made horseradish sauce for dipping).
STUFFED FLOUNDER
With crabmeat. Includes two sides, rolls & butter, and a choice of a cup of soup or a salad.

$16.95

EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA
With spaghetti. Served with roll and butter and a choice of salad or cup of soup.

$11.25

DEEP FRIED CRAB CAKE SANDWICH
Served with coleslaw, chips, and a choice of cocktail or tartar sauce.

$5.75

CHICKEN & WAFFLES
Served with two sides, rolls and butter, and a choice of a salad or cup of soup.

$14.95

DATASSENTIAL INSIGHT
Waffles are increasingly being used as a sandwich carrier, in addition to the classic Southern chicken and waffles combination, which has moved into the Adoption phase on the MAC.
FICO EATALY WORLD
LOCATION: Bologna, Italy
FICO (an acronym for Italian Farming Factory) Eataly World is an up-and-coming theme park for foodies set to open in October in Bologna, Italy. According to Bloomberg, the complex will feature “10,000-square meters of orchards, gardens, and pastures; 40 different workshops where you can watch pasta and cheeses being made; and 25 different restaurants and food stalls.” The goal is to show visitors how supply chains function and educate visitors on food systems. Entrance into the park is free, but tricycles with baskets will be available for visitors to use, as shopping is expected.

HOLIDAY WORLD & SPLASHIN’ SAFARI
LOCATION: Santa Claus, IN
Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari (formerly known as Santa Claus Land) are a combined family-run theme park and water park concept. They boast of having the Thunderbird (pictured above right), “the nation’s first launched wing coaster” that “launches riders from zero to 60 mph in 3.5 seconds.” A variety of dining options are available at the park, featuring dishes like Pumpkin Funnel Cake, Dole Whip Pineapple Float, and unique Pulled Pork Parfait (pictured above left). Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari is also known for offering free soda and has been “heralded as the World’s Cleanest Park,” according to their website, “for more than a dozen years.”
THOUGHT STARTERS

FRY IT AND PUT IT ON A STICK
State fairs are bringing together two trends: fried foods served on sticks. Easy, quick, and full of flavor, fried food can be a place for operators to safely experiment and put a refreshing spin on well-known dishes, like Jell-O and cinnamon rolls.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD
To stay on-trend, operators shouldn’t stay confined within the walls of Ubiquity. The foods and beverages typically offered at amusement parks and fair booths aim to grab consumers’ attention through bright colors (think Disney’s Pandora – The World of Avatar’s Night Blossom cocktail), playful novel-inspired flavors (Butterbeer), unique boysenberry-flavored butter spread on corn on the cob, pulled pork parfaits, and more.

HOST AN EVENT
Many of the amusement parks and fairs covered in this issue of Creative Concepts host spring or summer festivals like Disney’s Epcot Food and Wine Festival, SeaWorld’s Seven Seas Food Festival, and Cedar Point’s Brew and BBQ, in addition to demonstrations from celebrity chefs and live music performances. These various festivals have been known to attract a wider consumer base and encourage visitors to get familiar with global as well as local food and beverage concepts at sampling stations.

MIX IT UP
Hershey park puts a spin on traditional soda drinks by leveraging the mixology aspect of cocktails for the non-alcoholic beverages offered at their new BBLz concept, which gives visitors an opportunity to watch “Bubble Makers” (mixologists) create unique combinations of Pepsi soft drinks with whimsical confections like the All-Day PBJ. Consider innovative ways that you can mix up well-known foods and beverages for a refreshing spin that can draw consumers in.

LEVERAGE A THEME
The foods and beverages offered at theme parks are often consistent with the theme, like Universal Studios’ Wizarding World of Harry Potter that showcases not only a unique Butterbeer beverage inspired by the novels/movies, but also pumpkin juice, chocolate frogs, and Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans. Similarly, Disney is offering the Grey Stuff to visitors for a limited time, based on the live-action remake of Beauty and the Beast that recently hit movie theaters. Consumers enjoy seeing foods and beverages inspired by their favorite movies and books brought to life, as it provides an experiential element to dining in.
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Analyze how limited- and full-service chains have leveraged LTOs in different ways while achieving positive same-stores sales growth.

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**MenuTrends Keynote Reports**
For questions or to purchase the report, please contact Brian Darr
P: 312-655-0594
E: brian.darr@datassential.com

Reports are priced at $6,500 per topic. Package pricing is available with the purchase of multiple topics.
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