



By Libby Peck

Make Recipe Management a Habit in a Post-COVID World

Most restaurant owners and operators know that recipe management is important to the long term health of their businesses. Standardizing menu items, calculating plate costs, and monitoring how those costs change over time are all part of the act.

Despite how important recipe management is, the act is usually done only once, when a new item is added to a menu. Some restaurateurs and chefs don't calculate plate costs at all because of how complicated it is.

Plate costs are determined by the cost of each individual ingredient, which must be carefully weighed and converted to other units of measurement for consistency and accurate pricing, plus the labor costs involved with the physical act of making menu items.

In an industry that's grappling with the impact of COVID-19, it's more important than ever to make recipe management a habit to squeeze as much margin as possible out of each plate. Thankfully, cloud-based recipe management software is becoming widely available, making plate costing easier than ever.

Move away from manual data entry

Recipe management software is often powered by an accounts payable (AP) solution that supports invoice upload, so all of the ingredients in a restaurant's walk-in or shelves are accurately documented. Using this data, recipe management software automatically pulls in price and quantity information for each individual item. That means no more manual documentation of ingredients—ever. Eliminating manual data entry saves invaluable time and, therefore, reduces associated labor costs. It's also more accurate, since unpredictable human error is removed from the equation.

Quick conversions and custom units of measurement

Arguably, the most time-consuming aspect of recipe management is converting units of measurement. Luckily, those manual conversions become obsolete with best-in-class recipe management software. Using invoice data, recipe management software takes the quantity of each ingredient from vendors and converts them into practical units of measurement for use in the kitchen. Custom units of measurement can even be set so kitchens can accommodate uncommon amounts with ease, enabling prep and line cooks to focus on cooking rather than complicated math.

Watch costs fluctuate over time—automatically

Traditional recipe management captures the cost of each plate at the time the calculations are made. Recipe management software, by contrast, constantly recalibrates the cost of each menu item over time. Changes in ingredient prices and prime costs are reflected in recipe management software thanks to the invoice data fed into it, so you only have to calculate the price of each plate once. Restaurant operators can use this data to discover which items are profitable enough to keep on the menu, and which are above target COGS and should be replaced.

Take control in an uncertain time

With so much uncertainty as the world looks to reopen, one thing is certain: you should take control of your plate costs. In a post-COVID world, make recipe management a habit to maximize margin on everything coming out of your kitchen.

Libby Peck is the Content Marketing Manager for xtraCHEF, a business intelligence platform for restaurants. You can reach Libby at libby@xtrachef.com. Please see the xtraCHEF advertisement on page 57 as well as their listing in the hospitality directory on page 70.



The advertisement features a white smartphone in the center, displaying the xtraCHEF mobile app's login screen. The screen shows the xtraCHEF logo, a 'Forgot Password' link, a 'Password' input field, a 'Remember Me' checkbox, a 'Target Password' input field, and a 'Login' button. To the left of the phone, a vertical list of features is displayed with corresponding icons: AP Management (calculator), Budgets & Forecasting (calendar), Inventory Management (warehouse), Order Management (shopping cart), Integrations (gears), and Food Cost Analytics (bar chart). The background is a solid teal color with a large, faint 'X' logo. At the bottom, the xtraCHEF logo is on the left, and the text 'Visit <https://xtrachef.com/fbl/> to request a free demo.' is on the right.