

The value of pride and authenticity

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At Tri Color, one of the more popular items is a distinctly unique cake, known as the four-in-one, which features the delicious combination of four layers of chocolate cake, flan, cheesecake and tres leches cake. One slice is conveniently packaged in a single clamshell container, making this dessert simple to enjoy.

“This is one of the most popular cakes we sell,” Diaz points out.

At Vegas Bakery, another popular panadería in the city, where it opened nine years ago, bakery lovers come from all around to purchase the amazing authentic desserts, such as mil hojas cake. This elaborate cake is distinguished by its flaky layers inside, which are created with care by the bakers here, who work diligently to provide amazing cakes that are as beautiful as they taste.

“People love our authentic flavors that our bakers work hard to create,” points out Luis Trejo, owner of Vegas Bakery.

At La Favorita, local patrons come to enjoy the delicious breads and pastries, which are made with care fresh daily. There are many treats to discover, such as carlota de cajeta, a beloved Hispanic dessert made with coffee, cajeta and condensed milk.

“We create many pastries and breads that our customers love. More customers are coming back,” says Virginia Cazañas of La Favorita.

Looking ahead

One of the important things to watch is how consumers are responding to dining out in the post-Covid pandemic world, and one of the most influential trends is a return to familiar habits.

Culinary Visions recently released new insight from The Mindful Dining Initiative focused on pandemic era consumers, which delves into factors that favor the coffee café culture in the United States. This initiative has surveyed over 8,800 consumers in the past seven years with new insight collected recently as consumers grapple with finding their balance in a world that continues to seek a post pandemic new normal.

Many of the practices that captured devoted customers have proven to be strong motivators to keep loyal customers engaged with their favorite places. Aspects of value beyond price that were appreciated by consumers pre-pandemic are even more important today as today's patrons enthusiastically embrace the habits that they have missed for more than a year.

"Coffee cafes are in a strong position to welcome their customers back to a new normal that has many of the features they have missed and still crave beyond their favorite beverage," said Sharon Olson, executive director of Culinary Visions. *"These customers are looking forward to returning to places that have taken part in caring for their communities in difficult times without losing sight of the importance of assuring a sustainable living for everyone involved in bringing this experience to them."*

Some highlights from the Mindful Dining Initiative that focused on away from home dining can be particularly meaningful in pointing to a healthy future for the café culture.

Dining ethics

As on-premise dining opens up across the country, today's consumers are expressing themselves by choosing operations based on some of the behaviors they observed during the past year. More than half (53%) of consumers surveyed said they have changed the restaurants they patronize based on how employees have been taken care of during these difficult times. 77% are choosing to patronize restaurants that supported the local community over those that did not get involved. 75% say they like to patronize operations that support causes they believe in.

Mindful sourcing

Coffee café operators often serve customers that are uniquely interested in understanding the origin of their favorite brews and how everyone involved in bringing their favorites to them is able to make a sustainable living. 79% of the consumers in this survey said that they want to know as much as possible about the food that they are eating.

62% of consumers surveyed said that they seek out restaurants that offer responsibly produced foods on their menus. 63% said they prefer to order menu items that tell them where the ingredients come from, specifying not just the country or region of origin, but specific farms. An important indicator for the business is that 64% say they would be willing to pay more to order ethically produced meals.

Personal connection

The café culture offers patrons the opportunity to be around people whether actively engaged in conversation or focused on working in a convivial environment. Even consumers who enjoyed their solitude pre-pandemic really missed human connection as the pandemic wore on beyond expectations. 67% of survey participants said they have missed being around other people, and 74% said they were looking forward to reconnecting with their friends in restaurants.