Oral Communication 2

Creating a Menu

#1. Menu Writing Tips: Longer Food Descriptions Sell 30% More Food

#2. Menu Writing Tips: Use Nostalgia / Emotionally Charged Language to Describe Your Dishes

#3. Menu Writing Tips: Maximize the Diversity of Your Word Choices

Words For Cooking Method

Letting patrons know how something is prepared is important not only so they know what they are ordering, but also to understand the greater overall process of what went into a particular dish.

- **Baked:** food that is prepared and then cooked to completion in the oven. Think a pie or baked clams.
- **Blackened:** food dipped in oil, butter, or another sticking agent and then coated with spices like sesame, black pepper, to be cooked in a pan until the edges appear "blackened". Think blackened chicken breast.
- **Braised:** food quickly cooked in fat or butter and then finished in a covered pot or pan. Created a tender yet firm coated texture. Think braised beef.
- **Broiled:** cooking with close proximity very high heat in a grill or an oven. Depending on the food, will be crisped. Think broiled salmon.
- **Fermented:** foods that are cooked through time and bacteria or other organisms in a controlled environment which changes the flavor and offers a bit of preservation. Think kimchi or beer.
- **Fried:** food cooked fully submerged in a variety of oil, frying can be done using different oils and different temperatures. Think fried chicken.
- **Marinated:** food that has been cooked after spending time in a sauce or marinade. Think of marinated pork loin.
- **Roasted:** food cooked in an over or other dry heat environment, using higher heat. Think of roasted root vegetables.
- **Sautéed:** food that is cooked and stirred often in oil or fat. Think of sautéed onions.
- **Smoked:** food that has been cooked with low heat and enclosed, with wood-chips directly on coals or open fire, which produces smoke. Meats will be pink on the edges when cut into. Think of smoked salmon or smoked brisket.

Having a well thought out and cleverly worded menu will give your diners the best insight into what dishes they would prefer. Writing a descriptive restaurant menu can help people be more adventurous and try new things.

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Words For Texture

Texture is important to note because some textures are unappealing to some (think jellyfish) diners. Also, when writing a descriptive restaurant menu, having a good description of texture allows people to know what to expect when thinking about the way in which a dish and its flavors are delivered.

- **Airy:** light, feathery textures, think whipped cream, or whipped omelet.
- **Buttery:** silky, creamy and smooth like or tasting of butter.
- **Chewy:** food with some elasticity and that will have some bite too it. Think of salt water taffy.
- **Crispy:** crunchy but light textures, think well done French fries.
- **Crunch:** like crispy but with a more firm crunch. Think thick cut kettle cooked potato chips.
- **Crusty:** hard exterior with softer interior, think of a cal-zone or good a good French baguette.
- **Delicate:** light and airy flavors that will break bend, or be cut easily. Think edible flowers.
- **Flaky:** a texture that will literally fall apart in layers when cut. Think of quiche or a croissant.
- **Hearty:** full-bodied, rich, and filling; think a stuffed baked potato or chili.
- **Silky:** coating to the palette, this texture is refined yet rich. Think silky tiramisu.
- **Smooth:** a texture that is consistent without granules or pieces. Think whipped cream.
- **Tenderness**: texture that describes how easy something is to chew or its softness profile, think of tender filet mignon in comparison to a well done hamburger.

Words for Taste

First and foremost on a particular menu item, outside of the ingredients, will be taste and flavor profiles. Writing a descriptive restaurant menu that is well thought out, can build anticipation and excitement in a particular dish, when used in conjunction with presentation, creates a complete from menu to taste atmosphere for your patrons. Here is the most common flavor words to use where applicable.

- **Acidity:** sharp, almost biting taste used commonly to describe citrus, tartness, or vinegar heavy flavors.
- **Bitterness:** a sharp (but not acidic) flavor that can be perceived as overpowering or harsh, think broccoli.
- **Brine:** salt heavy flavors often with seafood, think the ocean.
- **Citrus:** tart, acidic, sweet or bitter, and fresh. Think lemon or other citrus fruit notes.
- **Cooling:** often paired with spicy food the cooling flavor will cool the pallet, think mint or yogurt with spicy food.
- **Creamy:** heavy milk or thin silky milk sauce, think new England clam chowder, or ice cream.
- **Freshness:** crisp and airy flavor, often describes fresh vegetables, salads, herbs, or also seafood describing it's time from fisherman to table.
- **Nutty:** flavor that is close to or containing any variety of nuts. Think of a powerful provolone cheese or different mushroom varietals.
- **Rich:** full flavor that coats the entire pallet and tongue, think butter cooked filet mignon.
- **Sharpness:** a powerful flavor that can out shine other flavors. Think extra sharp cheddar cheese or pungent raw red onion.
- **Smoke:** flavor profile that has clear notes of burning or wood, think smoked ribs.
- **Sourness:** tart and even puckering to the pallet, think raw lemon or powerful citrus flavors.
- **Spicy:** hot and even burning to the pallet, this flavor can be mild, medium, hot and beyond and usually patrons will either love it or hate, but most can always take a little heat. Think chicken

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wings, in various spice levels.

- **Sweetness:** fruity or sugary flavors (does not necessarily mean desert level sweetness), think cake or maple syrup pancakes.
- **Zesty:** close to spicy, a noticeable and powerful flavor that doesn't overpower a dish, offers some heat. Think Sriracha glaze on wasabi encrusted salmon.

As an example, here is one part of a simple menu:

Specialty Sandwiches

All sandwiches are served with fries and coleslaw. Sweet potato fries, quinoa salad, side tossed salad available for $2 each.

- Crab Cake Sandwich - A delicate crab cake served on a toasted roll with lettuce and tartar sauce. $7.95
- Tuscan Grilled Chicken Panini- Grilled chicken with provolone, artichoke hearts, and roasted red pesto on grilled rosemary focaccia. $9.95
- Southwest Turkey Club - Sliced turkey on a toasted roll with bacon, lettuce and tomatoes and avocado-ranch dressing. $9.95
- Mediterranean Turkey Panini - Roast turkey on grilled rosemary focaccia with a spinach-artichoke cheese sauce. $9.95
- Pulled Pork - Our slow roasted pork simmered in tangy BBQ sauce and served on a toasted roll with cheddar cheese. $9.95
- Lobster Roll - A Maine favorite. Plump lobster meat, mayo and crisp lettuce on a toasted bulky roll. Market Price
- Tuna Melt - Your choice of bread with tuna salad and cheddar cheese finished on the grill. $7.95
- French Dip - A toasted sub roll with shaved prime rib and a cup of French onion soup for dipping. $10.95
- Build Your Own - Your choice of sliced turkey, prime rib, ham, or tuna with your choice of cheese. $7.95
- BLT - Enough said. $7.95
- Soup and Sandwich or Salad - Your choice of our soup of the day with a ½ sandwich or a side salad. $8.95

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