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Hotels rethink food offerings to cater to today's consumer



Sweet Street · August 1, 2017 **SPONSORED CONTENT**



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Rising demand for convenient, customizable and high-quality food and beverage experiences is driving a change across the foodservice landscape, including the hotel and lodging sector. Hotels are starting to rethink traditional dining options to reflect the growing importance of food to guests and suit consumers' changing habits.

travelers are seeking out hotels that make food and drinks a top priority, with 55% of consumers saying food, drink and dining options are important to them when choosing a hotel, according to Datassential research. One in five consumers said food and beverage options are "extremely important."

In addition to high-quality food and drink options, guests are looking for hotels to present those options in a way that fits their lifestyle. Convenient, grab-and-go items available throughout the day appeal to the modern consumer's snacking habits. More than 90% of consumers engage in snacking multiple times throughout the day, according to the Future of Snacking 2016 report from The Hartman Group, which also found that 50% of all eating occasions today are snacks.

With so many snack occasions occurring across all dayparts, it may seem like an opportunity for hotels to invest in fully-stocked minibars to put snack options at guests' fingertips. However, minibars are falling out of favor with consumers, according to Datassential research, which found that only 48% of consumers want minibar options compared to 68% who expressed interest in micro-markets.

These small markets can offer a wider range of food and drink options that give a much greater perception of freshness than a collection of packaged items clustered in a cabinet or mini-fridge. Grab-and-go options were among the top 2017 food and beverage trends identified by HOTELS Magazine in a [recent article](#).

"More and more travelers plan their trips around food, and shun businesses



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recent interview with [Hotel Business](#). "This renewed focus on food and drink has caused traditional hotels to revise their F&B offering, some partnering with food-focused start-ups or local suppliers to try and breathe new life into their food services, others questioning the role of the minibar."



One company partnering with several major hotel brands is Pennsylvania-based [Sweet Street](#), which offers a range of desserts and other baked goods that feature premium, on-trend ingredients. Pre-packaged and thaw-and-serve



can come with in-house production, said Diana Duddy, national account director for Sweet Street.

The company's Manifesto bars and Bake Off cookies can be offered as a sweet treat for an afternoon coffee break and individually-wrapped varieties are perfectly suited as a grab-and-go option in micro-markets.

Regardless of the rise of snacking, morning meals are still important to travelers, with 88% of consumers saying they want breakfast and brunch options at hotels, according to Datassential. Starting their day with breakfast at the hotel before heading out for a business meeting or a day of sightseeing is convenient for travelers, and gives hotels an opportunity to differentiate themselves with an array of options to suit different tastes. Packaged and portable foods and beverages suit guests who want to simply grab and go, while more indulgent options with dessert-inspired flavors appeal to those looking to treat themselves as part of their vacation.

In addition to starting the day off with breakfast, some guests are also looking for hotels that kick-start their stay with a treat at check-in. During its survey of more than 1,000 consumers, Datassential found that 72% of consumers wanted food gifts such as cookies or cupcakes at check-in.

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