

# DELCO FOODS



## Menu Pricing & Food Costs

By Richard Walker, Vice President Bellissimo Foods

An effective way to increase sales and profits is to manage menu pricing. That doesn't necessarily mean raising prices and it isn't as simple as "my food cost is 25%." Each category; entrees/mains, appetizers, sides/salads, and desserts each might warrant a different pricing strategy. Also, some individual items might have a different target than the category target.

Your menu prices should reflect two basic elements. First, they should be sold at a price that will achieve your required food cost percentage. But, the prices must also be in a range that reflects the general level of the market. If these two critical benchmarks are far apart, you must re-examine your menu selection and ingredients.

Start with a market survey of your competitors. Don't look only at the menu prices. You need to look at portion sizes, ingredients, and things like atmosphere/ambiance, and service style for a fair comparison. A restaurant with more upscale décor and furnishings can command a higher price just like a restaurant that offers table service versus counter service may warrant a higher selling price. This should help you understand the general level of prices that you will need to charge for an item.

The next step is to calculate your food cost. You'll need to cost each recipe using ingredient weights and expected costs. Next, take the menu item cost and divide by your anticipated selling price and you'll have the food cost % for each menu item. You can also calculate a selling price based on your target food cost %. This will tell you what price you need to sell the item for to meet your target.

Compare the food cost percentage and profit for each item with your market survey and see if they make sense and you are competitive with the market for equivalent offerings. A high food cost percentage might make sense in some cases, especially more expensive entrees. (Remember you put the profit \$ in the bank not the profit %.)

Overall entrees/mains are the biggest portion of total sales and profits so first focus on setting prices and calculating food cost on key items. Moreover, pricing can be an effective way to increase profits by selling more items or attracting more customers. Selective discounting and promotional pricing can be effective tools, but be wary of continuing cheaper prices unless they're permanent. Lowering prices is a lot easier than raising them because customers get used to cheap prices. (You only have to look at the big national chains to see this.) If you think you need to discount, try it on a limited basis on a few popular items and/or as a draw on your slow days.

A great way to utilize price promotions to add to add bottom line profit is in the other categories besides entrees/mains. The biggest opportunity to add profit \$ is to sell additional items where profit margins are typically larger. Special limited time offers on these items can be very effective. Remember anything you sell after your main/entrée adds

profit \$ to the total sale. However, don't just offer the discounted price. Ask for the order on these items. If you don't get the order be prepared to come back with a special offer. Give your order takers or servers the opportunity to offer a special price.

The table below shows some typical examples. Sell that salad, appetizer, or dessert and you can add to the profit. Run a special offer on chicken wings for \$2.00 off when ordered with an entree. That might get someone to increase the order size or even dine with you instead of a competitor. On slower nights try rotating specials. Sell the extras and you'll make back the additional cost. Bring in 10 additional customers and you'll probably add \$100 profit to the evening.

Of course the above are just some examples. Do your homework of updating your information about your competitors and your own menu item costs; and compare. Not only will the information give you some new marketing ideas, but it will enable you to fine tune your menu offerings and prices, and that will benefit you at the bottom line! If you need assistance or further explanation on these concepts, please contact your local Bellissimo distributor representative or contact us at Bellissimo Foods for a referral. Good luck!

Example Menu Item	Food Cost	Menu Price	Food Cost %	Profit \$
Spaghetti with Marinara	\$1.12	\$7.95	14.1%	\$6.83
Chicken Parmagiano	\$2.96	\$9.95	29.8%	\$6.99
Cheese Pizza 12 inch	\$1.78	\$8.95	19.8%	\$7.17
Caesar Salad Small	\$1.97	\$5.95	33.1%	\$3.98
Hot Wings (10)	\$2.50	\$6.50	38.1%	\$4.00
Cheesecake Plain	\$1.43	\$3.99	35.8%	\$2.56





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If active dry yeast (ADY) is used, it is vitally important to make sure the yeast is hydrated in the correct water temperature. Typically, this is 95 to 100F. The yeast should be placed in about four times its weight in warm water (determined by an accurate thermometer), stirred to suspend the yeast, then allowed to set for 10 to 15 minutes to hydrate and activate. The yeast is then ready to add to the rest of the dough ingredients. Be careful not to allow it to come into contact with the salt or sugar as this can impair the activity of the yeast.


Instant Dry Yeast (IDY) is also widely used in the pizza industry. This yeast doesn't need to be pre-hydrated like ADY. It is best to add IDY directly to the dough ingredients, and since it is still dry, don't worry about it coming into contact with the salt or sugar as this will not hurt the yeast at all. Now, all you have to do is to add the water and mix the dough, and with a finished dough temperature of 80 to 85F you should get a great performing dough giving a finished crust with excellent flavor characteristics.



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## Tiramisu To You

- 8 ounces mascarpone, at room temperature
- 2 ounces semisweet chocolate and 1 ounce butter, melted together and cooled
- 2 Tablespoons hazelnut liqueur, divided
- 8 ounces heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 pound cake loaf, cut into 1" cubes, toasted in a 350° oven for 10 minutes and cooled
- 2 cups brewed espresso, cooled to room temperature
- Unsweetened cocoa powder and chocolate shavings

Beat the mascarpone, chocolate and half the hazelnut liqueur together until smooth. In a separate mixing bowl, whip the cream to soft peaks; slowly add the sugar and beat until stiff. Gently fold the whipped cream into the

chocolate-mascarpone mixture. Stir the remaining hazelnut liqueur into the espresso in a shallow bowl. For each of four servings, dip a few toasted cake cubes briefly into the flavored espresso and place them into the bottom of a balloon wine glass; spoon some of the chocolate cream mixture over. Repeat these layers as desired, ending with cake cubes. Chill thoroughly; just before service, garnish with a dusting of unsweetened cocoa powder and a few chocolate shavings.



### Questions or Comments? @

If you have a question or comment, please feel free to e-mail us at [daniel@bellissimofoods.com](mailto:daniel@bellissimofoods.com) or give us a call at 800-813-2974.

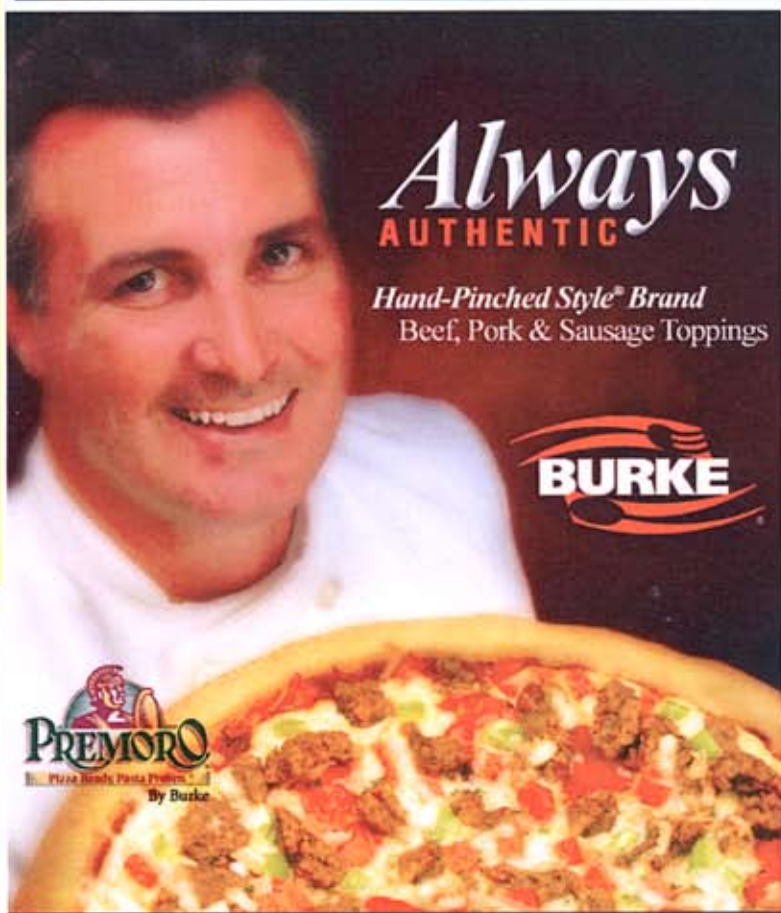
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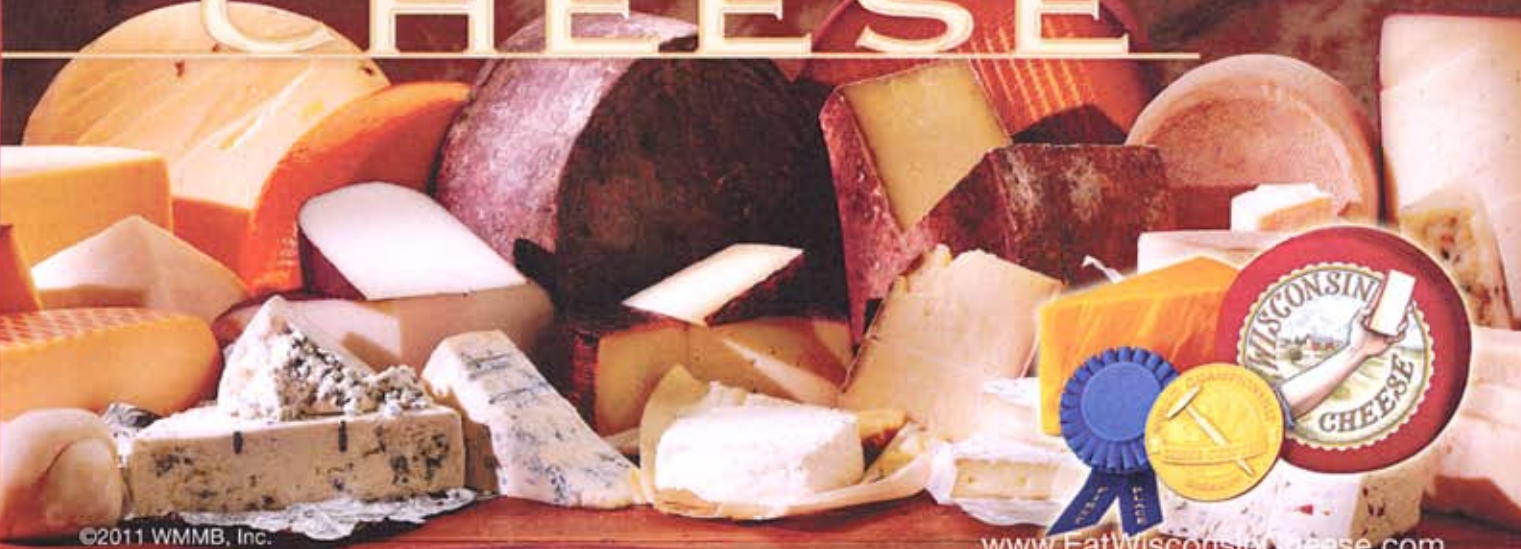
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# Eight Keys to Evaluating Mozzarella

How do you determine which type of mozzarella best suits your own pizza production? There are many attributes to consider, both in the raw cheese form and when it is baked on a pizza.

When receiving cheese in block form, shredability is a key factor. If the cheese is too soft, it will ball in the shredder and clump, making it hard to get uniform distribution on the pie and result in having to use more cheese than necessary. On the other hand, if the cheese is very firm, the shreds may be too thin and fragile, resulting in a lot of fine pieces which will not function properly on the pie. Among the factors which may cause cheese to be too soft or too firm are: moisture levels, fat levels, pH of the cheese and salt level. However, the biggest factor is the age of the cheese. Cheese contains live bacteria and an enormous amount of enzymes which are still active. Under refrigeration, this activity is greatly slowed down, but eventually any cheese will get soft. When evaluating pizza cheese, we refer to the "window" during which the cheese both shreds and performs best. If the window is 10 to 20 days, this is when the cheese performs best; younger than 10 days and the cheese will be firm and not look good on the pie, and older than 20 days the cheese will start to get soft and also not perform on the pie.

There are many different variables which can affect cheese performance on the pizza, including oven temperature, type of oven, type of crust, amount of cheese used, and type of sauce. But whatever is used, some cheeses will perform better than others within your own pizza bake parameters. When evaluating cheese performance, it is a good idea to concentrate on an all-cheese pizza rather than one with toppings. Almost every topping will enhance the cheese performance, because the toppings bring along moisture and/or fat, which protect the cheese. So, if an all-cheese pizza looks good, one with toppings will only look better.

Here are some of the key attributes to consider when evaluating cheese.

**YIELD.** The cheese should flow and cover the entire pizza. When looking at different cheeses on a pie, some may look like they have more cheese, when the actual amount of cheese is the same. This would be the difference in yield.

**FUSION.** The cheese should be completely fused together. When you look at the pie, there should not be any open spaces, which may allow the sauce to come through and give the pizza an orangey appearance. There should also be no evidence of any of the individual shreds when looking at the pie or pulling at the cheese.

**STRETCH.** How much stretch a piece of cheese should have is up to the individual. One thing to remember is that stretch changes over time once the pizza is made. For purposes of a consistent evaluation, the stretch should always be judged at a certain time interval after the cheese is baked.

**BLISTERS.** Again, it is up to the individual how much blistering is acceptable. Depending on the oven, this may vary a lot. A conveyor oven will result in more blistering than a deck oven, due to the drying-out effect of the cheese.

**COLOR.** When evaluating the color of the pizza, there are several aspects to consider. First is the blister color, which can vary from light tan to dark brown. There is also the background color (the color of the pizza between the blisters), which may range from pure white to a tinge of tan or even some browning. As mentioned earlier, if the cheese is not fused properly, the color may have an orangey tinge due to sauce coming through.

**OILING.** Some oil release is needed on the pie so the cheese does not burn. However, too much oiling will result in oil pockets.

**REHEATABILITY.** The cheese must be able to maintain its texture, color and stretch when it is reheated.

**CONSISTENCY.** This is by far the biggest factor of all in evaluating pizza cheese. To make a consistent pizza, the cheese must perform consistently from day to day.

