

## Food and Beverage

# Guest choice, unique menus make hotel breakfasts sizzle

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Acing a great breakfast takes a great deal of consideration as trends come and go. Here's how these hoteliers keep up with guests' morning meal needs.



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REPORT FROM THE U.S.—Hoteliers are working to customize breakfast options to every traveler type by revamping menus and emphasizing today's food-and-beverage trends, sources said.

Courtyard by Marriott is one brand that has rolled out a new bistro menu to do just that.

“What we've really seen across the board (is) ... guests' needs change,” said Callette Nielsen, VP and global brand manager at [Courtyard](#). “I think the demand for fresh options is certainly on the rise, and we knew when we saw this opportunity it was really important for us to lean into that.”

Flexibility is key to hitting all of these points, said Caryl Porter, SVP of brand operations at Ramada.

Giving guests the power to choose their breakfast is important, added John Greenleaf, global head at Hilton Garden Inn.

[Hilton Garden Inn](#) is continuing to see an increase in cooked-to-order breakfasts—especially protein-packed dishes like egg white omelets and turkey sausage, he said.

**Ramada** will be rolling out a completely revamped breakfast menu later this year, Porter said. It will focus on hot and healthy options, tapping into its guests' top-ranked breakfast foods: eggs, meat and waffles, as well as gourmet coffee options.

She said both guests and owners are giving feedback on the pilot menu, which will help tailor a final menu in the coming months. The brand recognized that ethnic food was big in 2017 and continues to be popular in 2018, which might translate into a more diversified hot section, she said.

"We may experiment with items like breakfast bowls, chorizo, feta breakfast burritos or Sriracha scrambled eggs—always making sure we tie back to Ramada's 'sample the world' brand positioning," she said.

Porter added the brand has considered what competitors are doing, too, and found breakfast options really need to be flexible for both "the family breezing through (and) the business professional sitting down to enjoy a hot meal."

Courtyard's new menu that was launched this year focuses on the American classics but with a twist, including a farm-stand breakfast bowl and on-trend items like acai bowls, Nielsen said.

### **Guest experience key**

Grab-and-go options remain popular with guests, but sources said they are also focused on the sit-down experience.

Greenleaf said F&B needs to be catered to both types of guest.

"In key leisure destinations like Waikiki Beach in Hawaii, guests tend to enjoy breakfast at a more leisurely pace than in a key business destination like Midtown Manhattan, where they may be in a hurry ... (and) prefer a gourmet coffee and protein bar," he said.

Nielsen said the guest experience should always come into play, and the menu should be an extension of the hotel's public spaces, where people can eat alone and while mingling with others.

Keying in on the hotel's location can help to elevate guests' breakfast experience, too.

For example, the Hilton Garden Inn Los Angeles Marina Del Rey serves huevos rancheros and smoked salmon platters, while the Hilton Garden Inn Panama features fresh sea bass ceviche, Greenleaf said.

"We encourage each of the hotels in our fast-growing portfolio to customize based on their needs and deep knowledge of the local area to ensure the offerings are not only robust, but (unique) to that particular area," he said.

It's also worthwhile to rotate seasonal items to keep the menu fresh, Nielsen said.

"We rotate four of our items seasonally," she said. "That's going to allow us to bring in a new ingredient and sort of a new twist on something."

Porter said a majority of Ramadas still offer free breakfast, which is a perk that can make or break a guest stay.

"Free breakfast translates into more value in guests' eyes, and ultimately return stays," she said.

### **Use well-known brands**

Today's traveler is looking at labels, Porter said, so it's key to offer some brand-name favorites in the mix.

"Ramada guests feel confident in knowing what they're eating is trusted, healthy and delicious," she said, and it's best to display those brands front and center.

Nielsen said having Starbucks coffee products in Courtyard's breakfast options has elevated the menu.