

Traditional Fare with a Modern Flair

Comfort food offers the allure of the familiar, but after a while the same old classics can make a menu seem stale. Earlier this year, culinary representatives from McCain Foods, Ken's Foods and Allied Foods—three entegra Preferred Partners that specialize in basic American fare—met up for an “ideation” session. They wanted to come up with recipe ideas that would add a twist to popular menu standards to help them stand out from the crowd.

“We took old comfort-food standards and experimented with different flavors, textures and combinations to make them a little bit more modern, upscale or spicy,” says Mark Slutzky, Senior Corporate Chef for McCain Foods USA. “We were trying to push the envelope and bring it to the next level. That’s important to keep your menu fresh.”

Slutzky, together with the president and sales manager of Allied Foods and the corporate chef of Ken's Foods, spent a day brainstorming in a room with a chalk board, then headed into the McCain test kitchen in Lisle, Ill., to try out their ideas with an array of Ken's sauces, Allied's Philly Steak and McCain's appetizers. “We made foods from salads and sandwiches to breakfast items and appetizers,” says Slutzky.

Some of their creations expand on breakfast standards, such as a twist on a breakfast skillet where miniature potato pancakes stand in for hash browns, making it “more fun and shareable,” says Slutzky. Decadent “breakfast nachos” add similar enticement to the breakfast menu.

Altering traditional regional flavor profiles provided a way to spark more creativity. A steak sandwich headed south with the addition of Texas BBQ sauce and deep-fried jalapeño slices. Potato skins got regional flavor spins, such as Southwest Fajita Skins topped with chopped Philly “fajita” Steak blended with spicy BBQ sauce and diced peppers, and cooled by dollops of sour cream and guacamole.

“Potato-skin ideas are cool because they’re shareable, plus you can offer them as an appetizer or in different dayparts, with the creation of that fourth and fifth “meal” for snacks or late-night dining—they can go across many different borders,” says Slutzky.

Another approach the team

tried was dreaming up new uses for items generally perceived as appetizers, such as using fried-onion “tanglers” as a topping for a chopped salad, or as a crunchy addition to a Philly cheesesteak sandwich, which also got zip from horseradish sauce and updated appeal as a wrap. Sweet-potato fries added color, texture and healthful appeal to a BBQ steak salad and took the place of tortilla chips in a creative South Philly version of nachos.

Overall, the culinary team didn't stray too far from tradition, keeping flavor twists within the bounds of what most customers would feel comfortable ordering. “If you go too far out, people might not try it,” says Slutzky. “The bottom line is that you need to sell it.”

On these pages, you'll find the results of the ideation session—recipes and menu ideas that add modern flair to traditional fare. All the recipes feature products available through entegra's Preferred Partners. Visit their Preferred Partner pages at entegraPS.com.

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Southwest Fajita Skins

Yield: 12 appetizer servings
(2 skins each)

- 24 McCain Potato Skins (regular)
- 48 oz. Allied Foods Philly Steak
- 1½ cups caramelized onions
- ¾ cup sautéed diced red peppers
- ¾ cup sautéed diced green peppers
- 12 oz. Sweet Baby Ray's Hot 'N Spicy BBQ Sauce (Ken's)
- 1½ cups shredded Cheddar-Jack cheese
- ¾ cup sour cream
- ¾ cup guacamole
- 4 Tbsp. sliced scallions

1. Deep-fry potato skins at 350°F until light golden, 2½ to 3 minutes (or bake in 425°F convection oven for 6 to 8 minutes). Hold hot for service at 140°F.

2. Cook Philly Steak (from frozen) until steak is cooked halfway through, about 1 minute. Flip steak, chop slightly with spatula and cook to 165°F, 20 to 30 seconds more. Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

3. Combine onions, peppers and BBQ sauce with Philly Steak. Hold hot for service at 140°F.

4. Arrange potato skins on sheet tray. Fill each with 3 oz. of meat-onion-pepper mixture (6 oz./2 skins per serving)

5. Sprinkle each skin with 1 Tbsp. shredded cheese. Broil until cheese is melted, about 3 minutes.

6. Per portion: Arrange 2 potato skins on appetizer plate. Top each skin with ½ Tbsp. sour cream and ½ Tbsp. guacamole. Scatter 1 tsp. scallions over plate. Serve immediately.

BBQ Steak Salad

Yield: 12 entrée servings
(8.5 oz. each)

- 24 oz. Allied Foods Philly Steak
- 24 oz. McCain Harvest Splendor Crinkle Cut Sweet Potato Fries
- ¾ cup Sweet Baby Ray's Hot 'N Spicy BBQ Sauce (Ken's)
- ¾ cup Ken's Sweet Vidalia Onion Dressing
- 12 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped cucumbers
- ½ cup whole-kernel corn
- ½ cup black beans
- 1½ cups shredded Cheddar-Jack cheese

1. Cook Philly Steak (from frozen) on 350°F grill until steak is cooked halfway through, about 1 minute. Flip steak and cook to 165°F, 20 to 30 seconds more. Hold hot for service at 140°F.

2. Deep-fry sweet-potato fries at 350°F until light golden, 2 to 2½ minutes. Hold hot for service/assembly at 140°F or above.

3. In medium bowl, mix BBQ sauce and Vidalia onion dressing. Hold



Cross Trax Nachos

chilled for service at 40°F or below.

4. In large bowl, toss romaine lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, corn, black beans, shredded cheese and dressing.

5. Per portion: Place 1¼ cups salad mixture on serving plate or bowl. Top with 2 oz. crispy, hot sweet-potato fries, then with 2 oz. Philly Steak. Serve immediately.

Tangled Steak Wrap

Yield: 12 wraps or 12 servings,
1 wrap each

- 12 oz. Moore's Onion Tanglers (battered onion strips-McCain)
- 48 oz. Allied Foods Philly Steak
- 12 10-in. flour tortillas, warmed
- 1½ cups Ken's Horseradish Sauce
- 12 oz. shredded Cheddar cheese
- ¾ cup fresh tomatoes, diced

1. Deep-fry Onion Tanglers at 350°F until golden, about 1 minute. Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

2. Cook Philly Steak (from frozen) until steak is cooked halfway through, about 1 minute. Flip steak, chop slightly with spatula and cook to 165°F, 20 to 30 seconds more. Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

3. Per portion: Place warm tortilla on cutting board. Spread tortilla with 2 Tbsp. horseradish sauce, 4 oz. Philly Steak, 1 oz. Onion Tanglers, 1 oz. shredded cheese and 1 Tbsp. diced tomato. Fold tortilla burrito-style. Cut in half on bias. Serve immediately.

Cross Trax Nachos

Yield: 12 large appetizer servings
(11 oz. each)

- 48 oz. McCain Redstone Canyon Cross Trax Fries
- 48 oz. Allied Foods Philly Steak
- 1½ cups jalapeño cheese sauce
- 4 Tbsp. sliced black olives
- 4 Tbsp. sliced scallions
- ¾ cup sour cream
- ¾ cup salsa
- 1½ cups Ken's Bacon Ranch Dressing

1. Fry Cross Trax Fries at 350°F until golden, 2¼ to 2¾ minutes (or bake in 425°F convection oven for 10 to 14 minutes). Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

2. Cook Philly Steak (from frozen) until steak is cooked halfway through, about 1 minute. Flip steak, chop slightly with spatula and cook to 165°F, 20 to 30 seconds more. Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

3. In steamer pan, heat cheese sauce to 165°F. Hold hot for service at 140°F or above.

4. Per portion: On plate, place 4 oz. Cross Trax fries and 4 oz. Philly Steak. Top with 2 Tbsp. cheese sauce, 1 tsp. black olives and 1 tsp. scallions. Dollop with 1 Tbsp. sour cream and 1 Tbsp. salsa. Drizzle with 2 Tbsp. bacon ranch dressing. Serve immediately.



BBQ Steak Salad