

RecipeMapping™

— HOW TO TURN GOOD RECIPES INTO GREAT MENU ITEMS —

A good recipe for home cooking doesn't always work out when you attempt to replicate it in the restaurant. Startup restaurateurs find out quickly that a recipe intended to yield four, six or even 10 servings might not be practical when feeding dozens or even hundreds of guests — every day.

We've said it once, we'll say it again: Success in the restaurant business is often measured in pennies. Toss in an inaccurate purchase order here, a dash of wasted product there, and mix in a bit of inefficient labor use, and you've got a recipe for slim margins. And while your friends and family never minded waiting an extra half-hour or so for your famous meatballs, your restaurant guests will not be so forgiving to slow service and inconsistency.

For good recipes to become great menu items, you must learn to make them pleasing to both your guests and your accountant. You must break them down into stages that assist purchasing and inventory control, organize prepping, reduce production time, and maximize yield. Then you must build them up to serve dozens of covers.

We call it RecipeMapping — a three-step process that allows you to add new items to the menu consistently, methodically and profitably. We hope it helps "map out" your strategy for adding items to your menu, as well as help you put your startup "on the map."

Step 1 – Add Ingredients to the Master Inventory List.

Every restaurant should maintain a Master Inventory List that includes all of the ingredients that a restaurant must use in the preparation of their menu items. This list can be maintained using a spreadsheet format that includes purchasing information such as the pack, size and price of the ingredients — information that is useful when creating other management forms such as inventory and order forms. But to accurately calculate the real cost to produce a menu item, the Master Inventory list should not only reflect the purchasing cost and unit of measure, but also the corresponding recipe cost and unit of measure. Any ingredient used in cooking can be expressed in one of three units of measure when using it in a recipe — weight measure (typically ounces or lbs.), volume measure (such as tsp., tbsp., cups, qts. or gal.), or by piece. Many products are purchased by weight units of measure but are measured for recipes in terms of volume (fluid) measure. To determine a true recipe unit cost, it can require measuring a pound of product to determine its recipe yield. We provide Recipe Conversion Notes to assist in this process.

Step 2 – Create the Prep Stages. Here we identify parts of the menu item that can be prepared prior to final cooking and presentation, to reduce the time from order to service. Even a simple, single menu item often requires several subrecipes that are produced in batch and become part of the routine preparation tasks. Each subrecipe is then added to the Recipe Manual for reference by the kitchen staff. The cost of each subrecipe ingredient is calculated by multiplying the number of recipe units used by the recipe unit cost listed in the Master Inventory. The subrecipe batch is then assigned its own recipe unit and cost based on total cost to produce the batch and how much it yields.

Step 3 – Calculate Menu Item Cost. Finally, the cost of the menu item is determined by calculating the cost of each individual recipe or ingredient needed to produce the menu item, then affixing a selling price that produces the desired profit. Restaurants should review their menu item cost every three to six months to ensure that cost expectations are accurate.

This Month's Features: Braised Short Ribs and Silver Moon Salad

The Bella Luna Restaurant is in the Jamaica Plain area of Boston. This month, owner/operators Carol Downs and Katherine Mainzer share the recipes for two of their signature dishes.

Working with Bella Luna Executive Chef Omar Ramirez, Tom Bruce, founding chef and owner of Sacramento Food & Beverage, demonstrates the proper costing and preparation procedures necessary when adding these items to the menu.



Menu items featured in our RecipeMapping department
are available online at www.RestaurantOwner.com/recipe.htm.



Braised Short Ribs

1 section Braised short rib
1 1/2 cup Sweet potatoes
1 portion Spinach sauté
1/4 cup rib sauce

Line Cook Instructions

1. Sauté spinach to order; use tongs to remove from sauté pan (drain thoroughly), and plate.
2. Add sweet potatoes using a 4-ounce service spoon.
3. Place short ribs, bone side down, over sweet potatoes.
4. Lightly dress ribs using a 2-ounce ladle; avoid oversaucing.



Silver Moon Salad

4-oz. wt. Mesclun salad mix
1 1/2 TBSN Bleu cheese dressing
2 TBSN Dried cranberries
1-oz. wt. Gorgonzola cheese

Line Cook Instructions

1. Mound mesclun mix in the center of a chilled salad plate.
2. Using a squeeze bottle, dress salad ensuring that dressing is evenly distributed.
3. Garnish with Gorgonzola and cranberries. Top with croutons if desired.

Step 1 Inventory Master

Item Description	Case Pack/ Size	Purchase Unit (PU)		Recipe Cost Unit (RU)			
		U/M	Current Price	U/M	# RU per PU	Yield %	Cost
* Short ribs	20 lb. box	Box	75.60	EA	20	100%	3.780
* Celery	24 bu. Case	Box	21.60	OZ-wt	768	69%	0.041
* Onions, red	25# bag	Bag	27.25	OZ-wt	400	90%	0.076
* Carrots	10# bag	Bag	5.50	OZ-wt	160	81%	0.042
* Sweet potatoes	25# bag	Bag	24.00	OZ-wt	400	75%	0.080
* Spinach	3# bag	Bag	17.10	OZ-wt	48	100%	0.356
* Mesclun mix	3# bag	Bag	8.00	OZ-wt	48	100%	0.167
* Coriander seeds	8 oz. jar	Jar	5.95	OZ-fl	23	100%	0.259
* Fennel seeds	14 oz. jar	Jar	10.12	OZ-fl	30	100%	0.337
* Maple syrup	1 gallon	Can	25.00	OZ-fl	128	100%	0.195
* Cranberries, dried and sweetened	3# bag	Bag	6.59	OZ-fl	77	100%	0.086
* Mayonnaise	4/1 gal. case	Case	32.20	OZ-fl	512	100%	0.063
* Sour cream	3# tub	Carton	3.59	OZ-fl	48	100%	0.075
* Bleu cheese	4/5# bags	Case	71.60	OZ-wt	320	100%	0.224
* Gorgonzola	5# bag	Bag	29.35	OZ-wt	80	100%	0.367
* Butter, salted	36/1# case	Case	39.24	OZ-wt	576	100%	0.068
* Chicken stock	12/46 oz. cans	Case	27.00	OZ-fl	552	100%	0.049
* Demi-glace, made from dry mix	16 oz. can	Can	20.70	OZ-fl	96	100%	0.216
* Olive oil, pomace	4/1 gallon	Case	88.00	OZ-fl	512	100%	0.172
* Sugar, brown	50# bag	Bag	24.00	OZ-fl	825	100%	0.029
* Garlic, whole peeled	3# jar	Jar	11.50	OZ-fl	96	100%	0.120

* Braised Short Ribs

** Silver Moon Salad

The first step is to identify each ingredient for all the subrecipes and then to get the purchasing unit pack, size and cost information from your foodservice distributor. Raw ingredients for these menu items were chosen based on availability from local distributors. Once you have the purchasing information, you're ready to calculate the number of recipe units in each purchase unit.

Recipe Conversion Notes

Many products are purchased by the weight units of measure but are measured for recipes in fluid measures such as teaspoons, tablespoons or cups. Precise conversion formulas are necessary to attain accurate costs. Here are some facts we noted when calculating the number of recipe units:

- ✓ Rib sections weigh about 1 lb.
- ✓ 1 bunch of celery weighs about 32-oz. wt.
- ✓ Medium onions average 8 oz. wt. each (eight recipe units).
- ✓ Carrots average 5 1/2 oz. wt. each (5.5 recipe units).
- ✓ Sweet potatoes lose about 25 percent after being peeled.
- ✓ 1 cup of whole coriander seeds weighs about 2.8 oz. (1 fl. oz. = 0.35 oz. wt.).
- ✓ 1 cup of whole fennel seeds weighs about 3.8 oz. (1 fl. oz. = 0.48 oz. wt.).
- ✓ 1 cup of dried cranberries weighs about 5 oz. wt. (1 fl. oz. = 0.62 oz. wt.).
- ✓ 1 cup of sour cream weighs about 8 1/2 oz. wt. (1 fl. oz. = 1.06 oz. wt.).
- ✓ 1 can of powdered demi-glace makes 3 quarts of liquid (96 fl. oz.).
- ✓ 1 cup of packed brown sugar weighs 7 3/4 oz. (1 fl. oz. = 0.97 oz. wt.).
- ✓ 1 cup of whole-peeled garlic weighs about 4 oz. (6 oz. if chopped).

Bella Luna - Recipe Card			Recipe Cost			
Sweet Potatoes		Batch				
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Sweet potatoes	10 lbs.	1. Peel sweet potatoes and cut into chunks approximately 1-inch wide.	OZ-wt	160	0.080	\$ 12.80
Butter, salted	½ lb.	2. Place potatoes in a large sauce pot, add 3 tbsp. salt and cover with water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer.	OZ-wt	8	0.068	\$ 0.55
Sugar, brown	1 cup	3. When potatoes are thoroughly cooked remove to a colander and drain completely.	OZ-fl	8	0.029	\$ 0.23
Maple syrup	¾ cup	4. Place potatoes in a table-top mixer bowl and use a heavy wire whip attachment to puree. Slowly add butter, brown sugar and maple syrup. Season with salt and white pepper to taste.	OZ-fl	6	0.195	\$ 1.17
		5. Place in hotel pan and hold hot for service.			-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: French knife, table-top mixer, large sauce pot, colander, rubber spatula, 1/2-size hotel pan. STATION: Prep cook YIELD: 112 fl. ozs. SHELF LIFE: 1 day			Total \$ 14.75 RU OZ-fl # of RU 112 RU Cost \$ 0.13			

Step 2 The Prep Stage - Braised Short Ribs cont.

Bella Luna - Recipe Card			Recipe Cost			
Spinach Saute			Batch			
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Spinach	2 ozs.	1. Preheat saute pan, add olive oil. 2. Add chopped garlic and lightly brown. 3. Add spinach and toss until lightly cooked. 4. Remove to plate for service.	OZ-wt	2	0.356	\$ 0.71
Garlic, whole peeled	1/2 tsp. chopped		OZ-fl	0.12	0.120	\$ 0.01
Olive oil, pomace	1 tsp.		OZ-fl	0.17	0.172	\$ 0.03
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: saute pan, portion scale.						
STATION: Line cook			Total \$ 0.76			
YIELD: 1 portion			RU EA			
SHELF LIFE: Immediate use only			# of RU 1			
			RU Cost \$ 0.76			

Spinach Sauté

This spinach is best prepared to order rather than precooking.

Step 2 The Prep Stage - Silver Moon Salad

Bella Luna - Recipe Card			Recipe Cost			
Bleu Cheese Dressing			Batch			
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Mayonnaise	1 gallon	1. Using a large mixing bowl combine all ingredients. 2. Blend thoroughly using a wire whisk. 3. Remove to food-grade container and cover with a lid. Refrigerate for service.	OZ-fl	128	0.063	\$ 8.05
Bleu cheese	5 lbs.		OZ-wt	80	0.224	\$ 17.90
Sour cream	2 cups		OZ-fl	16	0.075	\$ 1.20
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: Large mixing bowl, large wire whisk, food-grade container with lid.						
STATION: Prep cook			Total \$ 27.15			
YIELD: 224 ozs.			RU OZ-fl			
SHELF LIFE: 7 days			# of RU 224			
			RU Cost \$ 0.12			

Bleu Cheese Dressing

This is a basic dressing recipe; you may wish to dress it up a bit. Try adding 1-2 ozs. fresh lemon juice, Worcestershire, a mild hot sauce, or any combination of the three, to create a different flavor profile.

Step 3 Calculate Menu Item Cost

The final step for turning the recipe into a menu item is to add the cost of the ingredients needed to produce it. By calculating the cost of each individual recipe needed to produce the menu item, it makes it easy to cost out the finished menu item and affix a selling price that is profitable.

Menu Item: Braised Short Ribs				
Item Description: A winter favorite, finished with a rich natural sauce and served with mashed sweet potatoes and fresh spinach				
Recipe Unit	Quantity	Ingredient	Unit Cost	Extension
EA	1	Short Ribs	4.21	4.21
OZ-fl	4	Sweet Potatoes	0.13	0.53
EA	1	Spinach Saute	0.76	0.76
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
EA	1	Plate cost (Q-cost)	0.00	0.00
			Total Cost	5.49
			Menu Price	18.95
			Gross Profit	13.46
			Food Cost %	28.99%

Menu Item: Silver Moon Salad				
Item Description: Mesclun greens, sweetened cranberries, Gorgonzola and homemade croutons with creamy bleu cheese dressing				
Recipe Unit	Quantity	Ingredient	Unit Cost	Extension
OZ-wt	4	Spinach	0.36	1.43
OZ-fl	1.5	Cranberries, dried and sweetened	0.09	0.13
OZ-wt	1	Gorgonzola	0.37	0.37
OZ-fl	3	Bleu cheese dressing	0.12	0.36
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
EA	1	Plate cost (Q-cost)	0.35	0.35
			Total Cost	2.63
			Menu Price	10.00
			Gross Profit	7.37
			Food Cost %	26.34%