



# 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: Salvadorian Beach Tacos and Caldo de Pollo

In this month's features, Tom Bruce introduces two Latin menu item ideas that were inspired by Salvadorian chefs Maximo Perez and Guille Saucedo of Monterey, California, and enhanced by a visit to Ramone's in Mulega, Baja California Sur, Mexico.

Menu items featured in our RecipeMapping department are available online at [www.RestaurantOwner.com/recipe.htm](http://www.RestaurantOwner.com/recipe.htm).



## Salvadorian Beach Tacos

3 ea.	Corn tortillas
5 oz.	Salvadorian taco filling
1 oz.	Green bell pepper strips
1 oz.	Roma tomato strips
1 ea.	Red leaf lettuce
3 ea.	Chipotle tortilla strips

### Line Cook Instructions

1. The chipotle chili tortilla chips should be made a few orders at a time. Cut the large tortillas into 16 pieces, rectangular or triangular. Deep-fry at 350° until lightly crisped. Remove from the fryer, drain well and salt lightly.
2. Place 3 6" tortillas on the griddle or in a cast iron or sauté pan over medium heat. Toast on each side until

they brown, then remove, fold and place on the plate. Tortillas should always be heated prior to service or they'll break when folded.

3. Place a lettuce leaf on the service plate. Add 5 ozs. taco filling and garnish with 1 oz. tomato filets, 1 oz. julienne peppers and 3 tortilla chips. Dredge in flour seasoned with a small amount of sea salt and white pepper.



## Caldo de Pollo

8 fl. oz.	Chicken soup stock
5 oz.	Prepared chicken (cubed)
1 ea.	Vegetable mix portion
2 ea.	Lime wedges
2 fl. oz.	Pico de gallo
As needed	chopped cilantro

### Line Cook Instructions

1. Combine 1 bag of preportioned veggies with 8 ozs. stock in a sauté pan. Cover and bring to a simmer, continue to cook for 30 seconds.
2. Add 1 portion cooked chicken to the pan and cook for 30-45 seconds longer.
3. Remove to a soup plate for service and arrange as illustrated.
4. Garnish with 2 lime wedges, 1 oz. Pico de Gallo and chopped cilantro.



\*Salvadorian Beach Tacos \*\*Caldo de Pollo \*\*\* Both

## 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
** Chicken, 2-2 1/2# fryers	24 per case	LB	0.87	OZ-wt	16	100%	0.054
* Avocado, Haas	48 ct.	Case	45.40	EA	48	100%	0.946
* Peppers, jalapeno	10#	Case	15.15	EA	160	100%	0.095
*** Cilantro	30-ct. bunch	Case	12.90	EA	30	100%	0.430
* Lemons	115 ct.	Case	29.90	EA	115	100%	0.260
** Limes	165 ct.	Case	31.00	EA	165	100%	0.188
** Tomato, Roma	25#	Case	16.10	OZ-wt	400	100%	0.040
** Peppers, green bell	12#	Case	13.20	OZ-wt	192	84%	0.082
* Lettuce, red leaf	24 ea.	Case	11.50	EA	336	100%	0.034
** Potatoes, red	50#	Case	24.70	OZ-wt	800	100%	0.031
** Carrots, whole baby	6/2#	Case	11.40	OZ-wt	192	100%	0.059
** Celery	24-ct. bunch	Case	22.70	OZ-wt	768	69%	0.043
** Corn, super sweet white	48 ea.	Case	16.20	EA	48	100%	0.338
** Onions, yellow	50#	Bag	16.50	OZ-wt	800	91%	0.023
* Eggs, fresh shell	15 dozen	Box	17.10	EA	180	100%	0.095
* Tortillas, 6" corn	4/90-ct.	Box	10.20	EA	360	100%	0.028
* Tortillas, 12" chipotle chile	12 ea.	Bag	2.96	EA	12	100%	0.247
*** Salt	25#	Bag	8.00	OZ-wt	400	100%	0.020
** Garlic, whole peeled cloves	3#	Jar	8.25	OZ-wt	48	100%	0.172

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 there are 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:

- ✓ Roma tomatoes yield about 78percent after deseeding.
- ✓ There are about 14 leaves of red lettuce garnish per head.
- ✓ Jalapenos weigh about 1 ounce each.
- ✓ Green bell peppers lose about 16 percent from deseeding.
- ✓ Fresh chickens yield about 31 percent after cooking and deboning.

## Step 2 The Prep Stage - Salvadorian Beach Tacos

### Taco Filling

A single menu item may have several "subrecipes," and a recipe card should be created for each step. Other subrecipes for this dish but not shown include prepping the Roma tomato strips and green bell peppers.

Sacramento Food & Beverage - Recipe Card			Recipe Cost			
Taco Filling			Batch			
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Avocado, Haas	12 each	1. Hard boil 12 eggs and cool under refrigeration. 2. Peel eggs and cut into 1/2" cubes; you may wish to discard 1-2 of the yolks to create a firmer finished product. 3. Split, seed and finely chop the jalapenos, set aside. 4. Wash and partially stem the cilantro, chop finely and set aside. 5. Split the avocados, remove the pits and scoop from the skin using a soup spoon. Cut the avocados in 1/2" cubes and place in a large mixing bowl. 6. Add the eggs, cilantro and jalapenos to the avocado and mix slightly with a rubber spatula. 7. Juice 3 of the 4 lemons into the mixture, season to taste with sea salt and let stand 10-15 minutes. 8. The mixture should be somewhat acidic but not overdone. If necessary juice the 4th lemon into the mixture and adjust seasoning. 9. Cover and store under refrigeration for service.	EA	12	0.946	\$ 11.35
Eggs, fresh shell	12 each		EA	12	0.095	\$ 1.14
Peppers, jalapeno	8 each		EA	8	0.095	\$ 0.76
Cilantro	4 bunches		EA	4	0.430	\$ 1.72
Lemons	4 each		EA	4	0.260	\$ 1.04
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: French knife, cutting board, large mixing bowl, rubber spatula, soup spoon and paring knife			Total \$ 16.01			
STATION: Prep cook			RU OZ-wt			
YIELD: 16 each 5-oz. portions			# of RU 80			
SHELF LIFE: 1 day			RU Cost \$ 0.20			

## Step 2 The Prep Stage - Caldo de Pollo

### Prepared Chicken

Prepping the chicken ahead of time and then placing in portion control bags help to speed service and control cost.

Sacramento Food & Beverage - Recipe Card			Recipe Cost			
Prepared Chicken			Batch			
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Chicken, 2-2½# fryers	6 each	1. Rinse chickens thoroughly with cold water. 2. Place chickens in a large stockpot or rondo, add salt and cover with water. 3. Bring the chickens to a boil and continue to simmer until completely cooked, this usually takes about 1 hour and 15 minutes after they reach the simmering point. 4. When chickens are thoroughly cooked remove the pot from heat and carefully remove the chickens, taking care to drain them completely. 5. Remove to refrigeration and cool to at least 70° before handling. 6. When the stock has cooled somewhat, strain it into a container and store under refrigeration. 7. When chicken has cooled remove the skin and discard. Pull the chicken from the bone, taking care not to include any small bones or pieces of cartilage. 8. Cut the pulled chicken into bite-size pieces and portion into 5-oz. portion bags. 9. Refrigerate for service.	OZ-wt	216	0.054	\$ 11.75
Salt	½ cup		OZ-wt	3	0.020	\$ 0.06
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: Cup measure, large stockpot or rondo, wire strainer, skimmer and tongs or fork.			Total \$ 11.81			
STATION: Line cook			RU OZ-wt			
YIELD: 14 5-oz. portions			# of RU 67			
SHELF LIFE: 3 days			RU Cost \$ 0.18			

## Step 2 The Prep Stage - Caldo de Pollo Continued

### Chicken Soup Stock

Chef's note: Don't bother skimming the stock to remove the chicken fat; once the stock is cold the fat will form at the top and can be easily removed.

Sacramento Food & Beverage - Recipe Card			Batch		Recipe Cost	
Chicken Soup Stock						
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Leftover chicken stock	about 2 gallons	1. Place the leftover stock from the cooking process in a large saucepot.	OZ-fl	256	-	\$ -
Garlic, whole peeled cloves	4 oz.		OZ-wt	4	0.172	\$ 0.69
Onions, yellow	1 lb. peeled	2. Bring stock to a boil and reduce heat to maintain a high simmer.	OZ-wt	16	0.023	\$ 0.36
					-	\$ -
		3. Add rough-cut onions and crushed garlic cloves to the simmering stock.			-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
		4. Reduce stock to 1 gallon and remove from heat. Add a small amount of sea salt if desired. Strain through a wire strainer, cool and refrigerate for service.			-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: Ounce scale, French knife, cutting board, large saucepot and wire strainer					Total	\$ 1.05
STATION: Prep cook					RU	OZ-fl
YIELD: 1 gallon					# of RU	128
SHELF LIFE: 4 days					RU Cost	\$ 0.01

### Vegetable Portions

Chef's note: Precooking and thoroughly chilling the potatoes will set the gluten and give a better product when reheated. Other subrecipes included but not shown include Pico de Gallo and Chipotle Tortilla Prep.

Sacramento Food & Beverage - Recipe Card					Recipe Cost	
Vegetable Portions			Batch			
INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	PROCEDURE	RU	# of RU	RU Cost	Cost
Potatoes, red	3 lbs. (uniformly sized)	1. Place potatoes in medium saucepot, bring to a boil, reduce to simmer, and continue to cook for about 15 minutes or until just tender. Cooking time will vary based on the size of the potatoes. 2. Drain and cool potatoes, chill completely before the next step. You may wish to do this a day ahead. 3. Cut the potatoes into bite-size pieces and place in portion bags, 3 ozs. each bag. 4. Add 1 ounce of raw whole baby carrots to the bag. 5. Bias-cut the celery into bite-size pieces; add 1 ounce of raw celery to each bag. 6. Shuck corn and remove any silk; rinse if necessary. Break ears in half and place ½ ear in each portion bag. 7. Hold the filled portion bags under refrigeration for service.	OZ-wt	48	0.031	\$ 1.48
Carrots, whole baby	1 lb.		OZ-wt	16	0.059	\$ 0.95
Celery	1 lb. trimmed		OZ-wt	16	0.043	\$ 0.69
Corn, super sweet white	8 ears		EA	8	0.338	\$ 2.70
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
					-	\$ -
TOOLS/EQUIP.: Pound scale, ounce scale, French knife, paring knife, medium stockpot and wire strainer or colander					Total	\$ 5.82
STATION: Prep cook					RU	EA
YIELD: 16 portions					# of RU	16
SHELF LIFE: 2 days					RU Cost	\$ 0.36

## 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. Calculating the cost of each recipe needed to produce the menu item makes it easy to cost out the finished menu item and affix a selling price that is profitable. (Please note: A standard practice when costing out menus is to include a cost for certain menu items for unlisted incidentals such as seasonings, bread, condiments, or sauces; oftentimes referred to as plate cost or Q-cost.)

<b>Menu Item:</b> Salvadorian Beach Tacos <b>Item Description:</b> Corn tortillas stuffed with fresh avocado, egg and jalapeno filling, served with freshly made chipotle chips.				
Recipe Unit	Quantity	Ingredient	Unit Cost	Extension
EA	3	Tortillas, 6" corn	0.03	0.09
OZ-wt	5	Taco filling	0.20	1.00
OZ-wt	1	Bell pepper strips	0.08	0.08
OZ-wt	1	Roma tomato strips	0.05	0.05
EA	1	Lettuce, red leaf	0.03	0.03
EA	3	Chipotle tortilla strips	0.02	0.06
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			<b>Total Cost</b>	1.31
			<b>Menu Price</b>	5.95
			<b>Gross Profit</b>	4.64
			<b>Food Cost %</b>	22.10%

<b>Menu Item:</b> Caldo de Pollo <b>Item Description:</b> A classic Mexican dish from Baja. Rich soup stock filled with fresh chicken, hearty vegetables, potatoes and fresh pico de gallo				
Recipe Unit	Quantity	Ingredient	Unit Cost	Extension
OZ-fl	8	Chicken soup stock	0.01	0.07
OZ-wt	5	Prepared chicken	0.18	0.88
EA	1	Vegetable portions	0.36	0.36
EA	0.25	Limes	0.19	0.05
OZ-fl	2	Pico de gallo	0.02	0.04
EA	0.05	Cilantro	0.43	0.02
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			0.00	0.00
			<b>Total Cost</b>	1.42
			<b>Menu Price</b>	7.95
			<b>Gross Profit</b>	6.53
			<b>Food Cost %</b>	17.80%