

speed of service, keeping “munchies” on the table, and offering appetizer menus and water are just a few approaches to responsible alcohol service. More drastic measures such as denying service, having a guest escorted to his or her room, or calling a taxicab may also be required.

The laws defining legal levels of blood alcohol before driving impairment occurs vary (typically .08% – .10% in the United States). So, can a person drink and still drive? The answer is yes, not much, or maybe not at all. A good rule of thumb to follow in the United States is that a person can drink one ounce of distilled spirits, one beer, or one glass of wine an hour and still be capable of driving legally. However, countries in Europe have much stricter laws. In the United Kingdom, alcohol is limited to 0.4 mg per liter of blood, and falls to 0.25 mg in most other countries including Germany and France, but the limit in Norway is 0.1 mg. Gibraltar is the strictest country of all; any trace of alcohol is considered a violation.²⁹ Paying attention to customers’ needs and enjoyment can go a long way toward protecting the customer, the establishment, and the general public.

Coffee, Tea, Or?

For many years, we would have focused all of our attention on the alcoholic side of beverage operations, but times have changed and non-alcoholic beverages have gained in importance due to their financial significance. With the explosion of specialty coffees and teas, bottled water, juices and energy drinks, non-alcoholic beverages are no longer an after-thought or necessity as they have become important profit generators. Even the dispensing of fountain drinks has taken on new significance.

To understand the significance of non-alcoholic beverages to the bottom line, think about that \$4.00 cup of coffee, glass of tea or soda you recently had with a moderately priced dinner. When these and other non-alcoholic beverages are added to the bill, they not only increase the check average, but also the profit potential for the foodservice operator. From a simple profit perspective, consider the contents of a 16 ounce cup. What is the main ingredient and how much does it cost? The answers to these questions: ice and next to nothing! And, does a \$4.00 cup of coffee or a lemonade really cost as much, percentage wise, to prepare and serve as \$16.00 entrée? The answer to this question: no. But, when paired together, the combination is valued by the customer and the profit margin for the operator is enhanced. And, where tipping is practiced, servers also benefit, creating a triple-win situation. So, just like with alcohol and food, pairings of non-alcoholic beverages and foods should also be taken into consideration when designing and pricing menus.

Summary

Travel has expanded our awareness and desire for foods and beverages from all over the world while advances in science and technology have also increased the ways that foods and beverages are produced and prepared. The growing desire to experience new and tantalizing foods and beverages has created a separate category of travelers: culinary tourists.

There are many types of F&B operations designed to serve the public. The most common are commercial restaurants, but dozens of other styles of food service exist. No matter the size or type of operation, all foodservice

organizations are driven by the menus they offer. In delivering their menus, they must integrate the concepts of rhythm, timing, and flow to best serve their guests.

Foodservice operations range from the ubiquitous fast-food franchises that rely on drop-in customers to on-site amusement park snack bars and five-star gourmet dining rooms that serve captive audiences. No matter where they are located or whom they serve, these operations can achieve a competitive advantage by focusing on guest service, adding value, providing unique dining experiences, or offering innovative foods and beverages.