

TREND: GRAB-AND-GO ITEMS

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Concept Close-Up: Eatzi's Market & Bakery, Dallas

Eatzi's Market & Bakery offers chef-crafted grab-and-go meals, grocery-style items, wine and more in a European-style market setting at its six stores in the Dallas area. Popular precooked family meals at Eatzi's include casseroles such as the King Ranch Chicken, made with roasted chicken, tortilla chips, chiles, cheese and sour cream. Additional popular dishes include pot pies and lasagna. Staff cook all items on-site daily. CEO Adam Romo discusses Eatzi's journey with the grab-and-go format.

Q: What percentage of Eatzi's menu is grab and go?

A: Consumer demand for greater convenience is inexorable as evidenced by the rapid growth of online ordering, curbside service and immediate delivery. Twenty years ago, customers preferred customization of meals and personal service. Today, more consumers are willing to forgo strict customization of their meals for greater convenience. Our grab-and-go sales have grown significantly over the past 10 years and generate 25% of total sales. Our sales mix today reflects the trend of grab-and-go convenience as these sales continue growing annually in our stores.



Q: Have grab-and-go sales increased as a result of the pandemic?

A: Surprisingly, the percentage of our grab-and-go items pre-COVID-19 and now is the same: 25% of sales. We did see a shift within the category to items that lend themselves to freezing, such as casseroles. Since most of our food is highly perishable, our customers did not really alter their shopping habits much at Eatzi's.

Q: How has your menu evolved?

A: The first major evolution in our grab-and-go venue was the introduction of our Carb Conscious meals about eight years ago. Consumer demand for heart-healthy meals was growing, and these lean protein meals with non-starch sides have been very successful for us. We have since continued expanding our healthy offerings to include whole grain bowls with a variety of proteins, such as ahi tuna, flank steak and tofu. Also, the introduction of charcuterie and cheese trays provides a multipurpose use as a meal, snack or appetizer. We offer all our cakes, pies and cream desserts in individual portion sizes. This was another shift in consumer demand to eat healthier. As sales of whole cakes and pies declined over the past 20 years, sales of our single-serving desserts have grown significantly.