



## Appetizer and Bar Menus Benefit with Wisconsin Cheese

Appetizers, small plates or “bar food” are a trendy menu item that is serving up daring flavors and increasing profits. Consumers are no longer content with dull deep fried foods or boring dips. Instead, they want attention-grabbing applications, intense flavors and exciting beverage pairings.

Incorporating specialty ingredients such as Wisconsin Cheese not only adds value to the menu, it also provides an appetizing alternative to standard bare fare.

### Add a Spin to Comfort Food

Show customers how to update their bar or appetizer favorite with a Wisconsin Cheese twist.

*Pizza* – Experiment with new toppings and crusts to create a tasty spin on the traditional. Serve a flatbread pizza topped with exotic ingredients such as arugula, anchovies, almonds and shaved Wisconsin Parmesan.

*Cheese Straws* – For a cheesy twist on traditional French fries, mix grated aged Wisconsin Cheese such as Gouda, Cheddar or Parmesan with butter and flour, press into thin strips and bake.

*Fried Cheese Curds* – Nothing beats the flavor of fried cheese. Bread traditional Wisconsin Cheddar cheese curds, deep fry and serve with a flavorful tomato coulis, or create a fried cheese fritter with grated Wisconsin Gruyere cheese and serve on a bed of frisee with a light vinaigrette.



*Chips and Salsa* – Take this simple classic up a notch by serving crisp Wisconsin Asiago cheese chips with a fresh couscous salsa made with red peppers, cucumber, onion and parsley. Simply bake thin layers of the cheese until browned to create the cheesy chips.

### Simply Delicious

Don't neglect the added value a simple yet elegant cheese course can make on a bar or appetizer menu.

*Cheese Course* – Serve three to five different varieties of cheese in a course. Incorporate varying flavors, textures, ages and colors.

*Cheese Flight* – Explore the taste and textural differences aged cheese develops with a vertical flight of cheese. Offer a flight of aged Wisconsin Cheddars including 1-year, 3-year, 5-year and 7-year aged Cheddar.



## Basic Beverage Pairings

Boost appetizer or bar food sales by offering suggestions for beverage pairings. A carefully selected glass of wine, beer or cocktail makes a delicious addition to the meal and helps raise check averages. When selecting beverage pairings for a cheese course or a menu item featuring cheese, keep the following guidelines in mind:

### *Wine & Cheese*

- Most pairings are based on complementary or contrasting flavor combinations – strive for balance.
- Fruity white wines are the easiest to pair with cheese. For example, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc pair well with a variety of Wisconsin cheeses such as Asiago, Brie and Swiss.
- Pair dry white wines and young reds with aged cheeses such as Wisconsin Aged Cheddar.
- Pair assertive red wines with piquant cheeses such as Aged Parmesan or Provolone.

### *Cheese & Beer*

- Light beers go with lighter cheeses; strongly flavored beers need assertive cheeses.
- Equate lagers to white wines and ales to red wines—their pairings for cheese are similar. Lagers pair well with many cheese varieties, while ales are great with aged and more flavorful cheeses.
- Yeast beers go well with aged cheeses—try pairing them with Aged Provolone and crusty bread.

To help operators expand their appetizer and bar menu offerings, the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board offers a comprehensive recipe database at [www.foodservice.WisDairy.com](http://www.foodservice.WisDairy.com).