

Cinco de Mayo is driving guest traffic

Five menu trends helping chefs
turn bold flavor into full tables.
Cinco de Mayo is a moment.
Miss it, and you miss the traffic.

Cinco de Mayo keeps winning on menus.

It's bold.

It's flexible.

And guests keep coming back for it.

From street tacos to loaded bowls, Cinco de Mayo dishes deliver the flavor combinations diners love.

For chefs, it's also one of the smartest opportunities on the menu right now.

With the right ingredients and flavor balance, simple dishes become signature dishes.

This guide highlights **Cinco de Mayo menu trends gaining momentum** – and how chefs can bring them to life.

Knorr
PROFESSIONAL

52%

of consumers who
celebrate **Cinco de Mayo**
go to a restaurant
to celebrate
with food

*Cinco de Mayo
travels across menus*

- Street food
- Comfort food
- Late-night food

That's why guests keep ordering it.

The flavor factor

Sauces make the difference

Good dishes taste great.

Great sauces make them memorable.

Creamy.
Citrusy.
Smoky.
Spicy.

Sauces bring ingredients together and give chefs space to build signature flavor.



Menu penetration 4-year growth

84.8% | +5%
Jalapeño

66.3% | +15%
Lime

65% | +6%
Ranchero

65% | +5%
Chipotle

41.5% | +7%
Ranch

39.5% | +13%
Vinaigrette

35.5% | +17%
Crema

33.7% | +17%
Mayo

Lime, crema and mayo are among the fastest-growing flavor boosters in Mexican cuisine.

If a dish feels unfinished...

Add sauce.
Add lime.
Add heat.

One of those three usually fixes it.

Elote goes mainstream

Street corn has gone global.

Sweet corn.
Creamy sauce.
Lime.
Chilli.

Simple. Irresistible.

Elote

+125%

Menu growth



Elote works because it hits every flavor note.

Sweet. Creamy. Acid. Heat. Salt.
That's the flavor jackpot.



What's heating up on Mexican menus

TREND 1

Bowls are booming

Bowls are built for modern menus.

Customizable.
Balanced.
Packed with flavor.

Guests get variety.
Chefs get flexibility.



Bowls have **55% menu penetration** and are expected to grow **20%** over the next **4 years**



Bowls are flavor playgrounds

Layer them right and guests build their own favorite dish.

TREND 2

Generation favorites

Some dishes never leave the menu.

Street tacos.
Carne asada.
Tamales.

Guests know them.
Guests love them.
The opportunity isn't reinventing them.
It's executing them perfectly.



Dishes trending upward

+45%
Street Tacos

+45%
Carne Asada

+50%
Tamales



Guests don't order classics because they're safe

They order them because they're delicious.
Your job is to make them unforgettable.

TREND 3

Plant-forward with bold flavor

Vegetables are moving to the center of the plate.

Guests want lighter dishes and more variety.

But they still expect big flavor.

Roasting, grilling and bold seasoning turn vegetables into menu heroes.



Expected growth next 4 years

+215%
Vegan & Cauliflower Tacos

+94%
Vegan Burritos



Roasting vegetables does two things

- It builds flavor
- And it builds color on the plate

Both sell dishes.

Chef Recipe Inspiration

4 Cinco de Mayo Winners



RECIPE 1

Mushroom al Pastor Tacos

Ingredients

Portobello mushrooms
Chipotle paste
Pineapple
Garlic
Lime
Corn tortillas
Fresh coriander

Method

Roast mushrooms with chipotle, garlic and pineapple.
Slice and serve in warm tortillas.
Finish with lime and coriander.

RECIPE 2

Southwest Grilled Chicken Bowl

Ingredients

Grilled chicken
Brown rice
Black beans
Roasted corn
Avocado
Cherry tomatoes
Chipotle crema

Method

Build bowl with rice base.
Top with chicken and vegetables.
Finish with chipotle crema.



RECIPE 3

Cheesy Elote Street Corn

Ingredients

Grilled corn
Mayonnaise
Crema
Cotija cheese
Chilli powder
Lime juice

Method

Brush grilled corn with crema mixture.
Top with cheese and chili powder.
Finish with lime.

RECIPE 4

Elote Salad

Ingredients

Charred corn
Cherry tomatoes
Red onion
Coriander
Crema dressing
Lime

Method

Combine ingredients.
Toss with dressing.
Serve chilled.

Remember

You don't need ten ingredients to build bold flavor.

You need the right five.

Chef Cheat Sheet

Sweet

Corn
Roasted peppers
Pineapple

Umami

Grilled meats
Mushrooms
Slow-cooked sauces

The Cinco de Mayo Flavor Formula

Every great Mexican dish balance **five** flavor elements.

Creamy

Crema
Avocado
Mayo

Acid

Lime
Pickled onion
Vinegar

Heat

Chilli
Chipotle
Jalapeño

*If a dish tastes flat,
it's usually missing
acid or heat.*

Build-a-Bowl Blueprint

Base	Rice Quinoa Black beans
Protein	Chicken Pork Mushrooms
Veg	Corn Peppers Avocado
Sauce	Chipotle crema Salsa Verde
Finish	Cotija Lime Coriander

Tortilla

Corn tortilla

Taco Build Formula

Filling

Carne asada
Mushrooms
Chicken

Acid

Lime
Pickled onion

Sauce

Crema
Chipotle mayo






Crunch

Radish
Cabbage

Speed Prep Cheat Sheet

5 Base Ingredients → 12 Menu Items

Smart prep creates flexible menus
and faster service.

Base Ingredient	Use for:
 <p data-bbox="443 763 833 965">Grilled Chicken</p>	<p data-bbox="865 763 1426 965">Chicken tacos Chicken bowls Loaded nachos</p>
 <p data-bbox="443 972 833 1180">Roasted Corn</p>	<p data-bbox="865 972 1426 1180">Elote Corn salsa Bowl topping</p>
 <p data-bbox="443 1187 833 1395">Chipotle Crema</p>	<p data-bbox="865 1187 1426 1395">Tacos Bowls Nachos Street corn</p>
 <p data-bbox="443 1402 833 1610">Black Beans</p>	<p data-bbox="865 1402 1426 1610">Bowls Burritos Nachos</p>
 <p data-bbox="443 1617 833 1825">Roasted Peppers</p>	<p data-bbox="865 1617 1426 1825">Tacos Bowls Salads</p>



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Ready to level up
your menu?

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and menu ideas from Knorr Professional.

*Smart prep wins
busy services.*

Prep once.
Use everywhere.

Bold flavor. Smart kitchens. Full tables.