

Unexpected Ways to Pair Pantry Items with Olives for Menu Success

Part of managing a foodservice operation is handling inventory, which can be a tricky task to navigate. There's bound to come a time when it's realized that there's far more of a particular item than necessary for the menu. Letting it sit in storage and go back simply isn't an option, particularly when it comes to budgetary matters. Why not take advantage of this ingredient abundance by creating a new dish for specials menu?

If there's too many eggs, try: A [Green Bean, Egg and Olive Salad](#). A colorful salad option on the specials menu might tempt customers—particularly those that are health-conscious—to order a starter when they might not have otherwise. This particular salad calls for colorful cherry tomatoes—red and yellow—and pairs them with vivid green beans, jet-black Hojiblanca olives and snow white boiled eggs for an experience in both taste and texture. Because it's complete with a protein in the form of an egg, this salad can also appear on a lunch specials menu.

If there's extra pita bread, create: A [Vertical Pizza](#), a creative twist on a favorite entree. With toasted pita bread, black and green olives, cream cheese, sun-dried tomatoes and fresh herbs, a Vertical Pizza fits in perfectly on a special tapas menu. Labeling the dishes as “tapas,” rather than “appetizers” or “starters” adds a certain panache that appeals to customers looking to try something new.

If there's leftover beef jerky, experiment with: A [“Field and Mountain” brochette](#), certain to be both unexpected and a delightful surprise for customers. This tapas-style dish uses thinly sliced beef jerky, goat cheese and Aloreña and Hojiblanca olives to create a bite-sized stack of flavor, topped off with few basil leaves. It's not a standard combination, to be sure, but hook the customers by telling the server to explain how the salt of the jerky and olives pairs so beautifully with the creamy tang of the goat cheese.

If there's spare crusty bread, develop: [Solid gazpacho](#), a spin on the chilled soup that's so popular in Spanish culture. It happens to be an excellent way to use day-old bread; simply brush it with olive oil and top the bread with a mixture of chopped Hojiblanca black olives, cucumber, red pepper, green onions and cherry tomatoes. It's a refreshing starter, no spoon required.

If there's an abundance of potatoes, try out: [Spanish tortilla](#), also known as a Spanish omelet. Rather than flour or corn tortillas, this adaptation uses cooked and sliced potatoes that are baked with eggs, olives and onions to create a dish that is just as appropriate for a breakfast menu as it is for other services.

If there's a bunch of rice, consider: [Latin Rice with Olives](#), a flavorful, colorful concoction that can be served as a side dish, as a vegetarian dish or topped with protein for an entree. Customers are used to being served Mexican rice, but the touch of turmeric combined with a pinch of cumin and a hint of mustard will unexpectedly delight their senses.