Article 4: The Economic and Food Safety Aspects of Standardized Recipes
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Time is money in the food service industry. Chefs invest time creating standardized recipes to provide quality and quantity control and less waste. Most standardized recipe templates list total yield, portion size, number of portions, equipment, cooking times, temperatures, ingredients, units, prices, and methods of preparation. This makes it easier to order the correct amounts of food and supplies, train new employees, increase production efficiency, and trace or project costs.

Chefs and managers calculate cost from the information in a standardized recipe. They can anticipate that expense for a month or a year. In the past, all calculations were done on paper, which took many hours. Now, computer programs process changes immediately. Managers can immediately decide to keep or eliminate a recipe based on current or anticipated costs. Bottom lines are easier to anticipate.

Just a small change in one recipe can make a huge difference in cost per recipe per year. For example, if the serving of one item costs 10 cents more than planned, 300 servings of that item will cost the restaurant $30.00 more per day. Multiply that by 30 days per month, and the increased cost is $900.00. Multiply that by 12 months, and the annual cost goes up $10,800.00! If this happens with more than one recipe, food costs will skyrocket.

Most standardized recipes now list hazardous foods and nutritional analyses. Customers with allergies to certain foods ask servers about ingredients. Common food allergens are soy, dairy, wheat, shellfish, fish, tree nuts, peanuts, and eggs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the number of young people with food or digestive allergies increased 18 percent between 1997 and 2007.

Allergic reactions to food can be life threatening. Food allergen cards are available online in many languages. Customers present them to servers to allow for clear communication. Servers can refer to standardized recipes to check for common allergens. This does not release cooks or chefs from responsibility if they decide to be creative and alter a recipe. Any changes must be communicated to the customer by the server.

More customer safeguards are provided by listing HACCP components. When staff follows the guidelines of critical control points, minimum internal temperatures, proper food preparation, and holding and reheating temperatures, the result is safe, healthy food.