



Bowls: the New Plates

by Katie McIlvain, foodservice and general marketing manager for HLC

There's a new tablescene in town. But don't toss out the plates — just add bowls. Big, deep bowls for wholesome grain-and-vegetable combos. Rimless rice or noodle bowls. Wide, shallow bowls — no longer just for salads and pasta — now play host to entrees as varied as bone-in lamb served over rice to breakfast smashes comprising eggs, meats, and potatoes piled high. And yes, there are now bowl-and-spoon-worthy smoothies.

In 2015, “the year of the bowl,” diners began to discover that meals served in bowls just seemed to taste better. One-bowl dinners and photos of restaurant “bowl meals” began popping up all over social media.

Today's diners — foodies and fast-foodies alike — are being drawn by the allure and convenience of meals in bowls. Why not choose bowls in shapes, sizes, and colors that perfectly suit the food served in them?

Dinnerware research demonstrates the power of color and texture to make food more appealing. Other studies show that if diners are holding the bowl in their hands while eating, its heft and warmth can affect their feeling of satisfaction with the meal. Remember that steaming, fragrant bowl of chicken noodle soup when you were a kid? A bowl, because of its upward-curved shape, channels the food's aromas more directly to the diner's senses. And, of course, bowls are easy to eat from. Historically, in many cultures the bowl has been the main vessel for serving meals.

Presentation and design matter, too.

The bowl is the solution for the Rubik's Cube of foodservice: how to affect the perception of food's value by improving its presentation. For example, wide-rims frame the food and demand attention, while rimless bowls can be filled almost to the top, giving the perception of a larger serving. Then, once you've discovered the bounty of shapes, dig into the psychology of colors. Appropriate colors balanced against traditional ivory and white help you send your culinary message.

Consult a specialist who can help you choose. Ask about adding your brand “signature” by customizing bowls with your logo or theme colors.

Whether they offer comfort, convenience, or casual chic, bowls can make a meal especially satisfying. Any establishment can embrace the trend — there are dozens of options to fit your menu, decor, and budget. After all, life is just a bowl of endless possibilities!

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For a bowl consultation, contact Homer Laughlin China Company, 800-452-4462, www.hlcdinnerware.com. New “Bowls on a Roll” lit available at NRA, booth #4420.

