

Applebee's(R) Three New Stacked Stuffed & Topped Dishes Treat Guests to New Twists on Steaks, Pastas and Salads Starting at \$9.99

LENEXA, KS -- Applebee's new Stacked Stuffed & Topped entrees take the neighborhood's tried and true favorites -- sirloin, chicken, pasta and salad -- and pair them with unexpected twists like mozzarella scoops, fresh roasted vegetables and bruschetta.

The latest dishes include Florentine Topped House Sirloin with fresh roasted red peppers and sliced mushrooms, Chicken Parmesan Stack featuring country fried chicken atop a bed of fettuccine with roasted garlic Alfredo, and Provolone-Stuffed Meatballs with Fettuccine.

"Steaks and pastas are our best-selling items so we know guests love them," said Chef Shannon Johnson, executive director -- culinary innovation & development at Applebee's. "We are taking these tried and true favorites and literally stacking, stuffing and topping them with new flavors."

Today's guests want to try new foods but are skeptical at spending their hard-earned money on something they might not like. In fact, 66 percent of consumers report they enjoy trying new flavors from time to time while 20 percent said they prefer to stick to tried and true options according to Technomic's Flavor Consumer Trend Report.

The Applebee's culinary team experimented with dozens of concepts before choosing the following Stacked Stuffed & Topped dishes, all of which scored well among focus groups:

-- Florentine Topped House Sirloin -- Applebee's classic 7 oz. signature sirloin grilled to order with roasted red peppers, sliced mushrooms, onion, fresh spinach and bruschetta, topped with garlic and herbs and served over fried red potatoes; a 9 oz. signature sirloin is available as well.

-- Chicken Parmesan Stack -- Country-fried chicken stuffed with Italian cheeses, smothered in Applebee's spicy marinara and served atop a bed of fettuccine with roasted garlic Alfredo, onions and peppers, topped with parsley and shredded Parmesan cheese and served with toasted garlic bread.

-- Bruschetta Topped Chicken Salad -- Grilled chicken breast and warm fried mozzarella scoops served on a bed of crisp romaine tossed with champagne vinaigrette and topped with juicy tomatoes, red onions, kalamata olives, roasted red peppers, basil and garlic, sprinkled with Asiago cheese and finished with a balsamic glaze.

And this isn't the first time Applebee's has stuffed a popular item with greater flavor. The new items join Applebee's Provolone-Stuffed Meatballs with Fettuccine on the menu.

Applebee's is also having some fun with those Stuffed Meatballs, this time in an appetizer. Applebee's Stuffed Meatballs & Mozzarella Scoops features two meatballs paired up with crispy scoops of golden fried mozzarella, topped with zesty marinara, parsley and Parmesan cheese.

It's all part of Applebee's overall menu revitalization. In the past 18 months, Applebee's has updated or improved more than 80 percent of its menu, breathing fresh new life into casual dining fare and in turn winning new guests while surprising and delighting existing guests.

Since 2010, Applebee's new menu items have included its Unbelievably Great Tasting and Under 550 Calories™ lineup, RealBurgers® from Across America, Sizzling Skillet entrees, Stuffed Pastas, Flavor-Loaded Steaks and Bourbon Street flavors.

"We're putting excitement back into the casual dining experience and being almost irreverent in our approach," said Johnson. "People thought we were nuts when we took a perfectly good meatball and stuffed it with Provolone but our guests have eaten 30 million of those meatballs in less than a year, so we're definitely onto something."

About Applebee's

Applebee's (www.applebees.com) is the world's largest casual dining chain, with approximately 2,000 locations in 49 states, 15 countries and one U.S. territory. Based in Lenexa, Kan., Applebee's takes pride in providing a welcoming, neighborhood environment where everyone can enjoy the dining experience. Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar® is a DineEquity, Inc. (NYSE: DIN) brand, and is franchised and operated by Applebee's Services, Inc. and its affiliates.

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