

Hospitals aren't the only place putting the lunch trays aside and offering more specialized meal programs, but long-term care facilities and senior communities have revamped their food service operations too. From country kitchens, grab-and-go options, room service to in-house bistros and cafés, senior living communities have it all. It is no secret to them that quality meals not only offer nutritional value, but a place for residents to socialize and feel at home too.



Country Kitchens

Long-term care communities across the country are removing the cafeteria-feel from their dining rooms and replacing them with country kitchens. Smaller dining areas and family style kitchens help residents to feel more at home. In addition, these smaller kitchens encourage residents and staff members to cook alongside each other, allowing a greater feeling of independence. This will help residents to get more involved, socialize, and feel as though they are part of a family.

Grab-and-Go

Convenience is an important factor when it comes to dining and senior communities are reacting to this need with grab-and-go food options. One [center](#) in Pennsylvania offers residents soup, sandwiches, and fruit from a cart two times a week. Since the response was so positive, a permanent grab-and-go section was added to the dining area that features more convenient meal varieties, beverages, and even groceries. Grab-and-go food options accommodate various residents' schedules and provide lighter meal selections.

In-Room and Room Service Dining

Even though socializing with others over dinner is highly encouraged, some centers also have an in-room dining option or room service approach for their residents. With this food service style, residents are able to order from a small menu and have their meal delivered to their room on a cart. In one [survey](#) of senior living facilities, "Forty percent said in-room dining, and 30 percent said room service are the meal service types their residents enjoyed to a great extent." Adding this style of food service to your establishment helps satisfy all dining preferences.

Bistros and Cafés

Adding a café to your independent and assisted living center is yet another way to give your residents (and visitors) options. Having a café that is open throughout the day lets residents and their families stop in when they are hungry. Coffee, bagels, wraps, as well as full meals can be offered through this style of dining. Cafés also encourage socialization in a more comfortable environment.

As important as food is to improving residents' quality of life and encouraging a sense of community among residents, entertainment plays a role too. Dining spaces can also be converted to an entertainment space to host games, music, or even a happy hour. Planning your dining area appropriately can allow for many other social events in the future.

With the endless food service styles at different senior living communities, having the right equipment can elevate the approach being used. A Lakeside Portable Bar could be used in a variety of dining situations. From happy hour to a surface to provide breakfast or grab-and-go snacks, a bar can have multiple uses. Furnishing your facility with multi-use equipment can save money and add an elegant flair.

Senior communities and long-term care facilities are offering their residents numerous meal options in a more welcoming and attractive environment, encouraging the feeling of family and independence. Seniors desire the same variety and convenience when it comes to food, is your facility offering this?

What food service approach is your senior living facility using? Which ones are residents responding most favorably too?

