

6

WAYS TO MAKE MORE MONEY WITH A COMBI OVEN.



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1.

TRAIN EVERYBODY WHO TOUCHES IT.



Combi ovens are one of the most versatile, powerful cooking tools in a chef's arsenal. Widely adapted across European kitchens, American chefs are quickly realizing combi's can expand their menus, improve kitchen efficiencies, reduce food costs and save energy. A single combi can replace your convection oven, steamer, braising pan, holding cabinet, smoker and even your dehydrator. But, to wring every dollar of value from your combi, staff training is a must.

Combi's have three cooking modes—convection, steam or convection plus steam—but it's that last combined mode that truly brings the power of the combi to life. Unfortunately, that's also the cooking mode staff tend to be least familiar with—and may simply avoid unless you take the time to train them on the system.

Unlock the Power of Steam Across the Entire Cooking Spectrum.

The real cooking and financial benefit of a combi is its ability to apply steam heat across the entire spectrum of cooking temperatures, from as low as 85°F to as high as 575°F. Just like you feel

hotter on a humid summer day, steam heat delivers energy more efficiently than dry air at the same temperature. Combi's can use up to 70% less energy than the appliances they replace, but only if your staff uses them to their full potential.

Simple, push-button screens using smart phone-like icons and video tutorials help make training easier. Don't forget maintenance staff, as it's critical everyone understand how proper water filtration, cleaning and preventative maintenance can keep your combi running at maximum efficiency, and prolong the unit's life.

Look for Hidden Operational Efficiencies.

It's also a good idea to examine your operation to see where combi accessories can provide immediate labor savings. One casino operator had a cook spending up to six hours a day using a charbroiler to mark steaks. A consultant showed them a grill tray available for their combi that would cook and mark the steaks at the same time. They ordered 40 trays, and have never looked back.

2.

BOILER OR BOILERLESS? HOW TO CHOOSE WISELY.



Combi's come in two basic designs. Boiler units with a built-in boiler tank that preheats and holds hot water to produce steam as needed, and boilerless units without holding tanks that spritz water directly onto the heating element to produce steam. Knowing which model is right for your operation can save you money and improve production right out of the gate.

How Much Steam do you Need?

Unless you're doing a ton of full-load steaming regularly, it may be more cost-effective to consider a boilerless combi. They're smaller, cheaper, less expensive to maintain and often require simpler, less-expensive water filtration. They're ideal for operations that use steam selectively, and don't require a continuous, heavy steam output. However, if you plan to do a lot of bread baking in your combi, the boilerless spritzer may create water spot stains on your bread.

Boiler-based units, with their built-in steam generator and water tank, are clearly the champ in producing copious amounts of steam—and

recovering steam faster when the door is opened—but they are also bigger, more expensive and harder to maintain. They also consume more water and energy than boilerless units.

The Water Quality in your Area Plays a Factor in Determining the Right Combi for You.

Although all combi's require water filtration, if your area suffers from hard water, a boilerless unit may be a better choice. Hard water contains calcium and mineral deposits which build up in the boiler, clog it and cause your oven to stop working. An expensive reverse osmosis water filtration system may be required to solve the problem.

As a final note, be aware that boilerless combi's and high-volume shellfish cooking don't work well together. The superheated steam can cause a reaction between minerals in the water and calcium in the shells, releasing a chemical that quickly corrodes metal inside of the oven. A boiler-based unit is a better option.

3.

GO LOW AND SLOW FOR MAX COST SAVINGS ON MEATS.



One of the most tangible financial benefits of combi ovens is their reduction of protein shrinkage, increasing meat yields by up to 20%. If you sell proteins by weight, you can buy smaller raw product to produce the same finished size. Another way to extend this shrinkage-reducing, quality-enhancing benefit is to slow-cook meat overnight with a combi's low temperature cook-and-hold capacity.

An Overnight Cooking Sensation.

During the day, chefs marvel at the combi's ability to reduce cooking times by as much as 60% over traditional convection ovens. But a major labor-saving benefit is the combi's ability to cook meats at lower temperatures overnight. This low-and-slow cooking method preserves moisture, flavor and tenderness—while holding the product at a safe temperature until staff arrive in the morning. This cook-and-hold option extends productivity well beyond the work day, while eliminating the high-heat, rapid-cooking rush during peak times that can seize muscle tissue and overcook the outside of the protein. By automating the cooking process overnight, labor costs that tend to be higher on evenings and weekends can also be reduced.

Sous Vide at Higher Volumes in a Combi.

Chefs who have come to appreciate all the advantages of sous vide cooking often find a combi better suited to the job than a traditional circulator bath. The greatest benefit of sous vide for many chefs is the precise temperature and moisture control, which, of course, is where combi ovens really shine. Throw in the ability to cook larger batches at once—a typical combi may hold six or more two-inch deep hotel pans for the sous vide process—and you combine precision with efficient, large-scale production.

Lose the Bags; Keep the Moisture.

In fact, many chefs are not aware that combi's can produce a sous vide result without the traditional vacuum bags. For example, frozen shrimp cooked on a perforated pan cooked at 160° F in a combi will come out with a perfect texture and consistency. Best of all, there's no fear of overcooking, as the combi temperature will not exceed the actual serving temp. Considering how much food is wasted in kitchens every year due to burning, this is a substantial cost benefit for your operation.

4.

COMBI'S CONSISTENCY IMPROVES QUALITY – AND PROFITS.



Producing legendary consistency is not only the hallmark of great kitchens, it's also what keeps loyal customers coming back again and again. While some chefs have misinterpreted combi oven's push-button simplicity as taking some of the art out of cooking, chefs who regularly use combi's know the precise temperature and steam control extends their creative range—allowing for exceptionally delicate cooking—while delivering replicable results night after night.

Real-time Experimentation Followed by Precise Consistency.

From cooking schools to Michelin Star-rated restaurants, chefs are discovering the combi's precise control of both heat and moisture can lead to exciting experimentation. Once a successful new menu item is created, the combi's precise control of the cooking process delivers the consistency from shift to shift. Cooks who are learning the ropes of advanced cooking techniques find combi's a great way to learn the subtle and precise application of steam to impact texture and flavor.

Keeping Quality Consistent Across Multiple Locations.

As concepts grow and chefs find themselves becoming multi-site operators, combi's simple-to-use recipe programming produces consistent results across locations. With remote access and wireless monitoring, chefs can stay on top of oven usage, and help sites plan efficient use of day parts.

Restaurants with High Turnover Benefit from Combi's Simple, Intuitive Interfaces.

With high staff turnover a constant challenge in quick serve and fast casual restaurants, combi's smartphone-like interfaces with video tutorials are making it easier to get new staff quickly up to speed. Operators also appreciate the simple, push-button cleaning systems modern combi ovens feature that help ensure cleaning gets done in a fast-paced environment. Self-diagnosing sensors alert staff when there is an issue with the equipment, making maintenance calls faster and easier.

5.

RECLAIM VALUABLE KITCHEN REAL ESTATE PROFITABLY.



The multiple pieces of equipment combi's replace tend to be parked under vent hoods, where kitchen real estate is precious. Reclaiming this valuable space makes it easier to expand your operation without the costly addition of extra hoods. In addition, you'll gain improved efficiencies from less congestion, better traffic flow and improved ergonomics. So, it may very well be worth it to invest in a combi today to declutter your kitchen.

Out with the Old. In with the Energy Efficient.

When foodservice operators upgrade to a combi, most of the time they're replacing older, less-energy efficient equipment and often experience immediate energy savings. Operators report up to 70% savings on their water bill and up to 50% on gas or electricity, depending on which appliances they currently have. (For example, even a relatively small, three-pan steamer may consume as much as 40 gallons of water per hour, and generate \$3,000 per year in energy, water and sewer costs.) It's easy to see how combi's have a well-earned reputation for quickly paying for themselves.

A Combi Footprint Sized to Fit your Space and Production Needs.

Combi's range in size from highly compact countertop units that hold as few as four half sheet pans, to massive, roll-in units that can hold racks containing twenty full sheet pans. These larger units are ideal for high-volume operations that utilize heavy batch cooking and extensive rethermalization—like catering, academic institutions, hospitals, prisons, military facilities and high-volume restaurants. Since combi's rethermalize with steam, moisture is preserved, improving taste, texture and presentation.

A Safer Kitchen is a Happier Kitchen.

In addition to replacing old, outdated energy guzzlers, combi ovens replace many cooking devices that carry a higher risk of accidents. The gentle, pressureless steam combi's produce is quick and safe, standing in stark contrast to—for example—boiling stockpots on the stove. The ovens have a closed, insulated cooking chamber that is cool to the touch from the outside and safely vents steam when the doors are opened.

6.

EXPAND YOUR MENU WITH YOUR COMBI'S VERSATILITY.



The number one benefit chefs ascribe to combi's is cooking versatility, which means greater menu flexibility. A single combi can cook, roast, steam, smoke, grill, braise, dehydrate, bake, rethermalize, blanch veggies, do sous vide and healthy oven frying without oil. Meats come out tender and juicy. Vegetables retain their crispness, color and nutrients. Puff pastries turn out light and flaky. You can even hot- and cold-smoke foods. There simply is no other single piece of kitchen equipment that can do all that in a single footprint. Combi's are also well-known for their ability to isolate foods during the cooking process, avoiding cross-contamination of flavors.

One Final note: Get your Water Tested Before you Buy a Combi.

As we discussed earlier, the number one maintenance issue with combi ovens are buildup caused by poor water quality. Whether you have a simple, countertop boilerless unit or a massive roll-in boiler system, high-quality water filtration is essential. Not only will mineral, calcium and other deposits foul your oven and bring production to a halt, improper filtration might void your manufacturer's warranty.

Your water filtration expert should test your water to determine the correct filtration system. And, check with your local water utility to see if they produce regular water quality reports. Your Horizon consultant will help you find the right water filtration product to keep your combi running at peak efficiency for years to come.

Your Horizon Equipment Specialist will Help you Find the Right Combi for your Operation.

Just make sure when ordering a combi you don't simply replace the interior dimension of your current convection oven. A combi can produce up to 50% more than a similarly sized standard convection oven, so you may need a smaller combi than you think. Most restaurants find a combi that can fit six or ten sheet pans is adequate for their needs. (Schools that have 500 students or more generally find they can save money while expanding their menu choices with a combi.) Your Horizon equipment specialist will help you determine the right combi product for your unique menu and production capacity. ■

About Us

Horizon outfits food pros with the gear they need to create the world's most incredible food. Our experts provide personal consultation on every aspect of the food and beverage equipment in your operation. From the purchase of a single fry pan, to the creation of an entire cooking suite, we will design, equip, install, service and provide the parts to make your operation a success. In the Minnesota area, our fleet of factory-trained service professionals are on call for you 24/7/365, and will custom-design a planned maintenance program to optimize your equipment investment.



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