

From Fuel to Food



*How Fried Food Drives Revenue
in Convenience Stores*

AUTOFRY

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Summary

Convenience stores are uniquely positioned at the intersection of speed, accessibility, and impulse purchasing. **As consumer expectations evolve, foodservice has become a critical driver of revenue, differentiation, and customer loyalty.** Among the most profitable and scalable foodservice categories is fried food, an offering that delivers high margins, broad appeal, and operational flexibility.

This white paper explores how convenience stores, whether they currently offer foodservice or not, can leverage fried food programs to increase revenue, improve customer experience, and compete more effectively with quick-service restaurants.

By **focusing on simplicity, speed, and profitability**, fried food presents a low-risk, high-reward opportunity for operators looking to evolve their business. With the right approach, **even a small menu can generate meaningful incremental revenue** while enhancing the overall customer experience and driving repeat visits.



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The Modern Convenience Store Opportunity

Today's convenience store is **no longer just a stop for fuel and packaged goods**. It is rapidly evolving into a destination for fresh, hot, and ready-to-eat food. **Consumers increasingly expect more from their convenience store experience**, seeking quality, speed, and variety without sacrificing convenience.

This shift presents a major opportunity for operators to **capture incremental revenue and build stronger customer loyalty** through foodservice.

Key Industry Trends

- On-the-go dining is growing: Busy consumers are seeking quick, satisfying meal options.
- Snacking culture dominates: Smaller, indulgent food items are purchased throughout the day.
- QSR competition is intensifying: Convenience stores must offer comparable food quality with faster service.
- Higher margins from foodservice: Prepared food consistently outperforms packaged goods in profitability.

The Modern Convenience Store Opportunity

Changing Consumer Expectations

Modern customers expect:

- Fresh, hot food available throughout the day
- Consistent quality across visits
- Fast service with minimal wait times
- Affordable indulgences that feel like a treat

Convenience stores that meet these expectations are seeing a shift in customer behavior, from quick stops for fuel to repeat visits driven by food.

The Role of Foodservice in Store Growth

Foodservice is no longer just an add-on, it is becoming a core business driver. A strong food program can:

- Increase average transaction value
- Extend dwell time inside the store
- Drive repeat visits and loyalty
- Differentiate the store from nearby competitors

In many cases, **foodservice is becoming the primary reason customers choose one convenience store over another.**

Fried food checks all these boxes, making it one of the most strategic and scalable additions to a convenience store's offering.



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Why Fried Food Works

1. High Profit Margins

Fried foods such as French fries, chicken tenders, mozzarella sticks, and onion rings offer strong margins due to:

- Low ingredient costs
- High perceived value
- Minimal waste when managed properly

Example:

- Cost of fries per serving: ~\$0.50–\$0.75
- Selling price: \$3.00–\$4.50
- Margin: 70%+


2. Broad Consumer Appeal

Fried food is universally loved and requires little explanation or marketing education.

Popular menu items include:

- French fries & loaded fries
- Chicken tenders & wings
- Fried appetizers (pickle chips, jalapeño poppers)
- Breakfast items (hash browns, beignets)



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Why Fried Food Works

3. Speed & Convenience

Fried food aligns perfectly with the core convenience store promise:

- Quick cook times
- Easy grab-and-go packaging
- Ideal for impulse purchases

4. Menu Flexibility & Upselling

Fried food enables creative menu expansion without complexity:

- Add-ons (cheese, bacon, sauces)
- Combo meals with beverages
- Limited-time offers (LTOs)



Starting a Foodservice Program with Fried Food

For convenience stores without an existing food program, **fried food is one of the most practical and profitable ways to enter the foodservice space.** Unlike more complex kitchen concepts, fried food offers a straightforward path to launch, requiring minimal prep, a short learning curve, and immediate customer recognition.


One of the biggest barriers for operators considering foodservice is operational complexity. Concerns around staffing, consistency, and execution often prevent stores from taking the first step. Fried food helps eliminate many of these concerns by simplifying the process. **With the right setup, staff can be trained quickly, menus can remain focused, and product quality can be maintained with consistency.**

Equally important is the speed to market. **Convenience stores can introduce a fried food program without major renovations or long build-out timelines.** This allows operators to begin generating incremental revenue quickly while testing what works best for their specific customer base.

Why It's the Perfect Starting Category

- Simple menu execution
- Minimal prep requirements
- Scalable operations
- Immediate customer recognition



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Starting a Foodservice Program with Fried Food

A well-chosen starter menu allows operators to build confidence while establishing demand. Core items like fries, chicken tenders, mozzarella sticks, and onion rings are familiar, craveable, and easy to execute. These items also provide a strong foundation for future expansion, making it easy to introduce new offerings like wings, specialty sides, or limited-time flavors.

Recommended Starter Menu

- French fries
- Chicken tenders
- Mozzarella sticks
- Onion rings

As the program grows, operators can refine their menu based on sales data and customer preferences. This phased approach reduces risk while creating a clear path toward a more robust and profitable foodservice program.

Over time, what starts as a simple fried food offering can evolve into a key driver of traffic, revenue, and customer loyalty.



Enhancing Existing Foodservice Programs

For stores that already offer foodservice, fried food can significantly enhance profitability and variety.

Strategic Benefits

- Complements existing hot food (pizza, sandwiches, hot dogs)
- Increases combo opportunities
- Adds high-margin sides and snacks

Fried food acts as a natural extension of an existing menu, making it easy to integrate without disrupting current operations. It also provides an opportunity to refresh the menu without requiring a complete overhaul, helping stores stay relevant and competitive. By introducing fried options, operators can tap into impulse purchases and elevate the perceived value of their existing offerings.

Example Pairings

- Pizza + fries combo
- Sandwich + loaded tots
- Hot dog + onion rings



What Happens After Launch?

Launching a fried food program is only the beginning. **The real value comes from how operators optimize, promote, and scale the program over time.**

First 30 Days: Establishing the Foundation

- Train staff on consistent cooking procedures
- Identify top-selling items and peak ordering times
- Gather customer feedback
- Adjust pricing and portions if needed

60–90 Days: Optimization Phase

- Introduce combo meals to increase ticket size
- Add 1–2 new items based on demand (e.g., wings or specialty fries)
- Refine cook times and holding procedures for efficiency
- Begin light promotional efforts (in-store signage, bundle deals)


Ongoing: Growth & Expansion

- Launch limited-time offers (LTOs) to keep the menu fresh
- Rotate seasonal items or trending flavors
- Integrate fried food into loyalty or app-based promotions
- Analyze sales data to identify high-margin opportunities

Long-Term Impact

- Increased repeat visits
- Higher average transaction values
- Stronger brand differentiation
- A shift from fuel-based traffic to food-driven traffic



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Operational Considerations

Labor Efficiency

Modern frying solutions minimize labor demands through automation and simplified workflows.

Safety & Compliance

Advanced systems can include:

- Enclosed cooking environments
- Built-in fire suppression
- Automated alerts and safeguards

Space Optimization

Compact equipment allows operators to add foodservice without major renovations.



Profit Calculator: Menu-Based Profit Snapshot

Use this example-style table to visualize daily and monthly profit potential across popular fried menu items.

Item	Ingredient Cost	Menu Price	Gross Margin	Avg Orders/Day	Daily Profit
Fries	\$0.75	\$5.00	85%	50	\$212.50
Wings	\$1.50	\$10.00	85%	40	\$340.00
Mozzarella Sticks	\$1.00	\$7.00	85%	30	\$153.00
Churro Bites	\$1.25	\$6.00	79%	25	\$118.75
Total Daily Profit					**\$824.25**
Monthly Projection (30 days)					**\$24,727.50**

How to Use This Table

- Adjust orders per day based on your store traffic
- Modify menu pricing to match your market
- Swap or add items to reflect your actual menu

This format helps operators quickly see how each item contributes to overall profitability, and where to focus for maximum return.

Marketing Fried Food in Convenience Stores

In-Store Strategies

- Eye-catching menu boards
- Combo meal promotions
- Sampling during peak hours

Digital & Loyalty Integration

- App-based promotions
- Limited-time offers
- Rewards for repeat purchases

Impulse Triggers

Position fried food near checkout areas to encourage last-minute add-ons.

The Competitive Advantage

Convenience stores that invest in fried food programs gain:

- Increased foot traffic
- Higher average transaction values
- Stronger customer loyalty
- Differentiation from nearby competitors

Conclusion

Fried foods are not just a menu addition, they are a **strategic revenue driver**. Convenience stores that implement a **well-planned fried food program** can expect:

- Increased **guest spend and dwell time**
- Improved **repeat visits and customer loyalty**
- Streamlined operations with reduced labor and inventory waste
- Higher profitability even with **limited kitchen space**

Investing in **modern ventless equipment like AutoFry** ensures your fried food program delivers consistent quality while maximizing operational efficiency.



Contact Us

Interested in learning more about **launching or expanding a fried food program at your convenience store?**

Our team works with establishments around the globe to help operators explore foodservice opportunities that **drive revenue, increase guest satisfaction, and enhance the overall experience.**

Whether you're evaluating menu options, exploring equipment solutions, or planning a full food program rollout, we're here to **help.**

Contact our team to start the conversation.

**Motion Technology, Inc. (MTI)
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Learn how **modern ventless frying solutions** can help bring profitable fried food programs to **convenience stores** with **minimal footprint and operational complexity.**



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