

Ghost kitchens take a bite out of the Edmonton food scene

by Katie Hooge

As the takeout industry continues to climb, so does the rise of ghost kitchens — and they're adding to Edmonton's food spirit.

Ghost kitchens are professional cooking spaces operating for delivery-only meals. They typically have no storefront or dining areas for customers to visit — hence the name “ghost” kitchens. These spaces allow restaurants to outsource the making of takeout without having to focus on dine-in service.

What exactly are ghost kitchens? (Katie Hooge)

Ghost kitchens are both a concept and the name of a restaurant chain. The chain Ghost Kitchens is based on the virtual kitchen idea, but serves as a dine-in restaurant and delivery space. It has three restaurants throughout Edmonton and continues to expand. Cinnabon, The Cheesecake Factory, Ben & Jerry's, and Quiznos are just a handful of the options available at the restaurant chain.

You can get dinner from one spot and dessert from another all in the same order. That's the uniqueness of the site.

Ghost Kitchens chain

Nada Selim, marketing coordinator for the chain, believes Ghost Kitchens is becoming increasingly popular due to the convenience they offer families. “People like this because you can basically tap from one location and you'll be able to feed the entire family,” she says.

Selim says the restaurant offers around 21 different menus. Family members can order from different restaurants while only paying one delivery fee. No more arguing over where to eat.

Many restaurants suffered from closures forced by the pandemic. However, Selim says it definitely helped Ghost Kitchens and their takeout increased a lot. She believes the online ordering technology is part of what makes the business such a success. “Technology tailors to the generation,” Selim says. “It's convenience.”

It isn't just consumers who benefit from the ghost kitchen model and ease of operations. “You have a concept and a kitchen that serves a variety of dishes, and this helps a lot of restaurant

owners because it's more profitable that way," Selim says.

Food delivery continues to increase

According to [a QSR](#) article, digital ordering and delivery have grown 300 per cent faster than dine-in traffic since 2014. Online delivery apps like Skip the Dishes, DoorDash, and Uber Eats continue to dominate the market. In 2017, Skip the Dishes received an [award](#) celebrating Canada's fastest growing technology after a 10,969.6 per cent revenue growth from 2013 to 2016.

In a 2018 report titled "Is the Kitchen Dead?" Swiss investment bank UBS forecasted delivery sales could rise an annual average of more than 20 per cent from US\$35 billion to \$365 billion worldwide by 2030.

This is no surprise. Consumers love quick and easy service. You can order your favourite food from almost any restaurant and enjoy it from the comfort of your home. A 2016 [article by Mintel](#) said that 87 per cent of Americans who use third-party food delivery services agree that it makes their lives easier. In our on-demand world, these ghost kitchens are tailored to serving growing delivery demands.

Ana Ortiz, a server at Earls Kitchen + Bar, also believes the rise in takeout is generational. "This generation doesn't have time to cook and go out to a restaurant, so we just order takeout more often out of convenience," she says.

In an [article by Upserve](#), they reported that 59 per cent of restaurant orders from millennials are takeout or delivery.

As the takeout industry continues to grow, the ghost kitchen idea will likely increase along with it. "It's a different thing and it's new," says Selim. "It's a very interesting concept."

It is a model that aims to serve what Edmontonians really want: convenience and food.

[Magpie mainpage](#)