

A Message From

Oak Hammock Administration

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

Dining Changes in Independent Living Kevin Ahmadi, CEO

Hello Independent Living residents,

As we look forward to the reopening of The Grille, we are excited to share some updates to the menus for both The Grille and the main dining rooms in Independent Living. After more than a year of discussions with the Residents' Council Dining Committee, the following changes will be in effect starting January 4.

The Grille

The refurbishments in The Grille were envisioned to be minimal at this stage. This decision is informed by our expectation of broader transformations in our overall dining programs, which are planned for the near-term future. Once a comprehensive plan for the development of new residential units and renovations of common/dining spaces is ratified, The Grille may serve as a transitional dining area during any subsequent construction and renovation activities in the main dining rooms. Upon reopening, The Grille will continue to offer a casual dining environment where members are free to dine with whomever they choose, maintaining the tradition that we have all come to appreciate. In addition, some changes will be made soon in the Duckworth Gardens to offer an improved experience for residents who wish to dine outdoors.

Introducing a Stand-Alone Menu in The Grille

The objective for establishing a stand-alone menu in The Grille is to complement offerings from the main dining room, while incorporating a fast-casual concept that represents industry trends and aligns with current staffing levels.

The fast-casual concept is an ascending trend in senior living communities, offering a more streamlined dining experience. Residents can swiftly place orders at the counter, thereby reducing wait times and optimizing operations. Implementing this new system will require fewer waitstaff, enabling more efficient allocation of resources.

New Hours in The Grille

Breakfast 7 to 10:30 a.m. daily

Lunch 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily

Main Dining Rooms in Independent Living

In addition to the improvements in The Grille, residents will also notice changes to the dining experience in the main dining rooms in Independent Living, specifically in relation to menus.

We are fully committed to successfully navigating the complexities of offering an extensive menu, while managing staffing requirements and financial constraints to minimize costs and prevent waste. The proposed changes to our menu aim to align our operations with current resources, accommodating resident preferences and embracing emerging trends in food and beverage services.

As we go through an upcoming period of transformation, we are fully committed to identifying avenues for continuous enhancement in our dining operations. Rather than seeing proposed changes as final, we encourage residents to view changes as part of an overall, dynamic process. We will continue to identify areas for improvement, and we will remain agile so we can ensure that our operations are optimized, and you're consistently satisfied.

Reduction of the “Always Available Menu”

The objective of streamlining the existing “always available menu” is to eliminate slow-moving items and to introduce fresher, healthier options for residents. Rationale for reducing the size of the “always available menu”:

- **Resource limitations:** Our kitchen and storage areas are not large enough to support the current sprawling menu in addition to more than two dozen weekly specials.
- **Operational strain:** The hefty set up for a broad menu stretches our culinary staff and makes efficient food prep difficult.
- **Cost and waste:** Smaller quantities lead to higher procurement costs and lower risk of spoilage. Items often go to waste because they aren't ordered frequently enough.
- **Time for refreshment:** After nearly two years without significant changes, our residents are eager for new, exciting options.
- **Cross-utilization and health:** New items will share common ingredients, speeding up turnover of perishables and allowing for the introduction of healthier options.
- **Opportunity for special presentations:** Previously featured items from the “always available menu” can take center stage as special entrees, without undergoing permanent removal.

Breakfast Concludes at 10:30 a.m.

The objective of concluding breakfast at 10:30 a.m. is to optimize the use of limited kitchen space and improve the quality and consistency of breakfast offerings. Rationale for the conclusion of breakfast at 10:30 a.m.:

- Space constraints: Our primary cooking area has limited space for breakfast inventory, which needs to be cleared for lunch and dinner prep.
- Focus and freshness: Ending breakfast earlier allows chefs to focus on quality and ensures items like pancake batter and eggs are as fresh as possible.
- Operational readiness: The lull between breakfast and lunch will provide crucial time for the culinary team to prepare for the day's subsequent services.

Please note that we will continue to offer limited breakfast items throughout the day. They will be noted on the menu with an asterisk.

New Cycle for Daily Specials

The objective of having a new cycle for daily specials is to better manage inventory and increase resident opportunities to try special dishes. Rationale for offering daily specials on a three-day rotation:

- Inventory efficiency: One-day specials create leftover inventory that often goes to waste. A three-day cycle ensures better utilization.
- Workload management: The current daily turnover of specials places a heavy burden on the chefs, affecting other critical tasks and training.
- Resident satisfaction: Extending the same specials over three days allows members multiple opportunities to enjoy new dishes and comfortable favorites, enhancing the overall dining experience.

Please note that the three-day daily specials will be scheduled Mondays – Wednesdays and Thursdays – Saturdays, with the Sunday menu focused on the traditional brunch and special dinner menus. Furthermore, the appetizer and salad of the week will be temporarily discontinued, but a specialty sandwich or burger of the week will be available.

Formal Dining Room Hours of Operation:

Lunch 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. daily

Dinner 5 to 7 p.m. Sundays - Thursdays
 5 to 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays

Casual Dining Room Hours of Operation:

Dinner 5 to 7 p.m. Sundays - Thursdays
 5 to 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays

As a reminder:

Treats & Treasures Hours of Operation

8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays - Fridays

11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays

Gator Lounge Hours of Operation

3:30 to 7 p.m. Sundays - Thursdays

3:30 to 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays

Delivery service is \$6 as of January 1, 2024. Deliveries will be made after 1:30 p.m. for lunch service and after 7 p.m. for dinner service.

To order take-out for pick-up, call 352-548-1042 or 352-548-1043 and leave your name, your apartment or house number and your phone number when placing your order. For dinner orders to be picked up at 5 p.m., be sure to order by 4 p.m. Otherwise, indicate the time you wish to pick up your order when you are leaving a message.

We have attached the new menus for further explanation. These new menus will be in effect starting Thursday, January 4. We appreciate your patience as we implement these improvements for you. Our goal is to elevate your dining experience while offering some new options. As always, we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ahmadi

Kevin Ahmadi
CEO, Oak Hammock at the University of Florida