

Coffee Bars



Coffee shops have become a normal part of life for today's teenager. If students are already stopping by coffee shops before and after school, bringing this environment inside the building can increase revenue for your school nutrition department, increase milk consumption, and allow your team to control the nutrition of the coffee beverages your students consume.

Why are coffee bars important?

Adding a coffee bar or cart to your high school(s) can help you compete with popular off-campus shops and enhance the image of your program.

Additionally, your team can control the nutrition of the caffeinated beverages your students consume. USDA allows sales of coffee and espresso beverages in high schools up to 12 ounces and under 60 calories as part of the Smart Snacks in School program.

Coffee bars are also a great option for selling other a la carte items – such as smoothies, tea and hot chocolate – and a la carte breakfast and lunch items.



Increased a la Carte Revenue

Some schools with coffee bars see upwards of \$900 per week in profits – that's more than \$30,000 per year.¹



Increased Student Participation

Coffee bars may increase breakfast and lunch participation – some schools saw up to a 4% ADP increase after implementing a coffee bar.¹



Enhances the Image of Your Nutrition Program

“The coffee shops have created a ‘university’ type atmosphere and are constantly evolving based upon student preference and feedback. Product quality and consistency are a driving force for the items that we choose. We mimic our competition as closely as possible with packaging, marketing and products offered. The coffee shops in both high schools are located outside of the cafeteria. We market the coffee shop to be a premium line with specialty menu items – such as Chick-fil-A, Pizza Hut, specialty salads, premium sandwiches, bistro boxes, protein boxes, vegetarian options and an array of sweets.”

– Julie Telesca, SNS, Director of Nutrition Services
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Grapevine, Texas





Frequently Asked Questions

Q Are coffee beverages allowed to be sold in high schools?

- A** Yes. The USDA Smart Snacks rules allow coffee and espresso, only in high schools and only if they meet the beverage calorie restrictions: 40 calories per 8-ounce serving or 60 calories per 12-ounce serving are allowed, and you need only count the calories from added ingredients – like flavored syrups – not the calories from the low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Espresso / black coffee with fat-free white or flavored milk, served with or without flavored syrup: Allowed
 - Espresso / black coffee with low-fat white or flavored milk: Allowed, but no flavored syrup may be added
 - Cream, sugar, other ingredients and flavorings: Allowed as self-service accompaniments

Q Can schools serve coffee with the USDA competitive food service regulation?

- A** Yes. Coffee bars operated by the school nutrition department do not apply to the competitive food service regulation – especially if the coffee is part of a reimbursable meal (see below for more info).

Q Can a latte be part of a reimbursable meal?

- A** Yes, but only if a student purchases a reimbursable meal and then takes their milk to the latte station. That milk could be made into a latte for an upcharge – e.g., “for \$1 more, make your milk a latte.” Another example would be to serve lattes prepared with 8 ounces of milk as part of the reimbursable meal, with the milk counted as a component. Milk would still need to be offered on the line.

Q Can I sell other items with the coffee?

- A** Yes. We recommend selling additional Smart Snacks-compliant a la carte items along with the coffee. Selling items like yogurt parfaits, granola bars, muffins, paninis, salads, etc. can result in an additional \$500-\$2,000 per week in revenue.

Q What should my price point be?

- A** Look at coffee shops and restaurants serving coffee beverages in your area, then price competitively against your findings. Many schools start prices at \$2-\$3 for an 8-ounce beverage.¹

More questions?
Reach out to your Dairy MAX [School Wellness Consultant](#).

References:

1. https://schoolnutrition.org/uploadedFiles/2_Meetings_and_Events/Presentation_PDFs/ANC_2019/Coffee-Express-Increase-High-School-Sales-with-a-Coffee-Bar.pdf