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THE CUTTING EDGE OF FOODSERVICE

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SHOULD FISH AND CHIPS CEMENT A PLACE ON THE MENU?



Fewer meals scream ‘Kiwi’ like fish and chips. However, classic battered fish with deep-fried chips, isn’t always the easiest meal to perfect on a menu.

Should fish and chips remain a staple for New Zealand’s exploding restaurant scene? Or should it remain a takeaway speciality? Restaurant & Café spoke to a variety of restaurants and QSRs to get the low-down on this Kiwi favourite.



Simon and Sara, The Local.

Simon Pope and Sara Stevenson, owners of The Local on Waiheke Island, believe that fish and chips are New Zealand’s ultimate sharing and comfort food.

“It nostalgically takes us to our own special place whilst sitting on the deck overlooking the seas where the fresh fish came from,” they said.

Waiheke’s The Local offers the perfect mixture of the freshest Kiwi ingredients, served the way it should be. The Local also highlights an essential aspect of the special seafood meal—locality. No matter where a Kiwi is in the world, fish and chips will always remind them of home, something to remember when planning a menu.

At O’Connell Street Bistro, Mark Southon said that although there isn’t necessarily the classic fish and chip offering on their menu, the idea of something that can provide the same comfort is not out of the question.



*Mark Southon, O’Connell Street Bistro.
Photograph by Babiche Martens.*

“Perhaps a take on fish and chips would be something worth exploring,” said Southon. “I could see some form of potato, with a fish component working.”

Fish and chips is also a great way to ensure a no-fuss experience for diners with children. Steve Logan, managing director of Logan Brown, said that they like to have fish and chips on the children's menu.



Steve Logan, Logan Brown.

“The kids love it, and not all children want a challenging dinner, so why spoil a family dinner out by making a point?” Whether a venue has a specific children's offering, fish and chips on the regular menu will ensure that parents can get that for their children, should the situation arise.

To Gordon Wu, from The Ancient Mariner, great fish and chips are about contrast.

“This is what makes fish and chips so unique. The light, crispy batter versus the tender, juicy fish; the crunchy outside of the chip versus the fluffy mashed potato on the inside.” Wu continued, saying that shops that can spend time perfecting this and getting it consistent are the places you will find the best fish and chips.



Gordon Wu, The Ancient Mariner.

Recent headlines around the Tarakihi quota cuts have impacted the local fish scene, according to Wu.

“The cuts affect not only the Tarakihi but also the other popular species of fish. These often come in the form of supply issues and price increases.” This has challenged Wu’s shop as customers are often unfamiliar with a variety of species. Having said that, he is positive that the future will bring about a change in awareness.

Fish and chips are a staple that has become synonymous with New Zealand. Therefore, there is a place on most menus for some adaption of the offering. Whether a customer is looking for a taste of comfort, or that familiar and safe option amidst a complicated menu, fish and chips are ideal. Perhaps the classic battered fish, with thick and deep-fried chips isn’t appropriate for every restaurant—but similar items can be utilised to represent the nostalgia that many people feel when eating fish and chips. This is the most crucial part of utilising the dish, as its simplicity and history are alluring to many diners.

