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## DIY Restaurants on the Rise

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The option to make your own food -- at a restaurant -- seems to defeat the purpose of going out.

But a growing number of restaurants are going DIY -- at least in part. It's a practice that's long been commonplace at Korean barbecue restaurants but is now making its way into other cuisines and even cocktails.



In New York, the Parker & Quinn restaurant at the Refinery Hotel recently introduced a "build your own" brunch beverage experience where guests mix their own drinks. The Bloody Board includes a carafe of Bloody Mary, accompanied by pickled vegetables, pimento olives, pepper jack cheese, bacon, celery, horseradish, beef bouillon and assorted hot sauces. The "Bubbly Board" is DIY mimosas and bellinis, with a bottle of Prosecco, and sides of raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, whipped cream, along with and mixers.

"Since people are generally decompressing from the night before or preparing for the day ahead during brunch, through our Brunch Boards they're able to skip the hassles of cooking at home and creating cocktails from start to finish, but can still enjoy playing with their food," said Rob McGovern, Food & Beverage Director at In Good Company Hospitality. He added guests are looking for "Instagram-able" brunch experiences.

Slappy Cakes delivers batter and topping to tables equipped with a grill in the center so breakfast goers can DIY pancakes in both Portland, **Oregon** and Maui. The first Slappy Cakes opened in 2009 in Oregon and the Maui location debuted in 2013. Several international locations are opening this year including London, Bangkok, Jakarta and **Kuala Lumpur**. Founder Adam Fuderer said DIY cooking brings families and friends closer together. "At our restaurant we do all the prep and cleaning, leaving the fun part of actually cooking to the guests."

The Old Spanish Sugar Mill and Griddle House in De Leon Springs, **Florida** has a similar make-your-own pancakes concept.

In San Diego, the Gaslamp Strip Club has diners order a cut of meat which is then served uncooked; customers bring the meat to a grill station in the middle of the restaurant to cook the meat to their liking. At the grill stations, there are instructions for recommended cooking times for different cuts, seasoning suggestions and sauce/condiment options. A restaurant spokesperson said it's a popular feature for tourists looking for something out of the ordinary, as well as locals.

The Grill House in Allegan, **Michigan** is built around the grill-your-own concept. Guests are escorted to the grill room where they select a cut from the meat case and then, under the guidance of restaurant staff, are directed to the part of the grill they should use depending on how well done they want their meat.

Food expert Alanna Stang of The Daily Meal said the burgeoning trend is really just an extension of the DIY culture that's become so popular in recent years. "You have more people brining, pickling, jarring, etc. than in previous decades. People are into understanding how things are made--from their broth to their bitters." And while she said the idea of cooking your own food at a restaurant is "counterintuitive" it can be an enjoyable experience.

"At a restaurant people have access to all kind of ingredients and cooking methods that they may not have at home, plus you can cook together with lots of friends."