

After Pleas for the Pretzel Bun's Return, Wendy's Unveils New Pub-Style Cheeseburger

This week, Wendy's unveiled a new hamburger that involves applewood smoked bacon, muenster cheese, smoky honey mustard, warm beer cheese sauce, crispy fried onions and pickles all between a soft pretzel bun.

If that sounds like a lot of ingredients and calories (730 to be precise) in one sandwich, it is.

The bun itself returns after a five-year hiatus, which Wendy's is reintroducing after some "self-reflection." Every day since Wendy's discontinued the item in 2015 the company has received queries about when the pretzel bun is coming back, the chain's CMO Carl Loredó told Adweek.

While the company relies in part on market research, the decision to bring back the sandwich was ultimately based on its customers lobbying for it. "We also play really close attention to what our consumers have to say," Loredó said.

"Like we did with Spicy Nuggets, we've been watching and listening as customers have been craving for us to bring Pretzel back. We married the fervor for our former pretzel bun with the increased love for gastropub-inspired flavors and created a cheeseburger that is, in a word, unforgettable," Loredó also said in a separate statement.

In another bit of good news for fans of the pretzel bun, this time the sandwich will stick around for as long as there is ample demand for it, Loredó said, as no end date has been set.

The fast-food chain coined its latest offering the Pretzel Bacon Pub Cheeseburger and it went on sale for \$5.69 on

Tuesday. (You can also swap out the beef patty for a fillet. The chicken version carries a price tag of \$6.19.)

The pub-style cheeseburger, already promoted heavily on digital, gets its own 30-second television spot that will begin airing nationally next week, Wendy's told Adweek.

Wendy's partnered with agency VMLY&R to create the ad, while Spark Foundry is serving as the media buyer and Ketchum is providing public relations for the campaign.

The burger chain's newest menu item joins its "Made to Crave" line of sandwiches, which are packed with more flavor and ingredients versus other offerings and includes offerings such as a bacon jalapeño cheeseburger and the Big Bacon Classic.

"We adopted innovative techniques and ingredients you'd find at popular gastropubs and combined them with Wendy's signature high-quality ingredients to deliver this amazing new cheeseburger, the Wendy's Way," said John Li, vp of culinary innovation, in a statement.

To appeal to customers' wallets in addition to enticing their tastebuds, Wendy's is offering customers a free Pretzel Bacon Pub Cheeseburger with any Wendy's purchase over \$15 between Sept. 4 and Sept. 7 exclusively on Postmates.

However, Wendy's noted that customers can order all of its items via delivery services such as GrubHub, Uber Eats and DoorDash.

It's been a busy year for Wendy's culinary chief in particular. The pub-style cheeseburger is just one of several new menu items Wendy's has introduced this year.

Weeks ago, it added the new Spicy Crispy Chicken sandwich to its menu, intensifying the battle for chicken sandwich supremacy, with a 4 for \$4 promotional offering that included a drink, a Jr. fry, four-piece chicken nuggets and a choice of

sandwich.

Prior to the pandemic in early March, the company unveiled an entire lineup of breakfast items that initially drove comparable sales of 15%, the company has previously said. Even during the pandemic, the chain's sales have proven fairly resilient, with U.S. comparable sales down only 4.4% during the second quarter and up 8.2% in July, the first month of the third quarter.

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