

FAMILY FUN

A Tasty Read: Choosing A Casual Dining Restaurant

(NAPSA)—With the return of warm weather, families are busy with outdoor chores, errands, recreational activities and leisure day trips. Time-pressed folks are also looking for quick, easy and relaxing dining, along with take-out meals that can be enjoyed with family and friends. Also, in today's economy, families are demanding more value in all of their purchases, including their dining choices.

Casual dining is the answer for many. It continues to consistently outpace many other segments in the food service industry. *Nation's Restaurant News*, a restaurant trade industry publication, recently reported an increased trend of people eating closer to home and opting for modern comfort food. There are many restaurant choices to pick from and the biggest challenge for consumers may be deciding where to go. Here's some advice in selecting a restaurant:

1. Variety is the spice. Look for a place that has character and ambience. Many casual restaurants create an atmosphere with color, decorations, lighting and other accents that provide an escape from the ordinary. This makes the visit more memorable and can stimulate fun conversation while enjoying the food. Some restaurants even create an entertaining and educational environment that "transports" patrons to another place, either in time, geog-



Visiting a casual dining restaurant can be an enjoyable way to share a meal together with family or friends.

raphy or both. Others sport a heritage of genuineness and authenticity in what they serve.

2. Distinctive atmosphere. Some casual dining restaurants specialize in particular menu items—seafood, pasta, burgers—while others provide a broader and varied menu. A casual restaurant with a variety of menu choices will usually satisfy the tastes of everyone in your group.

For example, Uno Chicago Grill, the restaurant chain first known for inventing the original Chicago-style deep dish pizza, offers many other main courses in addition to its signature fare. "High quality grill items, such as steak, lobster, shrimp and scallops round out our menu. We offer something for everyone,"

said Uno executive chef Chris Gatto.

Other features to consider include a kid's menu and healthy menu items like salads and vegetables.

3. The take-out option. Some people don't realize that casual restaurants are also a good choice for take-out. The same fresh, high-quality food that can be consumed at the restaurant can be taken home and enjoyed there as well. Make sure the food is well-covered and that you live relatively close by, so it'll still be warm when you return home.

Perhaps the most important tip of all when visiting a casual dining establishment: Relax, have fun and enjoy the time spent with family and friends.