



Portillo's Appoints Christopher Hansen as Executive Chef and Senior Director of Culinary Innovation

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The seasoned culinary leader will oversee menu strategy and innovation to support growth and drive guest engagement

CHICAGO, July 23, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Portillo's](#) (NASDAQ: PTLO), the fast-casual restaurant brand known for its menu of Chicago-style favorites and unmatched guest experience, today announced the appointment of Chef Christopher Hansen as its Executive Chef and Senior Director of Culinary Innovation, overseeing all aspects of culinary strategy and menu innovation. Chef Hansen has served in culinary leadership roles for more than three decades, most recently leading the U.S. culinary business at fast-casual concept Guzman y Gomez.

"Christopher brings a rare combination of culinary creativity, commercial discipline and a deep appreciation for the brands and people behind great food," said Brett Patterson, Portillo's President and CEO. "As we continue to grow Portillo's, we're committed to delivering the food and experiences that have earned our guests' loyalty for more than 60 years while thoughtfully evolving our menu. Christopher understands how to honor a brand's heritage while introducing the right innovations to give guests a new reason to visit. Just as importantly, he shares our passion for the team members who bring those recipes to life every day. His track record building menu strategies will be invaluable as we continue building on the legacy guests know and love."

As Portillo's Executive Chef and Senior Director of Culinary Innovation, Chef Hansen will lead culinary innovation, including recipe and product development, and work in close collaboration with the company's marketing, operations and supply chain teams. He will play a critical role in preserving Portillo's reputation for quality and taste, while extending menu offerings beyond beloved classics. His appointment comes as Portillo's eyes new opportunities to expand its footprint and deepen guest loyalty across the country.

"Portillo's has spent more than six decades earning a special place in people's lives through incredible food and an unmistakable guest experience," said Chef Hansen. "As a Chicagoan, I've long admired what Portillo's means to this city and to so many people like me who grew up with the brand. That's a legacy you don't reinvent. You respect it, protect it and build upon it. I look forward to helping create new menu experiences that complement Portillo's iconic Italian beef sandwiches, Chicago-style hot dogs and chocolate cake that guests already love, giving them fresh reasons to visit while staying true to the flavors and quality that made Portillo's famous."

Hansen brings more than 30 years of leadership experience across the restaurant, foodservice and consumer packaged goods industries, with deep culinary expertise spanning menu development, product commercialization, flavor innovation and supply chain collaboration for a variety of quick-service and fast-casual brands. Most recently, he served as Head of U.S. Culinary at Guzman y Gomez, where he led culinary strategy, menu innovation and brand positioning. Prior to that, he served as Corporate Executive Chef, Business Development at McIlhenny Tabasco Company, where he oversaw innovation and developed co-branded menu items with leading restaurant concepts. Additionally, he spent more than 15 years at OSI Industries, LLC, a global supplier of custom food products, where he rose to Assistant Vice President, Culinary Executive Chef and led culinary concept development for U.S.-based and international customers.

About Portillo's

Portillo's (NASDAQ: PTLO) is a one-of-a-kind brand that has grown from a small hot dog trailer in Chicago to more than 100 restaurants across 11 states. Known for its unique menu of craveable Italian beef sandwiches, Chicago-style hot dogs, char-broiled burgers, fresh salads and iconic chocolate cake, Portillo's is beloved in both its home of Chicagoland and across new and growing markets. Portillo's operates a company-owned model of not just restaurants – but experience-focused destinations that blend dine-in, drive-thru, takeout and delivery to serve guests with the food they crave. And now, after six decades of success and counting, Portillo's is on a mission to bring its iconic food and unforgettable dining experience to guests across the country.

Guests can join Portillo's Perks, the brand's loyalty program, at [Portillos.com/perks](#) to earn and redeem delicious rewards. Every visit brings fans closer to exclusive perks, badges and surprise offers. Fans can also download the Portillo's App for iOS or Android or visit Portillo's website to order ahead for pickup or delivery and get the best dill on these bun-believable delicious Chicago-style favorites and more. Plus, Portillo's ships its crave-worthy food to all 50 states via its website.

Media Contact:

Sara Wirth
Director, PR & Communications
Press@portillos.com

Christopher Hansen, Executive Chef and Senior Director of Culinary Innovation



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Investor Contact:

Chris Brandon

VP, Investor Relations

cbrandon@portillos.com

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/ca473824-9766-4bc7-b285-533bacceb891>