

Fast-food chain tests 'Merry Munchie Meals' for marijuana smokers

Zlati Meyer, USA TODAY Published 2:54 p.m. ET Dec. 28, 2017 | Updated 4:57 p.m. ET Dec. 31, 2017



(Photo: Jack in the Box)

Knowing that marijuana smokers can get serious hunger pangs, one fast-food chain is looking to take advantage of the start of California's legalization of pot for recreational use.

San Diego-based Jack in the Box plans will sell a weed-themed Merry Munchie Meal at three southern California locations in mid-January.

In November 2016, Californians approved Proposition 64, which legalized sales of recreational marijuana for adults starting Monday, the beginning of the new year.

The limited-time offer is in partnership with cannabis lifestyle website Merry Jane — itself an allusion to marijuana's "mary jane" nickname — backed by rapper and TV game-show host Snoop Dogg.

The meal will be tested Jan. 18-25 at select Jack in the Box locations in Long Beach, Snoop's hometown.

The meal box, part of Jack in the Box's late-night menu, has half-servings of curly fries and onion rings, two tacos, five mini churros, three crispy chicken strips and a small drink. The price is \$4.20 — [April 20, or 4/20, is "Weed Day" \(http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/what-is-420-weed-day-meaning-origins-marijuana-california-penal-code-cannabis-high-a7691156.html\)](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/what-is-420-weed-day-meaning-origins-marijuana-california-penal-code-cannabis-high-a7691156.html) — plus tax.

"We are about welcoming all of our guests, no matter what they're craving or why they're craving it," Chief Marketing Officer Iwona Alter said in a statement.

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Jack in the Box is hoping to create a buzz that will elevate the brand.

"They're going to leap upon anything they can. It's an occasion. Why not?" said Robert Passikoff, founder of Brand Keys, a New York-based brand research consultancy. "The brand generates the kind of audience that won't be offended by it."

Sixty-four percent of Americans support legalizing marijuana, according to a Harris Poll conducted in October.

While General Mill's frozen pizza brand Totino's [has occasionally posted billboards \(https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/marijuana/totinos-ads-cater-to-marijuana-users\)](https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/marijuana/totinos-ads-cater-to-marijuana-users) suggesting people who are stoned should eat pizza rolls, don't expect pot-related fast-food meals to become a trend.

"McDonald's won't do it. Burger King won't do it," Passikoff said. "Jack in the Box has nothing to lose by doing this. But a major brand would never do it, because they would be afraid of backlash from people who don't have open minds about marijuana and drug culture."

Founded in 1951, Jack in the Box is a regional brand with more than 2,200 restaurants.

The chain announced Dec. 19 that it was selling its beleaguered Mexican fast-casual brand Qdoba to publicly-traded investment group Apollo Global Management for approximately \$305 million.

Shares of Jack in the Box were down about 1% Friday morning at \$98.66.

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