



Effective Friday, May 22, 2020, Hawks Restaurant will begin adding a 3% surcharge to all checks in an effort to provide competitive wages for our Heart of House staff, the talent preparing your meals. If you have any reservations regarding this voluntary surcharge, please let your server know and we will remove the 3% surcharge from your check.

Please take a moment to read the information we've provided below. Our goal is to remain transparent in our efforts as your trust means everything to us.

Why not raise menu prices in lieu of the 3% surcharge? Restaurants budget every cost associated with operations and we take pride in maintaining those costs. Current menu prices are an accurate reflection of industry standard, fine dining food and beverage costs. While increasing costs across the board could generate additional revenue to compensate our Heart of House staff, we feel doing so would not address the wage issues that persists in a traditional restaurant model.

Why now? Hearing the announcement that we would be forced to close our dining room due to the Covid 19 pandemic was frightening; having to furlough our hourly employees was heartbreaking. This experience shed light on a troubling reality; members of our kitchen team, the Heart of our House, are not financially prepared for an emergency because they are just barely getting by. As owners and operators, we feel an obligation to do better for our team.

Effects of Minimum Wage Increases While we believe in the benefit of minimum wage increases, sustained wage increases year over year simply increase operating costs and erode profits. As a result, there is little to no room in labor budgets to award merit-based increases. In order to retain staff and attract new talent, we must be leaders in our industry and offer competitive wages. Furthermore, while minimum wage increases are beneficial to all, these increases do not solve a problem unique to restaurants: the disparity of wages between the Front of House and Heart of House employees. While front of house employees rely on wages plus well deserved gratuity, the talent in the kitchen rely solely on hourly wages. The 3% surcharge will allow us to increase hourly wages for our Heart of House staff and offer merit-based increases. While this will not entirely eliminate the existing disparity in wages, it starts the conversation and takes a responsible first step.

Fostering the Next Generation of Chefs We believe in what we do and what we serve. The answer is not to downgrade the products we serve. We believe in supporting small, local farms. We believe in fileting whole fish and butchering our own meat. There is an art to what we do, and we feel an obligation to teach and mentor the next generation of chefs. In order to preserve quality restaurants, we must take steps toward creating a sustainable career path for talented cooks.

So many of you are more than just guests; you're a part of our family. We're confident you'll support our efforts; however, we welcome a discussion should you have any questions.

Thank you,

Molly and Michael