

## With 2019 investment, fast-casual Slim Chickens plans growth push

Fayetteville, Ark.-based company opens 100th unit and tailors multiprong expansion, COO Sam Rothschild says

*Ron Ruggless* | Dec 24, 2019 | <https://bit.ly/36f0xF6>



*Slim Chickens's 3-year-old unit in Irving, Texas, sports patio seating, which is found in most of the stand-alone restaurants.*

Slim Chickens Development Co. opened its 100<sup>th</sup> unit last week in Little Rock, Ark., and is tailoring growth in the year ahead, a company partner said.

“We’ve made advances in the interior and exterior of the prototype. We’ve upgraded technology with online ordering, app, rewards program. We’ve done additions to the menu,” said Sam Rothschild, a Slim partner and chief operating officer, in a phone interview.

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*A large beverage station includes serveware and condiments.*

The Fayetteville, Ark.-based fast-casual brand opened 21 restaurants in 2019, with 18 of those franchised and three company-owned. The company plans to open 31 units over the next year, Rothschild said, both domestically and internationally. The company has six franchised units in the United Kingdom and two in Kuwait in the Middle East.

The two prototypes for stand-alone units are a 2,400-square-foot restaurant with capacity for 80 inside and a patio and 2,800 square feet with capacity for 100 inside and additional 30 patio seats.

*Photo: Various portion sizes of the buttermilk-marinated tenders are offered with one sauce. Additional sauces are available and price individually.*

The Slim Chickens menu offers tenders that are buttermilk-marinated, breaded and cooked to order with a choice from 17 individually portioned dipping sauces as well as sandwiches,



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wings, chicken and waffles and wraps. Sides include a popular macaroni and cheese. Per person check averages is \$8.50 to \$9, Rothschild said.



A variety of Mason jar desserts are offered from a display case, and guests can keep the jar. "Slim Chickens can always be in your home or office," he said.

*Slim Chickens offers a rotating selection of desserts in Mason jars that guests may keep.*

Slim Chickens drew a July 2019 investment from 10 Point Capital, which is aiding the brand's growth, Rothschild said.

"We are able to add more infrastructure to our organization to support the franchisees and franchisee growth," Rothschild said. "We now have a strategic partner that's significantly grown another brand – [Atlanta-based] Tropical Smoothie Café – so they bring a lot of systems and processes and forward-thinking that has complemented what we had already been doing with the brand."

*A variety of seating styles, from tall tables to booths, gives guests a variety of choices in a décor that's called "contemporary Southern."*



The Slim Chickens' décor is contemporary Southern with an emphasis on blues music and a Mississippi

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Delta vibe. The company also offers non-traditional formats for football stadiums, college campuses, malls and transportation stations, Rothschild noted

“We’ve deployed the brand in a multipronged approach,” Rothschild said. The company sees conversions of prior restaurant spaces as good growth potential, he added. The company launched its first food truck in 2019 and entered the new markets of Colorado, North Dakota and Memphis, Tenn.

On the menu, the company has added Korean barbecue sauce and mango habanero, and plans some new sauces this year, Rothschild said.

“Having that many dipping sauces allows for guests to share flavors,” he said. “Every bite can be different.” The most popular sauces are cayenne ranch, honey-mustard, ranch, spicy barbecue and proprietary Slim Sauce, he said.

Slim Chickens was founded in 2003. Besides the international units, the brand has units in 20 states.