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Taziki's Becomes the First REAL Certified National Franchise

Washington, DC (January 14, 2015) – The [United States Healthful Food Council \(USHFC\)](#) announced today that [Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe](#) has become the first national franchise to achieve REAL Certification, the emerging national standard for foodservice nutrition and sustainability. With 40 locations across 11 states, Taziki's is also now the largest chain restaurant to complete the certification process.

“Taziki's has always been a trend-setter not a follower,” said Taziki's CEO Jim Keet. “It is an honor to be the first national restaurant franchise to complete the REAL Certification process and be recognized for our focus on health and sustainability.”



REAL Certified, or Responsible Epicurean and Agricultural Leadership, is a holistic nutrition and sustainability certification program for the foodservice industry developed by the USHFC and modeled after the LEED green building certification program. The REAL certification process requires a voluntary audit whereby a USHFC approved registered dietitian (RD) reviews menus, ingredients, preparation methods and sourcing and awards points based on a wide range of criteria such as the use of: nutrient-dense vegetables, fruits and whole grains; scratch cooking and minimally processed foods; healthier cooking methods and moderate portion size; unsweetened beverage and healthy children's options; and more sustainable sourcing methods such as local and organic. Those that satisfy the necessary requirements are awarded and recognized as REAL Certified.

“It's obvious that Taziki's goes the extra mile to purchase higher quality ingredients and utilize healthier preparation methods,” said Lawrence Williams, CEO of the USHFC. “Innovating in a mature industry is very challenging, and we applaud Taziki's for helping to establish what is essentially a new industry segment: fresh-casual.”

With this announcement, consumers can now find REAL Certified dining establishments in over 20 states across the spectrum, ranging from quick-serve restaurants (QSR) through fine-dining, as well as corporate dining facilities and institutional foodservice operations. All REAL Certified establishments are featured on REALCertified.org and through numerous restaurant-related directories.

About Taziki's: As a leader in the growing trend to provide healthful food in a fast-casual setting, all of Taziki's recipes are made fresh and inspired by Mediterranean cuisine, incorporating scratch cooking, healthy oils and healthier preparation methods, as well as "better for you" children meals in its offerings. Taziki's menu offers freshly grilled meats, a variety of vegetarian entrees, healthy side dishes and does not include any deep-fried items. Taziki's Mediterranean Café is headquartered in Birmingham, AL and currently has 40 locations in 11 states. Visit Tazikiscafe.com for more information.

About the United States Healthful Food Council (USHFC)

Established in 2011, the USHFC is a 501(c)3 registered nonprofit dedicated to fighting diet-related disease by realigning the food industry's incentives with consumers' health interests. The USHFC works towards its mission through the *REAL Certified* holistic nutrition and sustainability certification program. REAL Certified foodservice operators must satisfy prerequisites and earn sufficient points in the areas of Responsible (nutrition), Epicurean (preparation), Agricultural (sourcing) and Leadership (going above and beyond). The organization has received financial support from the Tennessee Department of Health, the Park Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation President's Grant Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation. More information can be found at USHFC.org and REALCertified.org.