

Burger King's Satisfries Help Boost Sales

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In this Thursday, April 25, 2013, file photo, a car stops at the drive-thru at a Burger King restaurant near downtown Los Angeles. Burger King reports their quarterly earnings on Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

NEW YORK (AP) — Burger King's new [lower-calorie french fries](#) [1] didn't spark a stampede to restaurants, but the company says they helped push up sales slightly amid heightened competition.

The Miami-based chain on Thursday reported a higher quarterly profit on growth overseas, with particularly strong results Asia. In North America, it said new menu items like Satisfries french fries and the Big King burger, which mimics McDonald's Big Mac, helped lift sales 0.2 percent at established locations.

Alex Macedo, [Burger King](#) [2]'s president of North American operations, said the rollout of Satisfries boosted fry orders overall.

"It's not a mainstream product, it doesn't have the broadest appeal, but it is a premium product and has had success," Macedo said. "People who were coming in and not ordering fries are now ordering fries."

Burger King Worldwide Inc. and other fast-food chains are fighting to attract diners constrained by the economy and a storm-filled winter, along with tough competition from higher-priced quick-service restaurants like Chipotle. In response, Burger King has introduced a string of new menu items and pushed deals.

The unveiling of Satisfries in particular came with great fanfare, with the company hosting a preview of the fries for media in a New York City penthouse this past September. The fries have about 20 percent fewer calories than the chain's regular

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fries as a result of a batter that blocks out some of the oil during frying.

They cost extra, with a small order priced at \$1.89, 30 cents more than regular fries.

Macedo said the fries also show Burger King's commitment to developing new products. The chain has been undergoing significant structural, menu and marketing changes since it was purchased and taken private by 3G Capital, a Brazilian private investment firm. In 2012, 3G unveiled a revamped menu before announcing a deal to take the chain public again.

For the quarter ended Dec. 31, Burger King says it earned \$66.8 million, or 19 cents per share. That compares with \$48.6 million, or 14 cents per share, a year ago.

Not including one-time items, it said it earned 24 cents per share, above the 23 cents per share Wall Street expected.

The sale of company-owned restaurants to franchisees led to lower revenue of \$265.2 million, which was below the \$268.2 million analysts expected. Such refranchising reduces corporate revenue because the company records only the fees the franchisee pays rather than the total restaurant sales.

Burger King had 13,667 restaurants last year.

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