Restaurant Research®

Concept Analysis & Benchmark Report

Applebee's 2026/2027

Executive Summary

Applebee's is an iconic American grill and bar with strong brand equity, benefiting from its comfortable, familiar positioning and connection to local communities. The brand also offers compelling value, with attractive pricing across staple menu items and well-known value platforms such as its 2 for $25 deal. Despite these strengths, however, Applebee's continues to cede market share to competitors, most notably Chili's, which has delivered exceptional sales performance over the past several years. While Applebee's remains highly recognizable and well-liked, one market research analysis suggests the brand is better positioned as a generalist for lower-ticket, routine, low-commitment occasions (such as going out with family) than for higher-ticket, more emotional occasions such as celebrations and date nights. This positioning limits check growth and may constrain frequency. The brand also needs to expand beyond its core lower-income and older customer base, which has shown greater propensity to lapse. Increased social media marketing is designed to strengthen engagement with younger consumers while efforts to improve the in-store experience, including greater manager-customer interaction and continued restaurant remodels, should help reinforce the brand's appeal. Higher staffing levels and shorter wait times could further improve the overall experience and encourage repeat visits. While Applebee's is moving in the right direction, the key opportunity may be to leverage its strong low-price/value positioning to address more emotional occasions while it continues to build relevance with younger and more affluent consumers. If successful, this could allow the brand to retain its core value-oriented customer while broadening its appeal sufficient to increase frequency and check.

Parent Company Summary

Parent Company	Ticker	Corp. Debt Rating	Net Debt [(1)]/ EBITDA	EV/ EBITDA	Stock Performance		
					2025	TTM	Aug-26
Dine Brands Global, Inc.	DIN	Not Rated	9.10	11.50	6.8%	36.8%	
$1B+ Chains			4.18	12.55	-13.1%	2.5%	

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(1) Net Debt includes operating leases.

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