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FOOD TRENDS 2022

As we welcome the new year, it is time to check the food trends that are likely to rule our plates

BINDU GOPAL RAO



Salted caramel chocolate cake

P L A N T - B A S E D F O O D

Fueled by the current climate crisis, part of which is propelled by unsustainable food consumption and lifestyle, plant-based eating is here to stay. There are a few things we as individuals can do to mitigate our carbon footprint, and one of them is to eat local, reduce our use of animal products and overall choose more sustainable options.

Chef Naimita Jagasia of An Ode to Gaia, says, "This started out as a weight management trend, health improvement diet and a fad, but slowly people have realized the benefits

of eating plant-based isn't just individual, but also has a great impact on our environmental output, reduces our carbon footprint significantly and look on the bright side. You are also reducing the number of animals killed by an annual average of 350. It went from being a trend to lifestyle choice especially among the younger generations, the Gen Z and millennials who understand the urgency of the climate crisis and are choosing to explore lifestyle changes that benefit not only themselves but the planet as well."



S M A L L E R M E N U S

The taste of Indian consumers is evolving, and Korean, Japanese, and other foods are taking a decent market share now.

"We are seeing this trend becoming stronger every month as you will find these newly formed food habits are leading to a larger adoption (Dalgona coffee is now available almost everywhere, so is Lotus Biscoff)," says Dharmin Vora, Co-founder, peAR Technologies. "That also means, you not only require a unique menu but also need to educate your customers to drive consumption, repeat orders, which would lead to a higher average bill size. That will require you to have a digital medium alongside a very visual medium. You need to show the presentation and ingredients first, get them to eat with their eyes first. 3-D menus will play a major part in both the dine in and food delivery segments. Food will have to be more presentable and eye pleasing before customers decide to add it to their cart."

A bowl of pasta

N O N - A L C O H O L I C B E V E R A G E S

Non-alcoholic beverages that include a variety of fruit combinations are popular. There is an increase in interest in innovative nonalcoholic and multifunctional cereal-based beverages as part of the trend toward more health-conscious lifestyles.

Renu Dalal, a cookbook author, says, "To make a great thirst quencher, mix any of the following fruits with soda: strawberry, green apple, berries, passion fruit, and avocado. Each fruit has a special and unique flavor. The drink should be just sweet enough to gratify the palate, not too sugary. A masala soda with no sugar is an excellent alternative for those watching their calories. For the health-conscious, a coconut water-lychee juice combo is ideal, as is a combination of juices. A dash of spice in the drink improves the flavor and leaves people wanting more."



Cucumber and jalapeno chiller

H Y P E R - L O C A L F O O D S

With an increasing awareness of the carbon imprint that food produces, many people are turning to locally grown foods that were nearly lost in the change during the last few years. Several fitness gurus and chefs who are developing some fantastic new recipes that are based on old recipes but have been updated to cater to modern tastes are also fueling this trend.

"They have maintained the mindful eating trends while reproducing them," says Saravanan Ranganathan, executive sous chef, Novotel ibis Chennai OMR. "In general, a big audience, particularly from tier I and II cities, has recognized the nutritional and environmental benefits of locally grown foods. Palmira (palm shoot) is one such influence, which is historically found in Tamil Nadu and is eaten steamed or roasted as a snack. The palm root is well-known for its ability to treat urinary infections and other renal problems. Palmira kal vada, palmira poriyal, and palmira payasam are some of the dishes our chefs have created using this healthful root and utilizing its fibrous character."



Dishes made with palm shoot

PHOTO CREDIT: NOVOTEL IBIS CHENNAI OMR

PHOTO CREDIT: CHEF ADITI DUGAR

Koji-aged beetroot and peach chunda

W A S T E - F R E E C O O K I N G

As we become more conscious of what we eat, where it comes from, and that our ecosystems are reaching a tipping point, we are becoming a bit more conservative and innovative in how to preserve what we do have.

"How to minimize food waste was one of the first things we set out to think about when we opened Masque," says Aditi Dugar, founder, Sage & Saffron and Masque. "For one, Masque only offers tasting menus; that, along with our reservations-preferred model, allows us to restrict our waste in itself because we know almost exactly how



many portions, we are preparing every evening. That said, a kitchen in any format will always produce some wastage, so we try to follow a zero-waste policy insofar as possible and meet it 95 percent of the time. Nearly every trimming, excess part, or byproduct, is turned into a new product. We've had chips, salts, cookies, and noodles made of veggie peels, leftover breads, even fish bones. Anything that's left behind is composted, or moved over to the Masque Lab, where we can test how to preserve or convert it."

Yoghurt, a popular fermented food



F E R M E N T E D F O O D S

There has been a growing interest among consumers for incorporating fermented food and drinks in their diets over the last few years. Consumers are eating healthier than ever, and this has been the core reason why fermented foods have gained visibility within the consumer markets.

“Fermented foods have numerous health benefits like boosting immunity and improving gut health,” says Vivek Mani, CEO, Heritage Novandie Foods Private Limited.. This works by increasing the number of healthy beneficial bacteria present within our bodies, also known as probiotics, that acts as an anti-inflammatory agent and aids absorption of essential nutrients, which in turn promotes good gut health... Products like yogurt and drinkable yogurts are gaining rapid visibility within the supermarket shelves and in people’s kitchens.”

P O T A T O M I L K

The planet has so much to offer is talk of the discussion globally and the trend of getting it into our daily diet is increasing rapidly. A few decades ago we heard dairy free desserts or ice cream and so on was the first step towards healthy food from the farm.

“Plants give us a dairy free, fat free and cholesterol free diet,” says Inder Dev, corporate director, food and beverage, Signum Hotels & Resorts. “Can we believe that calcium found in potato milk is as good or the same as found in cow milk? I will not be surprised to see potato milk in the stores... This will be just another vegan milk available everywhere. Consumers are aware and concerned about what they eat and what benefits it gives to their bodies. I strongly feel that the plant-based trend is doing all good for us and the planet.”



RETRO FOODS AND AUTHENTIC FLAVORS

In the last few years, chefs have been experimenting a lot with flavors and spices. Though innovation is great it is important to stay true to the authenticity of a cuisine.

"The core recipes can only be enhanced once a chef has a thorough understanding of the nuances of the cuisine," says Chef Ananda Solomon, Thai Naam. "Before I introduced India to the world of Thai cuisine I went to the country and lived and worked with the local

chefs both on the streets and in the royal kitchens before bringing the cuisine to India. Even with Thai Naam, I continue to travel and spend months researching how the cuisine has evolved. Classics like tom yum, som tam, chicken in pandanas leaves, red curry, green curry and pad thai have stayed the same through the years and are a balance of herbs and spices which tickle the taste buds."



PHOTO CREDIT: THAI NAM

Som Tam, young papaya salad from chef Ananda Solomon

SAVORY BREAKFAST

Savory breakfast has been a crowd favorite from the past many years, but it is only now that people have started experimenting with their choices. Over the years, the definition of a savory breakfast has changed and evolved. With more places having a breakfast-focused menu, people have become well acquainted with the variety of savory options available and open to trying new things.

Anukriti Anand, chef-owner, Altogether Experimental says, "The savory choices have seen a shift from the good old aloo parathas to savory crepes/croissants served with scrambled eggs. It's about combining the Indian flavors with the modern dishes, to accommodate the taste buds. A savory breakfast keeps you full for a longer period and puts you in a good mood. A warm bagel smeared with cream cheese topped with mixed greens, fresh tomatoes, chili bomb cheese and a sunny side up egg makes for a wholesome breakfast option. Another favorite is a warm twice baked croissant with mornay, feta, rosemary, and onion jam. On busy days, the best pick-me-up is a warm cup of coffee and butter croissant."

PHOTO CREDIT: ALTOGETHER EXPERIMENTAL

Spinach and mushroom crepe from chef Anukriti Anand

