

FB

FOODBYTES

YOUR FREE DATASSENTIAL
TREND REPORT

MACRO TRENDS

From a vaccine to a new administration to technology, dive into the factors impacting 2021.

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CHEF 3.0

What will it mean to be a chef in an era of fast-moving trends, ghost kitchens, social media, tech, and personalized celebrity?

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FLAVORS TO KNOW

The top 10 early-stage flavors, ingredients, and dishes that you need to know in 2021 and beyond.

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DATASSENTIAL'S ANNUAL

TREND FORECAST ISSUE

2021 EDITION

FOOD TRENDS BLAST OFF AGAIN

- + BIG PICTURE TRENDS
- + NEXT-GEN COMFORT
- + AMERICAN REGIONAL CUISINE
- + FUTURE OF PLANT-BASED
- + GLOBAL IMMUNITY-BOOSTERS
- + FROM ALCOHOL TO PSYCHEDELICS

& SO MUCH MORE



It's time to press "go" on innovation again.

We know what you're thinking. Should we even look ahead to 2021? Why jinx it? After all, we all posted those "2020 is going to be my year" memes on social media at the end of 2019 and look how that turned out.

And there's no doubt about it, in so many ways this year has been unprec...eh, let's just say it has been truly awful. Yet it also showed us that the food industry is easily the most creative industry in the country. Time and time again, operators across the U.S. would piv...change up their tactics on a dime. Last year the food industry came together to not only help each other out, but to support essential workers across the country.

And Americans noticed. Over the course of the pandemic we have fielded dozens of surveys to understand what consumers want and operators need. Though it all, consumers have consistently told us that they appreciate what the food industry has done, that they want to support their favorite brands and operators, and that they can't wait to go out to eat again when the pandemic is over.

With a vaccine on the way, it looks like we all may get our wish in 2021 (knock on all the wood). There's no doubt that the next few months will continue to be difficult, and there will be permanent ramifications from COVID-19 that include the many operators that closed for good in 2020. But it's also time to start thinking about the creative ideas and trends that consumers will expect from us when things get back to normal again. Innovation will be how the food industry bounces back even stronger in 2021.

That's why we're excited to release our annual peek at the trends and concepts that we think should be on your radar for the year ahead and beyond. In the upcoming pages you'll find a brief rundown of the macro trends that will impact every industry around the world, the seven food trends to know for 2021, plus our ever-popular list of the 10 early-stage flavors, ingredients, and dishes that you should know.

As part of your free *FoodBytes* subscription, we encourage you to share this issue with your colleagues as you start thinking about your 2021 strategy. But there's a lot more where this came from. In early 2021 we'll release our comprehensive trend decks packed with proprietary research and data on all of the trends that will make their mark on the year ahead and beyond, including foodservice projections by segment, census data, eating occasions, health and wellness, technology, delivery, ghost kitchens, modern comfort food, endangered foods, global flavors, alcohol, and so much more. If you want access to these unparalleled resources, send us an email at hello@datassential.com.

In the meantime, a look ahead sounds pretty nice right now, doesn't it?



BIG PICTURE FACTORS

You can't talk about food trends without also considering some of the macro trends that will impact the industry. Here's a look at some of the larger factors to keep in mind in 2021.

GOVERNMENT & POLICY

BIG CHANGES AHEAD FROM A NEW ADMINISTRATION

→ The Biden administration's stated policy goals differ from President Trump's initiatives in nearly every way, though the possibility of a divided Congress could prevent the incoming president from making sweeping changes. First up on President-Elect Biden's docket will be his COVID-19 plan, which will involve everything from calling for new aid packages (possibly benefiting the restaurant industry) to national guidelines on policies involving wearing masks and interstate travel. Other areas to watch that will impact the food industry include Biden's policies on tariffs (though there are no immediate plans to roll back tariffs on China, tariffs on European countries likely won't be as strict), healthcare (including support for a public Medicare option), the minimum wage (Biden supports a \$15 national minimum wage, which many states are already moving to), climate (he has chosen John Kerry for the newly-created Special Presidential Envoy for Climate position), and agriculture (which includes support for small and beginning farms and aiming for net-zero greenhouse emissions).

ANNOUNCED INITIATIVES & POLICIES



- Supports extra unemployment benefits, stimulus bills, increased money for small businesses
- Supports mandatory mask policies at state level
- Has pledged a "pathway to citizenship" bill for undocumented people in America in the first 100 days
- No immediate plans to roll back tariffs on China
- Supports national \$15 minimum wage



"When the vaccine arrived, it was almost like you turned a light switch on."
- Jerry Apps, 87, on life after the polio vaccine (Slate)

HEALTH

WHAT A VACCINE MEANS

→ Vaccines are on the way, but it's going to take some time to roll them out, both domestically and internationally. Essential workers in the food industry, including supermarket and meat industry workers, could be a part of early vaccination efforts (after healthcare workers and vulnerable populations). Showing "proof of vaccination" may also become the norm, with the International Air Transport Association already developing a digital COVID-19 vaccination passport. While it may take some time for consumers to feel completely comfortable being out in public in large groups again, by all indications they'll soon be making up for lost time and experiences. Some consumers are already planning blowout trips and big events, and we expect many businesses to offer "welcome back" promotions. Some things will get back to normal, such as foodservice at on-site segments like K-12 and healthcare, and many employees will start commuting again and falling back into their old routines picking up a morning coffee or afternoon lunch, though remote work on a wider scale is the norm now.

VALUES

THE NEW VALUES-DRIVEN CONSUMERS

From climate change to Black Lives Matter, a new generation of consumers are calling for change and making food decisions based on their passionately-held beliefs.

In 2020, race relations in America were front and center once again, prompting protests and calls for action across the country. Many food companies enacted new policies and plans to combat racism and ensure their workforce and leadership are more diverse, with implementation to carry into 2021 and beyond. NASDAQ even filed a proposal with the SEC that would require listed companies to have diverse boards. At the same time, the climate crisis continues to become more omnipresent in consumer minds as wildfires and other climate events make the news each year. In 2021, the food industry will continue to be called upon to take stances on serious issues by consumers, with those issues increasingly informing their buying decisions and loyalty.



Looking for a deeper dive into macro trends? Look out for our big picture trends deck in early 2021.

DEMOGRAPHICS & LIFESTYLE

WILL SHIFTING LIFESTYLE CHANGES BE PERMANENT?

COVID-19 impacted consumer lifestyles, from how they live to the very places that they want to live, in a big way. But will those changes be permanent? And are they all the result of COVID-19?

The home has become the new sanctuary for many consumers, as they have spent the year remodeling spaces and valuing privacy over open concept plans, prioritizing outdoor space, cooking in cozy kitchens, and looking for ways to combine — and separate — their work and home lives. In the year ahead, watch how these changes impact the types of foods and products that consumers want to bring into these spaces.

Meanwhile, younger consumers are increasingly living in solo households (prompting a number of brands to create smaller product sizes) or non-traditional multi-person homes (shared living communities, moving back home). To combat feelings of isolation, these consumers are increasingly concerned with self-care and personal well-being.

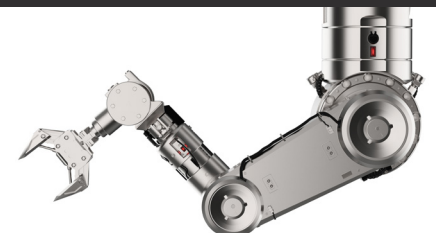
Some consumers made more drastic changes, choosing to move out of crowded cities in a pandemic and look for larger houses on more land. Some companies even paid employees to move out of expensive cities, banking on remote work being far more prevalent in the future. For a deeper dive into migration patterns in the U.S., [check out our Dual Migration & the COVID Pandemic white paper.](#)



ECONOMICS & WORKFORCE

AN ECONOMIC BOUNCE-BACK?

The economy is certainly the area where it would be the nicest to have a crystal ball. The most recent COVID-19 surge in the U.S. has dampened some hopes of a quick recovery, but economists are generally optimistic about 2021 and a post-vaccine economy, particularly beyond the second quarter of next year. Additional stimulus bills could also allow businesses to quickly hire back workers and give consumers the spending power to purchase the goods and services they missed in 2020. Globally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development projects global GDP growth will reach pre-pandemic levels by the end of next year.



TECH

A NEW TECH BOOM ARRIVES

This year we often asked ourselves how it would have even been possible to get through 2020 without technology. From Zoom meetings to internet shopping to winding down with Netflix, technology only became more omnipresent last year, which has set the stage for another technology boom in the future. A number of foodservice and retail operators across the country are introducing tech-driven remodels that feature options like automated pickup kiosks and mobile-ordering drive-thru lanes, while White Castle has expanded its test of kitchen robots that work alongside humans. Meanwhile, artificial intelligence is quickly reaching human-like capabilities, as systems like GPT-3 can write paragraphs that are virtually indistinguishable from human writing (will it help us write recipes in the future?), while a city in China is planning to put AI in charge to meet residents' needs: "When you show up, even though it's the first time you're there, the bartender knows your favorite drink," a representative from the company behind the technology told Reuters.



TRENDS

NEW YEAR, FRESH START: IT'S TIME TO GET BACK TO WORK INTRODUCING

TO KNOW

CONSUMERS TO THE FOODS & FLAVORS THAT WILL WOW THEM

IN 2021

FROM  DATASSENTIAL



- THE FUTURE OF THE CHEF
- MODERN COMFORT
- AMERICAN REGIONAL
- FUTURE FUSEBIQUITY
- GLOBAL IMMUNITY
- PLANT-BASED EVOLVES
- MIND ALTERING
- + 10 FLAVORS TO KNOW



01

MODERN COMFORT

MOVE OVER MAC & CHEESE, THE COMFORT FOODS OF THE FUTURE WILL LOOK A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT

You probably spent a lot of time thinking about comfort foods last year: adding them to the menu, marketing existing comfort foods, developing new options. A lot of those comfort foods probably looked the same: mac & cheese, pizza, burgers, etc. But for the upcoming generation of consumers, "comfort foods" can mean a wider variety of options: global flavors, new brands that they grew up eating, healthy options that make them feel better. In 2021, it's time to start expanding your definition of comfort foods.

Take ramen, for instance. While you probably wouldn't find it on the "comfort foods" menu at a local bar and grill, younger consumers grew up graduating from the inexpensive packets they could prepare in their dorm

room to the premium, hearty, flavorful versions that propelled ramen to grow over 260% on menus over the past decade. Indeed, ramen scores in the 96th percentile with Gen Z according to Datassential FLAVOR.

Younger consumers are particularly attached to the comforting foods that they grew up with because technology keeps them front and center all the time, whether it's Facebook reminding them what they ate 10 years ago or a *Buzzfeed* quiz on iconic brands from the 90s, some of which are even being resurrected due to this nostalgia. As ghost kitchens continue to grow, don't be surprised if you see the menu items and brands that younger consumers find comforting pop up again, even if it's only for a few weeks.

technostalgia (tek-no-stal-juh)
noun

TERM TO KNOW

1. a wistful desire for the past that is inspired or prompted by technology
"that buzzfeed quiz on things only a 90s kid would know inspired some technostalgia."

ANTI-COMFORT WHAT WILL YOUNGER GENERATIONS KILL NEXT?

Some foods and brands are comforting, while others just don't resonate with younger generations. Millennials have been blamed for going on a massacre in recent years, killing everything from real estate to diamonds. But no generation grows up buying and eating the same things as previous generations — tastes change. As we look to the future, we can look at some of the

foods that younger generations don't show an affinity for. In other words, these options could very well be on the "endangered foods" list (though that means they can also be reinvigorated with some creative ideas and thinking).

TOMATO JUICE

More members of Gen Z hate tomato juice than chopped liver. And though Millennials like bloody marys, they also don't show the same love for straight tomato juice as older generations.

DIET SODA

It's no surprise that diet soda sales continue to drop, as the category is

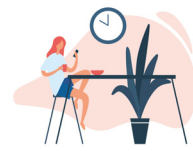
in the top ten most hated foods for both Gen Z and Millennials.

BLEU CHEESE DRESSING

While ranch dressing has become a bonafide sauce for just about anything you can imagine, younger generations don't feel the same affinity for its funkier cousin.

MEATLOAF SANDWICHES

Meatloaf sandwiches tend to skew towards older demographics, with Boomers liking them far more than Gen Z and Millennials. The sandwich has been declining on menus for over a decade, dropping another 19% in the past 4 years alone. Are its days numbered?



MODERN COMFORT FOODS



RAMEN & PHO

Soup is the ultimate comfort category, and younger generations grew up with more global options.



TOASTER PASTRIES

Branded or gourmet, toaster pastries are a modern fave.



BABY CARROTS

Invented in the 80s, they became the ultimate healthy lunch or after-school snack.



TACOS

Tacos are a lifestyle with their own day of the week now: long live #TacoTuesday.



BIRTHDAY CAKE

Birthday cake has become the ultimate comforting, nostalgic dessert flavor.



AVOCADO

Rich and healthy, younger generations just feel better when they put an avocado on it.

02

THE FUTURE CHEF

1K



Want to connect with your favorite chef? Today you can ask questions about a dish they made on TikTok, interact with them as they cook on Instagram Live, and even buy a birthday greeting from them on Cameo. Chefs at organizations of every size, from single operations to corporate chefs at the world's largest brands, are interacting directly with consumers and telling the story behind the food.

THE ROLE OF THE CHEF IS EVOLVING AS CONSUMERS SEEK OUT A PERSONAL CONNECTION AND BRANDS RELY ON A CHEF'S BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

The role of the chef has evolved over the years, from the fine dining chefs leading the back-of-house brigade to the celebrity chefs with their own shows during the Food Network era. As technology continues to break down walls, the chef's role will evolve and become more personal. Chefs who used Zoom and Instagram to teach classes, offer tours, show how to plate a delivered dish, and answer questions this year will continue to forge that connection with consumers. At a time when authenticity both matters more than ever before and is

also often called into question, the chef's background and history will also play a larger role. Meanwhile, as ghost kitchens and virtual brands continue to expand across the country, chefs will have to understand the wider trend landscape more than ever before — they may be tasked with developing a brand new ghost kitchen concept that will only exist for a week, or to oversee multiple virtual concepts operating out of one space. And they may still lead a brigade system, but it may include a robot or two in the future.

03

AMERICAN REGIONAL CUISINE

CHEFS AND CONSUMERS ARE SEEKING OUT AND CELEBRATING THE HERITAGES AND CULTURES THAT MAKE UP AMERICAN CUISINE



04

FUTURE FUSEBIQUITY

THE NEXT GENERATION OF INGREDIENTS & FLAVORS TO COMBINE WITH WELL-KNOWN DISHES

Fusebiquity means combining early-stage flavors that might be a little too new for U.S. consumers with dishes and flavors that they know and love — pizza, burgers, sandwiches. It's a surefire way to introduce consumers to a new flavor and create a dish or product that's both unique and craveable. As trends change, however, the types of ingredients that you'll use to create the next generation of Fusebiquity-driven dishes will also evolve. What should you watch out for in the year ahead? While in the past many chefs combined Asian and Mexican flavors, in the years ahead look for more mashups of Indian, Middle Eastern, and even Nordic options.

Chai Pani, in Asheville, NC, serves up everything from Parsi Chicken Burgers on a pav (a soft Indian bread roll) with red Masala slaw to these Bombay Chili Fries tossed in chaat masala with spicy lamb hash and crumbled paneer.



Chicago's Evette's combines Lebanese flavors and ingredients with familiar Midwestern and Mexican dishes in options like fried pita nachos, zaatar-spiced Duke's mayo, a (kefta) meatball sub with sumac onions and shakshuka marinara, and a peanut butter and jelly shake made with dates.



Also in Chicago, Orkenoy brings Norwegian flavors to the masses with options like spambrod, or a smørrebrød (open-faced sandwich) made with Spam, while ingredients like Icelandic moss syrup can be found in more approachable tiki cocktails.



Sure, you know Southern cuisine, or Tex-Mex, or even Hawaiian. But how much do you know about Gullah cuisine? Or Cal-Mex? Or Sonoran? There are still a number of all-American cuisines in the U.S. that are celebrated and beloved in small pockets of the country yet unknown to or misunderstood by the wider U.S. population. That will change, however, as younger generations look to celebrate these authentically American cuisines and the cooks and chefs who carry on these traditions into the future, though often with a modern twist that speaks to their varied background, education, ancestry, and history. At Benne on Eagle in Asheville, NC, for instance, chef Ashleigh Shanti celebrated both

Black Appalachian cuisine and the West African roots of the coastal Carolina Geechee community (Shanti recently left to start her own hospitality brand, but her legacy continues at the restaurant). Meanwhile, chef Sean Sherman, who was a keynote speaker at Datassential's 2019 Foodscape event, recently opened the Indigenous Food Lab in Minneapolis, which is an educational and research center that aims to empower Indigenous food businesses by revitalizing the many Indigenous food cultures and practices throughout North America. Sherman will also open Owamni by The Sioux Chef, a restaurant in Minneapolis' Water Works project, next spring. "It will showcase real American food," Sherman told *HuffPost*. Indeed, while many U.S. consumers

seek to "buy American" and/or purchase local foods, there are still many parts of the U.S. culinary culture that are new to them, yet they're eager to try them. When we covered Sonoran cuisine in *TIPS* earlier this year, only 4% of operators said they offered the cuisine, but 44% of consumers said they were likely to try it at a restaurant. Of course, featuring regional American cuisine in the future doesn't mean simply copying a recipe or featuring an ingredient, but instead about working with the chefs who know and understand these cuisines. At the same time, curious U.S. consumers will continue to seek out restaurants that feature these cuisines and allow them to experience U.S. culture in a new way.

REGIONAL AMERICAN CUISINES TO KNOW



SONORAN

With origins in the Sonoran desert, this regional cuisine spans from Arizona to Mexico.

TASTE

Chiltepin peppers, tepary beans, mesquite

GO

Kai
Phoenix, AZ



CAL-MEX

Mexican-influenced California cuisine that leans a little lighter than Tex-Mex.

TASTE

White beans, fish tacos, olives, avocado

GO

Aqui Cal-Mex
San Jose, CA



GULLAH

Created by the Gullah/Geechee who were brought to South Carolina as slaves.

TASTE

Peanuts, okra gumbo, rice, purloo

GO

Virgil's Gullah Kitchen & Bar
College Park, GA



APPALACHIAN

Spanning 12 states, this misunderstood cuisine features seasonal farmed and foraged ingredients.

TASTE

Corn, pawpaws, morels, wild greens

GO

Benne on Eagle
Asheville, NC



PACIFIC RIM

A combo of European and Asian techniques and flavors found in Hawaii and beyond.

TASTE

Seafood, Thai basil, fruit salsa, star anise

GO

Roy's Hawaii
5 locations



INDIGENOUS

The cuisines of Indigenous peoples varies greatly depending on the location and season.

TASTE

Corn, beans, rice, squash, bison, seafood

GO

Pueblo Harvest
Albuquerque, NM



⏏ Eat Just's lab-grown chicken nugget will go on sale for the first time in Singapore, with plans for a U.S. launch in the future.



➤➤➤ Plant-based burgers hit another mainstream milestone as McDonald's announced the McPlant will go on sale in the U.S. next year.

05 PLANT-BASED EVOLVES

THE PLANT-BASED & LAB-GROWN MEAT INDUSTRY SPENT 2020 GEARING UP FOR A BIG YEAR AHEAD

This month Singapore became the first country in the world to give regulatory approval to lab-grown meat, with Eat Just's lab-grown chicken nuggets (first publicly tasted at Datassential's Foodscape event) set to appear at a Singapore restaurant soon, and at a price comparable to premium chicken. It's a sign that the plant-based and alternative meat trend, which had been growing at an unprecedented rate prior to COVID-19, is set to make headlines in 2021 all over again.

While plant-based beef has dominated the market so far, expect chicken, pork, and seafood to take the spotlight in the future. Plant-based chicken promises to be even more disruptive than beef, as chicken is U.S. consumers' most-consumed protein

by far. Of note, KFC expanded its Beyond Fried Chicken test to more locations last year. Overseas, Beyond Meat also unveiled plant-based pork for the Chinese market, where plant-based meats are gaining traction because of animal-based flu concerns. Meanwhile, better formulations for plant-based cheeses and butters are also making their mark in those categories.

MODERN MEAT STARTUPS & COMPANIES TO KNOW

- Israeli-based Meat-Tech is 3D-printing beef fat and edible bio ink together.
- Vow, an Australian company, is creating cell-based kangaroo, rabbit, lamb, and alpaca meat.
- China's Zhenmeat launched plant-based pork tenderloin and crayfish last year to compete with Beyond and Hong Kong-based Green Common's Omnipork.
- Canada's Top Tier Foods launched plant-based wagyu for the Japanese market.
- Israel's SavorEats 3D meat printer allows customers to specify the amount of protein and fat they want in the product.
- Another Israeli company, SuperMeat, opened a restaurant called The Chicken to test cell-based chicken products.
- Texas-based BioBQ plans to have a cell-based brisket in two years.
- BlueNalu focuses on cell-based finfish that can be served both cooked or raw for sushi.

06 GLOBAL HEALTH & IMMUNITY BOOSTERS

Over half of consumers say they want to find immune-boosting ingredients at every place they go out to eat, according to our data, while 48% say they want to find them in everything they eat, including places you wouldn't expect to find them, like burgers, burritos, and pizza. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spike into early 2021 and concerns about future pandemics and food-borne illnesses continue to be top-of-mind for consumers, expect immune-boosting foods and ingredients from around the world to play an even bigger role on menus and in products in 2021 and beyond. Global superfoods continue to be in demand, driven by consumer interest in natural products and the mindset that these ingredients have been in use in cultures for thousands of years: millions of people using these products for so long can't be wrong, right?

A FEW GLOBAL IMMUNE-BOOSTING INGREDIENTS TO HAVE ON YOUR RADAR:



ELEUTHERO



SHATAVARI



HE SHOU WU



RHODIOLA

07 EXPAND YOUR MIND

FROM ALCOHOL TO CANNABIS TO PSYCHEDELICS, THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT – AND MAYBE A LITTLE TRIPPY – FOR MIND-EXPANDING AND MOOD-ALTERING FOODS & DRINKS

Mind-altering foods, drinks, and substances had a good year in 2020. Alcohol was deemed essential in many cities and states that enacted stay-at-home orders, allowing liquor stores to stay open and even letting restaurants in many parts of the country start delivering alcohol (will those laws become permanent in 2021?). Cannabis dispensaries were also similarly deemed essential in many states where they are legal, a number that grew with the November elections. Today one-third of Americans live in a state where recreational cannabis is legal. Now another option is also hitting the mainstream, as both Oregon and Washington, D.C., approved the therapeutic use of psychedelic mushrooms. These industries continue to attract interest as more consumers equate them with wellness and relaxation. So what's next for alcohol, cannabis, and psychedelics? Here are a few trends to consider in 2021 and beyond:



ALCOHOL As life returns to a post-COVID normal in 2021, will consumers want to live healthier lifestyles and seek out low-ABV options again, or will they want to run out to restaurants and celebrate? Yes. Consumers will be pulled in both directions next year, which means the industry should look for ways to offer mindful, semi-healthy indulgences that give consumers permission to enjoy themselves. Alcoholic beverages will also feature a wider array of functions, particularly as the industry looks to meet the consumer need states that are driving interest in cannabis and psychedelics.



CANNABIS More chefs continue to enter the cannabis space, bringing with them more ideas for innovative products and platforms. Companies are seeking to move beyond chocolate and gummies and into a wider array of product categories, including a range of savory products. With national legalization possibly on the horizon, early players are looking to stake out their category ahead of time.



PSYCHEDELICS Psychedelics are still a young category that are limited to medical therapies in the two states where they are legal, but that doesn't mean the food industry isn't preparing for the future. Because their hallucinatory experience may be too strong for a food product, some companies will look to isolate compounds and offer milder experiences or related benefits. Meanwhile, psychedelic cookbooks are hitting the shelves, like DELiC DiSHES by "The Happy Chef" Edible Dee.

01 CHICORY ROOT

You've probably heard of chicory, but the root has been trending as consumers seek out caffeine-free coffee alternatives. A number of innovative coffee brands have introduced chicory options to their menu or product line, which bodes well for future mainstream growth. Further into the future, expect to see it show up in more baked goods and desserts.

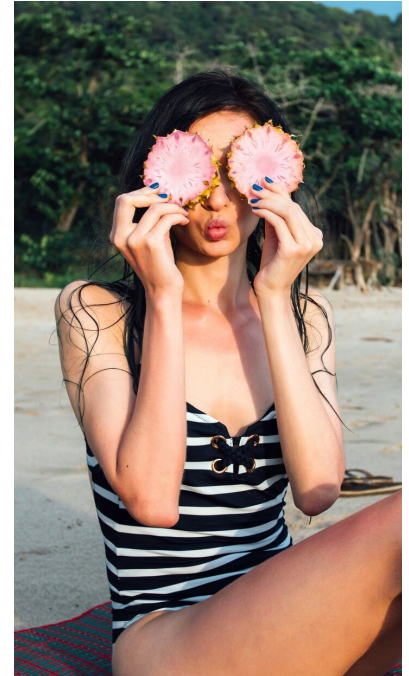
+38% ON MENUS IN THE LAST 4 YEARS



02 SUDACHI

This Japanese citrus fruit is commonly found in ponzu, though it's used as a common flavoring throughout Japan. It's showing up more often in the U.S. as a next-level version of yuzu, often in drinks (particularly cocktails) or as an acidic finish to Asian-inspired meat and veggie entrees.

ON THE MENU
Kemuri Jagaimo with smoked yukon gold potatoes, maitake, cured jidori egg, pickled ramps, and sudachi aioli.
Afuri | Portland, OR



03 FUTURE PRODUCE

In the age of plant-based cuisine and Instagrammability, a number of brands are developing unique produce varieties to grab consumer attention. These options are often expensive limited-edition products that call to mind the chic fruits and vegetables found in Japan. Driscoll's, for instance, introduced rosé strawberries and raspberries last year, while U.S. consumers have also been on the lookout for Blue Java bananas said to taste like ice cream.

Del Monte's PinkGlow Pineapple is only available online for \$49 plus shipping.

04 CAROB

At one time touted as a healthier replacement for chocolate, carob fell off the radar for a number of years. But chefs and consumers are giving it a new look as they seek out more health-driven, natural, plant-based alternatives. Find everything from carob flour to carob molasses in drinks, bars, baked goods, and beyond.

JUMPED UP 10% ON MENUS LAST YEAR



Blue Dream Curry House in Asheville, NC, specializes in curries from around the world, like this South Indian Pineapple Curry.



05 NEXT-LEVEL CURRY

U.S. consumers are getting more savvy about curry as regional Indian curries, Thai curry, and Japanese curry give them more options on menus today. In the future, go beyond "curry" as a flavor and consider the wide range of global dishes at your fingertips.

10 FLAVORS, DISHES, & INGREDIENTS TO KNOW IN 2021 and beyond



+10% ON MENUS IN THE PAST 4 YEARS

06 KHEER

Indian dishes and flavors continue to grow on menus in the U.S. For a sweet option, consider kheer, otherwise known as Indian rice pudding. At its simplest it's made from milk, sugar, and rice, but it's often flavored with options like cardamom, coconut, raisins, saffron, and pistachios, and sometimes colorful ingredients are added to change the hue. Looking to take it to the next level? Double down on nutty flavors with nut-based milks.

ON THE MENU
California wild rice kheer with cashews and dates. *ROOH | Palo Alto, CA*



+22% ON MENUS IN THE PAST 4 YEARS

DIY carne guisada tacos at Bar Amá, a reimagined Tex-Mex comfort food restaurant in Los Angeles.

07 GUISADA

Move over carnitas, there's a new protein option in town. Literally meaning "meat stew," carne guisada is a deeply-flavored, rich beef dish that can be eaten on its own or tucked into a taco. Now chefs across the country are creating "guisada-style" proteins from just about any meat that you can imagine, from chicken to pork to seafood to beef tongue.

08 FERMENTED HONEY

Fermented honey is made from raw honey and water, which turns the typically sterile product into a fermentation-friendly environment. Tangy and sweet, it takes honey (which continues to grow on menus and at retail as consumers seek out natural sweeteners) in a new direction.

ON THE MENU
Peruvian chicken bites with fermented hot honey and basil aioli.
Lechon | Portland, OR



09 HONEYSUCKLE

Speaking of honey, honeysuckle is a wild plant/flower that foragers have been turning into syrup for years. Now chefs are discovering it as consumers continue to embrace floral flavors. Think of it as a next-level version of elderflower and use it in drinks or desserts.

ON THE MENU
The Graduate Cocktail is a take on a gimlet with local barrel-aged gin, honeysuckle, chamomile, and lime.
Talula's Garden | Philadelphia, PA

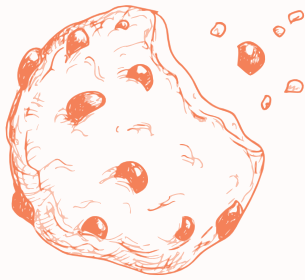


+87% ON MENUS IN THE PAST 4 YEARS

10 NIGELLA SEEDS

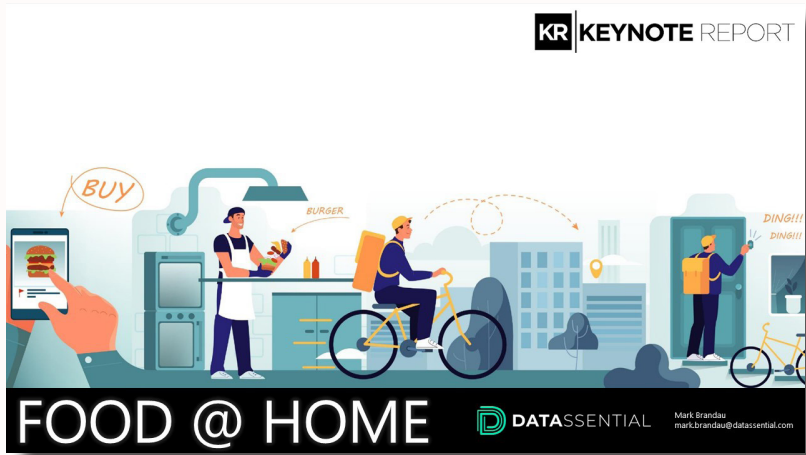
Found throughout the Middle East, these aromatic seeds have a taste reminiscent of onions and a dramatic black color. Both the seeds and nigella oil will continue to grow on menus and in retail products (consider the seeds for a crunchy topping on bread or dips) due to their high antioxidant content.

ON THE MENU
Avocado toast with whipped tahini, marinated cherry tomatoes, parmesan nigella seeds, and a sunny egg.
Blue Duck Tavern | Washington, D.C.



A FEW FINAL TREND BITES

It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close, but for this year we'll take it. While we never fully know what lies ahead, the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccine is cause for optimism. As you plan for 2021, we hope you'll partner with Datassential on the research and tools that you need to come back strong in the year ahead.



AVAILABLE NOW

Off-premises had seen massive growth before 2020. Now, amidst a pandemic, on-premises dining restrictions due to COVID-19 have only accelerated the growth of these strategies. Consumer usage of delivery, takeout/curbside, and drive-thrus has exploded and is the lifeblood for many operators right now (even those who are new to off-premises). Understand the motivations and challenges to growing off-premises business as well as the role that third-party delivery platforms are playing in the food at home space. **For more info, contact Mark Brandau at mark.brandau@datassential.com.**



HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR DATASSENTIAL'S BI-WEEKLY WEBINAR SERIES?

Join Datassential's Jack Li and a rotating panel of experts as they showcase the latest research and data on COVID-19, trends, changes in the industry, innovation, and more.

EVERY OTHER THURSDAY, 12PM CST

REGISTER NOW

QUOTABLE

Hot Dr. Pepper was developed as a corporate strategy to keep profits strong during the holiday season, when sales of cold pop plummet. It caught on mostly in the American South, cradle of fizzy innovation, where it lives on to this day in some little towns. In most of the country, Hot Dr. Pepper has long since faded into obscurity.

- SERIOUS EATS

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT MONTH?

Now that we've mentioned Datassential's brand new *Foodservice @ Home Keynote Report*, we're bringing you a more in-depth sneak preview of the data that you'll find in this essential report in next month's edition of *FoodBytes*. In the report you'll find consumer ordering habits and wants, their last at-home occasions, their takes on meal delivery services, ratings of the major chains, Firefly location breakdowns, and the foods and flavors that consumers most want from delivery. With brand new research fielded in November, you'll get the most up-to-date data on how COVID-19 impacted off-premises consumption.



HUNGRY FOR MORE TRENDS? Check out these related TS issues!



FB: 2020 Trends

Look back on the trends we predicted would be big in 2020.

We had some big ideas for the trends that would impact 2020, but of course the past year turned out a little bit differently than any of us expected. Many of the trends featured in last year's prediction issue are still relevant today and will pick up steam again in the year ahead and beyond.



FB: TrendSpotting's 500th

It's hard to believe that we've hit 500 issues of Datassential TrendSpotting.

Since we first launched Datassential's TrendSpotting Reports, we've added multiple new titles, redesigned the magazines numerous times, and covered thousands of trends. With our 500th issue of TrendSpotting, we look back on 10 of the trends that we covered in the past and see how they have moved through the trend cycle since those early days.




TW: November 2020

Always stay on top of the early-stage trends with Trend Watch.

Trend Watch covers so many of the early-stage trends that end up making it big years later. In last month's issue, we covered a number of global options, including chawanmushi, ajo blanco, pernil, and focaccia di recco. If you want to be the one who knows the trends before your colleagues, be sure to stay up to date on your Trend Watch reading.




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