



2018 *Trend* REPORT



CONVENIENCE ABOVE ALL

The need for convenient foods only seems to be growing. Speedy mealtimes for busy schedules are more important than ever, but the food still needs to be nutritious and tasty. Finding ways to translate your dishes to a grab-and-go or delivery concept is a must. With this trend, we have also seen the growth of hot dishes at the grocery store. If consumers can buy their groceries for the week plus tonight's ready-to-eat dinner, why wouldn't they?

MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR GUT

With healthy foods on the forefront, the newest craze is gut-friendly menu items. Adding ingredients that have probiotics or anti-inflammatory properties such as turmeric, aloe and flaxseed can help aid in digestion. These ingredients are also adding more flavor complexity to menu items, making this a win-win!



HEALTHY OR INDULGENT?

There seems to be a constant tug-of-war over healthy and indulgent foods. While consumers want wholesome and healthy, the need for comforting, indulgent foods seem to win in most occasions. Offer foods that seem to cover both of these categories—adding ingredients packed with flavor and health benefits to your already indulgent dishes, decadent pastas and appetizers are sure to please everyone!

MAKING CASUAL FINER

We have seen the growth of the fast casual sector over the years, but are now seeing a growth in Fine Casual. Restaurants with up-scale counter service and interesting ingredient combinations are becoming more popular. Think of adding tasting menus or a wine bar to your fast casual concept for an additional touch.



SOCIAL MEDIA WORTHY

Who has ever taken a photo of their food and posted it to social media? Yes, our hands are raised. One of the best ways to get consumers to your restaurant is by making your food social media worthy. Consumers are looking for beautiful colors and scrumptious, oozing ingredients. Consider starting the trend yourself by posting some perfectly lit, imperfectly staged photos of your menu items.

Ingredient Trends

UMAMI EVERYTHING

Mushrooms seem to be everywhere, whether they are stuffed, roasted or combined with meat. Easy to source and incredibly versatile, all kinds of mushrooms are popping up on menus. Consider adding less-common varieties with your menu items to add some interest—such as the shiitake or porcini.



CHARCOAL IS ACTIVATED

While consuming activated charcoal doesn't sound exciting, this is another ingredient touted as aiding in healthy digestion. Used mostly in drinks, it can be found in everything from pizza crusts to ice cream. Even though black foods go the opposite direction of the rainbow colors of 2017, it adds a striking effect to a menu; could this be the next popular social media fad?



CALABRIAN CHILI PEPPER

These little red peppers pack a punch when it comes to heat. Grown in the Calabria region of Italy, they are considered a classic ingredient in Italian cooking, with a delicious, smoky, salty flavor. Most commonly found dried or packed in olive oil, they are commonly used pureed in a sauce. Consider adding this to your dishes to give them a bit of spice!



Pizza Trends

ETHNIC INFLUENCES

While we are seeing ethnic influences all over, they are officially finding their way onto pizzas. Millennials and Gen Z consumers are seeking out innovative flavors on their pies such as gochujang, chimichurri, harissa and tzatziki sauce.

HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES

The emerging cauliflower crust is leading the way for a “healthier” alternative to a pizza. Other ways to ramp up your pizza—use natural sweeteners such as honey and maple syrup in the crust and as a drizzle, or top your pizza with fresh greens such as arugula to add some high-impact flavor.

ORDERING SMARTER

Consumers are only getting busier, so the need for speed is becoming ever more important. Don't have online options for your pizza? We highly suggest leveraging technology to better serve your customers. Along with online ordering, delivery is an important piece, with 69% of internet users ordering their food to be delivered online.

THICKER CRUSTS

While crust preferences are definitely regional, the Detroit-style crust is becoming popular around the country. With a thick and crispy crust, the pizza was created by using rectangular auto parts trays that were widely available in the city. Even though this isn't the only thick crust that is popular (hello, stuffed crusts), it is definitely leading the way.

From a PMQ 2018
Pizza Industry Census,
it was found that



58%
of operators
currently offer
online ordering

with 5%-15%
of their sales coming
from this feature.

Sources available upon request.