

Menu Flavours - UK - January 2014

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“One in 10 diners agree they actively look for dishes in restaurants that they have read or heard about (eg in magazines/TV), rising to 19% amongst Londoners. This illustrates the significance of headline grabbing products and dishes in today’s fast moving eating out market.”

– Helena Spicer, Senior Foodservice Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- What products can help operators cater for Britons’ conflicting demands for safe and adventurous dishes?
- How can social media be leveraged to drive footfall?
- What opportunities are there for London food trends outside of the area?
- How can flavour trends help operators tap into the buzz surrounding upcoming events?

This report analyses some of the key menu trends evident in the UK foodservice market in 2013 and leading into 2014 such as hybrid baking products, ethnic street food, regional American cuisine, smoked meats and emerging sandwich concepts (e.g. lobster subs, French dip rolls, gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches).

It aims to examine the motivations behind many of these trends, such as the globalisation of menus, and establish their longevity, suggesting opportunities going forward. For example, fusion products are increasingly appearing on mainstream menus (eg Korean-influenced hot dogs with kimchi toppings) tapping into interest in niche ethnic cuisine types. Meanwhile, ramen (Japanese noodle soup) and pho (Vietnamese soup) have benefitted from wider consumer trends such as the demand for fresh ‘real’ food. Ethnic street food also represents an opportunity for the market going forward, appealing to those diners who are looking for ‘something new and different’ through niche products such as bhel puri (savoury Indian snack food made with puffed rice, fresh vegetables and tamarind sauce), for instance.

Similarly, the report examines the evolution in the UK market of the American cuisine trend from gourmet burger bars to specialist BBQ joints to smoke houses, as ‘Americana mania’ continues to grip the market, and product and venue differentiation becomes harder in an increasingly competitive sector.

Consumer research for this report attempts to quantify current usage and future interest in these current menu flavour trends as hybrid baking products (e.g. cronuts and duffins), as well as the continual premiumisation of comfort food such as gourmet éclairs.

The report also explores consumers’ general propensity to be adventurous when dining out of home, with over a third of diners reporting that they are always looking to try dishes they have not had before, compared to 17% who would like more restaurants to give them recommendations based on dishes they like.

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