

National Restaurant Association

# WHAT'S HOT

2019 CULINARY FORECAST



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Global flavors in kids' meals

**CBD and cannabis-infused food and beverages** are among the top trends for 2019, along with zero-waste cooking, globally inspired dishes and vegetable-forward cuisine. American Culinary Federation chefs identified the trends for the National Restaurant Association's What's Hot survey.

The annual survey asks chefs to identify food and beverage trends for the coming year. **Chefs ranked 140 items** — from all-day breakfast to zero-waste cooking — as “hot,” “yesterday’s news” or “perennial favorite.” The resulting What's Hot list gives a preview of the food, beverages and culinary **themes that will be the talk of 2019**.

**Nearly 77 percent of the chefs ranked cannabis/CBD-infused drinks** as the No. 1 trend, and 76 percent of them tapped cannabis/CBD-infused food as the second most popular. Chefs who participated in the survey said infusing foods with the ingredients could create unique cuisine opportunities and potential new markets for experiential dining occasions. Seventy percent ranked zero-waste cooking as the third most popular trend.

“The Association's **2019 What's Hot report** reflects contemporary consumer cravings in tandem with emerging societal dining trends,” says Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research for the National Restaurant Association. “We're seeing a more **eco-friendly** perspective and greater emphasis on **global flavors/cuisines** as well as enhanced availability of **healthful items/children's meals** and the exploration of new food sourcing options.”



Doughnuts with non-traditional fillings

The survey indicates that Americans crave foods that not only nourish them but also help sustain the planet. **Plant-based and veggie centric foods** are no longer just for vegetarians. In fact, three of the 15 hottest items are plant-based sausages/burgers, veggie-centric/vegetable forward cuisine and plant-based proteins. **Hyper-local sourcing**, including restaurants that grow produce in their own gardens, also made the Top 10 list.

**Zero-waste cooking**, which transforms food scraps, damaged produce and leftovers into culinary delights, ranks third on the list of overall trends for 2019 and second in the culinary concepts category. Chefs are taking a second look at items they trashed in the past — using coffee grinds to flavor homemade ice cream and showcasing cabbage butts in crowd-pleasing stir-fries.

**Global flavors** also ranked highly, with the trend heating up from last year. Globally inspired breakfast dishes claimed the fourth spot on the survey, followed by global flavors in kids' meals.

In category after category, global flavors shine brightly. The **Israeli soda gazoz** ranks second in the non-alcoholic beverage category. **Thai-rolled ice cream** placed first among sweets. **African cuisines**, condiments and spices trended across several categories, including items that originated in North, West and East Africa (Ethiopia). Chefs identified North African cuisine (think tajine and fuul) as today's “hottest” global flavor.

**New cuts of meat**, such as shoulder tender, oyster steak or Merlot cut, cooled some after nabbing the top spot for the past two years. As for “yesterday's news,” chefs ranked overnight oats, anise-flavored cocktails and pretzels in desserts as trends that have come and gone.



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The National Restaurant Association works with the American Culinary Federation for its annual chefs' survey of menu trends for the coming year. This year, the Culinary Institute of America-trained chefs identified concept trends, such as zero-waste cooking, hyper-local ingredients and plant-based protein. They ranked 140 items as top trends, yesterday's news or perennial favorites, as well as by category. Learn more at [Restaurant.org/research](http://Restaurant.org/research).

## TOP TRENDS FOR 2019

- 1. Cannabis/CBD-infused drinks
- 2. Cannabis/CBD-infused food
- 3. Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
- 4. Globally inspired breakfast dishes
- 5. Global flavors in kids' meals
- 6. Hyper-local (e.g. restaurant gardens, onsite beer brewing, house-made items)
- 7. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
- 8. Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine (e.g. fresh produce is star of the dish)
- 9. Chef-driven fast-casual concepts
- 10. Craft/artisan/locally produced spirits

# TOP TRENDS FOR 2019 BY CATEGORY



## KIDS' MEALS

1. Global flavors in kids' meals
2. Gourmet items in kids' meals
3. Healthful kids' meals
4. Whole grain items in kids' meals
5. Sliders/mini-burgers in kids' meals

## SNACKS/SWEETS

1. Thai-rolled ice cream
2. Doughnuts with non-traditional filling (e.g. liqueur, Earl Grey cream)
3. Chocolate (responsibly sources, new flavors)
4. Injera chips
5. Artisan/house-made ice cream

## PRODUCE

1. Uncommon herbs (e.g. chervil, lovage, lemon balm, papalo)
2. Locally sourced produce
3. Imperfect/ugly produce
4. Exotic fruit (e.g. rambutan, dragon fruit, paw paw, guava)
5. Super fruit (e.g. acai, goji berry, mango-steen)

## DISHES

1. Globally inspired breakfast dishes
2. Vegetable carb substitutes (e.g. cauliflower rice, zucchini spaghetti)
3. Street food-inspired dishes (e.g. tempura, kabobs, dumplings)
4. Katso Sando (Japanese cutlet sandwich)
5. House-made/artisan pickles

## CONDIMENTS

1. House-made condiments/specialty condiments
2. North African condiments (dukka, zhug, harissa, ras el hanout, etc.)
3. Shichimi spice/powder
4. Gochujang (Korean red-pepper paste)
5. Berbere

## GLOBAL FLAVORS

1. North African cuisine/flavors (fuul, tajines, etc.)
2. West African cuisine/flavors
3. Peruvian cuisine
4. Ethiopian/Eritrean cuisine/flavors (Berbere, injera)
5. Filipino cuisine

## GRAINS/PASTA

1. Protein-rich grains/seeds (e.g. hemp, chia, quinoa, flax)
2. Non-wheat noodles/pasta (e.g. quinoa, rice, buckwheat)
3. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth, lupin)
4. Savory granola
5. Teff

## PROTEIN

1. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
2. Plant-based sausages and burgers
3. Locally sourced meat and seafood
4. Sustainable seafood
5. Heritage-breed meats

## NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1. Cannabis/CBD-infused drinks
2. Gazoz (non-alcoholic spritzer from Israel)
3. Craft/house-roasted coffee
4. Nitrogen/cold brew coffee
5. House-made soda

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1. Craft/artisan/locally produced spirits
2. Onsite barrel-aged drinks
3. Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients, herb-infused)
4. Locally produced spirits/wine/beer
5. Rosé cider

## RESTAURANT CONCEPTS

1. Chef-driven fast casual concepts
2. Pop-up temporary restaurants
3. Commissaries (e.g. shared commercial kitchen space)
4. Small-plate menus/restaurant concepts
5. Food halls

## CULINARY CONCEPTS

1. Cannabis/CBD-infused food
2. Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
3. Hyper-local (e.g. restaurant gardens, house-made items)
4. Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine
5. Natural ingredients/clean menus

## TOP ITEMS FROM EACH CATEGORY

1. Global flavors in kids' meals
2. Uncommon herbs (e.g. chervil, lovage, lemon balm, papalo)
3. Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
4. North African cuisine/flavors (fuul, tajines, etc.)
5. House-made condiments/specialty condiments
6. Globally inspired breakfast dishes
7. Protein-rich grains/seeds (e.g. hemp, chia, quinoa, flax)
8. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
9. Thai-rolled ice cream
10. Gazoz (non-alcoholic spritzer from Israel)