Stirfrup

A GUIDE TO:

2025 FOOD TRENDS

TOTAL foodservice

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Old school BECOMES THE NEW COOL

In 2025 we expect food trends to reflect a dynamic fusion between tradition and innovation, summarised by the theme "**Traditional with a Twist**," capturing the balance between nostalgia-driven classics and bold, forward-thinking culinary creations. Time honoured recipes are being revived with modern twists, blending comfort with gourmet refinement, while global fusion brings diverse cultural influences to the mainstream.

Health and wellness trends are becoming ever more pivotal, with consumers demanding transparency and personalised nutrition. This year key innovations including plant-based proteins and clean-label products will begin addressing consumers growing concerns over ultra-processed foods and sustainability.

Sustainability and social responsibility will remain central to consumers priorities, who expect caterers to put effort and focus on reducing food and packaging waste, promoting transparent sourcing and inclusivity, all of which are essential to earning consumer trust and driving engagement.

This year flexibility and indulgence will begin to define modern eating habits. Snack-sized, portable formats cater to on-the-go lifestyles, while indulgent desserts and creative bakes celebrate eating as a joyful experience. Emerging global cuisines and fusion formats will enrich menus, highlighting vibrant flavours from Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

These trends offer caterers across all sectors opportunities to blend classic cuisine with exciting new twists, the chance to prioritise health and sustainability, and push culinary boundaries - in 2025 there are no rules.

By experimenting with these themes, caterers can connect with ever changing consumer demands and shape the future of food with authenticity and creativity.

Feed the soul

For many of us, food has become so much more than just fuel for our bodies—it's a source of joy, comfort, and even a little escape from the chaos of daily life. More than ever, we're seeking meals that truly make us happy, blending indulgence, nostalgia, and a dash of creativity.

In a world filled with uncertainty—whether economic, political, or personal—many are finding comfort and connection at the table. Food has this magical way of feeding not just our hunger, but our souls, offering moments of happiness and togetherness that feel increasingly precious.

Here's a glimpse at some of the trends redefining how consumers dine and look to feed their souls in 2025.

1. NOSTALGIA-DRIVEN DELIGHTS

Nostalgia is making a bold return as diners seek comfort in familiar flavours and memories. Think of the classic 1950s burger, brought back to life with artisanal touches and high-quality ingredients. Childhood favourites, like fish finger sandwiches made with fresh seafood or whimsical cereal-inspired desserts, have been reimagined for a modern audience. These dishes do more than satisfy hunger—they spark joy, transporting us back to simpler times.

2. COMFORT FOOD EVOLUTION

Comfort food has evolved beyond familiarity—it's now a canvas for global influences and creative techniques. Imagine hearty bowls of ramen, rich with handcrafted noodles and bold toppings, or velvety congee drizzled with truffle oil and crispy chili garnishes. Stews and soups, once

Elevate Childhood Favourites

Take beloved childhood comfort foods and elevate them with modern techniques, adding a new level of sophistication while maintaining their nostalgic charm.

Flexible All-Day Options

Design your menu to cater to diverse eating patterns, offering flexible options that make dining enjoyable at any time of day, from breakfast to dinner—and everything in between.

humble, are now gourmet creations, bursting with flavour and elevated by unexpected spices or fresh-baked breads. Even the all-day breakfast has been reinvented, with pancakes, omelettes, and French toast available anytime, paired with indulgent ingredients like smoked salmon, avocado mousse, or spicy chorizo.

3. OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) INDULGENCE

Sometimes, more really is more. OTT indulgence is all about going big and embracing extravagance. Think triple-stacked burgers dripping with house-made sauces, crowned with golden onion rings, or pizzas piled high with molten cheese and luxurious toppings like Wagyu beef or black garlic. These dishes are all about decadence—show-stopping creations designed to be shared, savoured, and yes, Instagrammed.

4. REINVENTING THE CLASSICS

Classic dishes are getting a sophisticated makeover, blending nostalgia with gourmet flair. Hot dogs, once a humble snack, are now a premium experience with house-baked buns, artisanal sausages, and inventive toppings like kimchi slaw or truffle aioli. Sandwiches, too, are stepping up their game, with artisan breads and luxurious fillings—think slow-cooked brisket with blue cheese or ciabatta filled with roasted veggies and zesty citrus aioli. These aren't just meals—they're handheld masterpieces.

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5. SNACKISFACTION

Gone are the days of rigid meal schedules—today, snacks rule the day. Handheld bao buns filled with spicy pulled pork or crunchy plantain chips dusted with exotic spices deliver bold, unexpected flavours that make snacking feel like an adventure. Snackisfaction is all about flexibility and freedom—eating what you want, when you want, and savouring every bite. It's a chance to explore exciting tastes without the constraints of traditional dining.

Craft and Heritage in Storytelling

Share the stories behind your ingredients, focusing on craftsmanship and heritage to engage today's consumers who crave authenticity and a deeper connection to their food.

SIMPLE GOURMET

As consumers grow more aware of the impact of ultra-processed foods, they're turning to real, authentic ingredients, and demanding quality. In this era of 'Simple Gourmet,' everyday ingredients like cheese, butter, potatoes, and value cuts of meat and fish are taking centre stage. This trend focuses on indulgence without pretension, giving consumers access to luxuries they can enjoy daily, while giving caterers the chance to reinvent classic staples.

1. CHEESE PLEASE

Cheese is no longer a mere accompaniment; it's the star of every meal. Premium cheeses are being celebrated in their purest form, from creamy burratas to rich Hokkaido varieties, allowing consumers to savour the craftsmanship of cheesemaking. Dedicated cheese-focused restaurants are becoming go-to spots, offering cheese boards, fondue, and ooey-gooey dishes perfect for cheese lovers.

2. JUST ADD BUTTER

Butter is no longer just a simple spread—it's the ingredient that transforms any dish into an indulgent experience. Artisanal butters infused with truffle, honey, or miso elevate every dish, and brown butter adds a nutty richness that enhances both savoury and sweet options.

3. EGGCITING EGGS

Eggs are breaking out of breakfast and into all-day menus. Dishes like Turkish çılbır (poached eggs with yogurt and chili butter) and French eggs poached in wine bring eggs to life with global twists.

4. PASS THE POTATO

Potatoes are no longer just a side dish; they're taking centre stage in bold, innovative ways. Think spice-dusted potato bags, crispy hash browns topped with gourmet ingredients, or French fries elevated with truffle oil and unique dipping sauces.

5. VALUE CUTS

Affordable meats and seafood are now taking the spotlight in gourmet dining.

- **Meaty Makeovers:** Budget-friendly cuts like mortadella and brisket are being transformed into mouthwatering stews and smoky charcuterie boards.
- **Seafood Stars:** Mackerel, sardines, and smoked trout are showing up in unexpected, yet delicious dishes like mackerel lasagna and kipper tacos.

6. SUPER SALADS AND COLD PLATES

Salads and cold platters are evolving from simple sides into vibrant, flavourful meals. Think about reinventing classics, Caesar salads with miso dressings, smashed potato salads, and fresh cucumber recipes add new life to familiar dishes.

BIG FLAVOURS

In 2025, bold flavours will reign supreme! Consumers are craving bigger, bolder culinary experiences, while still appreciating the comforting classics. The "Big Flavours" trend celebrates a wave of flavour innovations that explore exciting combinations, pushing boundaries and celebrating creativity. As the world shrinks, food lovers are eager to taste the influence of multiple cultures, giving caterers endless opportunities to mix global flavours with familiar favourites.

1. SWAVOURY FUSION

The line between sweet and savoury is getting blurrier, bringing unforgettable combinations to the table. Imagine cinnamon fried chicken ice cream or PB&J chicken wings—sweet meets savoury in daring, surprising ways. Asian-inspired flavours like Indonesian kecap manis (sweet soy sauce) and Korean galbi (grilled beef marinade) are also leading the charge, balancing sweetness and umami in innovative dishes.

2. DESSERT INSPIRED INNOVATIONS

Dessert flavours are being reimagined in unexpected ways, transforming our favourite treats into new experiences. Think lemon cheesecake captured in a cheddar cheese, or a custard tart reinterpreted as yogurt. From tiramisu transformed into gin to playful twists on classic desserts, this trend shows that dessert-inspired creations know no limits.

3. SOUR AND PICKLES

Sour and pickled flavours are making a comeback, offering a refreshing zing across menus. From dill pickle brines to tangy cocktails and pickled sauces, these bold, bracing acids transform anything they touch. Fermented foods, like kimchi-inspired dressings and sour beer reductions, bring unexpected excitement and depth to every dish.

4. SUPER SPICY

Spicy foods are evolving to focus on complexity rather than just heat. The trend is now about heritage spices with layers of flavour. African suya spice blends smoky, nutty heat, while fermented hot sauces add a rich umami kick. It's all about creating nuanced spice experiences that intrigue and challenge the palate, rather than overwhelming it.

RECIPE · RECIPE ·

Baked feta with hot honey

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 200ml Country Range Honey
- 1tbsp Country Range Crushed Chillies
- 1 pinch salt
- 200g slice of feta
- 1 sliced red onion
- 6 cherry tomatoes cut in half
- 25ml extra virgin olive oil
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 torn basil leaves

METHOD

1. Warm the honey and add the chilli flakes and salt. Leave to infuse for up to one week.

2. Place the feta in an oven proof dish with the cherry tomatoes and red onion.

3. Drizzle with olive oil, garnish with rosemary and basil and bake in a preheated oven at 180˚c / 160˚c fan oven for 15 minutes.

4. Drizzle with your hot honey and serve with slices of toasted flatbreads or French baguette.

Treat time

Consumers are embracing indulgence with joy and moderation, seeking beautiful, visually captivating treats that elevate everyday moments. From decadent cakes and ice creams to nostalgic desserts and international sweets, the "Treat Time" trend is all about celebrating small luxuries that delight both the eyes and the palate. Whether it's a comforting classic or an exciting global fusion, these treats bring together creativity, convenience, and a sense of joyful escape.

1. CAKES & PASTRIES

Cakes and pastries are evolving into creative masterpieces that bring indulgence into daily life.

- **Innovation:** Hybrid treats like cheesecake-mochi and éclair cakes blend comfort with elegance. Banana pudding-inspired cakes bring nostalgia with a fresh twist.
- **Convenience:** Instagram-worthy and portable, these desserts are designed for busy, indulgent lifestyles.

2. DOUGHNUTS & SWEET BUNS

Doughnuts and buns are being reimagined, with a global twist. Classic doughnuts get a gourmet makeover, such as buttery croissant-dough doughnuts and savoury Maritozzi filled with whipped ricotta and herbs.

- **Global Fusion:** Fusion creations like Greek loukoumades and Japanese anpan merge textures and cultural traditions into irresistible treats.
- **Applications:** These creations are not just desserts—they work as snacks, breakfast items, or even as carriers for burgers and sliders.

3. SAVOURY BAKES.

Savoury pastries are becoming all-day favourites, embracing gourmet ingredients for every meal. Croissants, bagels, and Danishes are reimagined with layers of cheese, spices, and other bold ingredients. From kimchi croissants to black garlic-filled buns, these savoury bakes offer a perfect "snackification" option that satisfies any craving.

By blending innovation with familiarity, these tips will help caterers stay ahead of the curve while delighting diners with unique, memorable experiences.

Reimagining Nostalgia

Take beloved classics and rework them into modern formats, like Eton Mess yogurt pots, for a fresh twist on traditional favourites.

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4. ICE CREAM

Ice cream is no longer just a treat—it’s an adventure in flavours and textures.

- **Innovation:** Plant-based options and alternative milks, such as goat and sheep milk, offer creamy, rich textures for conscious consumers.
- **Global Touch:** International flavours like black sesame, stracciatella, and dulce de leche transport you to far-off places with every bite.

5. NOSTALGIC DESSERTS

Comforting and familiar, nostalgic desserts are making a comeback, with modern twists. Pavlovas and sticky toffee puddings are reimagined with flair while keeping their beloved essence intact.

- **Social Media Influence:** Retro recipes like jelly moulds and trifles are gaining attention online, bringing back fond memories and sparking engagement.

6. KOREAN SWEETS:

Korean sweets are taking the world by storm, offering a delightful fusion of innovation and tradition.

- **Rising Popularity:** Bingsu, banana milk-infused treats, and yakgwa are capturing hearts globally.
- **Fusion Creations:** Desserts like matcha mille-feuille and black sesame macarons combine Korean traditions with European patisserie, creating exciting, modern hybrids.

Snackification

Develop savoury bakes that offer flexibility, making it easy for customers to enjoy delicious bites on the go.

Versatility in Doughnuts & Cookies

Play with shapes, fillings, and creative applications to bring global appeal to these crowd-pleasing treats.

ENGLISH, IRISH, SCOTTISH AND WELSH FOOD TRENDS

The culinary traditions of the UK and Ireland are experiencing a remarkable revival, blending heritage with modern creativity. Across Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and England, chefs are breathing new life into beloved dishes like Welsh rarebit, Scottish cullen skink, Irish stew, and stargazy pie, balancing their roots with fresh, contemporary twists. This movement celebrates provenance, with seasonal, local ingredients like Orkney scallops, Aberdeen Angus beef, and artisanal cheeses such as Ogleshield and Stichelton taking centre stage.

Nostalgia meets innovation as classics like treacle tart and roly-poly pudding are paired with bold accompaniments like mushroom ketchup or reimagined as playful fusions—think jerk-spiced Sunday roast or Thai sausage in a full English breakfast. Desserts follow suit, with surprising delights like Guinness caramel doughnuts and banana ketchup adding excitement to traditional flavours. By blending heritage with global inspiration, the UK and Ireland's food scene offers a bold, delicious glimpse into its culinary future.

ENGLAND

English cuisine is experiencing a renaissance, with a renewed love for traditional favourites like Lancashire hotpot, the earthy delight of Pease Pudding, and the quintessential Ploughman's lunch, now a staple in both upscale and casual dining. These dishes, steeped in heritage, connect diners to England's culinary roots.

The country's famed pub fare is also being reimagined. Chefs are taking classics like bangers and mash and elevating them with high-quality, locally sourced ingredients, creating sophisticated comfort food that bridges the gap between nostalgia and innovation.

IRELAND

Ireland's cuisine continues to celebrate its robust flavours with enduring favourites like soda bread, crispy boxty, creamy colcannon, and the indulgent full Irish breakfast. These dishes, rich in comfort and history, serve as a foundation for both everyday meals and celebratory feasts.

Yet, Ireland is also embracing a wave of culinary innovation. Fusion creations like beef-stuffed boxty dumplings, enhanced with Cais Na Tire cheese, reflect a modern approach to Irish ingredients, blending tradition with ingenuity. Whether on a cozy kitchen table or in a trendy bistro, Irish cuisine captures the spirit of the land and its people.

SCOTLAND

Scotland's culinary heritage continues to shine with iconic dishes like haggis, tattie scones, and the decadent cranachan—a harmonious blend of cream, oats, raspberries, and whisky. These timeless staples are now joined by a revival of less mainstream classics like bridie, a Savory meat pasty, and the comforting cock-a-leekie soup, offering a nod to Scotland's hearty roots.

Modern innovations celebrate local ingredients with desserts like the Scottish fern cake, layering cake, jam, and icing with a touch of flair, showcasing the bounty of native strawberries and the creativity of today's chefs. Scotland's cuisine bridges the gap between tradition and contemporary refinement, proving that its flavours are as bold as its landscapes.

WALES

Welsh cuisine is steeped in tradition, with staples like lamb cawl, a warming soup, Glamorgan sausages, a vegetarian delight of leeks and cheese, and the sweet-spiced bara brith taking centre stage. These cherished dishes embody the heart of Wales and its culinary storytelling.

The region's exceptional cheeses, including the beloved Caerphilly, are finding new life in modern recipes, adding depth and richness to a variety of dishes. From rustic tables to gourmet settings, Welsh food tells a tale of heritage infused with innovation, a testament to its enduring appeal.

RECIPE · RECIPE ·

Cranachan

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 120g Country Range Frozen Raspberries
- 50g Country Range Honey
- 120g Country Range Oat Flakes
- ½ tbsp icing sugar
- 1 measure whisky
- 200g natural yoghurt

METHOD

1. Defrost the frozen raspberries and gently mix with the icing sugar and whisky.

2. Mix the oats with the honey and toast in the oven until golden brown, then allow to cool.

3. Layer the dessert in a glass with raspberries, yoghurt and oat mix.

4. Garnish with some fresh raspberries, a drizzle of honey and a few crumbled oats.

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International trends

The global culinary scene in 2025/26 is a thrilling mix of heritage and innovation, where cherished traditions meet bold reinvention. With migration and globalization shaping dining experiences, regional cuisines are blending flavours, techniques, and cultures in unexpected ways. From reimagined classics to fusion dishes celebrating diversity, every plate tells a story of connection, creativity, and evolution.

ITALIAN CUISINE

Italian food is redefining itself without losing its roots. Classics like cacio e pepe now inspire tangy crisps and cocktails, while pizza takes on fusion flavours such as Thai green curry and lomo saltado. Innovations like deep-fried lasagna and Japanese-Italian Itameshi creations showcase Italy's rich culinary heritage with modern twists, turning the dining scene into a creative playground where history meets bold imagination.

MIDDLE EASTERN EXPLORATION

Middle Eastern cuisine is evolving beyond staples, with dishes like mujaddara and maqluba gaining global recognition for their comforting layers of flavour. Fusion is also redefining the region's food scene, with creations like shakshuka pizza and halva blondies blending tradition with modern flair. By pairing ancient techniques with daring experimentation, Middle Eastern cuisine is thriving as a sensory adventure.

Turkish lamb pida

LATIN AMERICAN CUISINES

Latin America's culinary diversity is taking centre stage. While favourites like empanadas and arepas remain staples, dishes from Peru and Brazil, such as ceviche and churrasco, are expanding global palates. The bold Nikkei fusion—melding Japanese and Peruvian flavours—leads the charge with innovative creations like tiradito, while Argentina's chimichurri and dulce de leche add sophistication to the mix.

KOREAN CUISINE

Korean food continues to captivate, with staples like kimchi and bulgogi now global icons. Emerging trends include viral street foods like yakgwa and fusion formats such as Korean tacos, blending traditional spice with international street food flair. Korean patisserie is also gaining popularity, showing the versatility of the nation's bold and innovative flavours.

CARIBBEAN REVIVAL

Caribbean cuisine is undergoing a flavourful revival, elevating iconic dishes like jerk-spiced patties and rum-infused desserts into gourmet delights. Tropical ingredients such as mango and coconut anchor fresh, vibrant dishes that transport diners to paradise. With its rich blend of spice, heat, and sweetness, Caribbean cuisine is a celebration of bold creativity and cultural pride, capturing hearts worldwide.

ONES TO WATCH

- **Greek Fusion:** Traditional favourites like pastitsio and loukoumades are getting creative makeovers, with innovations like baklava cheesecake stealing the show.
- **Tex-Mex Renaissance:** Classic nachos and fajitas are elevated with gourmet flair, leading the charge in the "nouveau Tex-Mex" movement.
- **Southern Comfort:** Dishes like blackened fish, jambalaya, gumbo, and cornbread continue to charm with their hearty, soulful flavours.
- **North & East African Flavours:** Bold spices and condiments like harissa and berbere are making waves, adding depth and warmth to global cuisine.

NO RULES

Today's consumers are reshaping the culinary world, embracing bold, innovative dining experiences that challenge tradition. A younger, adventurous generation, seeking authenticity and creativity, is leading this charge. They crave unique, visually striking, and shareable food that tells a story and breaks boundaries.

Global fusion is at the heart of this movement. Dishes like birria ramen (Mexican meets Japanese) or dashi spanakopita (Mediterranean with umami-rich Japanese flavours) are redefining dining experiences. Pan-Asian ingredients like pandan, sambal, and ube are enhancing Western classics, with creations like soft-shell crab burgers and Thai chai ice cream offering exciting new twists. These fusions are edible adventures, encouraging exploration and discovery.

Hybrid dishes are also gaining momentum. From tanghulu mochi donuts to croissant-taiyaki hybrids, these unexpected combinations bring innovation to the table, sparking viral moments on Instagram and TikTok. Every bite is a story, a memory, and a shareable experience.

Customisation is a key part of this "No Rules" era. Gen Z, especially, craves personalisation. Build-your-own pasta bars or breakfast bowls, often enhanced by AI-driven recommendations, are catering to this demand, ensuring every meal feels uniquely tailored to the individual.

With fearless experimentation, cross-cultural inspiration, and hyper-personalised options, today's dining scene is rewriting the rulebook. The possibilities are endless, the flavours bold, and every bite is an exciting journey.

ITALIAN EVOLUTION:

Italian cuisine, known for its comfort and simplicity, is evolving into a playground of bold flavours and innovation. Classic dishes like pizza and pasta are reimagined with global influences. Think Thai green curry pizza or gnocchi lasagna—familiar favourites with an exciting twist.

The Itameshi fusion (Japanese-Italian) brings new dimensions, blending umami-rich ingredients with Italian staples. Imagine miso-carbonara or sushi-inspired arancini—Italian comfort food meets Japanese precision in surprising ways. Italian cuisine is boldly honouring tradition while stepping into new flavour territories.

MEXICAN REINVENTION:

Mexican cuisine is undergoing a renaissance, blending traditional techniques with global influences to create modern, unforgettable dishes. Nouvelle Tex-Mex is at the forefront, with dishes like wasabi guacamole and duck confit enchiladas elevating classic favourites.

Mexican staples like tacos and tamales are now canvases for international flavours. Korean bulgogi tacos and Mediterranean za'atar tamales are just some examples of how Mexican cuisine's global appeal is expanding.

Showcase Southeast Asia

Introduce the rich and diverse flavours of lesser-known cuisines from countries like Indonesia and Cambodia, captivating new audiences.

Promote Customisation

Empower consumers to personalise their meals, using technology to create a more interactive and satisfying dining experience.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

The phrase "You are what you eat" has never been more relevant. As we uncover the powerful link between food and well-being, people are rethinking what they put on their plates. From gut health to sustainability, the food landscape is transforming, encouraging choices that nourish both our bodies and the planet. Today's consumers are not only eating to stay healthy—they're embracing transparency, simplicity, and the idea that food can be medicine. This era of mindful eating is more than a trend—it's a lifestyle shift. By making informed, intentional food choices, we're nurturing ourselves and the planet, one meal at a time.

GUT HEALTH TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Your gut is the gateway to overall health, and people are catching on. Fibre-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains are gaining the spotlight for their role in supporting a balanced microbiome. A healthy gut can boost immunity, sharpen mental clarity, and even elevate mood. By choosing nutrient-dense, fibre-packed meals, we're embracing the idea that what we eat directly impacts how we feel—proving that the age-old wisdom, "health starts from within," rings true.

TRANSPARENCY & SIMPLICITY IN FOOD CHOICES

People want to know exactly what's in their food—and where it comes from. Clean-label products with simple, recognisable ingredients are now a priority. Home cooking is making a strong comeback, fuelled by the desire to control what we consume. From two-ingredient recipes to whole-food swaps, the focus is on reconnecting with the basics of nutrition. This shift reflects a broader cultural craving for authenticity, simplicity, and trust in our food choices.

MINIMISING ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS (UPFS)

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are under scrutiny as research links them to obesity, heart disease, and cancer. Consumers are ditching these highly refined options in favour of minimally processed alternatives. Tools like the Yuka app empower people to make informed decisions, sparking a movement to take control of what we eat. By saying no to UPFs, we're making a stand for cleaner, healthier living and embracing the power of knowledge in shaping our diets.

THE RISE OF NATURAL SWEETENERS

As awareness about sugar's effects grows, natural sweeteners are taking centre stage. Plant-based and fermentation-derived options are replacing artificial and refined sugars, offering a healthier way to satisfy cravings. Sweet proteins and other innovative alternatives deliver sweetness without spiking blood sugar, transforming how we indulge. These solutions make it easier to enjoy life's little pleasures while staying aligned with our health goals.

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