



MARKON®

TRENDS

WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

**SWEET & SALTY
MASHUPS
MOCKTAIL
OPPORTUNITIES
JUST-FOR-YOU
WELLNESS
MEALTIME DISRUPTION**



WINTER 2025

AT A GLANCE



MOVE OVER "SWICY"

Sweet & salty is beating out sweet & spicy!



SOBER CURIOUS

Non- and low-alc beverages are trending with Gen Z.



PERSONALIZED PREVENTION

Diners want to customize their functional foods.



FREESTYLE FOOD

Customers are snacking around the clock.



MAKE-YOUR-OWN
HEALTHY BOWLS

SWEET & SALTY IS BACK

REINVENTING THIS CLASSIC COMBO

Although Gen Zers started the viral sweet-and-spicy trend, they are also embracing foods that pair sugar and salt. Rooted in the nostalgia of the 90s (think kettle corn, honey mustard, and salted caramel), these bold contrasting flavors are back in myriad forms.



- **Appetizers/Snacks:** Wrap goat cheese-stuffed dates or figs in thick slices of prosciutto or Serrano ham.
- **Salads:** Mix together watermelon and feta or tomatoes and burrata and add to leafy greens.
- **Mains:** Offer crispy fried chicken with honey glaze and waffles, pasta with date-parsley gremolata, or sweet potato pierogis with brown butter.
- **Desserts:** Crunchy pretzel dough gives balance to fruity pies like apple or pear; sprinkle with chunks of sea salt.

**SWEET, TANGY,
SALTY**



WELLNESS
Turmeric
Ginger
Lemon
Manuka Honey

BOTANICAL
Lavender
Elderflower
Rose Water
Chamomile

SPICY
Chile Peppers
Black Pepper
Fresh Horseradish
Wasabi

LOW-ALC
Vermouth
Aperitifs
Amaro
Shrubs

TROPICAL
Pineapple
Coconut Milk
Mango
Lime

FERMENTED
Ginger Beer
Kombucha
Tepache
Tejuino

MOCKTAIL 2.0

Offer delicious options for the growing number of diners that want alcohol-free or low-alc alternatives—especially younger generations.

HEALTHY & CUSTOMIZED

Restaurants are taking wellness to the next level by offering make-your-own menus packed with healthy fruits, vegetables, and proteins that give customers control of their food choices.



- Guest visible, colorful toppings/offerings
- Gluten-free, vegan/vegetarian, or kosher options
- Allergen denotations on menus/boards
- Plenty of salad building blocks: lettuces, dressings, and toppings
- Data-driven personalized options for repeat customers
- Ingredient cross-utilization to prevent waste and lower budgets
- QSRs leading the way with dishes such as:
 - Power grain or acai bowls
 - Build-a-burrito or taco
 - Custom grab-n-go sushi
 - Create your own pizza
 - Individualized smoothies

**"JUST FOR YOU" FOODS
ARE FAN FAVES**

AROUND THE CLOCK SNACKING

Traditional dayparts have been blurring for the last decade—patrons now want the ability to grab a snack at any hour. Tap into the "girl dinner," third space, and snacking menu trends to capture more customer traffic.



"GIRL DINNER"

CHARCUTERIE
BOARDS
CAESAR SALAD &
FRIES
NAAN PIZZA
AVOCADO TOAST

THIRD SPACES

OFFPEAK HOURS
BAR MENUS
WORKING
CUSTOMERS
BRAIN-BOOSTING
BEVERAGES

SNACKING MENUS

BITE-SIZE PIZZA
SMOOTHIE BOWLS
VEGGIES & DIPS
MINI DESSERTS

THE HOT LIST



- Briny flavors
- Seasonal eating
- Haitian recipes
- Caesar salad innovation
- Transparency
- Pineapple
- Battered fries
- Natural wines
- Variations on ranch dressing
- Sweet Drop peppers
- Collabs
- Mash up conchas
- Flavored cheeses
- Miyazaki mangoes
- Aperitifs
- Clean labels
- Affordable proteins
- Cooking with sake
- Value meals

- Real sugar
- Culinary upcycling
- Suya
- Black garlic
- Snack plates
- Gut health
- Saffron
- BBQ sides
- Ube lattes
- Influencer power
- Paneer tikka masala
- Modern Greek cuisine
- Botanicals
- Regenerative agriculture
- Functional fluids
- Asian hibachi dining
- Pastina
- Drinking vinegars
- Lavender



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FRESH CROP

A weekly rundown of the fresh produce market including prices, supply levels, and quality.

TRENDS

Forecasts what is on the culinary horizon four times per year.

SOURCES:

Cozymeal
Datassential
Flavor & The Menu
Food Business
Foodservice Director
Mintel
Nation's Restaurant News
Perishable News

Prepared Foods
Produce Bluebook
QSR Magazine
Restaurant Business
Restaurant Hospitality
Technomic
TIK TOK
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