Culinary Visions Panel Predicts 2013 Food Trends

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Culinary Visions Panel (www.culinaryvisions.org), a food industry think tank, collected insight from food service professionals, scoured more than 20 trade shows, and surveyed more than 3,000 consumer toadies to determine the foods and flavors most likely to captivate consumers in the coming year. Highlights of the major trends the company is predicting include:

Reversing the Flow

While in the past fine-dining and cuttingedge chefs have driven trends, today leading chefs are being inspired by the street markets of Asia and Latin America, and classic American state fairs.

Pure Food

Nothing sells like pure and simple, as consumers clamor for clean fuels for their bodies and de mystified ingredient statements for their minds.

Menus on the Move

Food trucks have become part of the culinary landscape in major cities, and have migrated to industrial areas and college campuses. In addition, for the farm-to-table crowd, farmers are renting their fields to chefs and their guests. For adventurous fine diners, Diner en Blanc (a flash mob of upscale diners decked out in white bringing their own lavish meal to a public place) has been exported from Paris to nine cities in the U.S. and 20 worldwide.

Catering to Kids

Family dining is now benefitting from chefs who bring their culinary training and their family heritage along with their own kids into affordable, casual restaurants. Chefs who work in school kitchens are bringing a new level of nutrition literacy and good taste to the consumers of tomorrow.

24/7 Snacking

Meal times have expanded from the traditional three to seven as snacking increases among time-starved Americans' hectic schedules. Small plates are no longer a trend; they are just part of the way Americans eat today.

Canning, Curing and Cutting in House

As the push toward local is finding its way into almost every segment, chefs are moving toward preservation. Pickling is proving to be a popular way for chefs to add their personal touch and showcase a unique aspect of using local ingredients year round. Nose-to-tail is a sustainable practice that is expanding awareness of a wider range of meat cuts and is going mainstream.

Home and Away Flavors

Look for a rediscovery of regional American cooking as chefs continue to explore the culinary cultu res from cities and towns around the country. In addition, this will be the year for destination flavors that are fresh, hot and sweet. Chefs are using ingredients as a way to bring these flavors to the menu; look for ginger, cinnamon, exotic citrus, sriracha, chiles and sweet-heat blends like honey and harissa.

Vegetable Concoctions

From school lunch to gourmet retail shops, consumers are ravenous for vegetables. The latest twist is stem-to-root cooking with fruits and vegetables.

Liquid Luxuries

Amber spirits, house-made tonics and bitters have created a whole new bar scene. Non-alcoholic beverages are getting a flavor boost with fresh ginger soda, handcrafted sodas and exotic lemongrassflavored iced teas. Juices and smoothies have become the elixir of our day, with unique, delicious and sometimes palatechallenging blends of fruits and vegetables. Even desserts like milkshakes and floats have moved to the beverage menu.

Fashionable Plates

The parallels between food and fashion have always captivated the senses. From artfully presented entrees to couture condiments, innovative chefs are feeding the senses of consumers with an appreciation for fashionable plates.

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