

## Foodservice Takes Cues From Cultural Trends

These are based on experience,  
ingredient transparency.

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CHICAGO — In its latest report titled “What’s Trending in Foodservice: Cultural Contradictions Driving the Trends,” **Culinary Visions Panel**

explored the dining out expectations, attitudes and tendencies of more than 2,000 U.S. consumers.



Topics included experience-based dining, transparency of ingredients, balancing healthful with taste and food presentations.

In a survey of more than 2,000 consumers, Culinary Visions Panel found emerging trends such as:

**Unforgettable Food Experiences.** Today’s food-centric culture has paved the way for fully immersive experiences like food festivals, street markets, food emporiums, food trucks and more. Because of this, **food serves as both the attraction and the entertainment.** The goal is to have food experiences worthy of sharing via online and in person.

**Food as Fuel.** The fast-paced and over-committed lives of today’s **consumers have fueled visits to fast-casual and quick-service restaurants.** Consumers also eat to provide themselves with energy to get through the day.

**Loving Local.** Consumers are willing to **pay more for locally sourced food** when dining out in their continued desire for local and sustainable food. However, consumers enjoy **exploring new cultures through food**, including exotic spices, unique ingredients and global cooking styles.

**Healthful, Yet Indulgent.** Today’s consumers expect meals to be **both healthy and delicious** when dining out. They are unwilling to trade taste for healthfulness, but they do prefer to limit certain ingredients vs. completely eliminating them. Despite the talk surrounding healthfulness, consumers also love restaurants that offer “over-the-top” menu items and believe that **indulgent foods are worth the splurge.**

**Childhood Nostalgia Meets Adult Sophistication.** When dining out, consumers search for nostalgia and crave **foods that remind them of their childhood.** However, this doesn’t change the fact that consumers also admire artistic food presentations, **sophisticated flavor combinations** and avant-garde cooking techniques.

**Simplicity and Transparency.** Consumers like foods they can taste and ingredients they can understand. This means they desire **fresh ingredients prepared with simple techniques** and elegant presentations. Yet, consumers are also drawn to the simplicity of rustic, **home-style foods** and crave authentic flavor experiences.

“For any major trends identified, equally powerful counter trends appeared,” explained **Sharon Olson, executive director of Culinary Visions Panel.** “To describe this phenomenon, we’ve coined the term **‘OxyModern Food Trends.’** And we see it as a driving force behind tomorrow’s menus.”

The Culinary Visions Panel is a research and trend forecasting firm. It is a division of Olson Communications, headquartered in Chicago.

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