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FLAVOR UPGRADES

The Modern Pantry

A recent survey of foodservice operators reveals a new set of pantry staples

By The Culinary Visions Panel

CATEGORIES

PANTRY EXAMPLES

CONDIMENTS FROM AFAR Look to global condiments for inspiration here—as a base ingredient in authentic recipes or as a fully prepared sauce to make going global easy. The diversity here illustrates a growing interest in micro-cuisines and regional specialties.

Chutneys, fish sauce, fermented black beans, guava, hoisin, hot sauces and sriracha, kimchi, pickled vegetables and fruits, plum sauce, specialty mustards, sweet bean paste, wasabi

HERBS & SPICES Exotic and sensual ingredients for adventurous menus mark a significant flavor trend in today's pantry. They boost flavor and, in some cases, help reduce sodium.

Black cardamom, garam masala, saffron, smoked seasonings like hickory powder, specialty salts, sumac, Sichuan peppercorns, tamarind, za'atar

PREMIUM PRODUCE Fresh and local is top of mind, still. Variety is the key here, where kale now shares space with other greens. Techniques like smoking and pickling bring craftsmanship to the table.

Baby carrots, cipollini onions and demi varieties of potatoes; heirloom varieties; house-pickled vegetables and fruits; kale, micro greens and specialty greens like arugula and mâche; piquillo peppers; smoked tomatoes

NEW NOODLES The popularity of Asian-themed bowls is a big factor in new pasta forms. Another driver is a better-for-you demand for alternative pastas.

Brown rice pasta, egg noodles, fregola, Hong Kong-style chow mein noodles, quinoa pasta, rice noodles, soba noodles, udon noodles

NUTS & SEEDS Flavor, texture and healthfulness propel interest in a diverse representation of nuts and seeds, appearing with increasing frequency in all forms—from flours to milks—and applications, from coatings to beverages.

Chia seeds, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, almonds, walnuts, chocolate-hazelnut spread

BEVERAGE BOOSTERS There is something new in the beverage category almost daily, it seems, and this list could be endless with singular mentions.

Agave syrup, coffee syrup, chile syrup, almond milk, coconut milk, rosehip tea

BEYOND WHITE RICE No longer is a side of rice a simple alternative starch; global and specialty varieties are giving side dishes—and center of the plate—added value.

Arborio, basmati, brown, forbidden black, jasmine, red, sushi

HEARTY GRAINS Ancient and alternative grains deliver a great narrative and a hefty health halo to the menu, not to mention menu-wide versatility, from breakfast-bowl bases to salad stars.

Bulgur wheat, couscous, farro, kamut, millet, polenta, quinoa, rye berries, stone-ground grits, wheat berries

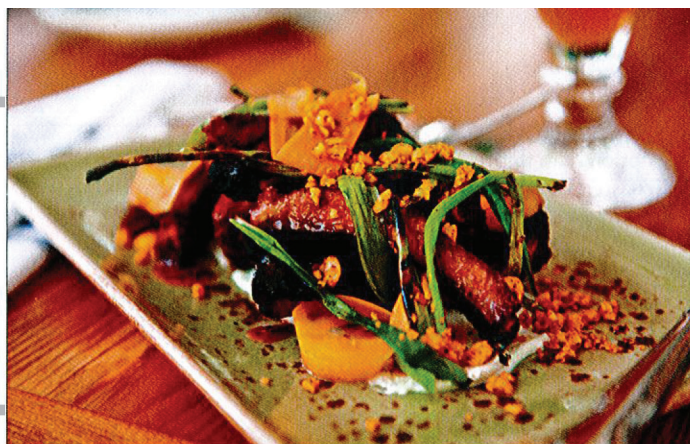
COMPLEX VINEGARS Add a hit of bracing acid to satisfy the growing love of sour. But look beyond white vinegar for both ties to provenance and complexity of flavor.

Aged sherry vinegar, apple-cider vinegar, balsamic vinegar, malt vinegar, rice-wine vinegar

SPECIALTY OILS Turn to specialty oils for premium value. A salad tossed in walnut oil, for example, adds subtle flavors and illustrates attention to detail that today's diners look for at every turn.

Nut oils (almond, walnut, etc.), infused oils (garlic-chile, citrus, herbal, etc.), seed oils (grapeseed, sesame, etc.)

At Chicago's Carriage House, baby back ribs get their texture and tang from modern pantry stars such as pepper jelly, pickled heirloom carrots and candied peanuts.



CARRIAGE HOUSE

MENU EXAMPLES

Calistoga Grass-Fed Burger, Petaluma Creamery jack cheese, avocado, marinated tomatoes, preserved lemon aioli, red wine mustard, potato bun, sweet corn and local sorrel salad, homemade ranch — *Park Grill, Chicago*

Sriracha Chicken Melt — *Subway*

Meyer lemon white chocolate, ruby grapefruit, celery, bitter cocoa and cardamom — *Volt, Frederick, Md.*

Garam masala-spiced Brussels sprouts — *Shanik, Seattle*

Stuffed Endives: Pickled garlic-roasted beets, Rogue Creamery smoky blue cheese, honey tarragon and shallot vinaigrette — *Alchemy Restaurant & Bar, Ashland, Ore. Beach, Calif.*

Red Chile Kale: Lollipop kale, guajillo chile sauce, local potatoes, añejo cheese — *Red O Restaurant, Newport*

Prawn Quinoa Pasta: Quinoa penne, tomato, zucchini, basil, white wine, garlic and Parmesan with a light lemon cream sauce — *Nirvana Grille, Laguna Beach, Calif.*

Fregola with manila clams, red onions and tomato — *The Chapel, San Francisco*

Chocolate Budino with pomegranate-soaked chia seeds and toasted almonds — *Lyfe Kitchen, Palo Alto, Calif.*

Roasted Cauliflower with truffled pea pesto, salted almonds, feta crema — *Etch, Nashville*

War of the Roses: Rosehip and green tea-infused vodka, St. Germain, honey, lemon, rose water — *Lento, Rochester, N.Y.*

Golden Latte: Turmeric latte with honey, turmeric juice and steamed almond milk — *Café Gratitude, Venice, Calif.*

Grilled Fish of the Day with orange-pistachio basmati rice, pomegranate, spinach, honey-glazed roasted sweet potato and sumac vinaigrette — *Ris, Washington, D.C.*

Diver Scallops with crisped sticky rice, roast pineapple, "Bloody Mary" dashi, ginger wasabi cream — *Pachamamas, Lawrence, Kan.*

Chipotle Prawn & Kale Salad: Chipotle-glazed prawns, baby kale, mixed greens, cinnamon-toasted quinoa, orange, avocado, toasted almonds, red onion escabeche, orange-citrus vinaigrette — *Cactus, Seattle*

Smoked Farro — *Sea Change, Minneapolis*

Slow-Roasted Carrot Salad with winter pear, sunflower, quince vinegar — *Allumette, Los Angeles*

Fish & Chips: Beer-battered cod, crispy potatoes, malt vinegar aioli — *The Optimist, Atlanta*

French Green Lentils with sherry vinegar, walnut oil, grain mustard — *Keefer's, Chicago*

Carrot and Ginger Soup with toasted chile marshmallow and pumpkin-seed oil — *The Thomas, Napa, Calif.*



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