



Culinary Educators Dish on Menu Trends



Local and sustainable food preparation are the leading menu development mandates that today's chefs need to embrace, reveals a new survey focused on culinary educators and students.

Released in March, *Culinary Trends: Thoughts and Perspective from Chef Educators and Culinary Students* from Culinary Visions Panel, a foodservice research and forecasting firm, asked about topics, techniques, and trends relating to food, beverages, condiments, culinary themes, and cooking methods.

When culinary educators were asked about trending preparation methods, both traditional techniques and modern methods topped the list, reports Rachel Tracy, Culinary Visions Panel managing director.

"Methods like smoking, braising, pickling, and fermenting that take lots of time were noted, along with methods requiring the latest technologies like sous vide and even liquid nitrogen," she says. "It told us that today's culinary schools are really learning labs for time honored technique and cutting edge experimentation."

Industry professionals cite the following as necessary to prepare culinary students for today's foodservice industry:

- Practice local and sustainable menu development.
- Understand classic French and European cuisine, and modern cooking techniques.
- Create delicious menus that hit health and wellness goals.
- Understand both traditional and unconventional venues like food trucks and pop-ups.
- Work with a pantry of global ingredients to prepare a full range of authentic ethnic and ethnic-inspired offerings.

Culinary instructors and students were also asked to identify the ingredients they cannot live without. The top four items are salt, garlic, olive oil, and butter. Completing the list of the top five, instructors noted fresh herbs and students chose pepper.

Asked about their favorite meals to prepare, culinary students cited tried and true American comfort foods and holiday meals. Among the most popular were Thanksgiving dinner, lasagna, braised short ribs with mashed potatoes, and soup.

"Culinary educators are in a unique position to have a significant impact on the menus of tomorrow through the knowledge and passion they share with their students," says Sharon Olson, Culinary Visions Panel executive director. "Understanding their perspectives give us a glimpse of trends to come."