

SNACK FOOD & WHOLESALE BAKERY

What do people want to eat in 2013?

A new report released by Chicago-based research firm Culinary Visions indicates that consumers want to eat “smaller,” as in locally grown food inspired by street vendors and food loaded with fresh veggies. The 2013 food trends report cites street markets as a key player in consumer preferences. Gone is the notion that fine-dining trends will eventually trickle down to the rest of us. In 2013, it will increasingly be trickle-up.

“All of the inspiration will come from street markets,” says Sharon Olson, executive director of the Culinary Visions panel, which surveyed more than 3,000 consumers nationally and interviewed dozens of food experts. “This will challenge big food sellers and manufacturers. It’s not a simple switch.”

Asian street markets, for instance, recently influenced Chipotle to open its Asian-themed ShopHouse Southeast Asian Kitchen chain. “It’s a reverse thinking on the way companies look at identifying food trends,” Olson says.

Consumers also want the food that they buy to be “demystified.” They want to be able to pronounce the names of all the ingredients. They also want to know where it comes from—ideally, locally, says Olson. “Nothing sells like pure and simple,” she explains. Veggies are critical to a dish, and the more local, as well as exotic, the better. As the locally-grown movement grows, so will the notion of canning, curing and cutting in-house. Pickling is especially becoming a hip way to add a personal touch, says Olson.

Freshness counts. Fresh vegetables will show up in more school lunches and in more gourmet retail shops. “Veggies have become chic,” Olson adds.