

FUTURE MENUS

**GLOBAL FOODSERVICE TRENDS
VOLUME 3**



**Unilever
Food
Solutions**

FOOD THAT MOVES US

GLOBAL FOODSERVICE TRENDS
VOL. 3 | 2025



Unilever
Food
Solutions

As a chef or food service professional you know how important it is to keep up with menu trends. It ensures you offer unique and exciting dishes that attract new customers, while keeping your regulars coming back for more. It's also an opportunity to showcase your creativity. Not keeping up risks allowing the competition to get ahead.

However, keeping abreast of evolving menu trends is hugely time consuming and all too often requires long hours of researching new ingredients, new techniques, and testing. Hours you simply don't have. That's where our *Future Menus* comes in.

Our highly skilled team of 250 in-house chefs, who are based all over the world, have worked on developing delicious, on-trend recipe ideas that you can use for your menus. With 5,000 years of collective experience between them, our chefs are perfectly positioned to help you craft the exciting creations your diners want today. They go to work every day to help *Unilever Food Solutions* customers serve up 200 million delicious dishes across the globe.

"Our highly skilled team of *UFS* in-house chefs, who are based all over the world, have worked on developing delicious, on-trend recipe concepts that you can use for your menus."

These recipe concepts are the way to bring the trends to life in your menu. Each concept belongs to one of the four menu trends we have identified this year: Street Food Couture; Borderless Cuisine; Culinary Roots; and Diner Designed.

Each one has been designed with operational requirements and costs in mind. They provide delicious inspiration with flavors, cuisines, and culinary techniques from all corners of the world. While they are globally inspired, each concept is also highly adaptable to ensure it resonates with your local market.

Along with these concepts, you will find lots of rich insights into each of the four menu trends and how they are defining the food service industry. Use them to stay ahead and to spark your creativity—a perfect recipe to delight your guests.

Kees Van Erp
Global Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions



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For more information on this year's trends visit www.ufs.com

CONTRIBUTORS



ALVARO LIMA

Senior Corporate Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, North America

An alumnus of the Technology Center and College of DuPage, Chef Alvaro has worked as a chef for 19 years. During his career, he has worked for the likes of Sodexo and Quest Food Management. First joining *Unilever Food Solutions* as a culinary intern in 2005, he returned to the company in 2014. He is now a Senior Corporate Chef, leading the Midwest in supporting sales with menu and recipe development.

 @chef_alvy



DANIELLE VENTER

Regional Customer Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, South Africa

Chef Danielle began her journey as a chef in some of South Africa's top restaurants and hotels and now has over 16 years of experience, having also lectured at a prestigious chef school. Chef Danielle sits on the board of the Chaine des Rotisseurs KZN South Africa and is a member of the South African Chefs Association. For the past five years, Danielle has served as the regional Demand Creation chef for *Unilever Food Solutions* South Africa.

 @chefdanielle_sa




EDWIN VAN GENT

Head Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, the Netherlands

Chef Edwin attended culinary school in the Netherlands aged 12, going on to work in various kitchens from the age of 16. He has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants and achieved the highest title in the Netherlands: chef S.V.H. Meesterkok (certified master chef). Looking for a new challenge, he became a development chef at KLM airline catering. He then joined *Unilever Food Solutions* as a culinary consultant and has been working there for 26 years.

 @chef_edwin_ufs



BRANDON COLLINS

Corporate Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, North America

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Chef Brandon worked at restaurants before moving to a role at Sodexo as Executive Chef at Pitch, which was Unilever's personal care division's co-creation space. After working closely with the company, he took a position as Corporate Chef Northeast, later becoming the Corporate Executive Chef, which is his current title. Here he manages a team of eight chefs from across the US and Canada. Chef Brandon is also one of only two people in the world to hold the title of Maille mustard sommelier.

 @chefbrandonc



CHRIS ZHONG

Senior Chef Consultant

Unilever Food Solutions, China

Since 1999, Chef Chris has honed his craft in hotels and restaurants, establishing a robust foundation in Chinese cuisine. A highly successful online content creator, he has a following of 500,000 and regularly gives interesting insights into the culinary world. At *Unilever Food Solutions*, he has excelled in roles such as Sales Chef, Innovation Chef, and CRM Chef Leader, showcasing his leadership and creativity.

 @chefchriszhong




ERIC CHUA

Executive Chef (Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia)
and Future Platform Chef Lead

Unilever Food Solutions, South East Asia & South Asia

Chef Eric began his career as a trainee chef at Swissôtel's Stamford Hotel in 2003. He honed his expertise in multi-cuisine cooking, which has included working at a Michelin-starred restaurant before joining Unilever in 2009. He proudly holds numerous gold medals and top honors from regional and international competitions, including a double gold win at the Culinary World Cup 2010 in Luxembourg. In his role at *Unilever Food Solutions*, he is dedicated to pioneering innovative dishes and solutions that shape the culinary future.

 @chef_eric_chua



FRANK JAKOBSEN

Lead Chef and Culinary Advisor

Unilever Food Solutions, Denmark

Raised in a family of chefs, Chef Frank began his career aged 17 by pursuing various food service roles. Throughout his time in the industry he has worked as a chef de partie, sous chef, and head chef, and has worked everywhere from small cafés and canteens to international hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants. From 2000 to 2005 he was also a high-level competitive chef, before joining Unilever Food Services 15 years ago.

 @f.jakobsen



GUN GUN HANDAYANA

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Indonesia

Chef Gun Gun is a graduate of the Food Production Management department at the National Hotel & Tourism Institute. Starting his career at the Novotel Hotel Group, he joined *Unilever Food Solutions* in 2006 and was appointed Executive Chef in 2017. He won Unilever's highly prestigious Global Hero Award in 2022 for the incredible support he gave to *UFS* customers during the Covid pandemic. He is also a very popular online content creator with over 320,000 followers so far.

 @chefgungun_handayana



JAMES BROWN

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, UK & Ireland

Chef James has been in the food service industry for over 22 years and has worked for esteemed establishments such as Champney's Health Resort, Le Petit Blanc, Polpo, and Polpetto – beginning as a commis chef and later holding roles such as Culinary Director. Honing his skills in kitchens around the UK to support his formal training, Chef James earned a diploma in culinary arts and retained a Bib Gourmand at Polpetto for two years running.

 @jamescbrown77



KYLE JAKOBI

Customer Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, North America

Chef Kyle started his career as a culinary school graduate and has since honed his skills in roles at upscale wine bars, Fairmont Hotels, and Bosch/Siemens, eventually rising to Executive Corporate Chef. Now with *Unilever Food Solutions*, he serves as Western Zone Chef, collaborating with food service operators across national accounts, non-commercial sectors, military, and regional chains. Chef Kyle's adventurous style blends Asian and Southwestern flavors, fostering connection and creativity through food.

 @chefkylejakobi



PHILIP LI

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, China

Since 1988, Chef Philip has accumulated extensive experience in Chinese cuisine in hotels and restaurants. He led the Chinese national team competing at the 2020 IKA Culinary Olympics to great success. The team won three gold medals, one silver, and one bronze. Chef Philip has held various key positions in *Unilever Food Solutions* during his 27 years with the business, working his way up to lead a team of 80 chefs today, across China.

 @李某人的美食空间




DIANNE ARANETA

On-Trend Flavors Lead

Unilever Food Solutions, Global

A graduate of the College of Business & Economics at De La Salle University, Chef Dianne has gained a wide range of industry experience and won leadership awards and a competition along the way, too. Before joining Unilever in 2011, she worked in a hotel and a corporation and took lead roles in restaurant chains and a pre-opening of a casual independent restaurant. She has also worked as a Research & Development chef, having held local, regional, and global innovation chef roles, including with Unilever, for over a decade. She is now part of the global digital marketing team and plays a pivotal lead role in UFS' annual *Future Menus* campaign.

 @yanaraneta



GILI HAIM

Lead Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Israel

Beginning his professional career in 1986, Chef Gili studied formal culinary arts at the Tadmor Hotel School and worked in a wide range of restaurants before becoming a consulting chef for numerous establishments and local and international fast-food outlets such as Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut. Since 2003, he has served as the Lead Chef of *Unilever Food Solutions* Israel and is primarily involved in researching and developing new products and concepts for the Israeli food service market.

 @gilih66



JOANNE LIMOANCO-GENDRANO

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Gulf and Indian Ocean Islands

Chef Joanne has over 20 years of experience in the Food & Beverage sector, working across various establishments, including catering services, restaurants, an academic institution, food brands, and hotel operations. Currently, Chef Joanne serves as the Executive Chef for the Gulf region and Indian Ocean Islands. She brings a wealth of experience from her tenure with *UFS* Culinary in Southeast Asia and her passion for Pan Asian cuisine, enriching her current team with a broad and diverse culinary perspective.

 @hellochefjo



MAURITS VAN VROENHOVEN

Global Lead Creative and Brand Development Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, the Netherlands

Chef Maurits pursued a degree in culinary arts and hotel management before working at several fine dining restaurants in the Netherlands. After a stint in the USA, he worked as a pastry chef at a two-Michelin-starred restaurant in Amsterdam's Intercontinental Hotel. He then worked in several other restaurants and hotels before joining Unilever in Rotterdam. At Unilever, he started as a catering chef and for the past 11 years has held the role of Global Brand Development Lead Chef.

 @chef_maurits_van_vroenhoven



PEIO CRUZ

Lead Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Spain

Chef Peio studied hospitality management in Bilbao before moving to England, where he began his career as a chef, working in hotel chains such as Sheraton and Hilton. He started as a local R&D chef at Unilever 24 years ago, gaining experience in international food as well as developing an extensive knowledge of the food service market and trends. In his current role as Lead Chef for *Unilever Food Solutions* in Spain he supports product innovation.

 @chefpeiocruz




RENÉ-NOEL SCHIEMER

Deputy Head of Culinary Consulting

Unilever Food Solutions, Germany

Chef René-Noel began his professional career with a chef apprenticeship that ran from 2007 to 2010. Throughout his career, he has worked in various hotels and restaurants and large-scale venues and has participated in trade fairs such as INTERNORGA before becoming a freelance chef. In 2015, he took up a position as Culinary Consultant for *Unilever Food Solutions* Germany, which he held for seven years. Since April 2022, he has been Deputy Head of Culinary Consulting for *UFS* Germany.

 @chef_renenoe_chefmanship



EVERT VERMANDEL

Global Lead Innovation Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, the Netherlands

Growing up in Zeeland, in the southwest of the Netherlands, Chef Evert found his culinary calling at a young age, working as a student chef and a commis. Then, in 1998, Chef Evert proudly joined Unilever to become Head of Kitchen Services at Unilever's corporate center. In 2013, he continued his journey with Unilever, moving to *UFS* R&D as a Global Innovation Chef, which inspired the transition to his current position. Today, Evert is the Global Lead Innovation Chef, creatively leading a team of great chefs in *HIVE*, Unilever's food innovation center in Wageningen.

 @chef_eef




GIUSEPPE BUSCICCHIO

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Italy

With culinary experience at the Four Seasons Hotel in Milan and the Sheraton Nicolaus Hotel in Bari, Chef Giuseppe has built his career in high-end establishments. He has honed his expertise in gourmet cooking and professional culinary arts, earning recognition as an Emerging Chef of Southern Italy. Chef Giuseppe now serves as the Executive Chef of *Unilever Food Solutions* Italy, where he trains chefs, introducing them to new cooking techniques and innovative culinary combinations inspired by Italian traditions.

 @giuseppebuscicchiochef_



THAÍS GIMENEZ

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Brazil

With a degree in Gastronomy from Senac Águas de São Pedro, Chef Thaís first made her name as a gastronomic consultant, working with global fine dining restaurants, bistros, hotels, and airline catering. Her unique culinary expertise has gained her skills in understanding food trends and how to curate innovative menus and dishes. Now, in her current role at *Unilever Food Solutions*, Chef Thaís serves as Executive Chef for Brazil and Demand Generation Leader, where she crafts strategies that seamlessly blend creativity with market needs. Her ambition is to create unforgettable experiences in the food service business.

 @thaisgimenez



JIRAROJ NAVANUKROH

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Thailand

Chef Jiraroj's connection to cooking began with his family. After establishing a culinary interest at a young age, he studied cookery at Dusit Thani College and, later, at Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Institute in Sydney, Australia, where he earned a Diploma de Cuisine. Chef Jiraroj first joined Unilever in 2006 as an application chef. By 2013 he was appointed Executive Chef focusing on the *UFS* Thailand and Myanmar markets today. Today, Chef Jiraroj's ambition is to blend modern and traditional cooking techniques and bring new and exciting dishes to international audiences.

 @chef_jiraroj_ufs



KEES VAN ERP

Global Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions

Chef Kees began his culinary journey as a teenager. His distinguished global career brought him to *Unilever Food Solutions* in 1991, where he led product innovations for Unilever. Today, Chef Kees serves as the Global Lead Chef for *UFS*, acting as a functional leader for Unilever's chef teams worldwide. In this role, he inspires the next generation of culinary professionals.



WESLEY BAY

Head Culinary Advisor

Unilever Food Solutions, Belgium

Chef Wesley has worked in various Michelin-starred restaurants including Boxy's in Kortrijk, Belgium, where he connected with his passion for food and creative flavors. With his background in culinary education and experience in high-end catering, he took up the position of Head Culinary Advisor for *Unilever Food Solutions* Belgium. Since then, Chef Wesley has worked closely with *Unilever Food Solutions* for nearly 10 years.

 @chefwesley_




ANDRÉS CARDONA

Corporate Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, North Latin America

Chef Andrés has a wealth of experience in the food service industry, notably within high-end restaurants. His passion for gastronomy has driven his culinary career, driving him to experiment with unique techniques and flavors within Latin American cuisine. Chef Andrés joined Unilever in May 2020 and his current role as Corporate Chef involves leading with creativity and knowledge to enrich the food scene in Latin America.

 @andres_chef_ufs



JIMENA SOLIS

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay

Chef Jimena has a degree in gastronomy and a particular expertise in pastry. In 2004, she discovered her love for food service while working in a restaurant in Buenos Aires. She subsequently moved to New Zealand to perfect both her English and skills in the professional kitchen. Chef Jimena has worked in several restaurants and taught at a professional pastry school in Argentina. She currently supports *Unilever Food Solutions* customers in three Latin American markets and is involved in Unilever's 'Women in Action' social initiative.

 @chefjimesolis



ANDREAS WILLINER

Executive Lead Country Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Switzerland

Chef Andreas is used to coming top of his culinary class and winning awards. In 2003, he represented his native Switzerland at the World Skills competition, winning the Vice World Champion title. He has worked as a catering chef and in four and five-star hotels. Chef Andreas is also an experienced culinary coach and trainer. He is particularly passionate about the art of food styling, paying very close attention to detail and capturing his work via his other love—food photography. He has been with *Unilever Food Solutions* since 2008.

 @ufschefs.ch



YONGCHAN (LEO) KIM

Culinary Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, South Korea

Starting as a field chef in a five-star hotel, Chef Yongchan gained expertise in fine and casual dining before transitioning to franchise R&D and customized food solutions. With experience consulting on restaurant openings, kitchen design, and menu innovation, he now specializes in chef-driven solutions, trendsetting initiatives, and culinary network development.

 @leo_yongchan_kim

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

ANA ROŠ

With a string of awards under her belt, Slovenian chef Ana needs no introduction. Her restaurant, Hiša Franko, was awarded three Michelin stars in 2023 and has been recognized for its commitment to sustainability. In her interview on page 132, Ana discusses how the restaurant's Alpine surroundings offer a wealth of tasty ingredients and help her create dishes that are inspired by her culinary roots.

GAGGAN ANAND

Gaggan opened his impressive eponymous Indian restaurant in Bangkok, Thailand, back in 2010. It earned two Michelin stars and was frequently listed as one of the top 50 restaurants in the world. As a chef and business owner, he knows a thing or two about creating unique dining experiences. On page 166, he shares how he creates a culinary journey that is truly diner designed.

SANTIAGO LASTRA

Mexican chef Santiago has swiftly become one to watch. Traveling across the world on a voyage of culinary discovery, he's utilized ingredients from multiple regions to create Mexican classics. His experiences have meant he's been able to create borderless dishes at his London-based restaurant, KOL. On page 84, he discusses the impact of his travels and the magic of Mexican cuisine using British ingredients.

ASMA KHAN

Indian-born chef Asma has made a name for herself through her acclaimed supper clubs and memorable appearance on Netflix's *Chef's Table*. Her acclaimed London restaurant, Darjeeling Express, operates a female-led kitchen. This, alongside her impressive philanthropy, makes her the perfect spokesperson on all things relating to Positive Kitchen Culture, which you can find on page 110.

RAFAEL LARUE

Rafael is the Chief Creative Officer of the transformation agency Livit Design, which specializes in the diner experience. As such, he is often looking at the emerging expectations of diners internationally. On page 160, he shares his thoughts on the changing face of consumers and whether "unreasonable hospitality" is at the heart of dining.

UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

For this edition of *Future Menus*, the research and development team at Unilever discuss fermentation, which is an emerging, and highly popular, cooking technique. Here, they offer insightful context, tips, and a look at the future of fermentation. Find fermentation inspiration on page 178.



Chef Sebastian Rivera
Unilever Food Solutions,
North America.

GET #PREPPED FOR TOMORROW WITH UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS



#Prepped for tomorrow

Unilever Food Solutions (UFS) is a business of chefs for chefs. Accounting for 20% of Unilever's Foods Business Group, UFS operates in over 75 countries as a dedicated supplier to the food service industry. Drawing on the expertise of over 250 professional in-house chefs, UFS offers food service professionals high-quality products, industry inspiration, and best-in-class services.

Our highly regarded portfolio of key products and solutions features power brands like *Knorr Professional* and *Hellmann's*, which perform exceptionally well in the professional kitchen.

UFS' annual Future Menus initiative is a very important resource for chefs. It offers the most up-to-date global culinary trends via indepth market research along with chef-developed recipes that allow you to bring these trends to life very easily in your food service business.

In fact, our ever-growing collection of unique and classic recipes (available on www.ufs.com) are a valuable source of inspiration, helping chefs at all skill levels with both creativity and profitability.

The *UFS Positive Kitchens* initiative helps to foster a positive culture in the professional kitchen by addressing the key challenges commonly encountered and providing tools, training, and advice to promote wellbeing.

In addition, our culinary training programs provide chefs and food service professionals with valuable advice on key skills and techniques, along with other vital areas in the professional kitchen.

To find out more about how we help chefs and food service professionals across the globe to better serve their guests, visit www.ufs.com

FOOD THAT MOVES US

Welcome to the latest edition of *Unilever Food Solutions' Future Menus*. Now in its third year, it's proving a valuable annual resource for chefs and food service professionals who recognize the importance of using data-driven insights to craft menus that satisfy evolving diner needs and preferences.

Every year, *Future Menus* identifies the big trends that are defining the global food service industry. The list of menu trends has gone from eight last year to four key trends this year. This reflects the shifts in the industry as we see a big emphasis on "FOOD THAT MOVES US", where we see taste in motion from the chefs' perspective, imbuing food with a sense of movement and discovery driven by emotion and the need to thrive in the evolving food service industry.

The four key trends identified in this year's *Future Menus* are:

- 1 Street Food Couture
- 2 Borderless Cuisine
- 3 Culinary Roots
- 4 Diner Designed

The trends have been shaped by three big shifts. The first is the strong culinary shift that includes the global demand for Asian and Latin American flavors and cuisines, underpinning all the trends.

The second shift is the effect the mass movement of people is having on the culinary landscape. Migration and migration tourism are strong drivers of the Street Food Couture, Borderless Cuisine, and Culinary Roots trends. They are fueling new and exciting developments in how chefs bring new ingredients, culinary techniques, and flavors together to create something unique.

Lastly, advancements in digital are driving the Diner Designed trend, which is all about satisfying guests with the more personalized experiences. Artificial intelligence and augmented reality are enabling this, along with an emphasis on new and exciting ways to create and serve dishes that fit with diners' personal flavor preferences.



Other factors, such as Gen Z consumers coming of age and their particular approach to eating and drinking, are heavily influencing the four *Future Menus* trends. The continued cost-of-living crisis is also playing a part as consumers look for affordable luxuries that bring them joy. Dining out to experience new and exciting dishes meets this need.

Traditional ideas of food and how we experience it are being redefined as cultural and social dynamics evolve. The Street Food Couture menu trend is a prime example and is heavily influencing culinary demand from the bottom up. Gourmet versions of traditional street foods, crafted with a chef's expertise, are now penetrating every channel in the food service industry, including fine dining establishments.

Making the trends work for your business

The *Future Menus* trends and insights included in this book are meticulously researched and validated—ready to spark creativity and innovation in your kitchen.

The trends are compiled using robust global data and extensive chef inputs, including reports, social media analytics and more than 300 million online searches across 21 countries. In-depth feedback from more than 1,100 chefs in 20 markets and the *Unilever Food Solutions* team of highly experienced in-house chefs was also used.

The *Unilever Food Solutions* chefs have developed delicious on-trend recipe concepts you will find throughout *Future Menus*. Each recipe concept belongs to one of the four trends. They are a key source of inspiration and will help you to implement the trends that are most relevant for your business.

You will find more information on this year's *Future Menus* and dish inspiration at [**www.ufs.com**](http://www.ufs.com)



From left: Chef James Brown, UFS UK & Ireland; Chef Thaís Gimenez, UFS Brazil; and Chef Eric Chua, UFS South East Asia & South Asia.



STREET FOOD CULTURE

This trend focuses on elevating *Street Food* by incorporating high-quality ingredients and refined techniques, while maintaining its informal charm and sense of discovery. The result is a higher-quality dining experience that retains the casual and dynamic atmosphere of the street food scene. It appeals to modern diners seeking both accessible and exciting food options, particularly those influenced by global flavors.



MEXICAN, INDIAN, KOREAN & FILIPINO

ARE FOUR CUISINES THAT
ARE EMERGING RAPIDLY
WITHIN STREET FOOD.
FILIPINO IS GAINING
THE MOST TRACTION
IN AMERICA AND ASIA.

Key factors contributing to this trend include:

- The cost-of-living crisis, making accessible, affordable food more appealing
- Gen Z's preference for informal dining experiences
- Ongoing migration and globalization influencing food choices
- Increased social media visibility of global street food dishes
- An opportunity for younger chefs to showcase creative, approachable food

At the core of this movement is the fusion of authentic cuisines, blending ingredients and techniques from various cultures in a thoughtful, innovative manner. This approach results in bold, exciting flavors while preserving authenticity, paving the way for more inviting and accessible dining experiences. By elevating street food, chefs offer diners an informal yet premium culinary adventure, balancing creativity with the roots of traditional street food culture.

The top techniques dominating this trend:

- Fermentation
- Grilling
- Steaming
- Wok hei
- Marination
- Charcoal grilling

A taste of the delicious dishes prevalent in this trend:

- Mexican elote
- Indian chaat
- Gyros
- Loaded fries
- Gourmet mac and cheese
- Korean rice rolls
- Shawarma

Previous page:

A street food staple, this chicken taco is garnished with radish, onion, feta, coriander, and lime.

ONE TO WATCH

ALEPPO PEPPER IS LIKELY TO BE AN EMERGING INGREDIENT WITHIN STREET FOOD OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS AND BEYOND.





Opposite page: Smashed
sliders with melted cheese.

This page: Chef Andrés Cardona
enjoys a smashed slider.



WRITTEN BY
Andrés Cardona
Corporate Chef
Unilever Food Solutions,
North Latin America.



THE BEAT OF THE

STREET

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THE EVOLVING STREET FOOD SCENE IN LATIN AMERICA, CHEF *Andrés Cardona* OFFERS SOME INSIGHT INTO WHAT MAKES STREET FOOD SO SPECIAL.

Street food in Latin America has undergone a remarkable evolution in recent decades, transforming from simple food offerings to vibrant dining experiences that captivate contemporary diners. This phenomenon is due in large part to the growing demand for bold flavors and innovative presentations from a public seeking not only to satisfy their hunger, but also to enjoy a unique and informal dining experience. Street vendors, traditionally associated with emblematic dishes such as tacos, arepas, or empanadas, have begun to reinvent their recipes, incorporating gourmet ingredients, modern cooking techniques, and cultural fusions that elevate the quality of their products. At the same time, the use of social networks has allowed these ventures to achieve unprecedented visibility, inviting diners to explore new flavors and share their experiences, generating a community around street food. Therefore, what was once simply a means of eating has become an artistic expression that celebrates the region's culinary diversity and creativity. The beat of the street is now one we can all move to.

“What was once simply a means of eating has become an artistic expression that celebrates the region’s culinary diversity and creativity.”

There are many reasons street food has become so appealing, but here are a few examples of what draws people to the street—all are adaptable ideas to bring the vibe of the street to your food service business.

Themed Pop-Up Events: Street food offers variety—there’s something for everyone. With that in mind, host temporary events that celebrate different types of street food from various cultures. This can attract a new audience and maintain the interest of regular customers.

Interactive Culinary Experiences: Being able to watch the food being prepared is appealing to diners. Many are often impressed by the intriguing techniques used to create their street food favorites. Offer workshops where customers can learn how to prepare typical street food dishes, which not only engages them, but also provides a memorable experience.

Rotational Menu: Introduce a menu that changes regularly—similar to the daily evolution of the street food menu—featuring new recipes or specialties from different regions. This can encourage customers to return to try something new.

Creative Pairings: Offer drink recommendations that complement street food dishes. This can enhance the dining experience and increase sales.

Customizable Options: Merging with the Diner Designed menu trend, street food allows customers to customize their dishes, choosing ingredients or spice levels, giving them a sense of control and satisfaction.

Attractive Ambiance: When we think of street food, we imagine socializing with friends, conversing with chefs, and a fast-paced and excitable energy. Create a welcoming and inviting space that reflects the street food culture, using vibrant décor and appropriate music to attract customers.

Collaborations with Local Artists: At the heart of street food is culture—and culture comes in all shapes and sizes. Invite local artists to showcase their work in your business, which can attract their followers and enrich the consumer experience.

Loyalty Programs: Establish a rewards program that encourages customers to return. Offering discounts or free meals after a certain number of purchases can increase loyalty.

Testimonials and Reviews on Social Networks: Lastly, encourage customers to share their experiences on social networks and offer incentives for doing so. Personal recommendations can attract new customers and build trust.



This page: Peking duck has been enjoyed for centuries, renowned for its flavorful crispy skin and tender meat.

Opposite page: Native to East Africa, okra offers a unique texture and flavor profile.



SPRINKLER
CHINESE



INDONESIAN

WRITTEN BY

Gun Gun Handayana

Executive Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Indonesia



CHEF *Gun Gun Handayana*
**SPOTLIGHTS SOME OF THE MOST
POPULAR STREET FOOD DISHES AND
FLAVORS IN HIS HOME COUNTRY.**

INFLUENCE

If you're a fan of bold flavors, smoky aromas, and dishes that pack a punch, Indonesia's street food scene is worth exploring. From bustling night markets to food carts perched on the edges of tropical beaches, Indonesian street food captures the soul of its people: vibrant, diverse and deeply rooted in tradition. Every region brings something unique to the table.

In this list, Chef Gun Gun Handayana introduces you to some of Indonesia's most popular street foods that locals can't live without—serving as inspiration to chefs and food service professionals around the world.

Satay (Sate)

Origin: Java, Indonesia

Grilled skewers of marinated meat—typically chicken, beef, or lamb—served with peanut sauce and sometimes rice cakes (lontong). Satay can be elevated using premium meats, innovative marinades, and refined plating for a modern presentation.

Beef Rendang

Origin: West Sumatra, Indonesia

This slow-cooked dish, traditionally braised in coconut milk and spices, gains a deep, rich flavor ideal for fusion creations like tacos or sliders, making it perfect for street food-inspired or gourmet menus.

Gado-Gado

Origin: Jakarta, Java

An Indonesian salad of blanched vegetables, boiled eggs, tofu, tempeh, and peanut dressing, Gado-Gado is visually vibrant with a variety of textures. It can be tailored with seasonal vegetables or artisanal peanut sauces, ideal for an elevated plated salad.

Martabak

Origin: Java, Indonesia

This thick, savory or sweet pancake is typically filled with minced meat and eggs (savory) or chocolate and cheese (sweet). Gourmet versions feature exotic fillings, high-quality cheeses, or premium chocolate, perfect for tasting menus.





Ayam Betutu

Origin: Bali, Indonesia

Whole chicken or duck, marinated in spices, wrapped in banana leaves, and slow-cooked or steamed to tenderness. This aromatic dish can be presented elegantly with infused oils and microgreens, suited for upscale dining.

Bakso

Origin: Java, Indonesia

A comforting meatball soup with noodles, tofu, and greens, Bakso can be refined using wagyu or seafood meatballs, delicate noodles, and garnishes, offering a sophisticated take on this classic.

Nasi Goreng

Origin: Java, Indonesia

A popular Indonesian fried rice with sweet soy sauce, vegetables, and meat, typically topped with a fried egg. Nasi Goreng can be transformed with truffle oil, premium meats and an attractive presentation, creating a tempting version of this beloved staple.

STREET FOOD WORLD MAP

EXPLORING STREET FOOD
around the world,
ONE BITE AT A TIME.



MEXICO

Street food in Mexico, with its immensely colorful and flavorful dishes, has deep roots dating back to pre-Hispanic times, when open-air markets were the main source of food. With the arrival of the Spanish, indigenous and European culinary traditions merged, creating unique dishes that today are an essential part of the Mexican culinary identity and are known for their incredible diversity. From classic tacos al pastor to exotic esquites, the variety of dishes reflects the mix of indigenous, European, African, and Asian influences. In addition, traditional drinks such as horchata water and tepache can be found, which perfectly complement snacks such as sopes, quesadillas, and tostadas.

INDIA

India has a long history of street food culture, and its major cities constantly vie for which one has the best-tasting dishes. But it's Mumbai that lays claim to one of the most popular street foods. The Bombay sandwich (also called the Bombay grilled sandwich) can be found for sale from sandwichwalas (street vendors) on nearly every street. Made with white bread, boiled potatoes, raw onion, tomato, cucumber, peppers, and slathered with spicy green chutney, it's toasted over an open flame. Other favorite street foods include pani puri—hollow, fried dough balls with savory fillings—and spicy vada pav, a deep-fried potato fritter (vada) sandwiched between a soft and fluffy bread (pav).



Street food is the perfect way for communities to integrate and socialize. Every town and city has their own take on street food culture, with multiple influences from a variety of sources. We take a look at some places with a burgeoning street food scene and check out the dishes that are popular with the locals.

TURKEY

It's no surprise that the meeting point between Europe and Asia is home to one of the most diverse and exciting street food scenes in the world. Beyond the staple dishes like doner kebabs or lahmacun, try the kumru, which is one of the most popular dishes with locals and features cheese, tomato and sujuk sausage served in a toasted, oval bun, or balik ekmek—a grilled fish (usually an oily fish like mackerel) sandwich with vegetables and often served directly from the boat that caught it.



SOUTH KOREA

Street food vendors have been setting up their stalls in and around South Korean markets ever since the Three Kingdoms period (57 BC – AD 935). Today, globally famous dishes like bibimbap, Korean fried chicken and kimchi are still very popular, while tteokbokki is one of the country's most enjoyed—chewy rice cakes served with chili sauce (gochujang), fish cakes or boiled eggs. Sundae is another popular dish but don't get it confused with the Western idea of one: In South Korea sundae is a blood sausage, made with pig intestines, and stuffed with noodles and dipped in chili sauce.



PHILIPPINES

Filipinos take great pride in their street food scene. Eating from a cart, while on the move, is truly a way of life across the archipelago—and they absolutely love their dishes deep fried! Filipino street food is affordable, fast, and easy to find, with vendors moving their carts to where the crowds are. Some of the most popular street food dishes are taho, fish balls, lugaw, palabok, and turon. To beat the Filipino heat, try the kaleidoscopic and refreshing frozen sweet treat halo-halo—it's the unofficial dessert of the Philippines.

Satay skewers marinated
in a peanut sauce.





TRINITY SURF & TURF INDONESIAN SKEWER

WITH TEMARI SUSHI

WITH GUN GUN HANDAYANA

Indonesian barbecue skewers, or satay, are a cherished street food that ranks just behind nasi goreng in popularity. Traditionally made with marinated beef seasoned with sweet soy sauce, cumin, coriander, garlic, and lime juice, these skewers are grilled over charcoal to achieve a smoky flavor and caramelized finish. The marination process, which can take place overnight, allows the meat to absorb the rich spices and sweetness, enhancing its flavor. Satay is not only a dish but a cultural symbol, reflecting the warmth and togetherness of Indonesian cuisine while showcasing traditional cooking techniques that have been passed down through generations.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



"TO ELEVATE STREET FOOD, RESTAURANTS SHOULD FOCUS ON *authenticity*, HIGH-QUALITY INGREDIENTS, AND PRESENTATION."

— **GUN GUN HANDAYANA**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Indonesia

This bold, flavorful ramen dish features a layered broth crafted from roasted chicken stock and smoked mackerel stock, inspired by Japanese dashi. The stocks combine to create a deep umami base, elevated with creamy richness by whisking in mayonnaise. The noodles are adorned with fresh spinach, carrots, spring onions, a soft-cooked egg, and tender char siu chicken marinated overnight in soy, garlic, ginger, and hoisin before being grilled to perfection. A drizzle of crispy chili oil adds heat and texture, tying the dish together as an explosion of flavor and texture—comforting and satisfying.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



"A high-impact,
**EASY-TO-MAKE DISH
THAT'S STREET FOOD
ELEVATED TO ART."**

— **MAURITS VAN VROENHOVEN**

Global Lead Creative and Brand Development Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, the Netherlands

SPICY RED HOT CREAMY RAMEN



WITH CHAR SIU CHICKEN

WITH MAURITS VAN VROENHOVEN

SOUTH AFRICAN LAMB & APRICOT SOSATIES

WITH DANIELLE VENTER



This dish is a South African street food staple: lamb and apricot sosaties. Sosaties, rooted in Cape Malay cuisine, are skewers of lamb cubes marinated with a blend of curry, apricot jam, and chutney for a unique sweet and spicy flavor. The chutney is typically not used in the dish, but gives it a refreshing modern twist. These are then grilled over a traditional South African braai—a wood or charcoal fire that imparts a distinct smoky flavor, a hallmark of local cooking techniques. The lamb is paired with onions and soaked apricots on wooden skewers, offering a blend of bold flavors while celebrating the rich culinary heritage of South Africa.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



“OPEN KITCHENS WITH GRILLS OR FLAMES ECHO THE *vibrancy* OF STREET FOOD, LETTING DINERS CONNECT WITH THE COOKING PROCESS WHILE ENJOYING BOLD, FLAVORFUL DISHES.”

— **DANIELLE VENTER**
Regional Customer Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, South Africa





A playful take on a Japanese sando inspired by the classic eggs Benedict. This creation features fluffy Hokkaido milk bread filled with layers of tamago-style eggs, cooked to a consistency to achieve a delicate soft texture. A miso sambal adds a spicy kick, while grilled pickled pineapple lends sweetness and acidity. Roasted king mushrooms contribute umami depth, prepared with soy for an extra layer of flavor. Topped with crispy bacon and piped citrus hollandaise, this dish embodies an on-the-go power meal, combining vibrant South East Asian flavors and simple techniques that highlight the beauty of street food culture. Although the preparation involves multiple components, such as layering and roasting, the assembly remains straightforward, allowing for an accessible yet flavorful dining experience.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



WESLEY BAY
Unilever Food Solutions,
Belgium



**"STREET FOOD IS NOT
ONLY *delicious*,
IT FILLS PEOPLE UP AND
EVOKES NOSTALGIA."**

— **JOANNE LIMOANCO-GENDRANO**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Gulf and Indian Ocean Islands

MR. BEN SAN



WITH JOANNE LIMOANCO-GENDRANO & WESLEY BAY

SHRIMP BISQUE CRISPY NOODLES



WITH DIANNE ARANETA

This dish is an elevated version of palabok, a Filipino noodle dish traditionally served with a shrimp-based sauce. Chef Dianne Araneta blends Filipino, Japanese, and European influences, using techniques like creating a richer sauce with a roux and incorporating smoked mackerel that blends both the Dutch smoked mackerel or tinapa (typical topping in the traditional version of the dish) to add a layer of smokiness. To make the dish even more exciting, the sauce is poured at the table, providing a touch of indulgence and personalization. Instead of pork crackling, the dish is garnished with deep-fried shiitake mushrooms seasoned with togarashi, giving it a crispy, spicy finish. Deep-frying the rice noodles is a trend in Manila, which adds texture to the dish combined with the creamy sauce.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



“CREATIVITY COMES FROM EMBRACING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF VARIOUS CULTURES AND CREATING A FEAST OF INGREDIENTS AND TECHNIQUES THAT *complement* EACH OTHER.”

— **DIANNE ARANETA**
On-Trend Flavors Lead
Unilever Food Solutions, Global

This dish is an innovative bao that fuses the flavors of duck à l'orange and Peking duck. It features a custom-made bao bun, shaped like a hot dog bun and infused with poppy seeds, aiming for a thinner, more delicate texture to hold more duck filling. The duck legs are brined with orange and ginger peels, then braised at a low temperature to ensure tenderness without losing bite. This versatile preparation can be transformed into multiple dishes, showcasing the adaptability and richness of street food.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



**JOANNE
LIMOANCO-GENDRANO**
*Unilever Food Solutions,
Gulf and Indian Ocean Islands*



**"STREET FOOD IS
social. IT BRINGS
PEOPLE TOGETHER AND
ENCOURAGES THEM
TO TRY NEW THINGS."**

— **WESLEY BAY**
Head Culinary Advisor
Unilever Food Solutions, Belgium

GRILLED

DUCK CONFIT BAO



WITH JOANNE LIMOANCO-GENDRANO & WESLEY BAY

KOREAN-STYLE FISH CAKE SOUP

& TTEOKBOKKI

WITH YONGCHAN (LEO) KIM

Tteokbokki is a popular Korean street food made from rice cakes, fish cakes, and gochujang (red chili paste), known for its spicy-sweet flavor and loved by all ages. Eomuk-tang (fish cake soup), a warm broth-based dish with fish cakes, vegetables, and sometimes seafood or meat, is especially popular in winter and often served alongside tteokbokki. These recipes can also be adapted into traditional Korean dishes: The tteokbokki sauce can be used to make dakbokkeumtang (Korean chicken stew) by adding chicken, potatoes, and carrots, while the fish cake soup broth can serve as a base for beef radish soup by substituting beef for the fish cakes and adjusting seasonings.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



"TTEOKBOKKI... IS A *soul food* FOR KOREANS WHO ENJOY SPICY DISHES AND IS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC KOREAN STREET FOODS."

— **YONGCHAN (LEO) KIM**
Culinary Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, South Korea

These fish tacos come from Mexico’s rich street food culture, particularly the Baja California region. The dish reflects a universal Mexican love for tacos as accessible and economical street food enjoyed across all social classes. They feature vibrant flavors, combining corn tortillas, fresh fish, vegetables, and diverse sauces, creating a well-balanced, handheld “food pyramid.” The dish celebrates Mexican culture through its ingredients and ease, offering a delicious and inclusive way to experience the complexity of regional flavors.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



KYLE JAKOBI
Unilever Food Solutions,
North America



**“THIS DISH GIVES SPACE
TO THE *exploration* OF
DIFFERENT FLAVORS
AND CULTURES.”**

— **ANDRÉS CARDONA**
Corporate Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, North Latin America

BAJA CALIFORNIAN-STYLE FISH TACOS



WITH ANDRÉS CARDONA & KYLE JAKOBI

BORDERLESS CUISINE

This food trend transforms diverse food traditions into harmonious, innovative experiences. This movement is driven by *globalization* and *migration* as well as a new generation of chefs aiming to honor their multicultural roots. These chefs are reimagining how different culinary influences can be combined to create unique yet authentic dishes that go beyond novelty.

GLOBALLY

TAHINI, MATCHA
GOCHUJANG & SUMAC

ARE THE INGREDIENTS GROWING
IN POPULARITY MOST RAPIDLY.



Key factors contributing to this trend include:

- Globalization and migration expanding culinary knowledge and influences
- A second generation of chefs honoring their cultural heritage
- Increased social media visibility of global cuisines
- Consumers seeking authentic experiences in food discovery
- A growing demand for meaningful storytelling behind these culinary creations

At the core of this movement is a desire to creatively and thoughtfully merge cuisines, combining traditional ingredients and techniques in ways that respect their origins. This trend paves the way for more refined and cultivated dining experiences that offer not only bold flavors but also a deep sense of authenticity and cultural significance.

The Top Techniques

Here are some of the trendy techniques that are dominating this trend:

- Marination
- Brining
- Aging
- Sous-vide cooking
- Curing
- Steaming
- Caramelization
- Smoking

Borderless Shopping List

Here are some of the trendy ingredients that are dominating this trend:

- Miso
- Cured fish
- Kimchi
- Shiso
- Calamansi
- Pomegranate
- Mentaiko
- Aged soy sauce
- Pandan

Previous page: This marinated chicken burger is inspired by international techniques and ingredients.

ONE TO WATCH

MISO IS A MUST-HAVE AT THE MOMENT. CONSIDER INCORPORATING IT IN DISHES TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST OF DINERS.







THE KEY TO

BORDE

CHEF *Alvaro Lima* CALLS UPON HIS
OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS
A GUIDE TO BORDERLESS CUISINE.

Raised in Chicago, Chef Alvaro Lima has led a varied career in the world of food service. However, as a personal passion point, he enjoys cooking with bold Latin flavors and creating Modern Latin-inspired dishes—bringing together different international flavors in order to create harmonious dishes that draw from multiple culinary traditions.

WRITTEN BY
Alvaro Lima
Senior Corporate Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, North America

RULES

CUISINE

For Chef Alvaro, this approach serves as an opportunity to educate individuals about the similarities between different cuisines and global cooking techniques. “Whether you’re stewing meat Indian-style or you’re stewing it Mexican-style, you’re still stewing and using the same technique. Then you’re shredding the meat and folding it into a Mexican rice bowl or an Indian basmati—those ingredients are very interchangeable.”

From these points of commonality, it’s easier to spot ingredients or dishes that might easily blend together or to discover the techniques that might enable this cross-pollination of different international flavors. From a consumer point of view, Chef Alvaro relishes the

opportunity to introduce guests to new and brilliant combinations. “It’s important that diners become more aware of the different ingredients that are out there. It’s something new and exciting.”

When it comes to devising blended recipes, he recommends embracing an experimental method to help get the creative juices flowing rather than entering into the process with hard and fast rules. “The fun part for a chef is doing trial and error to see what works. It helps you step out of your comfort zone,” he explains. “When things don’t work, something different can still come out of it. You can tweak things here and there and end up with something that you never would have thought was going to work.”

“It’s about taking things that the diner is comfortable with but they never would have thought of marrying together.”



While some kitchen teams might be nervous about adopting the principles of borderless cuisine, Chef Alvaro explains that chefs can step in and help to educate their staff on broader, more global food practices. “Even with cuisines they may have never cooked or tried before, there may be techniques that are familiar. Exposing a team to the ingredients and the culture is important, even if it’s through videos on YouTube or social media,” he says.

Chef Alvaro recalls bringing different cuisines together when creating birria ramen: a Latin-Japanese dish that he ideated after taking stock of the ingredients he had to hand. “I had stewed meat and a flavorful broth so I wondered if I could fold in Japanese noodles to it and add scallions. I did this a couple of years ago where we married these things together. It wasn’t even fully intentional—birria was on the rise on menus and ramen was still doing extremely well in North American menus—but it worked out wonderfully.”

Understanding the hesitancy that some diners might have around trying new dishes, Chef Alvaro explains that fusing together aspects of well-known dishes, can be a good entry point into the world of borderless cuisine. “With the example of ramen with birria, the diner might think, ‘Whoa, I like ramen and I like birria, but I like birria in tacos and I like ramen with pork belly. Hey, let’s try it,’” he says. “It’s about taking things that the diner is comfortable with but they never would have thought of marrying together. This can help open diners up and make them feel a little bit more comfortable.”

He believes borderless cuisine can be a way of sharing his Latin heritage while expressing his personal interests, and sees it as an opportunity for chefs to share the depths and breadths of their own tastes and experiences. “With borderless cuisine, it tells a story of who the chef is. I can showcase what I grew up eating and what I still like to preach and share but I can also introduce a new flavor,” he explains. “I love Japanese food, for example, so I can make a Mexican-influenced dish that is also very Japanese-influenced.”

He also thinks it’s important to combat misconceptions about borderless cuisine—namely, that it isn’t cost-effective. He feels that borderless cuisine can actually help us minimize waste by unlocking new creative ways to reimagine how we use ingredients. “The big thing is being able to take sauces and produce and being able to repurpose them,” he explains. “Let’s say you make a dish and it doesn’t work out. Can you still build other dishes out of that? You can utilize just about everything, depending on the cooking technique, from that ingredient.”

Whether it’s introducing new combinations, finding ways to entice diners into trying new dishes or getting inventive with minimizing waste, borderless cuisine promotes a sense of creative exploration.

To hear more from Chef Alvaro Lima on the Borderless Cuisine menu trend, visit www.ufs.com

Opposite page:
Chef Alvaro Lima,
Unilever Food Solutions,
North America.







THE RISE OF



An aromatic sauce being prepared in a traditional wok.

EASTERN INFLUENCE

WRITTEN BY
Megan Wallace

**AS A NEW *thrill-seeking* DINER BASE
EXPANDS THEIR PALATE THROUGH TRAVEL
AND CULTURAL EXPLORATION, WE DIVE INTO
THE GROWING POPULARITY OF K-FOOD AND
WHAT IT MEANS FOR FUTURE MENU TRENDS.**

From the predominance of Italy's trifecta of pizza, pasta, and ice cream to the meticulous ingredients and cooking methods of France's haute cuisine, or even the mass appeal of the American hot dog and burger, the West has long dominated when it comes to the world of food.

However, the status quo is beginning to change. Increasingly, consumers are looking towards the rich food cultures of East and South East Asia. So why has this shift taken place? And what does it mean for the future of menus globally? We find out overleaf.

Eastern influence through the ages

The ascent of East Asian cuisine in the West has been ongoing for several decades, reflecting changing patterns of migration and the region's increased cultural influence on the global stage.

In the United States, for example, migrants from China began settling from the mid-19th century, bringing their culinary traditions with them. With time, traditional dishes were adapted to suit a western palate—a process that led to the popularization of Chinese food throughout the country.

However, some East Asian and South East Asian countries have embraced food as a form of soft power, making a concentrated effort to increase awareness of their traditional cuisine as a way to increase the cultural capital of their nation. Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Cambodia have all funded government-backed culinary diplomacy programs.

The rise of K-food

South Korea, for its part, established a successful Korean Cuisine to the World program in 2009 that aimed to promote Korean cuisine (or *hansik*) abroad and increase awareness of its health benefits and taste profile.

Now, 15 years later, *hansik* has entered the zeitgeist. Korean dishes like bibimbap (a rice bowl dish) and kimchi (fermented vegetables) are easily available in major cities across the West, with Korean food exports to the US rising to \$1.74bn in 2023.

Due to its vegetable-heavy nature and the prevalence of fermented foods, the cuisine is celebrated for its rich flavors and cultural heritage, attracting food enthusiasts and adventurous eaters alike. It is, however, important to note that *hansik* does include the importation of instant noodles and ramen, which may be high in sodium and have some problematic nutritional values.

Hallyu has come for our palates

We can't talk about the rise in K-food without talking about *hallyu*.

The newfound popularity of Korean food has occurred in tandem with the general ascent of Korean culture. Referred to as Korean Wave or *hallyu*, this phenomenon has seen the international success of K-pop bands like *BTS* and *BLACKPINK*.

Popular K-films and K-dramas have explicitly depicted Korean dishes: *Parasite* introduced viewers to jjapaguri (noodles topped with steak) while *Squid Game* showed tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes).

This is, in fact, by design. Speaking with NPR, Yang Joo-Pil, an official at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, explained that his department will "select about 10 food items each year for product placement in dramas."

Social media also plays a role, providing opportunities to share Korean dishes and food culture. On TikTok, the "koreanfood" hashtag has been used on over 860,000 posts while mukbang—a South Korean trend of content creators eating food in front of a camera—has become a global YouTube phenomenon.





The role of travel in shaping the next culinary K-wave

Looking to the future, it's important to note how western eating habits may be impacted by the travel sector, particularly the thrill-seeking nature of today's travelers who relish new experiences and discovering other cultures.

Throughout the 2020s, travelers have displayed greater willingness to venture off the beaten track and into new territory, with 40% of travelers opting to explore unfamiliar destinations. Travel is so high on consumers' lists of priorities that in 2024, 64% of global travelers aimed to reduce other areas of their personal spending to prioritize leisure travel.

Korea has not been excluded from western travelers' growing desire to travel further afield. Indeed, in 2023 the country's capital of Seoul saw a 373.6% year-on-year increase in tourists.

This could be a driver for more authenticity within the sphere of K-food as Korean food establishes itself as a major player within fine dining. Rather than looking to familiar K-food dishes, consumers value diverse and authentic meals that haven't been adapted to a western palate.

Indeed, Chef Junghyun Park (whose Korean haute cuisine restaurant Atomix, based in NYC, was awarded two Michelin stars in 2021) has argued that his clientele are: "Very open to new cultures."

"They like accepting new things," he added. "So it's not like I have to change their taste."

The future of Eastern influence

Already, several Korean dishes have reached mainstream recognition in the West.

However, the next wave of K-food will see a greater variety of dishes come to the fore as Korean players—particularly in the convenience food space, such as C.J. Foods's bibigo range—move to make further inroads within the market.

As the K-food trend moves beyond street food and becomes more readily available, it's likely that:

- A growth in visibility will introduce more niche and regional variations of Korean cuisine.
- Korean food products will have a greater presence in western supermarket aisles.
- The popularity of Korean food will open the door for other East and South East Asian cuisines that have been less appreciated up to this point.
- For example, experts predict Burmese and Filipino cuisines—from the South East Asian countries of Myanmar and the Philippines—may emerge as new players in the global food space.

Generally, the rise of Eastern food influences reflects globalization within the food space and the gradual move towards a global cuisine rather than cuisines segmented by country or nationality.







Knorr Demi-Glace Sauce Mix is the perfect addition to a range of dishes.

THE

F

WORD

WRITTEN BY
Esther Tseng

THE FACE OF FUSION HAS CHANGED. BORDERLESS CUISINE IS THE *new normal*.

There is nary a culinary term more controversial and yet commonly used to describe the blending of cultures than “fusion.” On the surface, the merging of cultures, or influence of one over another, began as early as migration, colonization, and trade did. That’s to say, thousands of years ago. But context matters and addressing the history of when and how certain cuisines converged is more important than ever. The way fusion cuisine is referenced today tends to overlook the many ways cuisines were created outside an East Asian-Western purview before the latter half of the 20th century, when “fusion” in modern cuisine was coined. For the purposes of this section, we’ll address the large impact Asian migration has had on Californian cuisine, which has influenced and spread to many other parts of the world.

There are certain, ubiquitous dishes we might take for granted that act as timestamps in the history of fusion cuisine. In the 1960s, the California roll—the cut roll substituting raw fish with avocado, cucumber and (imitation) crab meat—was said to have been created by Ichiro Mashita in Little Tokyo or Ken Seusa near Hollywood in Los Angeles, or Hidekazu Tojo in Vancouver. Whether its invention was a result of the constraints of access to ingredients or acclimating to local tastes, the roll became popular throughout Southern California before spreading throughout the States, becoming the gateway to sushi for many North Americans.

There are many other notable dishes in the timeline of fusion cuisine that are still iconic today, including the Chinese

chicken salad by Sylvia Cheng Wu of Madame Wu’s Garden, which incorporated cabbage with lettuce along with cooked chicken dressed with a vinaigrette made of sesame oil, soy, and mustard, which was also created in the 1960s. The smoked salmon pizza by Wolfgang Puck has been on the menu at Spago since its opening in 1982, and is topped with dill cream, chili and garlic oil, chives, and caviar. Yellowtail sashimi in a sauce made of soy, citrus, and katsuobushi with thin slices of jalapeño on top is an iconic starter dish initiated into fusion cuisine by Nobu Matsuhisa, now seen everywhere. During the birth of social media, the Korean short rib taco peddled by Roy Choi’s Kogi taco truck became a well-known success story not only in the fusing of Mexican and Korean cuisines, but in the internet virality of foodstuffs.





There are also many iconic foods that have resulted from the convergence of cuisines all over the world centuries ago. There's bánh mì (Vietnamese and French), there's the Jamaican patty (Jamaican and English), and there's vindaloo (Portuguese and Goan). There's also pancit palabok (Chinese, Mexican, Spanish in the Philippines) and ramen (Chinese and Japanese). But the most important component behind all of these foods is the rich history from which they arose, whether the integration of their cultures was a result of colonization or shared exploration. Problems begin when cooks fail to acknowledge how cuisines or ingredients do or don't fit together, simply combining cuisines in a slipshod manner, believing that adding one to another will necessarily equate to a sum bigger than their parts. There is a reason why fusion cuisine has gotten a bad rap, sometimes earning the moniker among its critics, "confusion cuisine."

In fact, Matsuhisa's expertise didn't come about in a vacuum. He's a steward of Nikkei cuisine, itself a culinary movement that dates back to the late 19th century, when the first Japanese settlers landed in Peru. They adapted their recipes to fit local Peruvian tastes, becoming a local

staple by the mid-1900s. Matsuhisa, who was born in Saitama, Japan, opened his first Nobu in Peru in 1970, before moving to Los Angeles to open Matsuhisa. Today, there are over 50 Nobu restaurants all over the world.

Another blend of cuisines birthed in Peru is chifa, incorporating Cantonese and Peruvian flavors and ingredients to become a genre entirely its own, with the largest number of Chinese laborers arriving in the mid-1800s. Dishes such as arroz chaufa (fried rice) and lomo saltado (beef and vegetable stir-fry) populate menus in restaurants serving Chinese-Peruvian cuisine.

In France and Japan, cultural exchange began in the late 1800s during the Meiji Restoration after Japan opened its ports to Western trade. Frenchman Louis Begeux was employed as the first foreign head chef in Japan at Tsukiji Hotel and spread French influence throughout Japan, even cooking at imperial banquets. His Japanese apprentices would travel to France to study French techniques there, just to return and continue spreading French culinary influence throughout Japan. For France's part, in the 1960s, Japanese influence

“Understanding the history of these cuisines can only help chefs better understand how to integrate these influences.”



became more mainstream in nouvelle cuisine, with French chefs lightening up their touch with thinner sauces and more delicate notes on the palate. Cuisine showcasing this duality even arrived in the States, through restaurants such as the late Akira Hirose's Maison Akira in Pasadena, which was open from 1999 to 2019, and still lives on today, in Charles Namba and Courtney Kaplan's just-opened and third restaurant, Camelia, in Downtown Los Angeles.

In North America, Chinese food made for palates in the United States meant adding more sugar and frying more ingredients. Dishes such as egg foo young, General Tso's chicken, and orange chicken were created in American kitchens. Though Chinese migrants first landed on the shores of the States to work the gold mines, build its railway system, and work agricultural jobs, large-scale immigration didn't happen until 1965, when Chinese food could be supported by a larger Asian population because of the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act, striking down the restrictive Chinese Exclusion Act. Until then, Chinese food had to be acclimated to more Western palates in order to stay in business.

Today, fusion can be found anywhere and everywhere, also thanks to a few international chains that help make it ubiquitous in its many interpretations. Nobu, for one, continues to thrive on its identity as a reliable, cosmopolitan fusion restaurant offering sushi but also izakaya-like dishes in locations all over the world. Sushisamba offers a Japanese, Brazilian, and Peruvian menu for an East-South American experience within a colorful, modern setting in soon-to-be nine locations, including Las Vegas and Dubai. Award-winning Roy Yamaguchi's Roy's Restaurants, which serve Hawaiian fusion, has 30 locations, mostly in the United States, but also Japan and Guam. But there's also California Pizza Kitchen, with its over 200 locations worldwide, bringing fusion pizzas and Chinese chicken salad to the masses.

While it's impossible to address the roots of how the foods of countless cultures all over the globe have integrated with and influenced each other, there's a clear pattern when it comes to East Asian flavors and ingredients gaining acceptance when integrated with Western cuisines and palates in the mid-20th century. These are loosely what we recognize as "fusion" food,

born out of migration patterns and the adjustments these communities had to make in order to please local palates and stay in business. At its essence, some of this innovation was born out of struggle, and understanding the history of these cuisines can only help chefs better understand how to integrate these influences. Though there are no limits when it comes to fusion cuisine, and though the terminology might have some baggage to shed, its evolution continues and is simply inevitable.





COOKING BEYOND BORDERS

WITH CHEF *Santiago Lastra*





Chef Santiago Lastra is leading a new culinary moment that dissolves borders and rewrites tradition. At KOL—celebrated in *The World’s 50 Best Restaurants* since 2022—he reimagines the vibrant flavors of his native Mexico using exclusively British ingredients. His cooking is as much about honoring heritage as it is about embracing innovation.

“I left Mexico when I was 18 and didn’t want to look back,” Chef Santiago recalls. “At the time, leaving Mexico was the definition of success. My dream was to learn from Europe’s top chefs—it never crossed my mind that my heritage or Mexican gastronomy was unique. It took 10 years for my perspective to shift.

That realization came while working at the Nordic Food Lab in Copenhagen. There, Chef Santiago explored how to make tortillas using Scandinavian grains and nixtamalization—the traditional Mexican technique of cooking corn with calcium hydroxide. “I discovered how I could get Mexican flavors even without specific Mexican ingredients. That opened my eyes and made me realize how special it was to be Mexican and to be able to represent my country by serving Mexican food outside Mexico.”

Local ingredients for Mexican flavors

In Mexico, people cook with what they have around them, they don’t import ingredients. At KOL, I imagine the UK as an island that’s part of Mexico, creating Mexican flavors using only British ingredients. Each dish has a Mexican narrative or incorporates traditional techniques, like cooking ingredients wrapped in leaves. Everything is new, but also traditional.

We chefs like to think we can create tradition in our lifetime, but it takes a lot of time and effort to create something that is even equally as good as tradition. Just think—developing the first taco took at least 3,000 years. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. At KOL, we’re building a culinary language and a way of working that, someday, could become tradition. Hopefully our process will become an easier and more natural thing to do.

The secret behind the cuisine

During my travels across Mexico, I discovered that Mexican food is made not for fuel, but for pure pleasure. So for the past decade I have been obsessed by the science behind that pleasure and how it influences both the palate and the mind. I return to Mexico multiple times a year, exploring taquerias, villages, markets, and indigenous communities. Each visit deepens my understanding of what makes Mexican cuisine so special, helping me represent my country and its flavors in the best way possible.

Mexican food is explosive, yet perfectly balanced. It engages every part of the palate. Take the taco, for example: the crunch of the tortilla, the dumpling-like softness, the creaminess of the salsa and the chewiness of the meat. It's everything you can ask for, a complete bomb of sweet, alkaline, sour, umami, spicy, and aromatic. Everything you can ask for in just three bites. And that's just street food. Mole sauces can contain up to 70 ingredients—ash, chocolate, vegetables, plantains, chilies, nuts, and seeds—all layered to achieve maximum flavor complexity.

One of the most elegant things you can eat in Mexico—and one of my favorite dishes ever—is escamoles, known as Mexican caviar. It's only available in late spring, as it's made from the eggs of queen ants harvested from agave cacti. These delicate eggs are sautéed in butter with shallots and served with a tortilla, avocado, and salsa. It's just divine.

The craft of flavor

At KOL, we reimagined escamoles by steaming and cooking pine nuts until they softened into a jelly-like texture, mimicking the delicacy of ant eggs. We paired this with truffle, mushrooms, and a veal and bone marrow stock. To complete the dish, we added a sprinkle of Formica rufa ants from Kent, whose sour flavor resembles lemon, as a nod to the queen ants from Mexico.

Creating dishes like this asks for a meticulous analysis of flavors. You really have to break them down and see them as flavor maps in order to seek alternatives. If I need to replace mango, for example, I look for something equally sweet, yellow, and floral in the UK. That could be elderflower for the floral note—which we make into a syrup. Squash kombucha brings the right acidity and color, or in summer yellow bell pepper. Together, they become an ice cream that tastes remarkably like mango.



DOUGH REVIVAL



WITH JAMES BROWN, ERIC CHUA & THAÍS GIMENEZ

Developed by three *UFS* chefs from around the globe—Eric Chua (Singapore), Thaís Gimenez (Brazil), and James Brown (United Kingdom and Ireland)—this innovative dish brings the core element of Borderless Cuisine to life. Celebrating the interconnectedness of global cultures through food and allowing chefs to experiment and create something unique.

Chef Eric focuses on an iconic Singapore chili crab sauce for dipping, addressing the move to fast-paced eating. Chef Thaís introduces deep-fried dough, topped with sumac and accompanied with two delicious dips—Brazilian moqueca and a smoky açaí-bbq dip made with the traditional super berry. They are the perfect accompaniment to all savory dishes. Chef James adds British flair by glazing the dough balls and offering inventive dips like a rarebit espuma and a cottage pie mix, showcasing how the dish can unite different cultures and culinary techniques.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



JAMES BROWN
Unilever Food Solutions,
UK & Ireland



ERIC CHUA
Unilever Food Solutions,
South East Asia
& South Asia



**"PIZZA IS THE
MOST *inclusive*
DISH THAT WAS
EVER CREATED."**

— **THAÍS GIMENEZ**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Brazil

This collaborative dish by chefs René-Noel Schiemer and Evert Vermandel creatively blends German and Asian influences, showcasing a roasted half-chicken served with a ramen-style noodle salad. Chef René-Noel emphasizes the fusion of flavors, integrating paprika into the ramen salad. Chef Evert notes the importance of contrasting flavors and global influences, ultimately transforming the traditional chicken dish into a trendy salad that reflects a borderless culinary approach.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



EVERT VERMANDEL
Unilever Food Solutions,
the Netherlands



**“BE BOLD IN COMBINING
classic CONCEPTS WITH
TRENDY TECHNIQUES AND
INGREDIENTS INSPIRED
BY OTHER CUISINES.”**

— **RENÉ-NOEL SCHIEMER**
Deputy Head of Culinary Consulting
Unilever Food Solutions, Germany

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a chef's hands plating a dish on a stainless steel countertop. The chef is using a spoon to add a garnish of sliced red and green chili peppers to a half-poussin (roasted chicken) that is topped with a vibrant ramen salad. The salad consists of thin, julienned carrots, green onions, and fresh cilantro. To the right of the main plate, there are several small white bowls containing various garnishes: sliced red chili, green onions, fresh cilantro, and black sesame seeds. In the background, a metal tray holds more roasted chicken pieces. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures of the food and the metallic surface.

HALF-POUSSIN

WITH RAMEN SALAD & FOAMED SWEET & SOUR HOLLANDAISE

WITH RENÉ-NOEL SCHIEMER & EVERT VERMANDEL

FLAME-BROILED SKEWERED HERRING WITH MANGO PICO & ROUILLE



WITH ALVARO LIMA,
FRANK JAKOBSEN & KEES VAN ERP

This herring dish creatively combines Nordic and Latin flavors, showcasing a unique tropical pico de gallo. Chef Alvaro Lima's twist on the traditional salsa incorporates mango for a balance of sweetness and acidity, enhancing the beautifully charred herring that is lightly pickled and grilled. Chef Frank Jakobsen adds a Nordic flair through a dry-pickling technique, using vinegar powder and sugar, which transforms the herring into a semi-raw delicacy. This fusion highlights the versatility of herring while celebrating cultural culinary traditions.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



KEES VAN ERP
Unilever Food Solutions



FRANK JAKOBSEN
*Unilever Food Solutions,
Denmark*



**"IT'S A CELEBRATION
OF CULTURES,
BLENDING COMFORT
AND *curiosity* IN
EVERY DISH."**

— **ALVARO LIMA**
Senior Corporate Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, North America





This tasty white fish dish features a lightly salted fillet paired with a vibrant fire-roasted salsa verde, crafted by Chef Alvaro Lima. This salsa blends charred poblano peppers, tomatillo, garlic, onion, and jalapeño with a secret ingredient of spinach for added color and freshness. Chef Frank Jakobsen enhances the dish by infusing the fish with a flavorful salt marinade, incorporating bay leaves, fresh lemon, and peppers. Together, these elements create a bright and harmonious dish that showcases the best of Nordic and Latin culinary techniques.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



ALVARO LIMA
Unilever Food Solutions, North America



KEES VAN ERP
Unilever Food Solutions



**“THIS DISH
IS AN *earthy*,
ELEGANT FUSION.”**

— **FRANK JAKOBSEN**
Lead Chef and Culinary Advisor
Unilever Food Solutions, Denmark



STEAMED LIGHTLY SALTED WHITE FISH

WITH FIRE-ROASTED SALSA VERDE,
FRITES & GREMOLATA AIOLI

WITH ALVARO LIMA,
FRANK JAKOBSEN & KEES VAN ERP



THE BORDERLESS BURGER

WITH BRANDON COLLINS & CHRIS ZHONG

This onion smashed burger, crafted by chefs Brandon Collins and Chris Zhong, beautifully blends American and Chinese culinary traditions. The innovative dish features a juicy hamburger patty, expertly smashed for a perfect texture, topped with thinly sliced onions and aged cheddar cheese. To elevate the classic flavors, an avocado and Chinese green chili sauce adds a unique twist, marrying the comfort of an American favorite with vibrant Chinese influences. This burger exemplifies the concept of borderless cuisine, illustrating how diverse flavors and techniques can come together to create a harmonious dining experience.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



CHRIS ZHONG
Unilever Food Solutions,
China



**"IT'S MARRYING THE
flavors OF CHINESE
FOOD WITH THE
QUINTESSENTIAL
AMERICAN DISH."**

— **BRANDON COLLINS**
Corporate Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, North America

This innovative pasta dish reimagines lasagna by blending the rich culinary traditions of Argentina, Italy, and Switzerland. At the heart of this creation is ossobuco brasato, prepared in an authentic Argentinian style with tender meat, vibrant vegetables, and aromatic wine. The lasagna features fresh Italian pasta infused with saffron for a stunning golden hue, fried to enhance texture. Complementing this is a luxurious Parmesan cream, along with the distinct flavor of cavolo nero, a Tuscan black cabbage, and a touch of cocoa bean, resulting in a unique blend that celebrates diverse global ingredients.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



JIMENA SOLIS
Unilever Food Solutions,
Argentina, Uruguay,
and Paraguay



ANDREAS WILLINER
Unilever Food Solutions,
Switzerland



**"TOGETHER WE'RE
CREATING A NEW
DISH, A NEW
PROPOSITION,
AND A NEW *Vision.*"**

— **GIUSEPPE BUSCICCHIO**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Italy

CRISPY



LASAGNA

WITH GIUSEPPE BUSCICCHIO,
ANDREAS WILLINER & JIMENA SOLIS





MEXICAN CHILI CHARRED OCTOPUS,

CAVOLO NERO & RED WINE SAUCE

WITH KEES VAN ERP, ALVARO LIMA & FRANK JAKOBSEN

This octopus dish combines traditional techniques with bold global flavors, starting with tender marination inspired by Central America and finishing with grilling to achieve a smoky, caramelized depth. It's paired with a classic French red wine sauce, enriched by the octopus cooking stock and chicken bouillon, creating a harmonious blend of richness and complexity. This approach exemplifies the creative possibilities of combining diverse culinary traditions into one cohesive and exciting dish.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



ALVARO LIMA
Unilever Food Solutions,
North America



FRANK JAKOBSEN
Unilever Food Solutions,
Denmark



"A classic **RED WINE SAUCE TIES THE BOLD GLOBAL FLAVORS TOGETHER."**

— **KEES VAN ERP**
Global Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions

This chicken and waffle dish is a creative reimagining of a classic comfort food, blending global influences to elevate both flavor and texture. The waffles are prepared using a classic waffle iron for a crisp, golden exterior that contrasts with the tender, flavorful chicken. The chicken is marinated with Thai-inspired ingredients, adding complexity and a hint of spice. This pairing creates a dynamic balance of sweet, savory, and umami flavors, delivering an unexpected twist on the familiar. The dish exemplifies the appeal of borderless cuisine, transforming a well-loved concept into an engaging and memorable dining experience.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



EVERT VERMANDEL
Unilever Food Solutions,
the Netherlands



"THIS CHICKEN ISN'T JUST CRISPY, IT'S LAYERED WITH *bold* THAI FLAVORS, COMPLEMENTED BY A CREATIVE BLEND OF KOREAN AND WESTERN INFLUENCES."

— **JIRAROJ NAVANUKROH**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Thailand



SPICY ASIAN-GLAZED FRIED CHICKEN & WAFFLES WITH MAPLE MAYONNAISE

WITH JIRAROJ NAVANUKROH
& EVERT VERMANDEL







HERO INGREDIENT

POSITIVE KITCHEN CULTURE

Kyla Touri
Corporate Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Canada.

Every day, chefs across the globe exhaust themselves to deliver—for both their teams and customers. It’s what drives them, but it can also come at a cost—their physical and mental wellbeing.

Positive Kitchens, like FairKitchens before it, is here to support that drive, ensuring that delivering does not come at too high a cost for chefs or their teams, bringing some much-needed support to professional kitchens internationally.

Founded by *Unilever Food Solutions* in 2018, Positive Kitchens is a free support resource that provides the training, tools, and inspiration chefs and their teams need to thrive and perform at their best in the professional kitchen environment. We can’t eliminate the pressures of service, but we can provide support, arming you and your team with a blueprint of resources, training, and tools to help you make your environment as positive as possible, improving kitchens now and for future generations.

Positive Kitchens start with you, but we’re with you every step of the way, celebrating our people, championing diversity and inclusivity, and creating the positive environments that we all want to be part of.

UFS research findings show that professional kitchen culture is still highly toxic in many food service environments around the world, negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of chefs and their teams.

Our survey findings showed:

60%

EXPERIENCE NEGATIVE
MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

58%

BELIEVE THERE IS A
GENERATIONAL CONFLICT
IN PROFESSIONAL KITCHENS

51%

EXPERIENCE AGGRESSIVE
COMMUNICATION

28%

WOULD NOT RECOMMEND
BEING A CHEF

RECIPE FOR A POSITIVE KITCHEN

LEADING THE WAY
TOWARDS A POSITIVE
KITCHEN CULTURE
WITH CHEF *Asma Khan*.

“The greatest legacy of our generation should be that we changed the industry for the next generation.”

Restaurant kitchen culture has long been associated with grueling hours, strict hierarchy, and abusive language. That would come to an immediate end if it were up to Asma Khan, chef and founder of Darjeeling Express, an all-female Indian restaurant in London. The activist and disruptor is on a mission to revolutionize the way kitchens operate—focusing not just on the food, but on the people who make it. Building communities and creating an environment where every person is valued, respected and empowered. Discover the positive kitchen.

At Darjeeling Express I wanted to do things differently. We are a sisterhood. We look different and we come from different traditions, but we operate as a tribe. A group of women who cook together and who believe in each other. Women have always been at the center of every culinary tradition, yet are often sidelined in professional kitchens. They feel underrepresented, isolated and disadvantaged. That is a massive issue. They should be made to feel welcome, equal, safe, and that the doors are open for them to one day progress to head chef.

The hospitality business is run by people of all backgrounds, yet they are often not respected. But if you want to be successful, you need everyone in your team to feel valued. Restaurant owners should nourish their staff emotionally, physically, and mentally. The idea that you have to endure abuse because of the pressures of the kitchen is absurd. If you can't handle the pressure, you need to step back and breathe. It's not a reason to mistreat others. People need to be able to play sports, to go out, to see a film, to meet their friends, and to spend time with their cats.

We live in a revolutionary time of change within the industry. We're no longer talking about chefs doing molecular cuisine, we are talking about taking care of your staff.

Your priority is not the bottom line, the Michelin stars, or the good reviews. It's the mental health of your own team. Look after them first, then look after your customers. The greatest legacy of our generation should be that we changed the industry for the next generation.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

If you build a really good dish, everything has to be in equal proportion. The same goes for your team. Every kitchen should have an emphasis on diversity. Diversity not just regarding skin color, but also gender and sexuality. You must have people of every kind of background. Through food, conversations, and mutual respect you can build bridges. Start a conversation with your team about what they need to feel equal. Make them feel their opinion matters. That is how diversity will be successful.



FAIRNESS

As many as 74% of chefs feel sleep deprived to the point of exhaustion and 53% feel pushed to breaking point. People should get fair treatment and fair pay. That starts with shorter shifts and more reasonable working hours. Staff should be given the time to rest, pursue their personal passions, and live balanced lives. Exhausted people make bad decisions, which only leads to poor outcomes.



JUSTICE

Toxic work environments have been normalized in the restaurant industry for far too long. As many as one in four chefs have suffered physical abuse. I believe a kitchen should be a place where you feel safe. Owners, chefs, and managers are responsible for setting up a framework of respect and equality. You need to have policies in place that oppose bullying, that state there is zero tolerance of racism and zero tolerance of anyone being touched against their consent.



EMPATHY AND COMMUNITY

Create an environment where staff feel supported, respected and empowered. That can be done by celebrating everyone's birthday, holidays of all cultures, or by simply taking the team out for ice cream on a hot day. Those small gestures foster connections and break down barriers. By promoting understanding and celebrating diversity, chefs and kitchen staff can create a space where everyone feels seen and valued.





CULINARY ROOTS

An exciting growing menu trend that celebrates and revives lesser-known regional cuisines, honoring indigenous ingredients and cooking techniques that connect to cultural heritage. This movement emphasizes the importance of preserving the past while moving forward, ensuring *authenticity* remains at the heart of each dish. The trend often begins within a region and may gain wider recognition, but it must retain its true essence to succeed.

THE USE OF **TRADITIONAL YOGURT**

IS HEAVILY IMPACTING THIS TREND. YOGURT IS A KEY INGREDIENT THAT CAN BE UTILIZED IN MANY DISHES.



Key factors contributing to this trend include:

- The post-Covid pandemic era and supply-chain issues, sparking interest in local and cultural food traditions
- Diners seeking depth and authenticity in their food experiences
- The rediscovery of one's own culinary culture rather than focusing on foreign influences alone
- Chefs embracing their heritage first and foremost
- Storytelling as a means to connect with tradition and history

Chefs are now reviving traditional and micro-regional recipes, offering diners access to rarely celebrated cuisines. This approach preserves culinary heritage by using authentic techniques and ingredients. While modern twists can be applied, maintaining the authenticity of the cuisine remains essential, providing a rich cultural experience that celebrates history as much as innovation.

The top techniques in this trend:

- Wood-fire cooking
- Stewing
- Infusion
- Slow cooking
- Charcoal grilling
- Marination

Cuisines with Culinary Roots that fit this trend:

- Oaxacan
- Andean
- Basque
- Emirati
- Korean temple
- Sichuan
- Yucatecan

Previous page:
Dan dan noodles are
trending globally.

ONE TO WATCH

THE POPULARITY OF HUNAN CUISINE, WHICH ORIGINATES FROM THE XIANG RIVER REGION, DONGTING LAKE, AND WESTERN HUNAN PROVINCE IN CHINA, IS INCREASING RAPIDLY.









REGIONAL CULINARY HOTSPOTS

WRITTEN BY
Sophie Wilkinson

AROUND THE WORLD, SOME OF THE MOST
vibrant **CUISINES AND TECHNIQUES EMERGE**
FROM THE MOST UNEXPECTED OF PLACES.

Food used to travel by word of mouth, traders praising the merits of their produce, be they practicality—sugar was, to some, just a currency, salt was just a preservative—unique taste, apparent abundance, or exotic rarity. Immigrants devised cooking methods to adapt to their journeys as they sought better lives. Communities shared with each other the best ways of cooking their local ingredients. Colonial and military endeavors saw invaders bring their own familiar foods into places where locals far more preferred the novel cuisine than the newly imposed regime.

Later, cultural exchanges amongst allies saw niche food movements spark up, like Vietnamese food turning up in Czechia, Cornish pasties arriving in Argentina, and sultanas introduced to Venetian pasta.

Now, we live in a globally connected world where recipes can traverse miles in minutes and methods of cooking are hyper-optimized to make each task more efficient for busy cooks. As lauded chefs venture into new realms of processing,

pickling, preserving, and presenting food, the goal, it now seems, is to cherish the individual ingredient. While technological advances can help develop flavor profiles, sometimes getting back to basics is the way forward. Why not look at the roots of our collective food realms, how landscape shapes the flora and fauna, how the resourcefulness of home cooks and traditional chefs from regions around the world can shape today's approach to food.

Galicia

This verdant region of Spain on the Atlantic coast can thank its many bays and inlets—known as *rias*—for an abundance of seafood. Here, fresh and salt waters combine, creating the perfect environment for seafood like lobster, octopus, shrimp, and langoustines to thrive. Percebes may look daunting, but simply boiling in salt and bay, before blanching in ice-cold water and peeling, ensures their texture—calamari-meets-abalone—can be savored.

This area is known as the seventh Celtic region and its maritime climate means moist air and rich grasses produce ideal farming environments to create buttery cheeses like tetilla. Galicia is also home to the 12th-century Santiago de la Compostela cathedral, the destination of thousands of pilgrims (or *peregrinos*) who hike for hundreds of miles to reach it. In homage to St. James, the tarta de Santiago uses local almonds as flour, making a dense and coincidentally gluten-free cake. With eggs providing the fats rather than dairy, this tarta takes a while to spoil, meaning pilgrims since the 1500s have used it as compact—and delicious—fuel on their way. It also incorporates light notes of oranges and lemons introduced to the area under Moorish occupation.

The fusion of Moorish and Celtic cultures, as well as inspiration from former Spanish colonies in South America, winds up dramatically in queimada punch, made with orujo brandy that is set alight, with caramelized sugar, lemon peel, and coffee to lend it sweetness and depth. The ritual around its consumption is known as the *conxuro de quemada*, or the spell of the queimada, and it's commonly drunk around Halloween.

East Turkestan/Xanjiang Province

This mountainous area, on the borderlands of China and central Asia, has been in heavy dispute for centuries but has also been a stop-off on the Silk Road, taking in Turkic and Chinese influences in its cooking to create a distinct cuisine.

Like their Uzbek neighbors, Uyghurs brand their bread, or nan, with intricate metal-spiked stamps. This not only creates beautiful and individual patterns on the rounded flatbreads, traditionally cooked on the inside of domed clay ovens known as *tonurs*, but creates holes for the bread's texture to mold around. In parts fluffy, in others crunchy, the nan is used either as a plate or to scoop up wetter dishes like the da pan ji—a tomato and potato-based spicy chicken stew. If nan isn't used, then hand-pulled wheat-flour noodles, *läghmän*, will provide the chewy carbohydrate complement to the dish.

Polo is the Uyghur rendition of pilaf or pulao, where onions, carrots, and cumin are fried in oil before rice is added, then it's topped with steamed lamb or mutton. To cut through the comforting and unctuous depth of these flavors and textures, pickled vegetables and vinegary salads are added. Lamb is a focal meat for Uyghurs, who will put thin strips of it onto skewers to roast over hot grills until charred, dusting with hot cumin dust.

Cusco, Peru

Nestled in the Andes at a lofty 3,399 meter elevation, this city is home to the *huatia* method of cooking, where the oven is designed to fall. A fire pit is carved out, a temporary dome is built above it using adobe bricks, then the fire is lit beneath. Once it's warm enough, potatoes are thrown in and the hot bricks above are pushed down to cover them. Meats can be cooked on the bricks above the potatoes, which are normally soft and fluffy once dug out around half an hour later.

Chiri uchu is a popular dish with contested roots but undoubtedly is testament to the cornucopia of Peruvian produce. In one platter, eaten around Corpus Christi week in May or June, there's roasted guinea pig, chicken, charqui—a jerky-like dish made from llama—corn, cheese, seaweed, fish, potatoes, rocoto peppers, and tortilla. Served cold and spicy, it can be shared by the whole family and is also made available in smaller, more one-person size portions by street vendors.

For almost 100 years, fatty cuts of pork have been rendered in their own lard to make extra-crunchy bites of salty-sweet meat known as chicharrones. It comes served with both starchy hominy, which is yellow or white maize treated with lye to remove the hull and germ, and zingy salsa criolla, a mix of bell peppers, onions, tomatoes, and garlic.



IDENTITY THROUGH FOOD

HOW FOOD CONNECTS
GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS
TO IDENTITY AND *heritage.*

WRITTEN BY
Angela Hui



Have you ever paused to reflect on the story behind the dishes you create? Perhaps you've considered the origins of a key spice used in your kitchen or wondered about the history of a family recipe that inspires your menu. As a chef or restaurant owner, understanding the roots of food can transform your kitchen into a place that does more than just prepare meals; it can be a classroom to teach cultural history or a stage for celebrating dishes.

From age-old recipes passed down through generations to regional dishes reinvented with modern twists, Gen Z and Millennials see food as more than sustenance. Today's generation have some of the most adventurous palates shaped by early exposure to diverse flavors, they embrace food that excites the senses, learn about different cultures, and dive into forgotten traditions that connect them to the past. Using food as a bridge between cultural heritage and modern life, they're rethinking how they consume food, engaging with culinary content in books and online and finding cooking inspiration in new ways. Food is a crux for storytelling—a chance to reconnect with roots, a space to explore identity, and a way to foster a sense of community.

In 2018, Chris Ying, former editor of the cult indie food magazine *Lucky Peach*, explored this notion in the book *You and I Eat the Same*, highlighting the countless ways food and cooking connect us while also showing the stark differences and complexities of eating. For those working in the hospitality industry, this presents an opportunity to delve deeper into food and how it can be a connector, bridge cultural divides, and launch conversations. Who gets to cook what, and why? How can dishes reflect stories of identity, heritage, and evolution? What message do you want to convey with your ingredients and cooking techniques? By being intentional with these choices, you create dishes that can resonate on a deeper level with customers.



“The next time you test a new recipe, plan a menu or introduce a special, consider what story it tells. Does it highlight forgotten traditions?”

Opposite page:
Chef Edwin Van
Gent prepares olive
crumble for his dish.

Consider how chefs like Joké Bakare, whose restaurant was the first in the UK run by a black female chef to win a Michelin star, approach this. Her restaurant, Chishuru, in London, uses hard-to-find West African ingredients alongside local British produce. Bakare goes that extra step to educate and inspire. “Food is multi-layered and anchors us to culture and tradition,” she says. Her approach challenges preconceptions and invites diners to explore the breadth and depth of West African cuisine in a new light, paving the way for a more nuanced understanding. “Food from the sub-Saharan continent often lacks technique and finesse—it’s all very one-pot. I want people who come to Chishuru for the first time to discover the techniques we use. It might look simple, but it’s deceptive.”

The desire for meaningful culinary experiences is evident in the dining habits of Gen Z and Millennials. Research from the restaurant-reservation platform Seven Rooms highlights that 34% of UK consumers in this demographic dine out at least three times a month. They aren’t just looking for the next trend or the latest restaurant opening; they seek third places outside home and work to connect and unwind. Factors such as convenience, personalization, and value

when dining out are considered the most important. Customers are usually loyal to their favorite brands and restaurants; they trust them and are willing to pay more for elevated experiences. What’s more, some of the biggest themes in restaurant marketing are related to authenticity, community connection, genuine flavors, and inclusive spaces that celebrate diversity. In London, this shift is evident in places like Chishuru.

“The food world is finally sitting up and taking notice, but there’s a long way to go. It’s very important for me to hold on to the tradition of the food that I grew up with. In West African food, there’s not a lot of documentation on our food,” Bakare explains. “I want to be an agent of preservation while embracing modernity, ensuring these traditions endure for the next generation.”

This representation and diversity resonates strongly with younger diners and extends beyond the plate and into popular media. The internet has made it easier than ever to learn how to cook and discover places to eat. YouTube channels offer not only recipes and restaurant recommendations but also in-depth explorations of food origins and history. Meanwhile, social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok

allow home cooks, farmers, chefs, food and drink brands, restaurant groups, and food writers to share their stories directly with audiences, bypassing traditional media. This shift has created opportunities for both amateur and professional cooks to share their culinary traditions with the world.

Embracing this rise in identity-driven cuisine presents a unique opportunity. You’re not just serving food—you’re crafting a memorable experience that educates and connects. In this age of authenticity, diners value intentionality and purpose. They want to know what they’re eating, the journey from farm to table, the stories behind the hands that made the food, and feel that their meal is part of a larger cultural narrative. By offering context, stories, and history, you invite your guests into a shared journey of discovery. The next time you test a new recipe, plan a menu, or introduce a special, consider what story it tells. Does it highlight forgotten traditions? Does it connect to your heritage or personal experiences? Let your food tell the story of your roots, inspirations, and vision for the future. In doing so, your restaurant becomes not just a place to eat but a destination for cultural exploration and meaningful dining.



Deep-fried sliced fish marinated
with sichuan chili oil.





THE SOUL OF THE LAND SERVED ON A PLATE

WITH *Ana Roš*

At three-Michelin-starred Hiša Franko, in the remote Slovenian Soča Valley, nestled between the Julian Alps and the Italian border, each dish tells a story of place, tradition, and creativity. Co-owner and chef Ana Roš has built a cuisine shaped by the alpine climate and rooted in seasonality, local sourcing, and respect for the land. From reviving traditional farming methods to challenging perceptions of what makes an ingredient valuable, her creations are bold, personal, and reflect the region's unique character.

Hiša Franko is the first and only restaurant I've ever worked at. I actually graduated in international science and diplomacy. I wasn't a professional cook when I started working here 25 years ago, so I had a bit of a romantic approach and philosophy. I began liaising with local farmers, suppliers, and foragers around me, because we're so far away from any cities that we needed a strategy on how to get ingredients. So what today is a trend, we already started doing all those years ago.

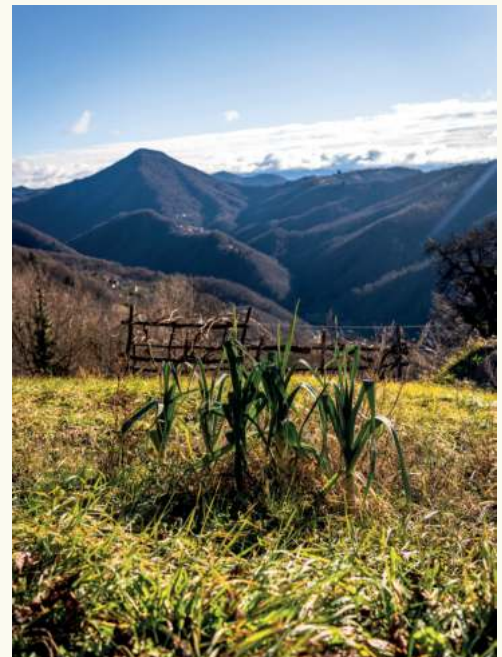
A slap to the face

I see us as ambassadors of our land. At the table of Hiša Franko, you can sense and experience where you are and who is cooking for you. Our food is a patchwork of seasonality and territory and the main color is the personality of the chef. My food is very intense and spicy. Guests are sometimes shocked and say the menu was like a slap to the face. But that's precisely what I want.

Working with the seasons

We follow nature and work with the seasons. Our ingredients are micro local. When I step on top of the mountain here, I can see all the places we're sourcing from. That challenges us to be creative, because nature isn't a supermarket—we constantly need to adapt. We don't use foie gras, lobster, or most of the ingredients you find at famous restaurants. We stick to the produce we can find around the Soča Valley, such as potato, trout, and roebuck.

"My food is very intense and spicy. Guests are sometimes shocked and say the menu was like a slap to the face. But that's precisely what I want."





A climate of abundance

Our unique alpine climate, influenced by the salty breeze of the nearby sea and the mineral-rich soil, gives plants and the animals that feed on them distinct flavors. It is incredible to discover how much more this soil and this climate can give than what our ancestors knew. Traditionally, this is the area of green beans, but through our farmers Jeanne and Matteo we discovered that our climate is similar to that of New Zealand. So now we have New Zealand spinach, wasabino, kiwi, and mustard leaves. So we let our imagination go wild and every year the list of ingredients we have is longer.

Keeping tradition alive

Sometimes I think one of my major successes is keeping the traditional ways of farming alive here. We sustain the valley economically through the way we source, which also has a social impact because young people are staying to become farmers instead of moving to the cities. The strong fermented cottage cheese we use—with a spicy and sour flavor—is typical for this valley, but unfortunately it is rarely eaten anymore. We buy it from old farmers to help the tradition and knowledge survive.

“For me, Culinary Roots is about returning to nature. It’s about embracing the local territory and being mindful in how we garden and forage, so we don’t deplete the forests or meadows.”



One euro potato

One of our most famous dishes is the potato baked in hay crust. That dish began with a conversation I had with a farmer about the potatoes we needed. When I asked him to set the price, he said, “One euro.” Per potato that was, not per kilo. At first, it felt excessive, but then he asked: “Why do we pay so much for good meat or fish, but not for vegetables?” That question shifted my perspective. The dish itself brings this idea to life. A potato is baked in a crust of high-mountain hay and salt, absorbing the floral, earthy aromas of alpine meadows. Breaking the crust releases a scent that evokes sleeping in a hay bed in the high Alps—a romantic experience that tells the story of Hiša Franko.

Return to nature

For me, Culinary Roots is about returning to nature. It’s about embracing the local territory and being mindful in how we garden and forage, so we don’t deplete the forests or meadows. Every chef should have the skills to source locally. If we can make it work in the challenging climate of the Soča Valley, it can be done anywhere. Let’s stop buying tomatoes year-round and instead focus on eating more seasonally and locally. We should stop moving food around too much. Not just to lower CO₂ emissions, but also because each day that passes after the harvest of fruit and vegetables, the plant is losing essential oils, which completely changes the flavor.”







CHOLENT

WITH

KISHKA

WITH GILI HAIM

This dish, called cholent, is a traditional Jewish stew known for its long and slow-cooking technique, rooted in the historical practice of preparing food before the Sabbath to honor the prohibition of cooking on that day. The dish typically includes kidney beans, barley, carrots, potatoes, and a vegan variation of kiske (traditionally a sausage) made with semolina and flour. This slow-cooking process creates unique flavors and textures, providing a modern twist to a historically heavy meal.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



"IT CATERS TO A WIDER GROUP OF DINERS AND IS *cheap* TO MAKE—BOTH OF WHICH ARE VERY IMPORTANT NOW."

— **GILI HAIM**
Lead Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Israel

This dish is heavily based on the escabeche technique, a traditional method used in Spain, Latin America, and the Philippines to preserve food. Escabeche involves cooking proteins like chicken, rabbit, or fish, and even vegetables, in a stew-like preparation with vinegar as the primary liquid, which balances the acidity and allows the dish to be preserved for days, even weeks. The chef modernizes this technique by enhancing it with new seasonings, such as cinnamon, anise, and a combination of vinegars and introducing Asian elements like dashi and miso. This dish, a chicken escabeche served with aubergines, is designed as a cold or ambient starter, bringing together old techniques with a modern twist.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**



**"OLD TECHNIQUES LIKE *escabeche*
ARE BEING MODERNIZED—IT'S ABOUT
CREATIVITY AND REINVENTION."**

— **PEIO CRUZ**

Lead Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Spain

GRILLED EGGPLANT



A top-down view of a light-colored ceramic bowl filled with a smooth, orange-brown sauce. Two halves of a grilled eggplant are placed side-by-side in the center. Each half is stuffed with a mixture of shredded chicken, pickled vegetables, and green onions. The eggplant halves are garnished with thin slices of pink pickled onions and chopped green onions. Small white sesame seeds are scattered around the eggplant halves in the sauce.

STUFFED WITH CHICKEN ESCABECHE, MISO & SHERRY

WITH PEIO CRUZ

DEEP-FRIED SLICED FISH WITH SICHUAN CHILI OIL



WITH PHILIP LI

This dish is a traditional Sichuan specialty, featuring low-temperature deep-fried fish in a rich, spicy chili oil. While this dish typically uses marinated and sliced beef, Chef Philip Li innovates by replacing it with fish for a healthier twist. The preparation involves marinating the fish with ginger and garlic before freezing it to allow for perfect slicing. It is then deep-fried at low temperatures, enhancing its texture and flavor. This dish not only showcases the historical cooking techniques of Sichuan cuisine but also emphasizes the importance of respecting and understanding culinary traditions as a foundation for innovation.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to www.ufs.com



**“YOUNG CHEFS MUST RESPECT
THE *traditional* DISH. THEY
NEED TO KNOW THE REASON.”**

— **PHILIP LI**
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, China

Salade Niçoise is a classic French salad that embodies the vibrant flavors of Nice. This refreshing dish typically features tomatoes, green beans, hard-boiled eggs, and black olives. However, in this instance Chef Edwin Van Gent opts for a creative twist by incorporating a crumble made from three types of olives, replacing the traditional tuna or anchovies with grated salted roe from grey mullet, adding depth and umami.

To get this recipe and the many other *Future Menus* recipes, go to **www.ufs.com**

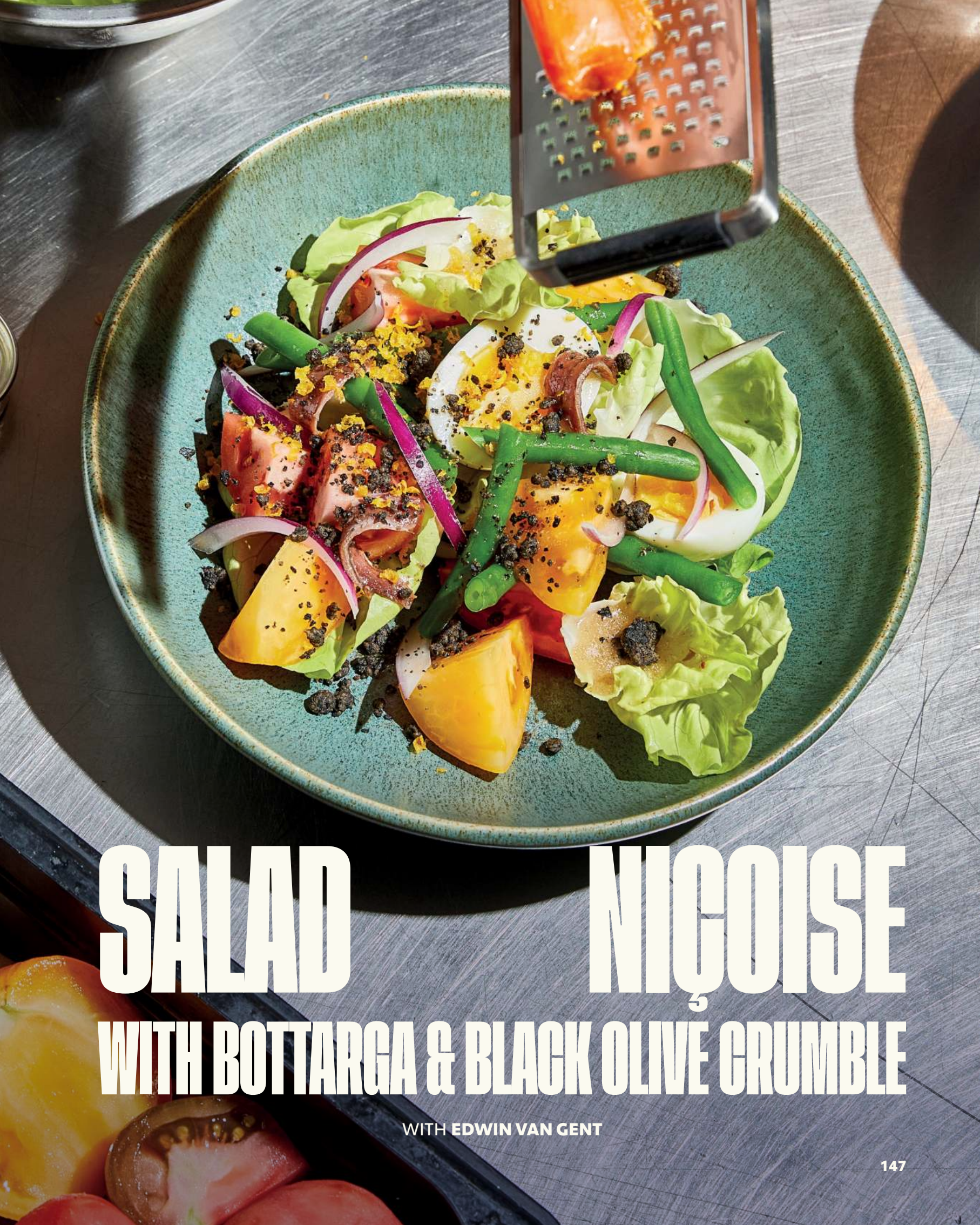


**"THIS DISH IS LOVED BY MANY
PEOPLE FOR ITS RICH FLAVORS
AND *refreshing* QUALITIES."**

— EDWIN VAN GENT

Head Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, the Netherlands



SALAD NICOISE

WITH BOTTARGA & BLACK OLIVE CRUMBLE

WITH EDWIN VAN GENT



Fire Sense



DINER DESIGNED

Dining is moving beyond generic customization to more interactive, personalized experiences, where diners take part in meal creation and modification. The *Diner Designed* menu trend focuses on making dining immersive and multisensory and offering unique, value-added experiences.

A silver spoon is positioned at the top of the frame, pouring a thick, vibrant red sauce into a white bowl. The bowl is filled with a variety of Korean BBQ ingredients, including sliced beef, mushrooms, spinach, and a sunny-side-up egg. The background is a solid green color, and the bowl sits on a light green surface.

55%

INCREASE IN SEARCH
RESULTS FOR GRILL-IT-
YOURSELF KOREAN
BBQ—HIGHLIGHTING
A SHIFT TOWARDS UNIQUE,
PERSONALIZED DINING
EXPERIENCES.

A number of factors are driving this evolving menu trend, including:

- A growing desire for personalized, engaging, and immersive dining experiences
- Diners seeking communal experiences beyond traditional sharing platters
- Gen Z’s preference for curated choices and social-media-worthy moments
- Technological advancements (AR, AI) reshaping how meals are experienced
- Access to data-enabling hyper-personalized dining interactions

While tech and food have grown increasingly closer together in recent years, the relationship is evolving more than ever. Augmented reality (AR) can create interactive menus, while artificial intelligence (AI) tailors recommendations based on past preferences. These tools will help diners engage all their senses, offering a more customized and immersive experience. Restaurants will continue experimenting with tech to offer highly tailored, multisensory dining experiences. These will go beyond taste, incorporating visual, auditory, and even tactile elements, making dining more memorable and unique.

This trend reflects a shift toward deeper engagement in dining, where personalization and interaction are key, driven by evolving tech and diners’ demand for more meaningful, shared experiences.

The top techniques dominating this trend:

- Build-your-own
- Foams, espumas and aerated sauces
- Pureeing
- 3d printing
- Table-side cooking
- Flash freezing
- Fermentation
- Blowtorching

Key ingredients for the Diner Designed menu trend:

- Nuts
- Beetroot
- Chocolate
- Lemon
- Saffron
- Mustard
- BBQ Meats
- Gelatin

Previous page:
Traditional bibimbap is easily modifiable for the diner.

ONE TO WATCH

ICE CREAM HAS EMERGED AS THE FASTEST-GROWING INTERNET SEARCH TOPIC GLOBALLY, WITH PARTICULARLY HIGH SEARCH VOLUMES IN ASIA AND THE US.



A PLAN FOR PERSONALIZATION



Eric Chua **UFS EXECUTIVE CHEF IN SINGAPORE, VIETNAM, AND CAMBODIA, SHARES COST-EFFECTIVE SUGGESTIONS TO SERVE UP PERSONALIZATION IN THE RESTAURANT.**

Personalization has become a cornerstone of the dining experience. By allowing diners to tailor their dishes according to their preferences, restaurants can create memorable and engaging experiences that keep customers coming back.

Personalization has become a critical factor in the dining preferences of Gen Z, a demographic that values individuality, health consciousness, and meaningful experiences. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z diners seek meals that reflect their personal tastes and dietary needs, making personalization not just a menu trend but a necessity for food service professionals to deliver on.



Create Topping Stations: Set up a salad or wrap bar with a variety of toppings (e.g. proteins, vegetables, nuts, and seeds). This allows Gen Z diners to craft their own dishes, enhancing their sense of ownership and creativity.

Custom Dressing Stations: Introduce a variety of interesting dressings and sauces inspired by regional cuisine flavors such as South East Asia. Patrons can mix and match to create their own unique blends, making each dish distinctly theirs.

Flavor Profiles: Provide diners with a choice of dynamic flavor profiles (e.g., spicy, tangy, sweet) that they can incorporate into their dishes. This helps cater to individual palates and encourages experimentation.

Build-Your-Own Options: Offer a selection of base ingredients for salads or wraps, allowing diners to choose their preferred proteins, vegetables, and grains. This not only caters to dietary preferences but also engages customers in the creation of their dish.

Seasonal Specials: Rotate seasonal ingredients and limited-time offerings that encourage repeat visits. Diners will appreciate the freshness and the opportunity to try new combinations.

Feedback Loop: Encourage diners to provide feedback on their personalized dishes, allowing the restaurant to refine offerings and build a closer relationship with its clientele.

Encourage Sharing: Create a “custom dish of the week” that diners can share on social media. This can incentivize them to try new combinations and helps promote your restaurant organically.

WRITTEN BY

Eric Chua
Executive Chef, Singapore,
Vietnam, Cambodia and
Future Platform Chef Lead
Unilever Food Solutions,
South East Asia & South Asia



HOW TO MAKE A RESTAURANT PROFITABLE (AND KEEP IT THAT WAY)

Ah, restaurants—those tantalizing temples of gastronomy where dreams are plated and credit cards weep. It's easy to get caught up in romanticizing about the industry, imagining yourself as that chef passionately crafting dishes that people rave about to their friends. But behind the beautifully garnished plates and the Instagrammable ambiance lies the cold, hard reality: Restaurants operate on razor-thin profit margins. So how do you ensure your business remains profitable? Below are five tips to follow.

WRITTEN BY
Thaís Gimenez
Executive Chef
Unilever Food Solutions, Brazil

A restaurant's profitability isn't just about what's on the plate—it's about what happens behind the scenes. Every day you have to contend with unpredictable realities like: how many diners are going to show up today/tonight; suppliers gone AWOL with that essential order of ingredients; staffing issues and those unplanned power outages that melt your frozen inventory along with your profit.

Even the best-run kitchens face a constant battle with unpredictability, so it's important to mitigate the risk with reliable strategies that underpin your profit margin.

1 **Menu Engineering: The Art and Science of Profitable Plates**

A profitable menu is more than a collection of dishes; it's a masterclass in balancing creativity and economics. Here's what it takes:

- **Understand your stars:** Some dishes fly off the menu and make you money. Others are passion projects that barely break even but showcase the chef's soul. Striking a balance between profitable crowd-pleasers and soulful culinary art is the key.
- **Practice ingredient wizardry:** Great chefs don't just cook; they maximize every ounce of every ingredient. From turning carrot tops into pesto to using beef trimmings for broth, efficiency is the secret sauce.
- **Adopt food trends (wisely):** Menu trends that align with your brand and audience can generate buzz—and revenue. Use this *Future Menus* book to find the one, or ones, that best fit your menu.

2 **Harness the Power of Data (Yes, Data!)**

Data might not sound sexy, but it's the lifeline of a profitable restaurant. Here's why:

- **Predicting demand:** By analyzing sales patterns, you can forecast customer flow and plan your purchases more accurately, reducing waste and avoiding stock shortages.
- **Tracking costs:** Integrate recipes, ingredient prices, and yields into your system to understand your food-cost percentage (the magic number that tells you if you're making money or just feeding people for free).
- **Scheduling efficiency:** Use historical data to determine peak dining times and staff rostering accordingly.

3 **Equipment: A Professional Kitchen's Best Friend (or Worst Enemy)**

Let's talk gadgets. Sure, you'd love a kitchen fitted out like a spaceship, but practicality matters.

- **Multitasking marvels:** Convection ovens, sous-vide machines, and high-powered processors can streamline operations and reduce prep time. Efficiency is your sous-chef.
- **Energy efficiency:** Lowering your energy bill is great for both the planet and your bottom line. Modern equipment with energy-saving features is worth the investment.
- **Training matters:** Even the best tools are useless if your team doesn't know how to use them properly. A well-trained team is more efficient than the fanciest mixer.

4 **People Make the Professional Kitchen**

Speaking of staff: they're the beating heart of your restaurant. But let's be real—the restaurant industry isn't exactly known for work-life balance. A happy, healthy team is a productive one. Here's how to keep your kitchen running smoothly:

- **Proper training:** Teach your cooks how to follow recipes and portion sizes accurately. Consistency reduces waste and ensures quality.
- **Mental health matters:** Burnout is real. Treat your team like humans, not machines. Healthy hours and a positive environment lead to better food service and reduced staff turnover. If you don't know about it already, check out the Positive Kitchens movement. *UFS* is a founding member. It's a free resource offering tools, training, and advice tailored for the food service industry (go to www.ufs.com for more).
- **Creative problem-solving:** A well-supported team can focus on creative ways to reduce waste, optimize workflows, and improve profitability.

5 **Profitability Is a Daily Grind**

Achieving profitability isn't a one-time milestone; it's an ongoing effort. Efficiency, creativity, and adaptability are your best friends. From rethinking your *mise en place* to embracing new preservation techniques (hello, dehydration and pickling!), every little adjustment can make a difference.

It might be a challenge, but for those who do it right, the rewards of running a profitable restaurant—financial and otherwise—are oh-so-satisfying.



EVOLVING



EXPECTATIONS

Rafael Larue, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER AT TRANSFORMATION COMPANY LIVIT DESIGN, OFFERS INSIGHTS INTO THE EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS OF DINERS.



Despite diners globally having different habits—from the food they eat to how they eat it—the expectations of their dining experiences are often the same, and in a world where almost anything seems possible, expectations are greater than ever.

Livit Design is a world-leading “transformation company.” Its global clientele list includes an array of household names. Its view of the global culinary landscape has enabled it to foresee the shifting expectations of diners and what might be causing these shifts.

Rafael Larue, Chief Creative Officer and Partner at Livit Design, shares some insights and tips on how to achieve optimal personalization in food service today.

Tell us a little bit about Livit Design.

Livit is the world’s largest food and beverage transformation company. The reason we call ourselves a “transformation” company is that we don’t fit neatly into any one category. We’ve tried labels like “design firm” and “consultancy,” but our work spans everything from design to operations and culinary innovation. We offer services from brand strategy and guest experience to interior design, kitchen design, and even the small details like table settings. We handle projects end-to-end, especially for scalable concepts that aim for replicable success. We work in markets like the US, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. This gives us visibility into emerging trends around the world. For instance, we may see trends in China that will soon reach the

US, or observe shifts in the US that might influence European brands. This global perspective helps us stay ahead of trends.

What are some of the biggest changes you’ve noticed in global diner expectations?

Diners today want everything on their terms, and they want it all at once. This isn’t necessarily a time of new trends but rather an expansion of existing ones. For instance, people expect convenience and quality, even from high-end brands. Fine dining delivery, once unheard of, is now common. Diners expect to engage with brands through multiple channels and options, and they seek experiences that are fast, high-quality, and tailored to them.

Where do these heightened expectations from diners come from?

It’s a mix of natural progression and the impact of Covid. Trends like customization were already emerging, but Covid accelerated everything as brands had to adapt quickly to survive. Additionally, consumer awareness has grown. Younger generations consider more than just taste—they think about food as fuel, brand values, and sustainability. They seek a connection with brands that align with their values.

“Personalization is key to everything we’re seeing within dining right now.”



“Unreasonable hospitality” has become a popular term in recent years, thanks to the book by Will Guidara. What are your thoughts on this term?

I think that’s the direction the industry is moving toward—personalizing experiences to an unprecedented level. While not every brand has the resources to offer hyper-personalized services, the overall trend is for brands to provide elevated, tailored experiences that go beyond traditional expectations. “Unreasonable hospitality” might sound extreme, but as guest expectations rise, a certain level of personalization is becoming the standard. Ultimately, brands must adapt to meet these expectations within their capabilities. As we continue down this path, “unexpected hospitality” will likely become the new baseline.

How are you addressing these changing diner expectations in your work?

We focus on flexibility in the guest journey, adapting to different dining channels and purchase paths. Today’s brands need to be more than just guest-centric—they have to be “people-centric,” balancing guest, employee, and corporate needs. We also simplify processes to attract and retain staff, especially where labor shortages exist. We aim to create workplaces that foster pride and belonging, making employees feel part of something meaningful.

What do you foresee for dining experiences in the next 5-10 years?

I think we’ll see a blend of convenience and experience, with a focus on delivering highly personalized interactions. For example, in some restaurants in Asia, even the décor is customized in real-time based on the guests present. Technology is enabling a level of individual experience we’ve never seen before, where each visit could feel like a unique, one-time experience. This trend toward tailored experiences will likely continue to grow.

Any final thoughts?

Personalization is key to everything we’re seeing within dining right now.







GAGGAN

RESTAURANT GAGGAN TAKES
experience **DINING TO THE**
NEXT LEVEL.

ANAND



India's Gaggan Anand is Asia's most awarded chef. In his restaurant, Gaggan in Bangkok, which opened in 2019, he shows his rebellious and experimental side even more than in his previous restaurant. In Gaggan the guests dance, sing, and eat grilled Thai street rat. Whether the latter is actually true? On that subject, the chef leaves his guests guessing. "We are an extremely radical restaurant," Gaggan says in a personal interview.

At Gaggan—ranked number nine on The World's 50 Best Restaurants and number three on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants—guests must abandon their ideas of fine dining. Experience is taken to the next level. It's like visiting the theater, with two different performances. The restaurant has 14 seats. Guests sit next to each other in two lines that flank the sides of the kitchen, with a direct view of the action. Dishes are accompanied by music, there is a light show, and singing and dancing by the kitchen team as well as the guests.

22 dishes

"I created the dishes and came up with the concept," says Gaggan. The show is like a movie that you think you know the end of, but then it turns out completely different. The only predictable thing is the fact that the 22 dishes that are served do not disappoint. They still form the biggest wow factor.

Gaggan previously made a name for himself by presenting traditional Indian dishes in a completely new way. Instead of classic approaches, he combined the flavors and spices of India with modern cooking techniques, leading to surprising and unusual taste experiences. "In today's Gaggan, guests taste my memories," he says. Memories from India, but also from his visits to countries around the world. From a broccoli cookie melting in your mouth to—in the middle of dinner—a dessert waffle, with foie gras and coffee.



Street rat and brains with beet juice

The culinary experience at Gaggan also includes humor. For example, Gaggan says he serves his guests Thai street rats. "We catch them, feed them every six hours, for 21 days, with grass. We bleach them, then steam them. We serve the brain of the rat with beet juice. From street to table."

Gaggan's "yogurt explosion" is also served. This masterpiece consists of a bubble of yogurt filled with intense flavors. When you place the bubble in your mouth, it explodes, creating a flavorful experience. "Whenever I have traveled somewhere, I know my experiences will be reflected in my new menu."

The top chef learned a lot about molecular gastronomy from Ferran Adrià at El Bulli restaurant, which was voted best restaurant in the world several times. "Adrià is a great example for me, but most of my inspiration comes from life. By traveling, by meeting people and by learning about different cultures."







DINER DESIGNED SAUCES

CHEF ERIC CHUA SERVES UP *dressing* SUGGESTIONS THAT BRING PERSONALIZATION TO THE FOREFRONT.

WRITTEN BY

Eric Chua

Executive Chef, Singapore, Vietnam,
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1 Balinese Sambal Matah Honey Mayo: The vibrant flavors of Bali really shine in sambal matah honey mayo, a delicious fusion that brings together traditional Indonesian sambal and the creaminess of mayo. This dressing starts with finely chopped shallots and fragrant lemongrass, infused with red chili and kaffir lime leaf. A hint of shrimp paste and fish sauce adds depth, while fresh lime juice brightens the mix. To balance the savory elements, we've stirred in zesty Dijon mustard and a touch of honey, and finished with a sprinkle of black pepper. This dressing is perfect for drizzling over salads, grilled meats, or even as a dipping sauce for your favorite appetizers.

2 Koh Kong Sauce: Drawing on a Cambodian classic, this zesty lemongrass fish sauce combines the heat of red and green chilies with the fresh, citrusy notes of lemongrass and lime juice. A delightful balance of spice and tang, fragrant cilantro leaves, and the subtle warmth of green peppercorns add depth, while garlic, shallot, and ginger provide a rich aromatic base. A touch of sugar rounds out the flavors, enhancing the natural sweetness of the ingredients. The sauce's tangy and spicy notes work well with grilled chicken or fish, or use it as a dipping sauce for fresh or fried spring rolls.

3 Coconut Peanut Sauce: Vietnamese coconut peanut sauce combines the nutty goodness of peanut butter with the smooth texture of mayonnaise, enhanced by the subtle heat of chili powder. Infused with chicken seasoning powder and a touch of sugar, it offers a perfect balance of savory and sweet. The addition of condensed coconut milk provides a luscious creaminess, while a hint of lime juice adds a refreshing tang. Finished with the nutty aroma of sesame oil and a sprinkle of crushed peanuts, this sauce is perfect for drizzling over salads, grilled meats, or fresh spring rolls, offering a unique blend of flavors.

4 "Sisig" Dressing: A Filipino twist to an all-time favorite: sisig dressing. This vibrant blend captures the essence of the Philippines with its creamy mayonnaise base, enriched by the zesty kick of calamansi and vinegar. Infused with liquid seasoning and a hint of red chili, it delivers a perfect balance of heat and tang. Fresh garlic cloves and a dash of pepper round out this flavorful dressing, perfect for adding a taste of the tropics to salads, grilled meats, or even as a unique dip. Add it as a topping in tacos or wraps for a unique twist or drizzle over rice bowls for added flavor.

5 Curry Kapitan Mayo: Curry Kapitan Mayo is a Malaysian-inspired dressing that transforms any dish with its rich and exotic flavors. This unique creation is crafted from a traditional rempah, a fragrant spice paste that forms the heart of many Malaysian dishes. The rempah features a harmonious blend of red onion, ginger, lemongrass, garlic, turmeric powder, and chili paste, all brought to life by the distinctive zest of kaffir lime leaves. These ingredients are expertly combined with creamy mayonnaise, creating a perfect balance of spice and smoothness. The result is a versatile dressing that enhances salads and sandwiches and serves as a delightful dip.

6 Nam Yum Mayo: Discover Nam Yum Mayo, a vibrant Thai dressing that brings together the rich creaminess of mayonnaise with the bold, zesty flavors of traditional Thai cuisine. This unique blend features the tangy brightness of lime juice paired with the savory depth of fish sauce, creating a harmonious balance of sweet, salty, and sour. The addition of sugar and chicken seasoning powder enhances its umami profile, while fresh garlic and cilantro roots infuse it with an aromatic punch. Perfect for drizzling over salads, grilled meats, or as a dipping sauce. Enjoy a taste of Thailand with this versatile and tantalizing dressing!

7 Salted Egg Sauce: Singaporean salted egg emulsion—a unique delightful fusion that elevates any dish with its rich and savory profile. This dressing combines the creamy texture of classic coleslaw dressing with the bold, umami flavor of salted egg. Infused with aromatic curry leaves and a kick of spicy chili padi, it's a perfect blend of tradition and innovation. Whether you're dressing up a salad or using it as a dip, this emulsion promises an unforgettable taste experience that captures the essence of Singaporean cuisine. The sauce even works well when paired with roasted vegetables, enhancing the taste of roasted broccoli, cauliflower, or potatoes.

8 Honey Mala Sauce: Singapore's honey mala dressing—a captivating burst of flavors that will elevate your dishes to new heights and is highly addictive. This dressing blends the luscious sweetness of rock sugar honey sauce with the bold, fiery essence of mala liquid seasoning. Finished with a splash of lime juice, it offers a perfect balance of sweet, spicy, and tangy notes. Ideal for those seeking a dynamic and exciting taste experience, this dressing is sure to enhance any culinary creation. It pairs exceptionally well with a variety of dishes, whether enhancing the freshness of Asian slaws with bold flavors or providing a captivating contrast to the mildness of tofu.

Some of Chef Eric's Diner Designed flavor selections:

- Sichuan mala
- Green chili
- Bulgogi
- Gochujang
- Roasted corn
- Salted egg
- Ponzu sauce
- Togarashi
- Kaffir lime
- Tahini



5 Curry Kapitan Mayo

8 Honey Mala Sauce

7 Salted Egg Sauce

2 Koh Kong Sauce

1 Balinese Sambal Matah Honey Mayo

6 Nam Yum Mayo

3 Coconut Peanut Sauce

4 "Sisig" Dressing








HERO INGREDIENT

INTRODUCTION TO FERMENTATION

CHAMPIONED BY CHEFS INCLUDING DAVID ZILBER
AND SAM BLACK, FERMENTATION IS MUCH MORE
THAN JUST THE *future* OF FLAVOR...





Imagine transforming simple ingredients into culinary masterpieces that burst with flavors you haven't experienced before—that's fermentation. In chemistry, fermentation is defined as the transformation of sugar into other substances by microorganisms in the absence of oxygen. But in the kitchen, fermentation is an artful skill that, when harnessed, helps propel foods and their flavors into the culinary stratosphere. "It allows us to experiment and channel our inner child as it can be very personalized and creative," notes Unilever's Research and Development Director, Sarah Lieder. Though there isn't one simple recipe for fermenting, some hero ingredients to include are water, salt, yeast, and sugars, which help create an environment that allows the key element to evolve. Beyond these conditions, the most important component of fermentation is time.

The history of fermentation goes thousands of years back and has roots in cultures across the world—from ancient China to North Africa and Greece. Initially though, fermentation was used as a form of preserving foods with short natural expiry dates, like milk, fish, or meat. But as early as 7000 BC, people began using the process for creating new drinks or dishes. However, the health benefits of fermentation weren't properly understood until the 1900s, when scientists discovered the positive impact of good bacteria in fermented milk on the human digestive system.

Since then, fermented dishes have become embraced not only for their flavors but also for the fact that they can make certain ingredients, such as fibrous vegetables, easier for the human body to digest. Kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, sourdough, yogurt, and cheese—all of these kitchen staples are the result of fermentation and the same goes for many popular alcoholic drinks, as the process breaks down glucose found in fruits and vegetables to form a natural source of the alcohol ethanol.

Though part of the mass food production industry for decades, the popularity of home fermentation has been on a steady incline over the past decade as wider audiences started valuing the active probiotic cultures

in fermented foods. Coincidentally, the complex flavors crafted by this process began penetrating even the most prestigious culinary circles. Not only does it make food more nutritious, but fermentation also has the job of elevating the aroma and pushing the boundaries of what a certain ingredient can taste like. "The sensation and new flavor profiles, but also textures—they trigger interest and curiosity. We know how something tastes, but how are we going to bring fermentation in the kitchen? That's where I see it evolving," explains Evert Vermandel, Unilever Food Solutions' Global Lead Innovation Chef. Both Vermandel and Lieder are excited about the prospects of fermentation in battling food waste, too. With products like vinegars and fermented sauces, the process offers a possibility of extracting good flavors from ingredients that are past their prime and building personalized flavors on top of it. "The possibilities are almost limitless," says Lieder.

Something that started as a means of survival is today a tool in crafting new pathways in both haute cuisine and home cooking, connecting the past, present, and future of food. More than just a trend, fermentation is an exciting way of pushing culinary boundaries into uncharted territories.

AN EVOLVING PROCESS

10,000 BC

THE BIRTH OF FERMENTATION

In north Africa, milk of camels, sheep, goats, and cattle became the first products to be fermented in an effort to **extend their poor longevity**.

In ancient China, the invention of a beer-like beverage called **kui**, made by mixing rice, honey, and the fruits of grape and hawthorn plants.

THE 7000 BC FIRST BREWS

500 AD

FERMENTATION FOR ALL!

Fermentation becomes widely spread **across different cultures** as a mean of preserving foods.

SOY 500 BC GOODNESS

Innovation in Chinese medicine recognizes the sterilization qualities of **fermented soybeans** when treating infected wounds.

1856

SAFETY FIRST

Louis Pasteur, the father of microbiology, officially develops a process that helps preserve food and drinks by heating them up and therefore killing harmful bacteria. Called **pasteurization**, it becomes an essential part of the fermentation process.

THE MAGIC OF MILK

Russian zoologist and bacteriologist Élie Metchnikoff discovers the benefits of **bacteria in fermented milk** for the human digestive system.

1900s

Before there was cooking, there was fermentation. In fact, before there were people, there was fermentation! This biochemical process is rooted in history, having been an important part of global cuisines for thousands of years. But prior to humans harnessing its power for expanding flavors and longevity of ingredients, fermentation was merely a natural accident that happened with time and transformed foods when they came into contact with bacteria. Wonder how it all started?

6000 BC

The earliest examples of ancient wine production takes place in Georgia, where grapes were **fermented to create** an alcoholic beverage.

AGE LIKE

FINE WINE

5500 BC

BIG

CHEESE

Born as a happy accident later discovered in Egyptian tomb murals, **cheese** emerges through the practice of storing milk in containers made from the stomachs of animals.

2000 BC

PASS THE

PICKLES

In the Middle East, the first documented pickling of **cucumbers** occurs.

The ancient Egyptians also discover that mixing flour and water together and leaving it to sit for a few days causes wild yeasts to start fermenting, resulting in the birth of the first leavened **bread**.

DAILY BREAD

3500-3000 BC

1970s

Developed over decades, **probiotics** become widely available as scientists create supplements with live bacteria and yeasts that support human digestion.

PROBIOTIC

GLORY

THE FUTURE

IS

Microbial fermentation is the basis of both culinary advancements and pharmaceutical products including vaccine components, anti-infectives, and many others.

NOW!

TODAY





THE

FUTURE

OF

FLAVOR

Taking the art of fermentation one step further, the culinary world has recently started embracing a new take on traditional methods. Using advanced tools and knowledge from food and biological sciences, we can step up from traditional methods and get (safely) access to the full potential of nature's texture and flavor diversity. Scientists search for new cultures that generate desired flavor and textures. Balancing the contribution of different microbes in a culture blend and finding optimal process conditions is the key to generating new fermented food concepts. Fermentation is turning into a creative tool. It allows chefs to create exciting textures, flavor profiles and give access to alternative protein sources, making it easier to serve customers with delicious textures and flavors.

Though still very much in the process of discovery, there is great potential in precision fermentation becoming part of the patchwork of gastronomy. The final products of this technique include proteins and fats with both a positive impact on both the body and the environment, making them a solid alternative to animal products. On the one hand, they can have higher amounts of protein and other nutrients. On the other, the excessive agricultural footprint of traditional ingredients can be relieved across the world.

Just like some of the other advanced culinary methods that were once considered revolutionary, it changes the way people look at ingredients and questions the impact of food on both the individual and their community. And just like the original mission of fermentation, its main goal is preservation—of food, of us, of the planet.

From left: Chef Philip Li and Chef Chris Zhong, UFS China.



TOP TIPS!



Whether you're an expert with fermentation or just beginning your journey with this magical process, here are some top tips that will ensure both success and safety when experimenting with different ingredients. No lab coat required!

1

QUALITY INGREDIENTS

Using fresh and organic raw vegetables ensures the best results, as they have natural yeasts that encourage the natural fermentation process.

2

STRONG HYGIENE

Always use clean vessels and utensils to avoid contamination of bacteria. Simple yet efficient, classic Mason jars are a great option for home fermentation, as glass doesn't stain or include any chemicals.

3

NON-IODIZED SALT

Non-iodized salts, such as sea salt, are a crucial component for fermentation because they don't contain additives that could potentially inhibit the process.

4

UNIFORMITY IS KEY

When cutting your vegetables, make sure to stick to uniform sizes to guarantee even fermentation and consistent results.

5

STARTER BRINE

For beginners, using a starter brine like salt, whey, or vinegar can help kickstart the fermentation process. This is especially useful for dishes like sauerkraut and kimchi.

6

STAY BELOW THE BRINE

All ingredients should be submerged below the brine to prevent mold growth and ensure proper fermentation.

7

NOT TOO HOT, NOT TOO COLD

Monitoring temperature is important, as fermentation works best at room temperature. Excessive heat or cold as well as temperature fluctuations can affect the process and the final product by preventing microbial growth.

8

WAIT IT OUT

Fermentation is a slow process, which means patience is of the essence. Allow enough time for the flavors to fully develop—rushing the process will lead to disappointing results.

Happy fermenting!

From left: Chef James Brown, *UFS UK & Ireland*;
Chef Eric Chua, *UFS South East Asia and South
Asia*; and Chef Thaís Gimenez, *UFS Brazil*.



Unilever
Food
Solutions



FUTURE
MENUS



CITATIONS

STREET FOOD COUTURE

The Forge (2024) *Trend Setter 3.0, Street Food Couture*. Chapter 300924.

Google search interest analysis for *Future Menus 2025 report*. Markets: USA, Canada, Brazil, UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines. Duration: August 2020 to July 2024.

Kantar Team (2024) *Global survey in the UFS e-panel*. Global results.
Sylvia Schöne and David Ehlers. Report ID: 316412774 | Q8135-54. September 2024.

BORDERLESS CUISINE

The Forge (2024) *Trend Setter 3.0, Borderless Cuisine*. Chapter 300924.

Google search interest analysis for *Future Menus 2025 report*. Markets: USA, Canada, Brazil, UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines. Duration: August 2020 to July 2024.

Kantar Team (2024) *Global survey in the UFS e-panel*. Global results.
Sylvia Schöne and David Ehlers. Report ID: 316412774 | Q8135-54. September 2024.

Rise of the Eastern Influence

In the United States, for example, migrants from China began settling from the mid-19th century, bringing their culinary traditions with them. Available at: <https://time.com/4211871/chinese-food-history/>.

Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Cambodia have all funded government-backed culinary diplomacy programs. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/20/food-diplomacy-countries-identity-culture-marketing-gastrodiplomacy-gastronativism/>.

South Korea, for its part, established a successful Korean Cuisine to the World Program in 2009 that aimed to promote Korean cuisine (or hansik) abroad and increase awareness of its health benefits and taste profile. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/t-magazine/korean-food-national-royal-cuisine.html>.

Now, 15 years later, hansik has entered the zeitgeist. Korean dishes like bibimbap (a rice bowl dish) and kimchi (fermented vegetables) are easily available in major cities across the West—with Korean food exports to the US rising to 1.74 billion dollars in 2023. Available at: <https://www.koreadailyus.com/korean-food-export-to-u-s-hits-record-high-due-to-increasing-popularity>.

Parasite introduced viewers to jjapaguri. Available at: <https://london.eater.com/2020/2/13/21134901/parasite-oscars-bong-joon-ho-jjapaguri-ram-don-steak-food-scene>.

Squid Game showed tteokbokki. Available at: <https://www.thetakeout.com/best-food-moments-in-squid-game-dalgona-cookie-candy-1850917251/>.

Speaking with NPR, Yang Joo-Pil, an official at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, explained that his department will “select about 10 food items each year for product placement in dramas.” Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/25/1226791305/korean-food-is-winning-over-palates-worldwide-including-the-world-of-haute-cuisi>.

On TikTok, the “koreanfood” hashtag has been used on over 860,000 posts. Available at: <https://www.tiktok.com/tag/koreanfood?lang=en>.

Throughout the 2020s, travelers have displayed greater willingness to venture off the beaten track and into new territory, with 40% of travelers opting to explore unfamiliar destinations. Available at: <https://amadeus.com/en/resources/research/destination-x-where-to-next>.

Travel is so high on consumers’ lists of priorities that 64% of global travelers say they aim to reduce other areas of their personal spending to prioritize leisure travel in 2024. Available at: <https://stories.hilton.com/2024trends-culture-experiences>.

Indeed, in 2023 the country’s capital of Seoul saw a 373.6% year-on-year increase in tourists. Available at: <https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-awarded-as-the-most-popular-destination-of-the-year/>.

Indeed, Chef Junghyun Park (whose Korean haute cuisine restaurant Atomix, based in NYC, was awarded two Michelin stars in 2021) has argued that his clientele are: “Very open to new cultures.” Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/25/1226791305/korean-food-is-winning-over-palates-worldwide-including-the-world-of-haute-cuisi>.

Experts, for example, predict Burmese and Filipino cuisines—from the South East Asian countries of Myanmar and the Philippines—may emerge as new players in the global food space. Available at: <https://middleby.co.uk/how-global-cuisine-is-taking-over-the-uk/>.

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