

# Culinary Trends

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# WHAT'S HOT IN 2014

## Introduction

Taking the time to understand what may be the next big thing in Foodservice can shape how operators and consumers approach and interact with food and beverages in both the near-term and far-term. The National Restaurant Association™ surveyed professional chefs, members of the American Culinary Federation, on which food, cuisines, beverages and culinary themes will be hot trends on restaurant menus in 2014. The "What's Hot in 2014" survey was conducted in the fall of 2013 among nearly 1,300 chefs. The forecast has been released, and we're pleased to share information with you as you move forward into 2014.

## National Restaurant Association's "What's Hot in 2014" Results

The results of the National Restaurant Association's annual survey of chefs are in: Foam and bacon-flavored chocolate are out; fried chicken, barbecue, Italian cuisine and eggs Benedict are still in; and ramen, pickles and Southeast Asian cuisine are getting there.

Once again, locally sourced meat, seafood and produce remain at the top of the trends, along with environmental sustainability and children's nutrition. Gluten-free food moved from 9<sup>th</sup> place to 5<sup>th</sup> place on the annual top 10 list and was joined, at 8<sup>th</sup> place, by non-wheat pasta – made with flour such as quinoa, rice and buckwheat – which jumped up from 12<sup>th</sup> place last year. Many restaurant chains responded to the increase in demand for gluten-free items in 2013, with **P.F. Chang's**, **California Pizza Kitchen**, **Dunkin' Donuts** and **The Counter** all introducing new items to appeal to consumers who are avoiding the wheat protein.

"Today's consumers are more interested than ever in what they eat and where their food comes from, and that is reflected in our menu trends research," Hudson Riehle, Senior Vice President of the National Restaurant Association's research and knowledge group, said in a statement. "True trends – as opposed to temporary fads – show the evolution of the wider shifts of our modern society over time, and focus on the provenance of various food and beverage items, unique aspects of how they are prepared and presented, as well as the dietary profiles of those meals."



## TOP 20 PREDICTED TRENDS FOR 2014

1. Locally Sourced Meats and Seafood
2. Locally Grown Produce
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Healthful kids' meals
5. Gluten-free cuisine
6. Hyper-local sourcing (e.g. restaurant gardens)
7. Children's nutrition
8. Non-wheat noodles/pasta (e.g. quinoa, rice, buckwheat)
9. Sustainable seafood
10. Farm/estate branded items
11. Nose-to-tail/root-to-stalk cooking (e.g. reduce food waste by using entire animal/plant)
12. Whole grain items in kids' meals
13. Health/nutrition
14. New cuts of meat (e.g. Denver steak, pork flat iron, tri-tip)
15. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth)
16. Ethnic-inspired breakfast items (e.g. Asian-flavored syrups, Chorizo scrambled eggs, coconut milk pancakes)
17. Grazing (e.g. small-plate sharing/snacking instead of traditional meals)
18. Non-traditional fish (e.g. branzino, Arctic char, barramundi)
19. Fruit/vegetable children's side items
20. Half-portions/smaller portions for a smaller price

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**Panera Bread** and **Chipotle Mexican Grill** both undertook initiatives to promote the provenance of their food earlier this year. **Chipotle** introduced an arcade-style game and a video promoting the chain's "Food with Integrity" message, and **Panera Bread** launched a campaign titled "Live Consciously, Eat Deliciously," that promoted its food sourcing as well as its charity efforts.

The trends that made the biggest leap in the survey were nose-to-tail/root-to-stalk cooking (now at 11<sup>th</sup> place), pickling, ramen, dark greens and Southeast Asian cuisine. The ones with the largest drop on the "hot trend list" were Greek yogurt, sweet potato fries, new cuts of meat (such as the pork flat iron or the Denver steak), grass-fed beef and organic coffee.

Although Southeast Asian cuisine made the biggest jump in trendiness among ethnic cuisines, Peruvian and Korean cuisine also made the top-five list in that category, along with "regional ethnic" and "ethnic fusion."

The top five alcohol trends were micro-distilled/artisan spirits; locally produced beer/wine/spirits; onsite barrel-aged drinks; "culinary cocktails" that use fresh or savory ingredients or other items usually found in kitchens rather than behind the bar; and regional signature cocktails.

Chains launching new regional signature cocktails in 2013 included Brazilian churrascaria chain **Fogo de Chão**, which introduced a line of variations on Brazil's national drink, the Caipirinha, and **Joe's Crab Shack**, which rolled out several "Moonshine Cocktails" intended to reflect the chain's low country and bayou heritage. For the full "What's Hot in 2014" results, go to <http://www.restaurant.org/Downloads/PDFs/News-Research/WhatsHot/What-s-Hot-2014.pdf>.

## Additional Analysis of "What's Hot in 2014"

### Top New Trends in 2014



### Perennial Favorites in 2014

Fried chicken
Italian cuisine
Frying
Barbeque
Eggs Benedict
Oatmeal
French toast
Grilling
Fruit desserts
Comfort foods

### Steady in Top 20 Food Trends since 2009



Locally grown produce
Healthful kids' meals
Gluten-free cuisine
Sustainable seafood
Health/nutrition
New cuts of meat
Ancient grains
Ethnic-inspired breakfast items
Non-traditional fish
Fruit/vegetable sides in kids' meals

### Hottest Trends in 10 years

Environmental sustainability
Local sourcing
Health/nutrition (e.g. low-fat, reduced sodium, whole grain)
Children's nutrition
Gluten-free cuisine
Other

For more information about ConAgra Foodservice, please call 1-800-357-6543 or visit [www.conagrafoodservice.com](http://www.conagrafoodservice.com)

Source:  National Restaurant Association's "What's Hot in 2014" Culinary Forecast