



*Hibiscus sugar crystals add gem-like sparkle to this tangy-sweet mascarpone-strawberry tart.*

## SUMMER 2019 TRENDS AT A GLANCE

- Bright, shiny, glittery garnishes are livening up cocktails, appetizers, desserts, and more!
- Cannabinoids and medium-chain triglycerides are taking the functional diet world by storm.
- Make it bright & bold!
- Mix & match: QSRs are using bento boxes to maximize customization.
- The future is now: foods that fight for a more sustainable world.
- Ice cream season: chill out with summer desserts.

# Trends

SUMMER 2019

## Pearls, Dusts, Crystals, and Powders

Chefs and mixologists are using innovative garnishes to give their dishes and drinks a signature look and taste.

- By using spherification (and reverse spherification) chefs can give guests the surprise of burst flavor, from pearls filled with balsamic vinegar, passion fruit, green tea...even seaweed.
- Flavor crystals (typically sugar plus another bolder flavor reduced down to a crisp nugget) can add texture and whimsical color to foods in every daypart and upgrade classic dishes in an unexpected way. Try ginger, hibiscus, and habanero!
- Fennel pollen is a powdery, bright gold dust that adds both color and anise-like flavors to dressings, sauces, meats, and vegetable dishes (see photo at right).
- Nutrient-dense mushroom powder is said by some to boost immunity and give a punch of umami to things as disparate as coffee, burgers, popcorn, even eye cream!

## Medicinals on the Menu

Many restaurants are infusing ingredients like cannabinoids (CBD, the non-intoxicating component of the cannabis plant) and MCT oil (medium-chain triglycerides) into recipes to appeal to the wellness crowd.

- Hemp-based CBD has been touted to reduce anxiety, ease chronic pain, induce sleep, and treat acne. Although claims are unproven, customers are clamoring for cocktails, baked goods, and dips (like hummus and guacamole) containing it.
- MCT oil is said to help people lose weight, build muscle mass, boost endurance, and help with dementia and seizures. Try it in coffee, ice cream, salad dressings, smoothies, and deviled eggs.

## Pop of Color

Brown, bland-looking food is so 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today's modern diners (read: Millennials and Gen Z), want vibrant, eye-catching meals. Whether it's to show off on social media or just bask in the glory of their beautiful plates, unique ingredients and garnishes can make or break a dish.



- Watermelon radishes have been chefs' darlings this year—their bright pink color and crunchy texture lend themselves to a variety of uses (see photo at left).
- Highlight your summer menu with sun-colored yellow squash blossoms' slightly bitter flavor and tender texture.
- Infuse rice, cheesecakes, bagels, and beverages with the deep blue/purple tones of butterfly pea tea.

## Eat Cute: Fast-Casual Bento Boxes

These ultra-practical compartmentalized serving vessels have been used in Japan and other Asian countries for centuries. Now with today's demand for customized meals, bento boxes are making inroads into other culinary genres.

- The name is derived from an ancient Song Dynasty slang word for convenient.
- Most foodservice establishments fill the compartments with different foods like salad, noodles, vegetables, and dessert, while some are catching onto the trend of *kyaraben* (edible fantasy creations—cute characters like riceball baby pandas) that are irresistibly Instagrammable.
- The format lends itself to just about any cuisine or restaurant type: school lunches, office deliveries, on-the-go sushi, and barbecue.



# Trends

SUMMER 2019



## Future Foods

Everyday diets are increasingly affecting the environment. In response, chefs and scientists alike are creating ingredients that use less water, fewer land acres, and lower greenhouse emissions.

- Plant-based patties like Beyond Meat and Impossible Burgers are taking the fast casual sector—and the stock market—by storm.
- Mock meats made with wheat gluten, also known as seitan, have a centuries-long history, but have also seen flavor improvements, especially when fried like the “duck” curry in the [photo above](#).
- Lab-grown meat companies are using stem cells to create cruelty-free, synthetic meats, but mass distribution is a few years away.
- Good old-fashioned veggie burgers are also more appealing with the addition of flavors like beet, falafel, and black beans.
- Never say never: insects are already making inroads through cricket flours (think pasta dishes), spicy fried grasshoppers (chapulines—a trendy street food), and ant larvae (escamoles—sometimes called Mexican caviar).

## The Hot List

- Plastic reduction
- Japanese souffle pancakes
- Licorice root
- Celery juice
- Brothless ramen
- Mushroom coffee
- Clean labels
- Zhug
- Compressed watermelon
- Bergamot
- Coconut ranch dressing
- Unusual service vessels
- CBD and MCT
- Kelp
- Mesquite flour
- Fruit/veg purees
- Eco-friendly packaging
- Soft-serve ice cream
- Orange wines
- Doner kebabs
- Cured egg yolks
- Baru nuts
- Vegan soul food
- Trout
- American teas
- Shio koji
- Dirty horchata
- Foods of the former SSRs
- Celebrating simple produce
- Bhel puri
- Micro nasturtium leaves
- Regional rice varieties

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- **In Season**—a quarterly look at what’s fresh now and how to use it
- **Trends**—forecasts what is on the culinary horizon four times per year

## Frozen Fantasies

Over-the-top, Instagram-worthy treats like freakshakes, alcoholic slushies, indulgent sundaes, and exotic ice creams are expected to draw in customers all summer long.

- Flavors such as Mango with Sticky Rice, Roasted Turmeric, Goat Cheese Beet Swirl, and Earl Grey Citrus Teacake have expanded the ice cream category from a favorite children’s dessert to a sophisticated, versatile daypart.
- Piled high with M&Ms, pretzels, big lollipops, and gummy worms, dripping with salted caramel, Mexican hot chocolate, and fruit purees, topped with whipped cream, marshmallow cream, and meringue...when it come to freakshakes, the crazier the better. Anything goes!
- Upgraded slushie and sno-cone ideas include the ever-favorite frose, frozen sangria, even icy bloody marys. Non-alcohol versions with nutraceutical add-ins like ginger puree, maca root, whey protein, and blue spirulina are popular with the clean eating set.
- A cherry on top and then some: like freakshakes, sundaes have taken a walk on the wild side with toppings such as whole pieces of cake, colorful macarons, Belgian waffles, and cotton candy.
- Pet-friendly establishments are enticing dog lovers with frozen “bones” made with bananas, peanut butter, and melons.
- The flipside to these zany sweets is authenticity: pure vanilla bean gelato, fruit-only sorbets, simple banana splits, and old-fashioned malts.

## Resources:

Berries and Spice  
Datassential  
Delish  
Eater  
Fine Dining Lovers  
Flavor & the Menu  
Food Business  
FoodBytes  
Food Navigator-USA  
FSR Magazine  
Gizmodo  
iNews

Nation’s Restaurant News  
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