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*Bright, bold seasonal ingredients like tomatoes, cucumbers, and garlic combine to make a delicious, chilled summer soup.*

## SUMMER - 2021 TRENDS AT A GLANCE

- Some Like It Hot: Highlight Seasonal Summer Fruits & Vegetables
- Healthy You, Healthy Planet: Immunity-Boosting Ingredients in Demand
- Comfort Foods Get Fancy!
- Food From The Earth: Plant-Based Booms

# Trends

SUMMER - 2021

## Seasonal Summer

As temperatures rise, vaccinations increase, and more restaurants open up to full capacity, socially starved customers are ready to get out and dine on delicious summer recipes prepared with colorful, flavorful fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Tomatoes hit peak flavor over the next few months. Highlight their vibrant color and tangy-sweet flavor in cold/raw preparations such as gazpacho (see photo to left), pasta salads, bruschetta, even a unique sorbet.
- Showcase sweet corn in spicy salsas, green salads, on the cob slathered with crumbled cheese and fresh herbs, puréed with cream and chiles, or in vegetable tarts.
- Domestic stone fruits like apricots, cherries, nectarines, and peaches, are at their best during the summer months. Incorporate them into ice cream, green salads, charred meat dishes, fiery marinades, smoothies, and craft cocktails.
- Okra, the most important vegetable in the cuisines of the African diaspora, is particularly timely over the summer. This versatile item can be prepared in myriad ways—think deep fried in cornmeal or tempura batter, pickled with mushrooms, stewed with seafood, or grilled alongside ribs.
- California strawberries are at their plump and juiciest at this time of the year. Bake in pies, freeze in popsicles, stir into scones and quick breads, top açai bowls, and serve on cheese plates.
- Watermelon slices are synonymous with hot weather. Refreshing and subtly sweet, their firm, granular texture and deep color work well in many beverages, especially frozen and chilled cocktails (and mocktails).

## Boosting Immunity

The pandemic put health in the spotlight, perhaps like never before. Investing in personal strength by focusing on immunity-boosting foods has skyrocketed into one of the most popular dietary trends to come out this difficult past year. What should chefs highlight to capture these diners?



- Garlic and onions not only give recipes a burst of bold flavor, but they also contain sulfurous compounds that are thought to help fight inflammation, lower cholesterol, and decrease blood pressure.
- Leafy greens, especially spinach and kale, are rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, and many antioxidants. Fill your menus with green salads and lightly sautéed side dishes using these superfoods.
- Berries are brain food. Blueberries' rich color comes from anthocyanins that are said to help with inflammation and lessen oxidation. Toss these fruits into drinks, green salads, barbecue and chimichurri sauces, pies and tarts, or breakfast items like oatmeal and pancakes.
- Flavoring agents ginger and turmeric are popular in Asian cuisine and desserts. They may help decrease inflammatory diseases and reduce nausea. Use them in stir-fries, curries, hot teas, dips like hummus and cucumber-yogurt, egg dishes, meat glazes, bean soups, and salad dressings.
- The bowl trend so popular with Gen Z and Millennials lends itself well to immune-boosting ingredients such as kimchi, roasted Brussels sprouts, avocados, whole grain sorghum, flaxseed, and Shiitake mushrooms.
- Offer healthy shots at the bar—think wheatgrass, fresh citrus, ginger, carrot juice, and apple cider vinegar.



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## High-Quality Comfort

Chicken fingers and pizza ruled menus throughout the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, with people opting for familiarity over innovation. Now as things begin to transition to the new normal, savvy chefs are reworking traditional recipes with sophisticated add-ons and creative upgrades.

- Burgers of all types (both animal- and plant-based) continue to sell well, especially when made with the finest base ingredients (top-grade meats and superior grains/vegetables). Toppings are more important than ever, so don't skimp on the caramelized onions, tender romaine lettuce, juicy tomato slices, thick bacon, or adventurous sauces.
- Lobster mac & cheese was popular before the pandemic, but continued to sell well along with other iterations of this American classic. Try adding roasted Brussels sprouts, crispy pancetta, tender short rib meat, roasted morels, or fried chicken.
- Give pizzas and flatbreads a summer makeover by topping with charred zucchini, heirloom tomatoes, grilled melon and ham, house-made pesto, or balsamic-glazed figs.

## The Hot List

- Soul Food
- Pickled Watermelon
- QR Code Menus
- Oat Milk
- Climatarianism
- Hard Seltzer
- Ajvar
- Kitchen Robotics
- Snacking
- War On Waste
- Filipino Recipes
- Vegetable Salads
- Contactless Delivery
- Global Condiments
- Labor Solutions
- Grilling & Charring
- Health Halos
- Low-Alc Drinks
- Whole Fruit Ice Creams
- Edible Insects
- Travel By Eating
- Restaurant Brands
- Tajin On Mango & Melons
- BBQ++
- Peaches
- Open Air Dining
- Kebabs
- Ketogenic Diet
- Block Party Dinners
- Yuba
- Meal Kits
- Eastern European Cuisine
- Dining Indoors
- Produce "Walktails"
- Total Transparency
- Sweet & Spicy
- Untraditional Coleslaws
- Mexican Elotes

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## Plant-Based Explosion

First there were vegetarians, then vegans, followed by flexitarians...and now the diet gaining the most traction is known as climatarianism. This movement is fueled by the desire to know where your food comes from, how it was grown, and what impact it may have on the environment. Plant-based foods figure prominently into this style of eating, with fresh fruits and vegetables being the stars of the plate.

- Appetizers such as whipped Burrata with macerated strawberries and rhubarb, roasted beets with grapefruit and labne, and charred Brussels sprouts tossed in Romesco sauce are all examples of bold flavors that don't need animal protein to feel satisfying.
- Tacos remain hot! Offer plant-based versions with fiery charred cauliflower as the main attraction, topped with creamy guacamole, pickled watermelon radishes, shredded green cabbage, and charred green onions.
- Puréed produce such as mango, blackberries, cantaloupe, cucumbers, and pineapples make ideal sorbet. Garnish with diced fruit, chopped nuts, sesame seeds, or a sprinkle of matcha for social media appeal.
- And veg-forward doesn't always mean meat-free, but rather a higher ratio of fresh produce than animal protein. Garnishing pasta dishes with crumbled Italian sausage, dotting green salads with lardon, adding bits pork belly to kimchi fried rice, and tossing green beans with salumi vinaigrette are all examples of incorporating small amounts of meat for bursts of flavor and texture.

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