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## WINTER - 2022 TRENDS AT A GLANCE

- Turkey is great, but side dishes are where chefs get to showcase their creativity.
- Restaurants are changing gears when it comes to catering options.
- Ring in the New Year with festive holiday drinks.
- Labor shortages are challenging the entire industry—which strategies can mitigate problems?

# Trends

WINTER - 2022

## Creative Holiday Sides

This season is a time to celebrate through foods that reflect the growing global nature of our families and friends. Mix and max different cultural side dishes with traditional ingredients to modernize the menu.

- It pays to be holiday inclusive: the winter season includes multiple celebrations including Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Eve. Offering event-specific and seasonal specials attracts more customers and honors their traditions.
- Supply chain shortages are one of the biggest obstacles affecting foodservice, especially in the meat, poultry, seafood, and egg categories. Fresh produce is a cost-effective option as center of the plate. Veg-focused eating is at an all-time high with no signs of slowing, meaning these dishes meet customer expectations while driving down budgets.
- 62% of surveyed diners say they crave traditional comfort foods over the holidays. Think stuffing, mashed Markon First Crop® (MFC) Potatoes, pumpkin pie, apple-cranberry beverages—all with a twist. Updating classics can be as easy as incorporating global flavors like spicy chile peppers, tahini, yuzu, or hibiscus.
- Plant-based eating continues to grow; take care to menu plenty of options for the wellness crowd, whether meat-free or proteins used as a garnish.
- Elevate tender, subtly sweet Ready-Set-Serve (RSS) Trimmed Green Beans by wrapping in prosciutto and topping with crumbled goat cheese.
- Give sweet, earthy Butternut squash notes of umami with Japanese miso paste and a hint of salty soy sauce (see middle photo).



## Catering 2.0

As the world shifts with each new challenge and more companies are moving to a hybrid home-office split, restaurants are transforming the way they cater to businesses.

- The days of large, buffet-style platters are fading; today's catered functions prefer individually packaged meals that help maintain social distancing and have fewer opportunities for viral or bacterial exposures. Savvy operators will make this fun and interactive by branding wrappers and boxes and using eco-friendly materials.
- Virtual restaurant brands are on the increase. Utilizing existing kitchen space for multiple brands to prepare and package dishes for off-premise menus cuts back on rent and labor costs.
- Offer cocktails in resealable pouches—space saving and easy to pack and deliver, these bags can be personalized with company logos or themes.
- Twist-top glass jars serve as a decorative way to present desserts—especially when vibrant fruit colors shine through.
- Special holiday office and healthcare meals can be ideal for group celebrations; portion and package seasonal favorites like turkey with mashed MFC Potatoes and winter squash for Christmas; brisket, kugel, and potato latkes for Hanukkah; catfish, macaroni and cheese, and RSS Chopped Collard Greens for Kwanzaa; and black-eyed peas, ham hocks, and pickled RSS Red Cabbage for New Year's Eve.
- Healthy ingredients will get extra focus in January and February. Catering menus that highlight on-trend diets such as plant-based, immunity-boosting, and keto will be in strong demand.



# Trends

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## Holiday Beverages

Specialty drinks are a hallmark of the holiday season. From pumpkin-spiced coffee to apple cider sangria and winter citrus spritzers, now is the time to promote both seasonal fruit cocktails and non-alcohol options.

- Cranberry and pomegranate drinks make a bold statement with their vibrant color and distinct flavors. Mix with Champagne or vodka for cocktails or RSS Lemonade for the growing mocktail crowd (see photo above).
- Yuzu, the wrinkled, Asian citrus fruit, is extremely fragrant and too sour to eat out of hand, making it an excellent choice for winter drinks. Cited by several sources as being on-trend in 2022, it can be used in many beverages as well as cross utilized in salad dressings, sauces, and marinades.
- Pumpkin margaritas and cran-apple sangrias pair deliciously with tacos, mole enchiladas, and chiles en nogada on menus that offer Mexican food.
- Antioxidant-rich berries such as MFC Strawberries, raspberries, and fresh currants make ideal sodas and smoothies for the wellness crowd.

## The Hot List

- South American Cuisines
- Eco-Friendly Packaging
- Tik Tok Food Influencers
- Yuzu
- Fruity Vinegars
- Shareable Snacks
- Frybread Tacos
- Functional Mushrooms
- Interactive Food
- Black Salt
- Transparency
- Cranberries
- Urban Farming
- Cottage Foods
- Celebrity Collaborations
- Holiday Specials
- Grilled Jerk Cauliflower
- Digital Menus
- Boozeless Cocktails
- Hibiscus
- Supply Chain Disruptions
- Filipino Pop-Ups
- Climate Concerns
- Healthy Kids' Menus
- Experiential Dining
- Cardamom
- Kitchen Innovations
- Wild Game Renaissance
- Wellness
- Virtual Restaurant Brands
- Zero Waste
- Nuts & Seeds
- Robots
- Veg Meat & Seafood
- Meal Kits
- Plant Milks
- Cross Utilization
- Covid Frustrations

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## Labor Shortcuts

Near the top of the past year's challenges is the need for consistent, qualified staffing. Higher wages, benefit packages, signing bonuses, childcare...operators are utilizing many strategies to retain employees. Among those is the budget-friendly method of incorporating more pre-cut and lightly prepped ingredients to reduce back-of-house work.

- RSS salads and blends remove the need for messy washing and dangerous chopping as well as reducing storage allotments, waste removal costs, and employee injuries. With so many mix options available, operators don't need to stock multiple base lettuces.
- Workhorse ingredients like broccoli, carrots, celery, and onions can be purchased in a variety of cuts and sizes, erasing hours of work better spent on creativity.
- MFC Trimmed Leeks are lightly prepped, meaning they are trimmed of their green top and roots, reducing carton weight and cooler space needs. From box to a light rinse, these multi-purpose ingredients are ready for soups, sauces, and sides.
- Cross utilization of products is an ideal way to expand the menu without adding SKUs. Ingredients can be prepared with different techniques (raw, roasted, charred, pureed, fried, etc.) to new textures and flavors.
- Fermenting and jamming extends shelf-life while incorporating gut-healthy produce into all dayparts and menu categories.

### Sources:

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Nation's Restaurant News	Today



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