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SPRING - 2022 TRENDS AT A GLANCE

- St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Cinco de Mayo, and Mother's Day—spring is loaded with holidays to showcase seasonal flavors.
- Are you maximizing take-out potential?
- Island Time: Caribbean ingredients come into focus.
- Cheese and charcuterie boards are now their own menu category loaded with sharable ingredients.

Trends

SPRING - 2022

Seasonal Holidays

Now is the time to plan spring holiday-themed menus that showcase ingredients at their flavor peak. Set the stage for diners to celebrate together whether in-house or take away.

- Creole and Cajun flavors dominate Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday menus. Pair cornmeal-fried okra and grilled corn with boil-and-eat shrimp, add vibrant Markon First Crop® (MFC) Red Bell Peppers to jambalaya, and turn up the heat in gumbo with spicy chiles. Wedges of sweet watermelon make a healthy dessert.
- Go green for St. Patrick's Day! Traditional (and modernized) Irish recipes reign on this feast day. Add Ready-Set-Serve® (RSS) Shredded Cabbage or Kale to mashed potatoes (colcannon), top shepherd's pies with smashed peas, and stuff cabbage leaves with corned beef and barley. Stack your cocktail (and mocktail) menu with vibrant green drinks like green tomato Bloody Marys and matcha-basil-vodka highballs.
- Get creative with Easter ham sides like RSS Trimmed Green Beans with shallots and bacon, ricotta phyllo tarts with MFC Asparagus, and harissa-roasted MFC Carrots.
- Guacamole is *the* dish of Cinco de Mayo. Use RSS Pico de Gallo Guacamole to reduce back-of-house labor—no more peeling, pitting, and mashing. Stir and serve!
- Mother's Day brunch is one of the busiest days on restaurant calendars. Highlight spring vegetables such as MFC Asparagus, artichoke hearts, fresh peas, fava beans, RSS Baby Spinach, ramps, and morels. Fresh berries are a hallmark of this holiday. Use ruby red MFC Strawberries on waffles, in green salads, flaky tarts, and a variety of drinks.

Take Out Solutions

Delivery and take out have gone from an operator's pandemic survival necessity to a solid revenue generator that is here to stay. Ensuring food arrives as deliciously intended is critical to satisfied customers and repeat business. Planning ahead can streamline efficiencies and improve off-premise quality.



- Take the trickiness out of salad delivery by including certain steps beforehand, like packing hot and cold ingredients separately, skipping sliced tomatoes in favor of whole MFC Grape or Cherry Tomatoes that don't seep, serve house-made dressings on the side, and using hearty greens such as RSS Kale, RSS Collard Greens, RSS Shredded Cabbage, and RSS Heritage Blend that are less prone to wilt.
- Or skip the lettuces and feature grain-based salads and sides made with RSS Brussels Sprouts, MFC Fennel, RSS Sweet Baby Broccoli, and RSS Broccoli and Cauliflower Florets.
- Invest in proper packaging that is sturdy and leak-proof. Reduce plastic and paper waste by packing cutlery and napkins upon request only. Using sustainable materials is another way to meet eco-conscious customers' expectations and build brand loyalty.
- Which foods travel best? BBQ, grain salads, cold dips, sushi, acai/veggie bowls, and pizza. For pasta, tacos, and burgers, pack components separately.
- Consider jumping into the growing sector of ghost kitchens that reduce staffing and leasing budgets, as well as create cross utilization options for better ingredient ordering.
- And finally, always communicate your efforts through menus, signage, and social media.



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Trends

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Food Board Frenzy

Cheese plates, charcuterie combos, crudite boards...whatever the term, these sharable meals allow diners to mix and match a variety of sweet and salty ingredients. Today's chefs have expanded the concept, offering an endless variety of craveable themes that are fun for groups and parties.

- Go Mediterranean with gooey Burrata, shaved Parmesan, briny olives, charred cherry tomatoes, **lemony arugula pesto sauce**, salty shaved hams, and **baked grape-focaccia**.
- Wellness options target healthy diners that want to treat themselves with immunity-boosting ingredients like **fermented carrots**, pickled cauliflower, chia-beet hummus, **charred shishito peppers**, and turmeric-spiked yogurt.
- Offer a sandwich theme with sliced meats, buns and breads, unique spreads and sauces, and toppers like crunchy lettuces, creamy avocados, and tangy tomatoes.
- Pack dessert boards with chocolate candies, colorful berries, **tiny pavlovas**, lemon curd, melon balls, banana bread squares, and edible flowers for holiday celebrations like Easter and Mother's Day.

The Hot List

- Mushroom Fever
- Renewed Sustainability Efforts
- Kids as Customers
- High-End Dining's Return
- Kool-Aid Pickles
- Curated Take Out
- Corn Ribs
- Updated Steak Sauces
- Micheladas
- Immunity-Boosting Recipes
- Bread Programs
- Celebrity Virtual Brands
- Seaweed & Kelp
- Modern Greek Flavors
- AI Order Taking
- Loaded Food Boards
- Smashed Vegetables
- Low ABV Drinks
- Celebrating Global Cultures
- Cabbage Renaissance
- Supply Chain Substitutions
- Indian Fast Casual
- Spicier Options
- Potato Milk
- Bocadillos
- Monochromatic Dishes
- Signature Salts
- Hand-Held Bar Snacks
- Higher Health Awareness
- Dressing Makeovers
- Streamlined Menus
- Colorful Cocktail Infusions
- Live-Fire Cooking
- Portion Control
- Tokyo Pizza
- Passion Fruit
- Larger Outdoor Dining Spaces
- Plant-Based Choices

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- **Trends**—forecasts what is on the culinary horizon four times per year.

Caribbean Cuisine

Dreaming of an escape to sunnier climes and feel-good vibes amid two-plus years of global uncertainty, many customers are seeking excitement at the local level through adventurous dining. Chefs are satisfying a bit of society's wanderlust by turning to tropical flavors this spring, serving up a vacation-on-a-plate that provides a fun, experiential meal with island ingredients.

- Light, fresh starters like **ceviche** with fiery chiles and tangy citrus, mango- and pineapple-based salsas, and plantain chips with mojo-mint sauce set the tone for craveable, yet healthy bites that balance sweet and sour notes.
- Sauces and glazes made with coconut, Habanero chiles, or tamarind can give menu staples like wings, burgers, tacos, salads, and slaws a Caribbean makeover.
- Bring produce to the center of the plate with flavor bombs like Jamaican jerk eggplant, cilantro rice bowls piled high with black beans and crunchy red cactus pear, or fried yucca and sweet potato patties covered in callaloo sauce easily made with RSS Collard Greens.
- Reinvent tiki-themed cocktails and wellness drinks with vibrant colors and unique flavor combinations that are delicious and social media-worthy. Think muddled pineapple, creamy banana, fresh lime, ginger, passion fruit, and hibiscus.
- Classic island flavors translate easily to the dessert menu: try coconut piña colada tarts garnished with edible micro orchids, elegant pavlovas piled with berries, mango, red dragon fruit, and brilliant acai sauce, or brightly colored ice cream made with guava, papaya, or mamey sapotes.

Sources:

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