

# TOP TEN TRENDS

'22

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**TEXASPETE**

## TOP 10 TRENDS

## ON THE MENU



1

### ABOVE BOARD: CHARCUTERIE

Energized by social media influencers leveling up board presentations during the early days of the pandemic, charcuterie boards began their resurgence as the ultimate shareable. During "The Great Takeout Times" of 2020, savvy chefs and gourmet retailers preserved the experience with innovative portable formats. Today, consumers continue to embrace charcuterie in both on-premise and takeout formats, driven by the signature offerings of curated ingredients. Customization also ranks highly here, with the mix-and-match versatility of boards accommodating consumer needs and preferences. This diversity of ingredients, formats and dining occasions delivers great opportunity for growth.



2

### BOCADILLO'S MOMENT

Spain's simple, rustic bocadillo is finding a home on American menus, championed by heavyweights Ferran Adrià, José Andrés and other Spanish-cuisine trailblazers. The bocadillo offers a number of features that make it ideal for today's times. With a simple build that focuses on quality over quantity, this handheld is takeout ready. It also runs parallel to the charcuterie trend, working well to cross-utilize those ingredients seamlessly. A prime example of differentiated, next-level sandwiches, the bocadillo is an ambassador of a food culture that Americans are embracing with increasing enthusiasm.



3

### GREEK TO ME

Modern Greek cuisine is having a moment, fueled in part by the ongoing boom in Eastern Med menu inspirations and restaurant concepts. Eschewing the kitschy "Americanized" Greek offerings that defined the cuisine for generations, operators are resetting the dial with authentic preparations, recipes and ingredients that weave a tighter narrative around the bright and intriguing flavors of Greek food culture. Further opportunity is found in applying translatable flavor profiles inspired by the innovations happening in the bustling culinary scene of Athens, taking cues from chefs in that city on what defines modern Greek cuisine.



4

### TROPIC LIKE IT'S HOT

With mood-boosting colors, vibrant ingredients and an island-escape sensibility, the flavors of the tropics offer diners escapism and joy, both much-needed attributes today. For the menu developer, these flavors are easily accessible and workable, playing well with savory, spicy and sweet profiles, and made bolder and more complex through cooking techniques. The range of ingredients tap all the trending fruits like guava, mango, passionfruit, pineapple and coconut, and easily extend across all menu sections and dayparts, and across a wide variety of cuisines. The beverage menu is also seeing a tropical resurgence that embraces a Tiki-plus approach.



5

### MEXICAN COMFORT

Mexican cuisine offers fertile ground for comfort-centric menu innovation. With comfort food holding its position as a lead driver in dominating today's dining decisions, offering familiar-yet-new fare is a smart move. Next-level tweaks of crave-worthy dishes like quesadillas, taquitos and birria provide safe adventure wrapped in homey comfort. Chefs can push, too, moving Mexican comfort flavors into signature dishes outside of this category—think a birria-inspired burger or an Indian-spiced quesadilla.



6

### SEA CHANGE: PLANT-BASED SEAFOOD

Plant-based seafood is starting to make waves on menus, as innovative suppliers introduce alternative products to foodservice, and chefs explore different culinary techniques to mimic the flavor and texture of fish and shellfish. Riding the momentum of the plant-based movement, this trend is buoyed by a growing number of flexitarian diners. Plant-based seafood offers a compelling sustainability story, helping it gain serious footing with consumers. The conditions are just right for menu developers to dive in.



7

### WORTH ITS SALT

Rising above the old "pinch" or "to taste" line on the recipe card, salt is making its way to center stage, gaining traction as both a flavor enhancer and a high-impact flavor on its own. Moving salt from everyday to elevated, chefs are applying a deft approach in using salt to soothe heat, contrast sweetness, balance the bitter and dial up flavor. With an exciting depth of opportunity for modern menus through varieties' differentiating color, crystal size and provenance, salt is proving its distinctive value as a flavor builder.



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### FLAVOR IN HAND: SAVORY HAND PIES

Savory hand pie concepts at modern food halls have revved up the engines of innovation and fired up the appetites of consumers, showcasing a spectrum of exciting offerings. Empanadas, meat pies, pasties, puffs—all are infinitely adaptable, whether operators highlight a specific culinary origin or go with a global mash-up. There's vast potential for expansion, creativity, flavor melding and experimentation with these comfort-centric, portable pies.



9

### GOING BANANAS

Menu developers can peel back the layers of possibility found in the humble banana, dialing up its tropical tones, leaning into its Southern comfort or exploring eclectic mash-ups. They can counter its sweetness with spices, heat or funk. And they can manipulate its texture and flavor through more aggressive cooking techniques, from caramelizing to charring. With banana, there's incredible flavor play, primarily in desserts, but also in the beverage space. Creative spins on banana pudding and bananas Foster abound, with diners eating it up, renewing their vows of commitment to comfort.



10

### COLD FRONT: COLD-COFFEE DRINKS

Younger consumers are driving innovation in cold-coffee beverages, up 23 percent in the last year alone and expected to overtake hot coffee by the end of the decade. This temperature-driven shift in American coffee culture is propelled by intentionally crafted, inventive concoctions that deliver mixology-level experiences. Beyond the red-hot cold-brew phenomenon, cold-coffee drinks are being menued in a wider array of applications, from new non-alc coffee tonics to broader use in cocktails. The cold-coffee category has the added benefit of expanding coffee occasions, offering up "anytime" opportunities for all menus.

**Madriño Charcuterie Cone:**  
Ibérico chorizo, manchego, sesame cracks and rosemary  
—*Kured, with two locations in Boston*

**Almussafes Bocata:** Sobrasada Ibérica, goat cheese, confit onions and white vermouth purée, and truffle-aged balsamic on pan de cristal  
—*Mama Delia, Chicago*

**Greek Fried Chicken** with a tzatziki rub and blackened Greek yogurt, served with oregano fries and Greek slaw  
—*Committee, Boston*

**Heritage Pork Belly** with pineapple and tamarind glaze, poblano, grilled pineapple and ajo blanco  
—*The Longboard, Sullivan's Island, S.C.*

**Birria Tacos** with Mississippi pot roast, provolone cheese, green onions and consommé  
—*Next Door American Eatery, Boulder, Colo.*

**Green Goddess Roll:** Spicy plant-based "tuna," cucumber, cilantro, black tobiko "caviar" and ponzu sauce  
—*Blue Sushi Sake Grill, based in Omaha, Neb.*

**Truth or Pear:** Árbol chile and pasilla pepper mezcal, lime juice, rosemary and pear, with a dehydrated blueberry salt rim  
—*Bandits, New York*

**El Choripan:** Beef chorizo, bell peppers, potatoes, onions and house-blend spices, wrapped in Cornish-style pasty dough  
—*Everyone's Empanadas, Oakland, Calif.*

**Bananas Foster Parfait:** Housemade banana granola, bananas Foster sauce, Greek yogurt, dried bananas  
—*Gospel Coffee and Boozy Treats, New Orleans*

**Cool Hunter:** Elderflower, grapefruit bitters, cold brew and club soda  
—*SPRO Coffee Lab, San Francisco*

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