

TRENDS 2014

My thoughts on what may be hot next year and beyond



Burmese Cuisine



With Burma now becoming the hip Asian travel destination, it's only a matter of time before travellers bring back their discoveries of the food, such as Mohinga, a rice noodle and fish soup, a variety of fresh salads (a thoke) and of course the extensive use of condiments.

Burmese food within the UK is relatively hard to find, with only a few restaurants currently showcasing the cuisine (and not that brilliantly to boot), but with the likes of blogger MiMi Aye enthusiastically waving the flag, it's only a matter of time till it reaches greater public awareness.

Sea Vegetables

Seaweeds have been around for a little while now, but they are slowly creeping into everything from snacks, through to seasonings such as Mara (www.maraseaweed.com).

Look out for a greater use on restaurant menus, including samphire, sea spaghetti, kombu, wakame, sea lettuce and carrageen moss.



Fermentation



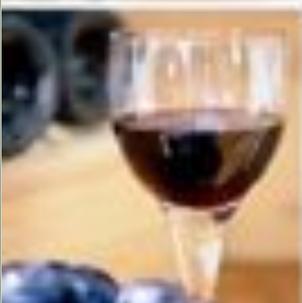
Pickles are still going to be a popular thing (of course with Manfood I would say that!), but fermentation in all its forms is really going to come into its own - but instead of an industrial scale, think restaurant and urban kitchens making their own kimchi, homebrewed kombucha, vinegars, cured meats..it's all fermentation, but using various different microbes.

Interesting things to look at:

wildscheese.co.uk

Pete Favelle's Coffee Porter at The Bull in Highgate (also have a look at www.petedrinks.com)

www.picco.co.uk



Hybrid fast food



I've suffered from a little bit of Cronut fatigue this year, and I have to admit that I've yet to actually even eat one. It's certainly been a year for food mash ups (and yes, I did PR the Townie and Duffin), but we've not seen the last of them. Next year, more hybrids will be coming, but they'll be hitting the street food and fast food arenas, so look out for:

Ramen burgers (where the buns are replaced with ramen)

Pizzaritos (effectively a rolled up pizza)

Asian Jewish food. It's a thing. No really.

Next generation juices and drinks

A recent study found that Smoothies contain a huge amount of sugar, which means consumers are going to be rushing to jump on the next band wagon. This may explain why the likes of Starbucks and Coca Cola already have major investments in the juice and 'healthy' drinks market (Evolution Fresh, Glaceau Vitamin Waters and Honest Tea to name but a few).

But there's still an opportunity for genuine low sugar, healthier brands, e.g. Cho! Gazpachos.



Natural sweeteners



Following on from above, Sugar is being deemed as the Crack of the food world, following a number of studies that have highlighted its addictive properties.

But since we're not going to be living without the taste sensation of sweet, the health conscious will be looking for alternatives.

Step forward: sweet sorghum, lucuma, yacon, and barley malt syrups.

Brazilian

With the World Cup taking place next year, Brazil is going to be slap bang in popular consciousness. But it's not all about the football. Chefs like Alex Atala are really championing the produce of the Amazon, and in the more mainstream, look out for the rise of Pão de queijo, feijoada and regional specialities such as caruru, a spread of okra, onion, dried shrimp and toasted nuts.

And of course, Cachaça - the must have ingredient for a Caipirinha.



Ice-cream sandwiches



Every year, I hope that I won't have to see another cupcake. Sadly, while these sweet treats are here to stay, we'll all be revisiting our childhood summers, with the rise of the ice cream sandwich.

These aren't going to be the fake vanilla yellow icecream blocks between two thin wafers of our youth: think artisan gelato and icecreams (there is a difference in texture and flavour) sandwiched between handmade biscuits. Flavour combinations can vary between the conventional to the new and out there.

A good example is Gelatorino in Covent Garden, who will start gelato sandwiches next year.

Nut Milks

With vegetarian and vegan options being more in demand, and more and more people appearing to eschew dairy for a number of reasons, a different type of milk is emerging on the scene: nut milk.

Almond milk, is the most popular of these concoctions, which are generally made by pureeing nuts with water and sometimes flavoring, such as vanilla, or sugar. The mixture is strained and the liquid drunk straight. However, restaurants are now using these milks in their cooking. Saf had a cashew nut milk ricotta, while DOM in Brazil offers a lightly toasted black rice with green vegetables and Brazil nut milk.

Horchata (Tiger nut milk) has been popular in Spain and South America for ages. Look out for it starting to appear in the UK.



Masculine Food



I promise this last one isn't so that I can promote Manfood again. Well maybe a little, but it's a trend that's continuing to emerge. I'm not just talking about gender specific marketing (after all the Yorkie Chocolate Bar and their 'It's not for girls' has been around a while), or dude food (burgers, pizzas, any calorie fest going pretty much), but foods that have a flavour profile or style of eating that specifically appeals to men.

The detractors will say that one can't generalise, and that to be gender specific is not only sexist, but misogynistic.

However, at a physiological level, women have more taste buds than men. Which definitely should give you food for thought.