

Consumer Trends: Top Menu Trends For 2013

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire-USNewswire) — The [National Restaurant Association](#) [1] (NRA) each year prepares its "What's Hot" culinary forecast of menu trends for the coming year. The NRA surveyed more than 1,800 professional chefs – members of the [American Culinary Federation](#) [2] (ACF) – to find that children's nutrition and local sourcing will continue to be the hottest trends on restaurant menus in 2013. This year, the NRA also surveyed nearly 200 professional bartenders – members of the [United States Bartenders' Guild](#) [3] (USBG) – revealing that onsite barrel-aged drinks, food-liquor pairings, and culinary cocktails will be the hottest trends on restaurant drink menus in 2013.

What's Hot chef survey - top 10 menu trends for 2013:

1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Locally grown produce
3. Healthful kids' meals
4. Environmental sustainability as a culinary theme
5. Children's nutrition as a culinary theme
6. New cuts of meat (e.g. Denver steak, pork flat iron, teres major)
7. Hyper-local sourcing (e.g. restaurant gardens)
8. Gluten-free cuisine
9. Sustainable seafood
10. Whole grain items in kids' meals

"It is encouraging to see that children's nutrition remains a top priority for chefs and that they continue to put their creativity in healthful kids meals to work on restaurant menus," said Joy Dubost, Ph.D, R.D., director of Nutrition & Healthy Living for the National Restaurant Association. "We have seen an increasing interest in health and nutrition among consumers over the last several years, and that interest is also extended to children's menus, which has helped make our [Kids LiveWell](#) [4] program so successful."

"I am pleased that members of the American Culinary Federation, who took part in the survey, continue to make children's nutrition a top priority for 2013. Many ACF members are heavily involved in this effort all across the U.S., both in community programs and with Chefs Move to Schools," said Michael Ty, CEC, AAC, ACF national president. "Making sure that nutritious food is available for children and their families, and for everyone in the U.S., is paramount to the future of foodservice. An emphasis on local sourcing can only further that effort, as chefs revise menus to better serve their customers while dealing with the increased cost of ingredients."

What's Hot bartender survey - top 10 drink menu trends for 2013:

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1. Onsite barrel-aged drinks
2. Food-liquor/cocktail pairings
3. Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients)
4. Micro-distilled/artisan liquor
5. Locally produced spirits
6. Locally sourced fruit/berries/produce
7. Beer sommeliers/Cicerones
8. Regional signature cocktails
9. Beer-based cocktails
10. Locally produced beer

"Artisan products, local sourcing and culinary creativity are trendy on restaurant menus and our new research shows that to also be true behind the bar," said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research and knowledge for the National Restaurant Association. "Increasing recognition of mixology has elevated restaurant drink menus to a new level that allows bartenders to showcase their skills in blending textures and flavors similarly to how chefs approach food in the kitchen. This is good news for today's increasingly sophisticated and adventurous consumers, who have a wider variety of alcoholic beverages from which to choose when dining out."

"It was great to work with the National Restaurant Association on this project," said David Nepove, USBG national president. "How wonderful that a survey about cocktails was the result of key bartenders from across the country, as they are the individuals who are setting many of these trends and see them in action every day. The top trends have not only proven popular with guests, but also allow bartenders to use their creative and professional talents in flavor-making, giving full justice to the craft of mixology."

Also included in the surveys were questions about other restaurant and bar trends. More than half (55 percent) of the chefs surveyed said they always make efforts to adjust dishes and recipes to be more healthful, while 37 percent said they cook with nutrition in mind, but that not all recipes are easily adjusted.

When asked how to best handle the increasing cost of ingredients, one-third (32 percent) of the chefs said changing menus, one-quarter (25 percent) said adjusting plate composition, and another quarter (24 percent) said exploring new sourcing options. Only 4 percent said that raising menu prices is the best strategy.

In addition, 67 percent of the bartenders said that adding culinary cocktails to drink menus is a good way to build business, and 26 percent said culinary cocktails are fun to make because they let the bartender's creativity shine.

When it comes to technology trends, just over one-quarter of the chefs (27 percent) ranked tablet computers, such as iPads, as the hottest technology trend in restaurants in 2013, followed closely by smartphone apps (25 percent), and mobile/wireless/pay-at-the-table (19 percent). Among the bartenders, two out of five (40 percent) ranked social media marketing and loyalty programs as the hottest technology trend in 2013, followed by tablet computers, such as iPads (29

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percent), and smartphone apps (14 percent).

The NRA surveyed 1,834 American Culinary Federation member chefs and 195 United States Bartenders' Guild member bartenders in October and November 2012, asking them to rate items as a "hot trend," "yesterday's news," or "perennial favorite" on menus in 2013.

These and many other restaurant trends will be showcased at the [2013 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show](#) [5] (May 18-21 at Chicago's McCormick Place) and [International Wine, Spirits & Beer Event](#) [6] (May 19-20 in conjunction with NRA Show 2013).

The NRA's award-winning [Kids LiveWell](#) [7] program is a voluntary industry-wide initiative designed to help parents make the healthful choice the easy choice for their children when dining out. Currently, the program includes more than 110 brands representing nearly 30,000 locations nationwide.

For complete What's Hot in 2013 survey results, video and downloadable images, visit Restaurant.org/FoodTrends [1].

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Links:

[1] <http://www.restaurant.org/foodtrends>

[2] <http://www.acfchefs.org/>

[3] <http://www.usbg.org/>

[4] <http://www.restaurant.org/kidslivewell>

[5] <http://www.restaurant.org/show>

[6] <http://www.winespiritsbeer.org/>

[7] <http://www.restaurant.org/foodhealthyliving/kidslivewell/index.cfm>