

5 ways Canadian Foodservice will change in 2017



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1. Ethnic sparks menu creativity

Mainstream cuisines such as Chinese and Mexican are making way for more intriguing global fare. Newcomers from across the globe will bring with them exotic recipes and ingredients, spurring fresh inspiration for chefs. Looking at the year to come, specialties like Filipino pancit (noodles) and sinigang (soup), Pakistani roadside bun kebabs and Iranian gheimeh (stew) will flourish in Canada's diversifying ethnic food landscape.



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2. Plant-based comfort foods

Veggies are moving to the centre of the plate as people choose to avoid meat on more occasions, with some going vegetarian or vegan. These dining and diet trends, combined with environmental concerns, are fueling growth of plant-based restaurants. Make no mistake: This won't result in rabbit food or a weight-loss fad. It's veggies, done tasty, creative and satisfying. Plant-based comfort food such as pizzas, burgers and burritos will drive the trend in 2017.



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3. Super special sweets

Dessert-focused concepts remain hot—a trend driven by restaurants devoted to refining classics such as decorated soft-serve cones, decadent doughnuts and artisan ice cream. Specialty flavours, indulgent toppings and eye-catching preparations will continue to generate excitement. And expect to see more ethnic specialties like Mexican paletas, Taiwanese shaved ice and Japanese-style cheesecake begin to move from innovative indies to chain restaurants and retailers.



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4. Creative Caffeinating

While the third-wave movement continues to push coffee to its premiumized extremes, boundary breakers will take coffee in unexpected directions to stand out in a crowding field. On the radar: lemon coffees, coffee jelly, Indonesian avocado espressos, coffee plus butter or salt (or both!), and intricate and customizable latte foam art.



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5. Engaging with Gen Z

Operators will pay closer attention to Gen Z—the maturing cohort of ethnically diverse digital natives accustomed to constant convenience, social sharing and a fast-changing world. Look for more ethnic mashup foods, desserts and drinks worthy of Instagram, emoji speak on the menu, chatbots, Snapchat filters, packaging hacks (think a meal box that can charge a smartphone) and a greater emphasis on corporate responsibility and environmental stewardship. Trends already on the up—delivery, mobile payment and kiosk ordering—will continue to solidify.