

FROM THE CATERFOOD BUYING GROUP

# INFUSE

WINTER 2025/26



## EYES ON THE PIES

BIG FLAVOURS  
AND BOLD IDEAS

## WHAT'S NEW FOR 2026

THE HOTTEST FOOD  
AND DRINK TRENDS

## TOP TO TAIL COOKING

LESS WASTE,  
MAXIMUM TASTE



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**T**he winter chill might be setting in, but things are heating up in the kitchen as a brand new year of culinary creativity begins!

This issue, our deep dive into pies reminds us exactly why the nation's favourite pastry deserves a top spot on every menu. Looking for some fresh inspiration to keep your menu ahead of the curve? We reveal the food and drink trends set to define 2026. From sweet-meets-umami fusions to fiery new takes on cocktails, it's shaping up to be a year full of surprises.

With sustainability continuing to take centre stage, we explore nose-to-tail cooking, with creative tips for using every part of your ingredients. And don't miss our spotlight on the brilliantly versatile béchamel, with ideas to help you stretch that batch sauce further.

We also speak to healthcare professionals to uncover the challenges and joys of delivering great care home catering.

Here's to hearty food, bold ideas and fresh beginnings for 2026!

*The Infuse Team x*

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### GOOD, BETTER, BEST

Have stacks of fun with  
our trio of pancakes  
from around the globe



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Three standout dishes  
starring the humble yet  
flavour-packed date



## 10 THE PIE'S THE LIMIT

Lifting the lid on the  
nation's favourite pastry, we  
look at current trends and  
the golden rules of dough





# The Hot List

Your guide to everything fresh on the food scene...



## In the mood for food

When it comes to emotionally-led eating, comfort and tradition are this year's watchwords, according to a recent consumer survey by Nielsen IQ\*. In the current climate, perhaps it's unsurprising that Brits are opting for familiar comfort foods – but a sense of adventure is also driving our dining habits, with 54% of us regularly exploring new cuisines.

\*CGA by Nielsen IQ x Bidfood 2024 Trends Survey

## Canadian Gold

Drizzled over roast veggies or squeezed onto pancakes (see p24), maple syrup is enjoying a renaissance in the UK as more consumers seek natural substitutes for refined sugar and vegan alternatives to honey. Setting the (gold) standard by sourcing from Canada's maple forests, St. Lawrence Gold is our one to watch this season – the new, heavier-duty Amber range is perfect for baking and barbecuing. [stlawrencegold.co.uk](http://stlawrencegold.co.uk)



## Bold new brews

Not to be confused with tonic teas (herbal infusions), tea tonics are causing a real stir in the beverage sector. Best described as traditional brews with a fresh (and often fruity) twist, they blend classic teas with up-and-coming flavours, such as watermelon, yuzu, strawberry and lime. Capitalise on the trend by offering a 'mix and match' menu with seasonal theming.



# EAT THE SEASON

A spotlight on the picks of winter



With their delicate onion flavour, leeks offer a gentle lift to winter dishes. They're delicious when blended into creamy soups, baked in tarts or roasted until caramelised. Don't ditch those outer leaves either – use them to flavour stocks and sauces (for more tips, see p41).



Bow down to the ultimate kitchen chameleon; mild enough to take on bold flavours, but sturdy enough to carry the spotlight. Cut into 'steak' slices and roast until golden and nutty, use as a meat substitute in curry, or smother in a thick, cheesy sauce for the king of side dishes.



A true winter veg, the flavour of salsify actually improves after the first frost, when the roots develop a more tender, sweeter taste. Serve as a sophisticated side dish by sautéing with lemon, herbs and lots of seasoning, or purée with milk, salt, pepper and Dijon mustard.

## 5 ways to use... Blue cheese

Salty, rich and indulgent. A decadent wedge of blue cheese brings instant punch and personality to any dish. Feeling daring? Lean into its creamy texture and experiment with it in fruit-filled desserts for a bold winter twist



1. Pear and Roquefort galette
2. Gnocchi with Gorgonzola, spinach and walnuts
3. Prosciutto, pear and blue cheese salad
4. Risotto with winter squash, sage and Stilton
5. Blue cheese ice cream served with fresh figs and nut crumble



# FOOD FIGHT PÂTISSERIE



MACARONS

PÂTISSERIE  
RATING

9

Sweet and  
sublime

As beautiful to look at as they are to eat, these jewel-toned mini meringues are made with almond flour and sandwiched together with a sweet, creamy filling. Melt-in-the-mouth and delightfully delicate.



ÉCLAIRS

PÂTISSERIE  
RATING

10

I chouxes  
you!

Derived from the French word for lightning (possibly because they're gone in a flash!), the beloved éclair is composed of hollow choux pastry filled with flavoured cream and topped with icing or chocolate. Irresistible.



KITCHEN QUICK-FIRE

## Q&A

**STEVE WALPOLE**  
HEAD OF BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT & NPd  
ROYAL SMILDE

### 2026 trend prediction

Retro and nostalgic foods I feel will be playing a big part in the future. Bring back classics from different eras but with a more conscious approach to ingredients, evoking food memories and fun.

### Something you'd change about the industry

Food waste always gets me – from ingredients to packaging, it's a huge issue with so many serious repercussions.

### Most memorable meal

It has to be my experience at the Ritz – so iconic and the food was faultless. I loved the modern twist to classic cuisine along with the theatre of the place; it's just exceptional.

### An ingredient you just can't get behind

Hot, hot chillies. No matter how hard I try, I find the heat and taste a step too far. Ghost, Reaper, even Scotch Bonnet are all a no for me, even if it's in honey or chocolate.

### Go-to comfort food

Spaghetti carbonara – there's something about the simplicity of smoky guanciale, pecorino, black pepper, egg and pasta that makes it my go-to comfort meal every time. ■

## TRENDING NOW

### PORK BELLY

With its crispy skin and tender meat, this flavourful cut is a popular ingredient in dishes across the world



#### PORCHETTA STUFFED WITH APRICOTS

This classic Italian dish is created by shaping a piece of belly pork into a tight roll that can be served as the focal point of a roast dinner or even sliced and popped in sandwiches. Stuff with dried apricots and thyme, and drizzle with honey or syrup for extra-crispy, sticky skin.



#### PORK ADOBO

Often described as the national dish of the Philippines, adobo is made by braising chunks of meat in garlic and soy sauce until the liquid reduces to a glossy, savoury glaze. The pork belly turns meltingly tender, rich and full of depth. Best served piled over steaming rice with a sprinkle of spring onions.



#### PORK BELLY BAO BUNS

Boost your bao buns with this tender meat. Combine brown sugar, ginger, Shaoxing rice wine and dark soy sauce to make a treacly, sticky sauce in which to coat thick slices of pork belly. Cook slowly before serving in cloud-soft bao buns with shredded raw vegetables for added freshness.

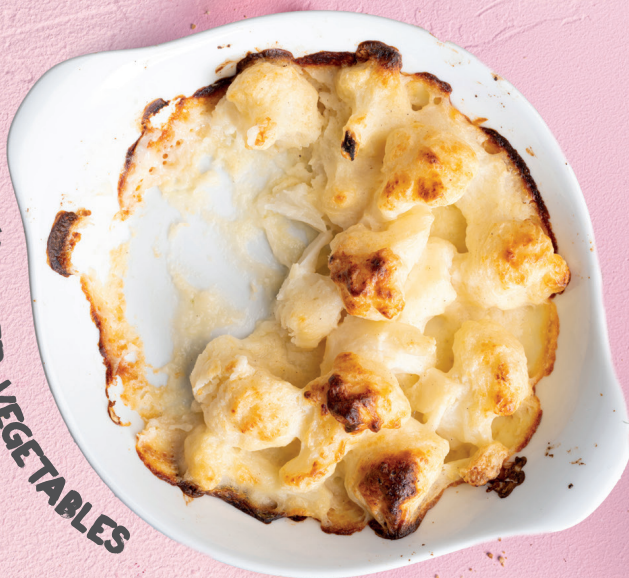




# WARM UP YOUR WINTER MENU

Discover our seasonal favorites for cozy winter dining:

WINTER  
VEGETABLES



## CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

Creamy, cheesy, and comforting.

10x1kg G0882201I / PV0900010D9I

## ROASTING VEGETABLE MIX

Ready to use, full of flavor, and ideal for festive dishes.

10x1 kg G0882001I / PV0740010D9I

## HONEY GLAZED PARSNIPS

Sweet, golden, and irresistibly caramelized—winter comfort on a plate.

10x1kg G0882401I / PV0870010D9I

## CRANBERRIES

A sweet-tart touch to complete your plate.

5x1 kg 81915199I / S8191051099I

## ROASTING PARSNIPS

10x1kg G0881801I / PV0930010D9I



**darta**  
*Cuisin' easy*



# Festive Loaded Twister Fries

Lamb Weston Twister Fries topped with pulled turkey, pigs in blankets, sage & onion stuffing, creamy Brie, cranberry sauce, and a sprinkle of dried cranberries served with a pot of rich gravy on the side.

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE FRIES

- ▲ 300g-350g Lamb Weston Twister Fries (cooked until golden and crisp).

### FOR THE TOPPINGS

- ▲ 150g cooked turkey breast (pulled or shredded into bite-sized pieces).
- ▲ 4-6 pigs in blankets
- ▲ 4 stuffing balls, crumbled.
- ▲ 50g Brie, torn into chunks so it just starts to melt from the heat of the fries
- ▲ 2 tbsp cranberry sauce (drizzled over).
- ▲ Handful of dried cranberries (for texture and sweet pops of flavour).

## TO SERVE

- ▲ Small pot of hot gravy on the side for pouring/dipping.
- ▲ Optional sprinkle of fresh rosemary for a festive finish.

## PREPARATION

- 1 Preheat fryer (175 °C) or oven (200 °C). Fry frozen Twister Fries for 2 min 30 sec, shaking after 30 sec, or oven-bake for 16-20 min, turning once halfway.
- 2 Layer on shredded turkey or chicken, pigs in blankets, and crumbled stuffing balls.
- 3 Top with Brie so it begins to melt into the toppings.
- 4 Drizzle over cranberry sauce and scatter dried cranberries.
- 5 Serve on a sharing board or dish, with a pot of festive steaming gravy on the side.

**Lamb Weston®**

POSSIBILITIES IN POTATOES





## UTILISING LEFTOVERS:

Turkey breast, pigs in blankets, stuffing, and Brie are all common surplus items after Christmas dinners or party menus. Instead of going to waste, they can be repurposed into a premium small plate.

\*Using fries as the base makes it familiar, indulgent, and shareable.

Source: Lamb Weston x The Food People Potato Trends 2024\*

## PREMIUM POSITIONING:

\*\*Fries are a low-cost base, but the festive toppings transform them into a premium limited-edition dish. In pubs and bars, consumers are 'willing to trade up' for premium beers and higher-priced menu options at weekends. The same behaviour applies to premium festive food offers.

Served as a sharer, it encourages upselling to drinks (mulled wine, cider, craft beers). The perception of indulgence and seasonality allows for higher pricing.

Source: Lumina Intelligence UK Pubs & Bars Market Report 2024\*\*

## BOOSTING MARGINS:

\*\*\*The Lumina UK Restaurant Market Report 2024 confirms that new, premium menu items are priced nearly 20% higher than existing ones. Seasonal "guest dishes" (e.g. Christmas specials like Zizzi's Cromer Crab Arancini) justify higher prices and boost margins

Guests pay for the festive experience as much as the food. Using leftovers reduces wastage while driving incremental revenue. Simple to prepare at scale—keeping kitchen labour low.

Source: Lumina Intelligence UK Restaurant Market Report\*\*\*





# *Eyes on the* PIES

*Sweet treat or savoury staple, there's a place for pie on every menu...*

There's no shying away from it: we're a nation of pie lovers. The average Brit packs away 36 a year, and collectively we consume £1 billion worth of pies annually\*. Sweet or savoury, meaty or meat-free, piping-hot or chilled, few pastries are as versatile or as universally adored. And in winter it's even more tough to beat the comfort of golden pastry and hearty fillings.

So roll out the dough and fire up the oven – this season, we're putting pie firmly back on a pedestal.



## NEW FOREST VENISON PIE

**Serves** 6

**Prep** 25-30 minutes

**Cook** 2½-3 hours

Woodsy and rich, this classic game pie is a shoo-in for festive feasts and winter banquets. New Forest venison shoulder pairs beautifully with aromatic herbs and red wine – simply serve with buttery mash and leafy greens for the ultimate hearty winter meal.

- 800g New Forest venison shoulder
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 2 tbsp Caterfood Select rapeseed oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 200g chestnut mushrooms, quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 250ml red wine
- 500ml game stock
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp Caterfood Select redcurrant jelly
- 1 sheet all-butter puff pastry (ready-rolled)
- 1 egg, beaten (for glazing)

1. Dice the venison shoulder and toss in the flour, seasoned with salt and pepper.
2. Heat oil in a heavy stovetop casserole dish, then brown the venison in batches. Remove from the dish and set aside.
3. Add onions and mushrooms to the dish. Fry gently for 8-10 minutes until softened. Stir in the garlic and tomato purée.
4. Pour in the red wine, scraping up any browned bits. Return the venison to the dish and add the stock, herbs and redcurrant jelly. Bring to a simmer.
5. Cover and cook gently on the hob or in the oven at 160°C for 2-2½ hours, until the venison is tender and the sauce is rich. Remove herbs from the mix.
6. Transfer the filling into pie dishes. Allow to cool slightly. Cover with puff pastry, trim, and crimp the edges. Optionally, cut out shapes from spare dough to place on top.
7. Brush all pies with beaten egg and bake at 200°C for 25-30 minutes, until glossy, golden and puffed.
8. Serve with buttered greens and creamy mash for a hearty winter feast. ▶

**BRITISH  
PIE WEEK**

**2<sup>ND</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
2026**



# Pastry BEST PRACTICE

Golden rules for when you're rolling your own...

## DO

### PICK THE RIGHT PASTRY FOR THE JOB

Hot water crust is ideal for sturdy, hand-raised pies with dense fillings (think classic pork pie), while shortcrust is great for traditional fillings. Lighter puff pastry brings an airy finish to pot pies.

### CONSIDER YOUR CRIMP

Imprinting with a fork will give your crust a neat, classic ridge. For a scalloped edge, press a knuckle down and shape the dough around it – repeat all the way around. Keep the dough cool and flour your hands as necessary.

### KEEP ANY DOUGH OFFCUTS

Roll out scraps and shape them into pie toppers so nothing goes to waste. If you're batch baking, this is a great way to remember which pies contain what fillings.

## DON'T

### WORK WARM

When handling shortcrust dough, keep your cool. Otherwise, the butter will melt prematurely, spoiling the pastry's texture. Work with chilled butter, cold water, and refrigerate the dough for 30-60 minutes before rolling it out.

### OVERWORK THE DOUGH

It's a fine art, but aim to work quickly and diligently. Overworking the dough (whether by hand or in a food processor) can cause gluten to develop in the flour, resulting in a tough, chewy crust.

### FORGET THE EGG WASH

If you're aiming for a crispy golden top, ensure your pie lid or lattice is lightly brushed with egg wash (one beaten egg with a tablespoon of water). It also helps seal the dough.

**TO ORDER THIS RANGE**

Contact your local  
CFBG Member  
Sales Manager



Yasmin Bates



## A SPOTLIGHT ON... THE DERBYSHIRE PIE & CO

*No time for pastry prep?  
Say hello to your new  
favourite pie brand*

Delivering all the flavour of homemade with a fraction of the effort, The Derbyshire Pie & Co was founded in 2021 by ambitious chefs Matt Campbell and Matthew Riggott who boast Michelin-star and 3 AA Rosette experience. The brand specialises in high-quality, centrepiece pies crafted with exceptional local ingredients.

Available in two sizes – a 300g pie ideal for pubs, restaurants and foodservice, and a 185g version made for stadia and grab-and-go menus – each one is packed to the brim and baked in a smooth-sided tin for a handmade and homemade appearance that looks as good as it tastes.

Choose from a delicious flavour line-up offering that unmistakable, from-scratch taste in just 20-30 minutes.

“

*Placed on a bed of  
thyme mash and topped  
with a red wine jus,  
these pies are an  
elevated pub favourite*

**GAVIN SCOTT**  
CATERFOOD BUYING GROUP

### WANT MORE?

Don't miss the other delicious  
flavours in the brand's range:

**Saag Aloo** 300g

**Lamb Hotpot Pie** 300g

**Steak Pie** 185g

**Chicken Balti Pie** 185g

**Cheese and Potato Pie** 185g



#### STEAK AND ALE

This hearty pie is fit to burst with tender, slow-cooked beef chunks in a rich ale gravy. It's a moreish meat feast that delivers all year round, but is especially rewarding during the colder months. Available in 300g.



#### CHEESE, ONION AND POTATO

A big win for pastry lovers who prefer their pies meat-free, the cheese, onion and potato trifecta never goes amiss. The filling is enveloped in a rich cheddar sauce and encased in shortcrust. Available in 300g.



#### CHICKEN, HAM HOCK AND WHITE WINE

Generously packed with chicken and ham hock braised in their own juices, thickened in a creamy white-wine sauce with tarragon, this pie is full of rich flavour. Available in 300g.

\*Maple UK's lifestyle of pie the average British pie is weighing 200g pies over their adult lifetime according to a study by 2022.  
With the help of the Derbyshire Pie & Co.



# WHAT'S HOT

*From global fusions to seasonal spins, traditional tastes to lighter bites, we've rounded up the latest piping-hot pie trends to land this year...*

## Fusion FLAVOURS

In the era of culinary mash-ups, we're seeing some very interesting flavours emerge. French gourmet tea brand Mariage Frères were recognised in The British Pie Awards 2025 for their unusual Flower Salmon Pie – a union of salmon and spices from their green tea blend. Other trending fusion pies include Indian curry, gochujang beef and miso maple pork.



## TASTES LIKE HOME

Our collective appetite may be growing more adventurous, but the classics remain in demand. Pub menus are still dominated by familiar flavours like pork, lamb, chicken and mushroom, and steak and ale from regional butchers and piemakers; and with comfort and tradition steering our tastes this year (p4), there's no better time to revisit the trusty faves.



## Healthier options

As younger generations continue to drive healthier eating habits, we're seeing an uptick in wholegrain, gluten-free and lower-fat pastries, alongside 'lighter' fillings such as veggies and leaner meats. Today's savvy consumer values choice and transparency, so it's essential to provide dietary options and (of course) clearly listed allergens, ingredients and nutritional content.



## GOOD GRAVY

All aboard the gravy train! The British brown sauce is back in fashion with added flair. Take Burger & Beyond's gourmet bone-marrow gravy dip for instance, or the current wave of online recipes featuring chicken wings, tomato purée, soy sauce and more. Thin or viscous, classic or complex, a jug of gravy is always a welcome sight for pie fans.



## SEASON'S EATINGS

Seasonal flavours are always in vogue, from the squashes and nuts of autumn (we can't resist Sweet Street's Bourbon Street Pecan Pie tart) to winter's gamey meats and summer's sun-kissed fruit and veg. Limited-time seasonal menus are a great way to increase demand and showcase your carefully sourced ingredients – plus, Instagrammers love a themed dish or several! ■



**62%**  
of consumers  
prefer the taste  
of Hellmann's\*



**Say yes to better taste - try it today**

- 35% less sugar compared to average sugar content in the market
- No allergens to declare\*\* and 100% vegan
- Recycled-ready packaging, helping you meet your sustainability goals
- No artificial colours or preservatives
- Professional chef-friendly format – easy to store, pour and prep during busy service

\*vs UK food service best selling ketchup, 62% of 445 consumers agree, UK based taste study - March 2025. For more information see <https://www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.uk/product/hellmanns-tomato-ketchup-jerry-can-4-8kg-1-EN-1247001.html#product-info>

\*\*This product does not contain allergenic ingredients which require declaration under EU regulation 1169 | 2001.



# Three months *in food*

Serving up essential culinary  
dates for your diary

## DECEMBER

### 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### ENGLISH BREAKFAST DAY

Bacon, eggs, mushrooms, sausages, beans – what are the essential ingredients in your fry up? Why not celebrate the breakfast of champions by giving it an all-day slot?



### 14<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

#### HANUKKAH

Classic potato latkes, mouthwatering beef brisket and challah bread are traditional tasty treats to serve up to celebrate the Jewish festival.

### 25<sup>th</sup>

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

Whisper it...you don't *have* to serve turkey on Christmas Day. Marmalade-glazed duck, treacle-smothered ham, or a festive beef wellington are all spectacular seasonal showstoppers.

### 31<sup>st</sup>

#### NEW YEAR'S EVE

The biggest night in party season is upon us! Ring in 2026 in style with a selection of champagne cocktails, plus fizzy no/low alcohol alternatives for inclusive sparkle.



Images: Adobe Stock

## JANUARY

#### DRY JANUARY

Alcohol-free doesn't mean fun-free. Shake off the winter blues with a selection of grown-up, dry serves – from alcohol-free wine and craft beer to signature virgin cocktails that feel every bit as indulgent.

#### VEGANUARY

Time to get inventive with plant-based ingredients. Root vegetable stews, warming curries, and hearty soups will stave off the winter chill.



### 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING DAY

A day rightfully dedicated to one of the most delicious desserts ever created. Turn to p38 for the ultimate cosy recipe inspiration.



### 25<sup>th</sup>

#### BURNS NIGHT

Haggis, neeps and tatties are go! Offer a veggie alternative crafted with lentils and mushrooms to ensure everyone can join in the traditional Scottish supper.

## FEBRUARY

### 3-4<sup>th</sup>

#### THE SOURCE TRADE SHOW

Westpoint, Exeter  
[thesourcetradeshow.co.uk](https://thesourcetradeshow.co.uk)

### 10<sup>th</sup>

#### THE FOOD SHOW, PRESENTED BY ELITE FINE FOODS

Doubletree by Hilton, Brighton  
[elitefinefoods.co.uk](https://elitefinefoods.co.uk)

### 14<sup>th</sup>

#### VALENTINE'S DAY

Set the mood with a loved-up menu featuring romantic specials, such as creamy 'Marry Me Chicken' and perfectly pink ribeye steak.

### 17<sup>th</sup>

#### SHROVE TUESDAY

Up your griddle game with our three delicious recipes on p24. Take your pick from a savoury Dutch classic, a fluffy American stack, or matcha and coconut soufflé pancakes.

### 17<sup>th</sup>

#### CHINESE NEW YEAR

Welcome the 'Year of the Horse' with a celebratory feast of fortune. Longevity noodles, plump dumplings and whole fish dishes are menu essentials.

### 17<sup>th</sup>

#### RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY

Build a buzz around the day and offer a free coffee or dessert to randomly-selected guests, or give shout-outs on social media to the staff who go above and beyond. ■



### PIZZA BIANCA

Swap out the tomato sauce for béchamel and you're on your way towards a super-tasty white pizza. Add depth of flavour with crushed garlic, basil and a sprinkling of ricotta.



### ČULBASTIJE

Move aside, meatball marinara... Čulbastije (or Djulbastije) is a mouth-watering Balkan dish that marries potato and beef patties with béchamel, resulting in a top-tier winter warmer.



## STRAIGHT TO THE SAUCE

One base. Endless possibilities.  
Unleash your batch-cooking potential  
with this beloved all-star sauce...

### CROQUE MADAME

We love the Croque Madame over the eggless Monsieur - more height, more flavour, more protein! Béchamel pairs beautifully with the bread, fried egg and ham in this dish.



### BÉCHAMEL

One of the original French 'mother sauces', béchamel is made from three pantry staples: flour, milk and butter. Not only is it cost-effective and quick to whip up, it also serves as a creamy base for many dishes and other sauces, making it deliciously versatile.

### CAULIFLOWER GRATIN

Add gruyère to your béchamel and pour it over steamed cauliflower. Top with breadcrumbs and bake for 15-20 minutes until crispy and golden. It's the ultimate veggie indulgence.



### MOUSSAKA

Béchamel is popularly used in lasagne, but it's also become a classic sauce in its pasta-free Greek cousin moussaka, thanks to influential chef and author Nikolaos Tselementes.







**At Becketts, we are a family-run business driven by a single passion for delivering bacon at its absolute best.**

We know Christmas is about sharing incredible flavour, whether it's a full family breakfast on Christmas morning or a glazed gammon centrepiece for the big day itself. That's why we're always striving to refine our products and service, so every slice and joint brings joy to your plate.

## **Did you know?**

We produce over 3.5 million rashers per day making us the largest foodservice slicer in the UK. This means our quality assurance processes are highly tuned and audited daily to consistently maintain the superior standards of product, without exception.

That's why we work to the highest criteria set by the BRC, to give our customers complete peace of mind, with full product traceability and hygiene levels.

**This Christmas, let Becketts bring quality to the heart of your celebrations.**









# Fresh

## ON THE MENU

From punchy flavour combos to new dining habits, these 12 trends will give your 2026 dishes some serious bite

# 1

### K-FOODS

First came the music, then the skincare, and now the food. Growth in global social conversations about Korean food have shot up by 5.5% in the last year\*. Experiment with traditional dishes like tteokbokki, which features small cylindrical rice cakes simmered in a spicy sauce, or embrace K-flavours with fusion dishes such as a cheese toastie slathered with gochujang.



Images: Adobe Stock

\*Synergy 2026 Taste Trends

# 2

### SPICE UP YOUR DRINK

The spicy marg has yet to loosen its grip on bar menus, but it has evolved, with many customers now playing with heat in other classic cocktails. Liven up a Paloma by serving with a rim of chipotle chili powder or give a classic G&T a hot twist with a dash of pepper-infused syrup. Alternatively, make a no-alcohol ginger beer a little more fiery with a few slices of fresh jalapeño.





## 3

**NEXT-GEN SNACKING**

Loaded fries, bao buns, protein-packed energy bites and globally-inspired street eats are blurring the lines between small-plate snacks and main dishes. This switch-up gives caterers the chance to serve up high-margin, bite-sized creativity while offering flexible menu choices that move beyond the classic starter-main-dessert format.



## 4

**SWALTY**

Last year it was all about sweet and spicy (or 'swicy') combos, whereas in 2026, umami tastes are merging with sweet notes to create a flavour profile that's both unexpected and delicious. Combine miso with white chocolate for a twist on your usual brownies or add some honeycomb to a tangy cheese board for a decadent take on the trend.

## 5

**LESS IS MORE**

The conversation around ultra-processed foods has not gone away, and combined with more allergen awareness, consumers expect to know *exactly* what's in their dinner. Across the foodservice industry, simplifying dishes, spotlighting quality produce and keeping menu labelling clear and confident helps build trust with diners, and is fast becoming the hallmark of modern, mindful cooking. ►





# 6

## MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE SHARING

With diners craving real-life connection as much as good food, sharing dishes are set to dominate. “Mediterranean food is *all* about sharing,” says Ben Drury, Marketing Executive at Odysea ([odysea.com](https://odysea.com)). “Small plates, vibrant vegetables, pulses and grains create a style of eating that feels both timeless and perfectly in tune with how we want to connect over meals today.” Think generous platters built for grazing, vibrant dips, whipped feta, marinated olives, slow-cooked meats, zingy pickles and flatbreads for dipping and mopping.



# 7

## THINK LOCAL

Both chefs and diners are increasingly mindful of where ingredients come from – and the impact those choices have on the planet. “In 2026 I hope we see more climate-adaptive cooking and more chefs embracing diverse and sustainable ingredients,” says Tom Heywood, Chef Owner at Pignut & The Hare ([pignutandthehare.co.uk](https://pignutandthehare.co.uk)). Keep menus seasonal, highlight British ingredients and give a shout-out to local growers to tell customers the story behind each plate.

# 8

## NEWSTALGIA

Comforting, familiar classics and childhood favourites are sneaking their way back onto menus, but not before having a glow up. Tap into the trend and transform humble beans on toast with a sourdough base, delicately spiced butterbeans, topped off with nduja or creamy burrata. Or how about elevating a spaghetti bolognese with slow-braised short rib and freshly-made pasta?





\*\*Tastewise

# 9

## ASPARAGUS

Whether it's because of its unique flavour or the fact that each stalk is packed full of vitamins, asparagus is definitely having a moment. In fact, social conversations about the delicate green vegetable are up 24% year-on-year\*\*. With peak asparagus season hitting from late April, it's the perfect time to give it centre stage. Pile it up with watercress and poached eggs for an unbeatable brunch stack.

# 10

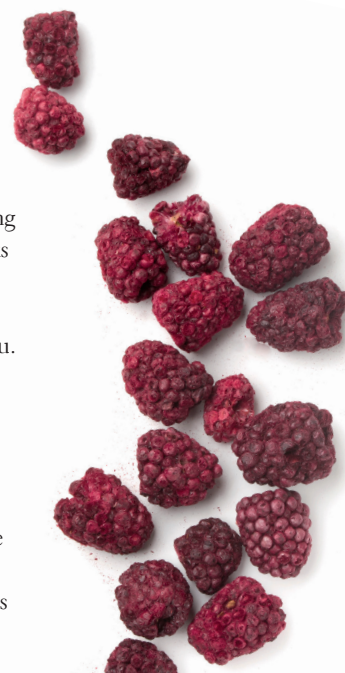
## FUNCTIONAL SIPS

From lion's mane lattes to tea tonics, functional beverages are stepping firmly into the spotlight. Boasting mood-balancing botanicals, brain-boosting properties and natural energy boosters, these drinks promise more than hydration – they deliver focus, calm or a lift out of that 3pm slump. See p44 for our edit of the best functional drinks for your menu.

# 11

## FREEZE UP

Thanks to TikTok, freeze-dried foods – sweets and candy in particular – are gaining traction. Sprinkle puddings with freeze-dried berries for a flavour bomb of fruit, or experiment with freeze-dried peas and sweetcorn on creamy risottos or soups.



# 12

## SWEET ADVENTURES

Pastry chefs...it's time to get creative. In 2025, we saw Dubai chocolate and strawberries-and-cream sandos grabbing headlines, and the appetite for cross-cultural indulgence is showing no sign of slowing. Korean bingsu, Basque cheesecake and Taiwanese Castella Cake are here to make puddings irresistible again. ■



Images: Adobe Stock





# GOOD, BETTER, BEST PANCAKES

Elevate breakfast stacks to dizzying  
new heights with inspiration from the  
USA, Japan and the Netherlands







# GOOD

## BACON, FETA, SWEETCORN AND SPRING ONION

**Serves 4** (makes 4 large pancakes) **Prep** 15 mins **Cook** 20 mins

Soft and golden, this Dutch café classic brings a spot of sunshine to winter days. Not only are the ingredients cost-efficient pantry staples, they pair beautifully to make a brunch-menu hero.

For the batter:

- 250g plain flour
- 2 large eggs
- 500ml whole milk
- Pinch of salt
- Butter or oil for cooking

For the filling:

- 1 pack Caterfood Select Unsmoked Back Bacon
- 200g Caterfood Select Sweetcorn
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 150g feta cheese, crumbled

**1.** To make your batter, whisk the flour, eggs, milk and salt together in a bowl until smooth. Rest for 20-30 minutes.

**2.** Lightly fry the bacon rashers in a pan until crispy round the edges.

**3.** Add the sweetcorn and sauté until golden and slightly charred.

**4.** Stir through the spring onions and season with black pepper.

**5.** In another large frying pan, heat a little butter or oil. Pour in a thin layer of batter, swirling to coat the base (like a crêpe, but slightly thicker).

**6.** Cook until set, flip carefully and then cook the other side evenly.

**7.** Slide onto a plate and scatter with crumbled feta, bacon and spring onions.

**8.** Serve hot, either stacked or individually; flat or folded like a wrap.



Photography: Sonny Hemgen





# BETTER

## BLUEBERRY, LEMON AND RICOTTA

**Serves** 4 (makes 8 small pancakes) **Prep** 15 mins **Cook** 20 mins

Flip American-style pancakes on their head with tart blueberry, zesty lemon and creamy ricotta – the ultimate sweet and savoury breakfast treat. To achieve a fluffy finish, use buttermilk in the batter.

- 350g fresh blueberries (plus extra to serve)
- 50g caster sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 250g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

- Pinch of salt
- 250ml buttermilk (or milk with a squeeze of lemon juice)
- 2 large eggs
- 150g ricotta cheese (plus extra to serve)
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Butter or oil, for cooking

**1.** To make a blueberry coulis, place 200g blueberries, sugar and lemon juice in a small saucepan over a medium heat.

**2.** Heat gently for 5-7 minutes until the blueberries release their juices. For a

smoother coulis, blend and strain.

**3.** In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, bicarbonate, 2tbsp sugar and salt.

**4.** In a jug, whisk buttermilk, eggs and ricotta until smooth. Stir in lemon zest.

**5.** Pour wet mixture into dry and fold gently until just combined. Fold through 150g blueberries – don't overmix.

**6.** Heat a little butter or oil in a non-stick pan. Drop in generous spoonfuls of batter and cook for 2-3 mins on either side, until they're golden and fluffy.

**7.** To serve, stack your pancakes and top with coulis and a spoonful of ricotta. Scatter with blueberries and lemon zest.



## MATCHA AND COCONUT

**Serves** 2

**Prep** 15 mins

**Cook** 8-10 mins

Thick and delicious with plenty of bounce, these soufflé-style Japanese pancakes marry earthy matcha with coconut milk and white chocolate.

- 2 large eggs (separated)
- 2 tbsp coconut milk
- 40g plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp matcha powder (plus extra for dusting)
- 30g caster sugar
- Butter or oil, for cooking
- Handful of pistachios
- White chocolate sauce
- Fresh fruit of your choice

1. Whisk egg yolks with coconut milk. Sift in flour, baking powder and matcha – mix until smooth.
2. Whisk egg whites with a pinch of salt. Gradually add sugar until stiff, glossy peaks form.
3. Fold meringue into the yolk mixture in three additions, keeping it airy.
4. Lightly grease a non-stick pan and place it on a low heat.
5. Spoon tall mounds of batter into the heated pan (use ring moulds if you want extra height).
6. Cover with a lid and cook for 4-5 mins per side until puffed and golden.
7. Drizzle with white chocolate sauce and serve with fresh fruit. ■





# Made *with* Care

What does great care-home catering look like today? We speak to five industry pros bringing flavour, dignity and heart to every plate...

Care-home catering comes with a unique set of challenges and rewards rarely seen in other corners of the industry. In many ways, it's the inverse of a commercial kitchen: diners are well-known to staff, a set number of covers is guaranteed and success is largely measured by customer wellbeing rather than turnover. Dietary needs are also more complex and constant. Conditions such as dysphagia place a higher importance on texture in meals, and food and drink for dysphagic residents must be compliant with the International Dysphagia Diet

Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI).

The mental wellbeing of residents is also paramount and can be supported through nostalgic, nourishing meals that spark happy memories. The key is getting to know the individuals you're serving – understanding their histories, cultural and dietary beliefs, personal preferences and physical capabilities – to craft bespoke menus with meaning.

But how do you build that rapport, and what else needs to be considered when catering for a vulnerable and typically overlooked group of people? We speak to five professionals about the day-to-day realities of running a care-home kitchen.





## MARCIN FRANKE

HEAD CHEF  
MANOR LODGE CARE HOME,  
CARE UK



"You can be the best head chef in the world, but without a strong team, you're going to fail. To succeed in care-

home catering, you need to have excellent communication with the residents, and the meals should be designed around their requests and wishes. It's their home, so they should be involved in creating the menu. The most rewarding thing about working in care is the immediate feedback from residents and their families. There's a misconception that care-home food is frozen and of low quality, but that's not the case at Care UK. You work hard with the team to deliver high-quality, considered meals that take into account dietary restrictions and IDDSI levels and then get amazing feedback – there's absolutely nothing like it." [careuk.com](http://careuk.com)

## DARREN NEAL

HEAD OF CULINARY  
WHITE OAKS



"Our team places residents at the heart of everything we do, enriching lives through a home-from-home

catering experience that fosters a genuine sense of community, valued by residents and their families alike. By combining great food with industry-leading expertise, we take care of all aspects of catering and dining services, allowing our clients to focus on what matters most.

Every client and every resident has unique needs, and we pride ourselves on taking the time to truly understand each one. This personalised approach allows us to tailor service styles and food offerings that reflect individuality, resulting in greater resident satisfaction, enhanced choice, and a meaningful contribution to overall health and wellbeing. The most rewarding part of

my job is making a positive impact on our residents – I love to see us make someone's day by serving great food that brings comfort and joy." [white-oaks.co.uk](http://white-oaks.co.uk)

## KARL GALLAGHER

CHEF  
STONESWOOD  
RETIREMENT LIVING, AUTOGRAPH  
CARE GROUP



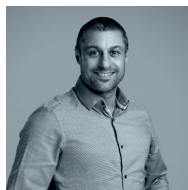
"A great catering service isn't just about meal planning – it requires empathy, compassion and

patience. In a care home with residents who have mixed needs, including dementia, it's about balancing everyone's requirements using quality, healthy, fortified ingredients. It's also essential to be flexible, ensuring every meal provides both nutrition and enjoyment.

Seeing residents enjoy their meals is the most rewarding part of my job. I try to make every meal special and go the extra mile, and the appreciation from residents makes it all worthwhile." [autograph.care/stoneswood](http://autograph.care/stoneswood)

## YAQOOB ISHAQ

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
SIMPLY FOOD SOLUTIONS



"Our journey began over 20 years ago with a home-cooked meal and a simple idea: to make food better

for everyone. After seeing the lack of halal options in hospitals, my father set up a small kitchen to provide authentic, nutritious halal and ethnic meals to the healthcare sector. After another hospital visit, he recognised the challenges faced by people living with dysphagia and was determined to make a difference, leading to the creation of the UK's first complete, plated texture-modified meals.

All of our meals are fully compliant with IDDSI texture guidelines, meaning consistent quality, safe preparation, and peace of mind for carers and patients alike,

because everyone deserves mealtimes that feel 'normal' and enjoyable.

I'll never forget meeting a gentleman in hospital who had recently been diagnosed with dysphagia and hadn't eaten properly for several days. I asked him what he would have if he could eat anything and he said "I'd kill for a curry". We had recently launched our range and I'd brought several samples with me, so I heated one of our level 4 chicken curries for him. He took a bite and the smile that followed will always remain with me. It was an emotional experience that highlighted the impact of making a difference to someone who had lost hope in one of the fundamental things that we all take for granted every day – to eat normally and take enjoyment from food. I take this into everything we do here, knowing we make a difference to so many lives affected by this condition." [simplyfoodsolutions.co.uk](http://simplyfoodsolutions.co.uk)

*"I love to make a resident's day by serving great food that brings comfort and joy"*

## LAURA FIELDING

CATERING MANAGER  
ST CECILIA'S NURSING HOME



"Preparation, multi-tasking, knowing your residents and teamwork are all key to delivering a great service.

From care staff asking residents their meal choices, to housekeeping setting up the dining room, kitchen porters washing your pots all day long, maintenance fixing any issues in the kitchen and of course the chefs cooking and serving quality homemade food – it's a collaborative effort. The best part is knowing we're providing our residents with the food they actually want and food I'd want to eat myself. I might be giving someone their last meal, therefore I will always strive to make it my best." [stceciliass.co.uk](http://stceciliass.co.uk) ■



★★  
CATERFOOD  
SELECT

# classic cheesy cheddar



## Caterfood Select Mature White Cheddar Block

Caterfood Select Mature Cheddar Blocks are rich, full-flavoured, and consistently smooth, offering the perfect balance of strength and versatility. This British cheese is ideal for slicing, grating, or melting, to enhance a wide range of dishes, including sandwiches, jacket potatoes, sauces, and snacks. It's an excellent choice for busy kitchens and is available in convenient 2.5kg and 5kg packs.

4 x 5kg | 8 x 2.5kg

Speak with your Area Sales Manager or Telesales Representative for more information.

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# TASTE MAKERS

Every issue, we shine a light on the people  
powering the Caterfood Buying Group's success



## PHILIP TANSWELL

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
CORNISH SEA SALT

*Self-confessed 'salt geek' Philip Tanswell talks to us about what sets Cornish Sea Salt apart - from its ancient production methods and the wild Atlantic waters it's drawn from, to the innovation driving its ever-evolving range of flavours*

### What does an average day look like for you?

My day normally starts at 6am. I review the night shift reports, catch up on emails and join department meetings from around 9am. On a good day, I make it to the salt house for a walkthrough, tasting the quality of output and discussing new and ongoing research and development projects.

### What's the origin story behind Cornish Sea Salt?

The original founder, Tony Fraser, came across an Iron Age saltworks in a remote cove on the South Coast of Cornwall while out walking. This caused him to reimagine the sea salt industry for the twenty-first century, and Cornish Sea Salt was created. Production is still inspired by the original methods and we are one of very few sea salt producers harvesting from open waters.

### Why sea salt?

When Tony discovered the saltworks, he wanted answers: why

Philip and his team are champions of flavourful, authentically harvested sea salt

had such an essential element of the county's farming and pilchard industry died out? We have since been on a journey of discovery around the world to create the best-tasting sea salt we can.

### How does your location inspire your brand identity?

Our sea salt is harvested just eight metres from the protected waters of the Atlantic lapping at the shores of The Lizard - a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This totally unique geographical environment defines the taste and high mineral content of our sea salt. Both serpentine (once highly sought after in the Victorian era) and gabbro are rich in magnesium and calcium, two of the key minerals in our sea salt.

### What's your proudest accomplishment?

We have had many achievements in the 18 or so years we've been trading, but for me, the biggest is making pretty, tasty salt. Typically, you either have flake salt that tends

to be pure sodium chloride with very little taste, or not-so-pretty but tasty salts (crystal). Coming up with the process that makes attractive, flavourful salt is one of the things that makes us stand out from other producers.

### How do you stay competitive?

Our new product development team lives and breathes innovation. We're constantly inspired by the food trends lighting up social media, customer requests and new flavour pairings. Twice a year, we roll out fresh creations, testing them in UK kitchens to see which blends win hearts (and taste buds).

### What's your favourite dish to make with Cornish Sea Salt?

Everything I cook features our salt! It depends on my mood, but dry-brining steak with our smoked sea salt takes a relatively inexpensive and tough cut and makes it a smoky, tender thing of joy. Flaky salt and butter on steamed broccoli with a squeeze of lemon juice is also a simple delight. ►





# KATE COSTELLO

## ACCOUNT MANAGER

LA LORRAINE  
BAKERY GROUP

*Award-winning family business La Lorraine is constantly rising to meet consumer demands and evolving tastes in one of the most competitive corners of the food industry. Kate Costello explains how the team keeps things fresh*



### Can you tell us about your day-to-day role?

No two days are the same. I might be visiting customers, presenting products (my favourite thing to do), reviewing sales performance, planning promotions, or working with our marketing and product teams to bring new ideas to life.

### How did La Lorraine begin?

The La Lorraine Bakery Group began in 1939 as a family-run flour mill in Ghent, Belgium. Over the decades, it's evolved from milling into baking, pioneering innovations like bake-off technology and expanding across Europe. Today, we're still family-owned, combining artisan tradition with modern techniques to deliver high-quality products to more than 35 countries.

### What are the biggest trends in baking right now?

We're seeing a strong interest in health-conscious choices – for example, breads that are high in fibre – and a growing interest in plant-based options (many of our

Understanding customers' needs is an essential part of Kate's role

products are naturally vegan). International flavours are trending too, with spicy ingredients making their way into everyday menus.

### How is La Lorraine unique?

As a family-owned business with more than 85 years of baking heritage, we're passionate about quality, sustainability and customer experience. What sets us apart is our commitment to 'baking a better world' through responsible production, product leadership, and respect for people, product and planet (our three P's).

### What's been your biggest achievement to date?

One of my proudest achievements was winning Supplier of the Year for the Caterfood Buying Group in 2024. As Account Manager, it's a testament to the strong relationships we've built and the consistent value we deliver. It's incredibly rewarding to see our efforts recognised as we continue to grow the business and support our customers with innovative bakery solutions.

### How do you stay innovative in such a competitive industry?

Innovation at La Lorraine is driven by trends and customer insight. We stay close to market information and listen carefully to our customers' evolving needs, whether that's healthier options, bold new flavours or more sustainable packaging. Internally, we work with research and development, marketing and sales teams to bring fresh ideas to life quickly. Our Pane & Terra range is a great example, combining authentic Italian baking with modern flavour twists like pesto and tomato. It's about being agile in the marketplace, while staying true to our craft.

### Which baked goods do you start and end the day with?

I like to start the day with a slice of our Goodgrain bread with avocado and poached eggs. By the end of the day, I'm ready for some indulgence. I love our Donut Worry Be Happy treats, especially the new Dubai Diva donut with its pistachio filling and irresistible chocolate coating.





# JESS MORRIS & NICK MARSH

CO-FOUNDERS

THE CANINE MENU

*In 2021, The Canine Menu was born out of a simple idea: to help pubs and dog-friendly venues cater to their four-legged guests. Jess Morris tells us how the spark of an idea in a beer garden turned into a thriving business*

## Describe a typical day at The Canine Menu

Nick and I often joke that we're "general dogsbodies", and it means every day is different. One day I'll be deep in financial forecasts, legal documents or strategic planning, and the next I'm waving a squeaky toy at a dog during a photoshoot. It's a big part of why I love the job – the mix of serious decisions with lots of moments of fun and creativity.

## Can you share the company's backstory with us?

The Canine Menu was a spark of an idea I had back in 2021. We'd finished a big dog walk with friends and ended up in a pub garden. My dog Rudy was only a puppy and she was full of beans, so I used to take a long-lasting chew with me to help her settle. When I realised I'd forgotten to pack one, I looked at the beer garden full of dogs and said to Nick "Wouldn't it be great if the pub sold dog chews?". It was all built from that simple moment!

## What are the unique challenges and considerations when catering for dogs?

Catering for dogs is very different from catering for people. Palatability is king – and that's hard when dogs love smelly, messy things while their owners and pub managers certainly do not! Our challenge has been striking this balance while still offering real function beyond taste. We want our range to provide something enriching for every dog (from teacup chihuahuas to great danes!), while being practical for busy venues to stock up and sell.

## Best bit of the job?

I love seeing the brand take on a life of its own. It's a joy watching something we started from scratch grow into a meaningful business that's having a positive impact on dog ownership and the hospitality industry. Being a decision-maker also means I don't have to follow the conventional business 'rules' and can build the kind of company I truly believe in.

Jess and Nick saw a gap in the hospitality market and set to work

## What's your proudest achievement?

My proudest moment so far has been launching The Canine Menu in Europe. Expanding internationally has been no small feat. It meant navigating new regulations, cultural nuances and logistics, all while staying true to our brand values. To see our products being enjoyed by dogs and their owners across multiple countries is incredibly special and shows that our mission resonates far beyond the UK.

## Do you have any exciting news to set tails wagging?

Yes! We're thrilled to have launched a brand new Natural Meal range, perfect for when customers have lingered at the pub a little longer than planned. The meals are made from fresh, sustainably-sourced ingredients which are freeze-dried for ambient storage. We've even included a Turkey and Cranberry dinner – a much-loved addition to our Christmas range! ■





Delivering the World's FINEST Seafood & More



### Prawn Twisters

PT34PW • 6 x 800g

Sweet Prawn meat in a herb and garlic marinade, hand rolled in a spring roll pastry.

*Ideal for buffets or as a starter*



### Lemongrass & Chilli Prawns

LGP16PW • 10 x 500g

These value added prawns make an impressive and flavour packed starter

*Enjoy with a soy dipping sauce*



### Red Velvet Prawns

VP16PW • 10 x 500g

These deliver a fantastically visual dish, guaranteed to give your customers the wow factor.

*Serve on rice noodles & sliced veg*

[pacificwestfoods.co.uk](http://pacificwestfoods.co.uk)

[jacobmccathie@pacificwestfoods.co.uk](mailto:jacobmccathie@pacificwestfoods.co.uk)

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# Kara

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KITCHEN CHAMPIONS

# DATES

Adding a burst of natural sweetness and a rich, caramel depth to any dish, there's every reason to rate dates. Try these winter plates starring our favourite Middle-Eastern fruit... ►



## LAMB AND DATE TAGINE

**Serves** 4

**Prep** 20 minutes

**Cook** 60-90 minutes

Robust and hearty, this lamb and date tagine is the whole package. Tender lamb shoulder is paired with a mix of spices and sticky dates to create a rich and aromatic dish that's full of depth and warmth.

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800g diced lamb shoulder
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 thumb-sized piece fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 400g Caterfood Select Chopped Tomatoes
- 500ml chicken stock
- 150g carrots
- 150g Caterfood Select Pitted Dates, halved
- 1 preserved lemon (optional), finely chopped
- Mediterranean-style couscous
- Fresh coriander, to garnish
- Caterfood Select Flaked Almonds, toasted to garnish

1. Heat olive oil in a heavy casserole dish or tagine and brown the lamb in batches until golden, then set aside.
2. Add onions, garlic and ginger to the pan. Cook gently until soft.
3. Stir in your spices and cook for a further 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
4. Return lamb to the pot. Add tomatoes, stock, carrots and dates.
5. Season well with salt, pepper and preserved lemon if using.
6. Simmer gently for 1½-2 hours (or cover and cook in oven at 160°C), until lamb is tender and sauce thickened.
7. Serve with couscous, fresh coriander and toasted nuts to round off the meal.



“

Dates are a perfect balance of sweetness and texture. Whether I'm slow-cooking lamb or throwing them into a pudding, they never let me down.

**Phil Clark: Business Development Chef, Harvest**



## BLUE CHEESE AND DATE TARTLETS

**Serves** 12 **Prep** 20 mins **Cook** 95-110 mins

These bite-sized tartlets strike a beautiful balance of bold and sweet, pairing creamy blue cheese with the sugary warmth of date chutney. A sophisticated and delicious first impression at any Christmas or New Year soirée.

- 1 packet of filo pastry
- 80g Stilton crumbled
- 20g melted butter

For the date chutney:

- 1kg cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 250g onions, finely chopped
- 250g Caterfood Select Chopped Date
- 500ml Caterfood Select Malt Vinegar
- 300g soft brown sugar
- 2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground coriander

1. Put the apples, onions, dates and vinegar in a pan. Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 30 minutes until the fruit is soft.
2. Stir in sugar, spices and a pinch of salt.
3. Continue to cook gently for 45-60 minutes, stirring regularly until you achieve a thick and glossy consistency.
4. Brush melted butter in between three layers of filo pastry. Cut out 12 squares from the layered pastry and place into a small cupcake or muffin baking tray.
5. Place in a preheated oven at 180°C for 5-6 minutes, until crisp.
6. Fill each pastry container with crumbled Stilton and a generous dollop of apple and date chutney.



Sonny Flanagan



## CLASSIC STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING

**Serves** 6

**Prep** 15 minutes

**Cook** 30 minutes

A long-standing British favourite, our traditional sticky toffee pud features finely chopped Caterfood Select dates, which add extra moisture and stickiness to the sponge. Soak dates in rum to enrich the flavour and finish your festive three-course meal on an indulgent note.

For the sponge:

- 200g Caterfood Select Chopped Dates
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 100g unsalted butter, softened
- 150g soft light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 175g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the toffee sauce:

- 150g light brown sugar
- 100g unsalted butter
- 200ml double cream
- Pinch of sea salt

To serve:

- Caterfood Select Vanilla Ice Cream



1. Place chopped dates in a bowl, cover with 250ml of boiling water and stir in bicarbonate. Leave to soften for 10 mins.
2. Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time, then add vanilla extract.
3. Fold in flour, then mix through the softened dates within their liquid.
4. Spoon into a buttered baking dish or individual pudding moulds.
5. Bake at 180°C for 30-35 minutes (20-25 if you're making individual portions) until the sponge is risen and springy.
6. For the sauce, melt butter with sugar in a pan. Stir in cream and simmer for 2-3 mins until smooth and glossy.
7. Poke holes in the sponge and pour over some warm toffee sauce to soak in.
8. Serve with extra toffee sauce for pouring and vanilla ice cream. ■





NEW

BRIDOR

Frédéric Calos

MEILLEUR  
OUVRIER  
DE FRANCE

**The art of French breadmaking, reimagined with refined artisan craftsmanship for ultimate quality**

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

**43243** LARGE POCHON LOAF 700 G

**43242** LARGE CEREAL LOAF 700 G



0-10 min  
at room  
temperature



16-18 min  
at 190-200°C  
preheat to 230°C  
Closed damper



14 pieces



# succulent sizzling sausages

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CATERFOOD  
SELECT



## Caterfood Select 50% Pork Sausages

Caterfood Select Pork Sausages are expertly crafted to deliver exceptional taste, texture, and reliability in every serving. Made from carefully selected cuts of premium pork, these sausages offer a rich, meaty flavour and smooth, satisfying texture that perform perfectly across a wide range of catering applications.

1 x 4.54kg - 4's | 8's | 16's | 32's

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# Waste not Want not

Maximise every ingredient in your kitchen  
with these zero-waste cooking tips

**F**rom nose-to-tail to root-to-stem, the zero-waste movement is redefining how professional kitchens operate. Once dismissed as an eco-friendly tick box, many caterers are now realising it's a practical, cost-saving strategy that maximises every ingredient's potential. In fact, zero-waste cooking stretches produce further, streamlines

prep and minimises spend, all while sparking creativity. In a climate where margins are tight and sustainability is under the spotlight, chefs are discovering that peelings, stalks and rinds deserve a little more love. So much so that the challenge of transforming old scraps into menu standouts is fast becoming a hallmark of innovation across the catering industry. ►





**Bone broth has seen a huge surge in popularity, with searches up**

**163%**

Did you know the UK produces more food waste than any other European country? In fact, manufacturers, the hospitality sector and the retail industry are responsible for nearly three million tonnes of food waste every year.\* Additionally, every potato peel and chicken carcass sent to landfill creates methane as it breaks down, while the water, energy and land used to produce it are lost. Food waste as a whole is responsible for around 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.\*\* It's a sobering picture and a clear indication that things need to change, but the tide is turning. Across the industry, chefs and caterers are finding innovative ways to turn scraps into menu success, transforming by-products and peelings into profitable, planet-friendly dishes.

### **SMALL CHANGES**

Starting a war on waste doesn't need to begin with an enormous kitchen overhaul. Sometimes small changes can make the biggest difference. Portion control, clear labelling and product rotation are all minor adjustments that can be implemented immediately.

"The biggest tip I give to our customers is to simply standardise all their menus," says Neil Moore-McCarthy, Development Chef for Turner Price. "If all chefs are working to a specific recipe, this not only reduces waste but also helps guarantee consistency and allergen control."

### **NOSE TO TAIL**

Similarly, getting inventive with odds and ends can produce results that don't

Bone broth is making a comeback and is a great way to reduce waste

just cut waste, but save money and taste incredible, too. "With fresh produce, practically everything is edible," explains Neil. "Certain parts may just need a bit more cooking or no cooking at all; for example, broccoli leaves are great in salads, as are the hard stems when roasted on a BBQ. You can incorporate a lot of things into soups and casseroles, but you can be more inventive by making croquettes and bonbons with cuts that would normally be wasted."

With experimental dishes from the Far East growing in popularity (see p20 for our full 2026 trend report), there's never been a better time to explore lesser-used cuts, offal and bones. Bone broth in particular has seen a huge surge in popularity, with searches up 163% and the hashtag #bonebroth racking up over three million views on TikTok.\*\*\*

It's clear proof that there's a big appetite for the animal parts that were once considered too challenging for standard British menus.





## the LEFTOVERS

Turn common kitchen scraps  
into menu gold



### RICE = ARANCINI

Take leftover rice and fold in béchamel sauce and whatever cheese, veg and protein you have to hand, or even some leftover ragu. Crumb and fry to create this tempting Sicilian classic.



### STALE BREAD = PANZANELLA

Dry out stale bread and toss with tomatoes, onion, fresh basil, olive oil and vinegar. Season well and serve.



### POTATO PEELINGS = HOMEMADE CRISPS

Wash and dry potato skins to remove excess moisture and fry until crispy. Season generously for a tasty, high-margin bar bite.



### MUSHROOM STEMS = UMAMI POWDER

Dry your stems in a low-temperature oven and then blitz into a fine powder. Sprinkle in soups, stews and sauces or use as an umami meat marinade.

*“It’s as easy to be creative  
with a potato as it is with  
wagyu beef!”*

**NEIL McCARTHY**

DEVELOPMENT CHEF, TURNER PRICE

### SUSTAINABILITY FIRST

The zero-waste approach extends far beyond the chopping board. Search for sustainability opportunities in your operation and you’ll start to see them in every corner of the kitchen, from staff training to better food storage and even seasonally rotating menus.

“As a way to balance creativity with sustainability, we produce menus that change seasonally, using locally-sourced products wherever possible,” says Neil. “It’s as easy to be creative with a potato as it is with wagyu beef!”

Another essential step in the process is to calculate properly when purchasing to avoid a surplus of stock. “I always shop for ingredients to minimise waste right from the start,” confirms Neil.

“It may appear more expensive pro rata, but by the time you take wastage into account, it will likely work out cheaper in the long run.”

### PAVING THE WAY

Cutting waste isn’t just about protecting margins – it’s about reducing emissions and reshaping the culture of professional kitchens for the better. Every choice to repurpose scraps, plan smarter or source more mindfully chips away at an industry-wide problem that’s costing billions and fuelling climate change. And as more chefs embrace zero-waste thinking, they’re proving that sustainability isn’t a limitation – it’s an opportunity for creativity, efficiency and a new era of responsible catering. ■

Zero-waste  
cooking is an  
invitation to  
get creative



<sup>\*</sup> [wastemission.com/blog/food-waste-facts-statistics-uk/](https://wastemission.com/blog/food-waste-facts-statistics-uk/)

<sup>\*\*</sup> [unfccc.int/news/food-loss-and-waste-account-for-8-10-of-annual-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-cost-usd-1-trillion](https://unfccc.int/news/food-loss-and-waste-account-for-8-10-of-annual-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-cost-usd-1-trillion)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> [johnlewispartnership.media/news/waitrose/19012024/the-backbone-of-health-waitrose-customers-look-to-benefit-from-bone-broth](https://johnlewispartnership.media/news/waitrose/19012024/the-backbone-of-health-waitrose-customers-look-to-benefit-from-bone-broth)



# HIGH FUNCTIONING

Meet the new wave of drinks designed to do more than quench your thirst. From boosting gut health to calming the mind, functional drinks are fast becoming the next big thing in the beverage market. Here's our edit of the blends and brews worth knowing about

## HYDRATION HERO

In today's always-on hustle culture, drinking enough water can get lost in the daily to-dos. Enter coconut water, a hydration hero that's gone from niche health drink to global staple in recent years. Sweet and subtly nutty, it's packed with electrolytes, nutrients and vitamins to give you a kick after a long day. It's also a great mixer – from post-gym smoothies to tropical mocktails.

### We recommend:

Vita Coco Coconut Water



## SMOOTH MOVER

Fruity or leafy-green, sweet or tart, breakfast or dessert; there will always be a place at our table for smoothies. Putting the 'fun' in functional, these beloved beverages offer endless combinations of nutritious and delicious ingredients, from tropical fruit fusions to greens-packed power blends. A quick, nourishing fix that customers already know and love.

### We recommend:

Love Struck Pash N Shoot Smoothies



## GUT-BOOSTER

Just like the yeast it's made with, kombucha has risen to the top in recent years. Quickly becoming everyone's favourite fermented tippie, this punchy tea is a probiotic powerhouse. While it's developing, the SCOBY (symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast) produces vinegary acetic and sour lactic acids, creating that unique tang and promoting healthy gut bacteria. Commercial kombucha is flavoured with various herbs and fruits to really sweeten the deal.

### We recommend:

HOLOS Kombucha





## 2026 POURCAST



### MAKE MINE A MOCKTAIL

The sober-curious movement continues to gain momentum with nearly a quarter of adults in Britain now 'zebra-striping' (alternating between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks). Offer alternatives alongside wine and beer such as mindful mocktails and hydrating spritzes.



### SPIRU-LATTE

Slated to be colour of the year, 'Transformative Teal' is the precise blue-green hue of the superfood spirulina. Already a favourite in smoothies and shakes, this antioxidant-rich algae combines nutritional credentials with visual appeal and we predict big things.



### FIND YOUR MATCHA

Earthy, energising and strikingly green, matcha is still whisking up plenty of attention. Try going beyond teas and lattes and sprinkle matcha powder across your menu, incorporating it into smoothies or signature desserts. Turn to **p27** for our matcha and coconut pancake recipe.

Adobe Stock

### SIP & SOOTHE

Adaptogenic and calming teas continue to dominate the wellness drinks scene, offering a natural route to relaxation and balance. Whether brewed with adaptogens such as ginseng, ashwagandha and holy basil, or antioxidant-rich leaves like matcha and green tea, these blends are crafted to calm the mind, restore focus and promote overall wellbeing.

#### We recommend:

Joe's Tea Co. Queen of Green

### IMMUNITY TWINS

When you need more pep in your step, nothing hits quite like a health shot. Ginger and turmeric are the most iconic duo on the scene right now, often blended raw with orange, lemon and a dash of black pepper. Thanks to the winning combo of anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, this softly spicy juice is great for nausea-busting, aiding digestion and boosting your immune system.

#### We recommend:

Daily Dose Cold Pressed Juice

### FOREST BREW

Taking the shroom boom to new heights, mushroom coffee is blended with medicinal fungi such as lion's mane, cordyceps, reishi and turkey tail and delivers an earthy, umami-rich flavour. A progressive alternative to standard coffee (with less caffeine to boot), it's packed with natural compounds believed to boost focus and support immunity.

#### We recommend:

Lion's mane from Billington Mushrooms





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# Next issue...

We celebrate the season of renewal in all its flavour-filled glory in our next edition. From expert tips and tasty recipes to trend-led inspiration, it's your ultimate spring menu refresh.

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Sianade Curry

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James Croft

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Clemmie Millbank

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Sonny Flanagan

### Photography Styling

Helena Steele

### Editorial Director

Cath Dean

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Gavin Scott

Harriet Thursby

#### Development Chef

Phil Clark

#### Advertising Sales

Jordan Kent

Ben Woodhouse

For advertising enquiries, please contact:

[hello@caterfoodbg.co.uk](mailto:hello@caterfoodbg.co.uk)

For editorial enquiries, please contact:

[caterfood@thecontentemporium.co.uk](mailto:caterfood@thecontentemporium.co.uk)

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## PRESSURE COOKER

Having seen first hand the pressures of professional kitchens, Tom is a vocal advocate for mental health in hospitality. He is an ambassador for Beder ([beder.org.uk](http://beder.org.uk)) where he raises awareness, opens conversations, and encourages a culture of care in the foodservice industry.

## LAST LICK OF THE SPOON *with* TOM CENCI

**Executive Chef for Maslow's Collection of membership houses: Nessa, Mortimer House Kitchen and Yasmin, Tom Cenci talks to us about the hard lessons he's learnt from being in some of the world's most competitive kitchens, and what it means to be a trendsetter**

### **Describe the moment you knew you wanted to be a chef**

When I was fifteen, I had the chance to do work experience as a chef. My school offered me a place at the local trading estate, making sandwiches, and I thought to myself, 'I can do better than that', so I wrote to all the local hotels and got a placement at Cliveden Hotel. I immediately fell in love with cooking and have never looked back.

### **How would you describe your cooking style?**

Simple and different. I always try to be as original as possible and think of dishes that aren't done elsewhere; as soon as I see a trend that everyone starts to copy, I make sure I'm doing something different.

### **Favourite food memory?**

It has to be my mum's spaghetti and meatballs. I have such fond memories of this dish growing up. It's still up there as one of my favourite meals.

### **You've trained under some of the biggest names in food. What's the most valuable lesson you've carried through your career?**

I've learnt a lot of lessons in my career – both good and bad – from all the places I've worked, but none more so than when I worked in France. The food was exceptional, but it was at the cost of treating the staff poorly. It was a big lesson. The head chef would scream and shout at the chefs daily. They taught me how *not* to treat your employees.

### **How do you keep the creative spark burning?**

Something inside me keeps wanting to do better. The desire to create a unique dining experience that stands out in a competitive market, and makes guests happy is a real driving force.

The rise of social media has grown connections throughout the world, so it's easier than ever to find inspiration.

### **How do you see kitchen culture evolving in the next 10 years?**

We're witnessing a necessary transformation. The old brigade system, with its military hierarchy and often toxic intensity, is giving way to more supportive environments. I would describe the kitchen culture at my restaurants as collaborative and respectful. While we always maintain high standards, we have intentionally moved away from the traditional high-stress kitchen environments. We focus on open communication, continuous learning, and mutual respect.

### **Is there anything you wish would change sooner?**

I would love to see more diversity and better working hours in all kitchens.

### **Any advice for chefs in training?**

Don't climb the ladder too quickly; listen, learn and be patient. Success comes with experience. When considering young chefs for our kitchens, we look for curiosity and a hunger to learn. Technical skills can be taught, but genuine curiosity is innate. I value character and attitude over experience or credentials. A chef with the right mindset can be trained in techniques, but passion and work ethic are qualities that must come from within. ■



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