

The Food Trends to Get Excited About in 2024, According to Experts



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A longing for authenticity. An urge to protect the planet and embrace nature. An itch to spice things up. These are the modern sentiments shaping what will show up on our plates and in our glasses in 2024, according to experts who forecast food trends.

We asked nearly a dozen industry insiders—from chefs to a food futurologist—what to expect in the year ahead for food and drink. Here’s what they said.

An emphasis on global flavors

Even if you don’t venture farther than a nearby restaurant in 2024, exciting new flavors from around the world will be at the other end of your fork. One of the defining trends of the year is expected to be third-culture cuisine, or dishes from a chef’s diverse background. Think: *wafu* Italian restaurants, which bridge Japanese and Italian cultures, and Filipino-British bakeries. “It’s very much derived from social changes and globalization and the meaning of identity today,” says Claire Lancaster, head of food and drink at the trend-forecasting company WGSN. In the past, she notes, someone might have “slapped something random on a pizza” and called it fusion, but more care goes into it now. “This new generation of chefs is creating products that reflect their unique, multi-layered cultural identities.”

More Asian ingredients

Expect Asian flavors and ingredients to have a moment. Black sesame, ube, and milk tea will follow the path of [matcha](#) and become more prevalent, predicts Denise Purcell, vice president of resource development with the Specialty Food Association, a trade group that hosts the [Fancy Food Show](#). “We’re seeing milk tea-filled donuts and ube hot chocolate,” she says. “I was just someplace where they had

black sesame cookies.” The flavors are also popping up in salty snacks, like [black milk tea popcorn](#), Purcell notes.

Andrea Xu, co-founder and CEO of Umamicart, an online grocer that specializes in Asian groceries, anticipates more people will embrace Asian fruits, such as rambutan, pink guava, longan, mangosteen, and various types of dragon fruit. “If you go for the golden variety, it will be much sweeter and softer,” Xu says of dragon fruit. “The white and purple varieties are a little tangier. They make for really good smoothies.”

In Denver, Ni and Anna Nguyen—the married chefs behind popular Vietnamese restaurant Sap Sua—are excited about the emergence of first-generation Asian chefs diversifying what dining looks like. “A lot of people are starting to recognize that there’s a difference between the cuisines,” Ni says. “What makes Filipino cuisine special, and what makes Vietnamese cuisine special? It’s not just lumped into one category.”

Steps toward sustainability

One of the undercurrents driving food and drink trends is our collective desire to take care of the planet. More companies will prioritize sustainability in the coming months in surprising ways. Expect, for instance, the rise of alternative chocolates. As Lancaster points out, the demand for cocoa has led to [deforestation](#) worldwide; plus, access to it is becoming more difficult and expensive. Alternative chocolate is “made without cocoa,” but it still tastes remarkably similar to your standard bar, she says. “There’s a group of innovators who are creating alternatives that have the same taste, smell, and melt of original chocolate.” One U.S.-based company, [Voyage Foods](#), uses ingredients like grape seeds, sunflower protein flour, and sunflower lecithin to make their alternative chocolate. In the U.K., [WNWN Food Labs](#) replaces cocoa beans with ingredients like cereals and legumes.

Other companies are responding to water scarcity, extreme heat, and droughts by creating products that minimize their water footprint. For example: waterless plant milks come in powder form, so you can mix in water at home. “The industry is realizing that we’re paying to ship water—that’s 90% of the product,” Lancaster says. “It’s a huge CO2 emitter, and it adds to the cost of the product.” Other companies are utilizing drought-friendly crops like prickly pear cactus to make snacks like [popcorn](#), [trail mix](#), and [candy](#).

Meanwhile, as we learn more about the climate impact of marine ingredients, expect innovators to start showcasing lesser-known ones, Lancaster says. That includes urchins and fish roe—all of which “create a really lovely, savory, umami depth of flavor, and they’re bringing it to a wider range of dishes.”

Fun with fungi

Todd Anderson, a chef and founder of the [Turnip Vegan Recipe Club](#), gets mushy when talking about mushrooms. In 2024, more of us will embrace fungi, he predicts—and mushrooms will shine as a meat replacement. Anderson recently made mushroom meatballs and roasted lion’s mane, a mushroom that grows on woody tree trunks. He also enjoys dishes like shiitake bacon, mushroom roast beef, and maple sausage made out of mushrooms. Many mushrooms are easy to grow at home, he says, even for people in urban environments—and he’s looking forward to seeing more people grow and experiment with them in 2024.

A celebration of vegetables

Matty Matheson, a chef and restaurateur who starred in FX's restaurant dramedy *The Bear*, doesn't consider himself a big trends guy—but he's excited about veggies. We're about to see a surge in “vegetable-forward restaurants,” he says. “I think people are now understanding how to cook vegetables in a way that's more profound and more exhilarating for their customers and for themselves.” Take broccoli, for instance. You might see it grilled or pureed; a chef might stew its leaves with collard greens. Another increasingly popular technique: cooking Brussels sprouts’ “beautiful, very robust” leaves as though they were collard greens, which Matheson describes as especially flavorful. “Having more vegetables on the forefront is going to be a big thing.”

Dinner in a drink

Lauren Paylor O'Brien, a mixologist who's the winner of *Drink Masters* season 1 on Netflix, likes to use food as inspiration for the drinks she creates. In 2024, she predicts we'll see more culinary integration with booze. During a recent event, she paired a scoop of honey ice cream with three drops of olive oil and a fizzy whiskey cocktail. It's a “sensory experience,” she says. “There's the visual appearance of ice cream in a glass, the carbonation from the drink as you're pouring it, the aromatics from both the ice cream and the canned cocktail, the additional flavor profile of adding olive oil, and then also the aromatics that you're getting from the olive oil.”

Mixologists worldwide are embracing meal profiles for drink flavors, Lancaster notes. She points to [Double Chicken Please](#), a New York City bar, where patrons can order cocktails like the Cold Pizza (Don Fulano Blanco, parmigiano Reggiano, burnt toast, tomato, basil, honey, and egg white) or Mango Sticky Rice (Bacardi Reserva Ocho, mango, sticky rice pu'er tea, wakame, cold brew, coconut). At [the Savory Project](#) bar in Hong Kong, patrons can sip on drinks that utilize ingredients like beef, charred corn husks, leeks, and shiitake mushrooms. “Really unexpected flavor profiles” are going to be big, Lancaster says.

More mindful drinking

For years, Derek Brown was best known in Washington, D.C., for owning high-profile bars. But the longtime bartender's attitude about alcohol has shifted, and he's now an advocate for non-alcoholic cocktails (he wrote the [Mindful Mixology](#) recipe book in 2022).

In 2024, Brown expects we'll see the continued rise of mindful drinking, vs. an either/or approach. “We still see a lot of polarization in discussions about alcohol,” he says. “They tend to revert to: drink or don't drink.” Instead, we'll start to hear more about what he calls “substituters,” or people who switch between “non-alcoholic and alcoholic adult sophisticated-beverages based on the occasion.” That allows us to keep the best parts of drinking—being social and trying delicious drinks, Brown says—while leaving heavy consumption behind.

Another trend bubbling toward the surface is non-alcoholic wine, Brown predicts. Attention has largely centered on non-alcoholic beer until now, but companies like Leitz in Germany and Giesen in New Zealand are starting to offer dealcoholized wines. Many add teas and extracts to compensate for the body and flavor lost during the dealcoholization process—and Brown describes their taste as “amazing.”

Funky flavors, ingredients, and colors

During a conversation on a recent afternoon, Xu snacked on Lay's "numb & spicy hot pot" flavored potato chips. "We're starting to see people really going outside the typical snacks they'd been having," she says. Enter: unique offerings like roasted cumin lamb skewer Lay's, Sichuan Peppercorn Doritos, and Lay's Stax potato chips flavored like jamon (Spanish ham).

On the higher brow end of things, chef Michele Mazza of Il Mulino New York is looking forward to cooking with unique pasta flavors, like squid ink pasta—which "has a very salty flavor with some hints of the ocean"—and truffle-infused pasta, which "gives off a more earthy taste." We'll also likely see wider use of whimsical pasta shapes, he believes, such as orecchiette, farfalle, fusilli, and Cavatappi.

Color-wise, blue will rule, predicts Morgaine Gaye, a food futurologist based in London. That's a reflection of a broader trend: In 2024, we'll continue to seek out nature—part of our ongoing quest to find solace in a divided, stressful world. Inspired by ocean and sky hues, more of our snacks and meals will incorporate blue: "We'll see muffins, we'll see cupcakes, we'll see drinks" colored with butterfly pea protein—a powder made from the butterfly pea plant, a vine native to Thailand—or blue-green algae, Gaye says.

Gaye also foresees florals. Rose, lavender, and violet flavors will pop up in drinks, baked goods, ice cream, snacks, and more to delight us. In 2024, "we're going to need comfort, kindness, and nature," she says. "All of that stuff is key to mental well-being, as we try to hold ourselves, and hold one another, together."