

Fresh Produce Conference Insight

Ideation Fresh Foodservice Forum – New York | FreshStart – Tucson, Arizona | January 2020

Fresh ideas were presented in December 2019 and January 2020 at two conferences focused on foodservice opportunities for the fresh produce industry. Culinary Visions® participated in a panel discussion on Menu Innovation at the New York conference and Y-Pulse® presented research titled, Connecting with Gen Next Away from Home.

Menu Development Turned Upside Down

Vegetable-centricity has changed the perspective on menu development. Today's leading menu developers are looking at **produce in the center of the plate** and using protein – animal or vegetable – as the enhancement.

Produce Highlights

Baby Vegetables – delicate and delicious, offering gourmet appeal and endless versatility.

Pastabilities – the varieties continue to expand on convenient vegetables, cut and formed to offer low calorie, gluten-free options to traditional pastas.

Fermented Foods – bold, often polarizing flavors with functional benefits like detox, unwind, de-stress or energize continue to draw enthusiasts.

Right Size Bowls – this mainstream trend is taking a new turn with curated combinations of mini bowls attempting to capture a share of snack business and appeal to a wide range of lifestyle diets.

Implications for Food Marketers

Sustainability Moves to CSR – Sustainable practices have become ubiquitous and no longer differentiate purveyors. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs and initiatives are now differentiating manufacturers with their customers.

The Next Generations of Foodies – Young consumers are eating more like adults than previous generations. The Kids' Menu is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

Lifestyle Nutrition Is Influencing Trends – Catering to lifestyle diets is becoming second nature to successful restaurants and retailers.

Menu Stars

Flavor & The Menu magazine previewed their **2020 trend forecast** at Ideation Fresh with produce centric menu stars.

Vegan Cool – the benchmark of a rising star chef is becoming their innovative preparations of vegan menu items that are just as cravable for carnivores as vegetarians and vegans.

Root Vegetables – gaining attention paired with fresh, creamy burrata cheese or used in seasonal menus featuring root to stem cooking.

Watermelon is Having Its Moment – as a replacement for tuna in poke bowls, watermelon "ham" and watermelon burgers are making diners think again about one of summer's favorite fruits.

Cauliflower Can Be Anything – cauliflower pizza crust, riced cauliflower and cauliflower tots are proving the mainstream versatility and appeal.

Beyond Beyond Burgers – although plant based manufactured "meats" are in the news, there is tremendous burger innovation with black beans, beets, sweet potatoes & kale that can be prepared in the kitchen rather than the factory.

Gen Z Setting the Pace

Y-Pulse® research presented at the FreshStart Conference noted that Gen Z consumers have a lot of confidence in the kitchen. They are watching food programming on traditional and digital media and creating their own content. According to Y-Pulse® research **44%** of 15-18 year olds and **30%** of 8-14 year olds say they are the best cook in their house.