CBD and cannabis-infused food and beverages are among the top trends for 2019, along with zero-waste cooking, globally inspired dishes and vegetable-forward cuisine. American Culinary Federation chefs identified the trends for the National Restaurant Association’s What’s Hot survey.

The annual survey asks chefs to identify food and beverage trends for the coming year. Chefs ranked 140 items — from all-day breakfast to zero-waste cooking — as “hot,” “yesterday’s news” or “perennial favorite.” The resulting What’s Hot list gives a preview of the food, beverages and culinary themes that will be the talk of 2019.

Nearly 77 percent of the chefs ranked cannabis/CBD-infused drinks as the No. 1 trend, and 76 percent of them tapped cannabis/CBD-infused food as the second most popular. Chefs who participated in the survey said infusing foods with the ingredients could create unique cuisine opportunities and potential new markets for experiential dining occasions. Seventy percent ranked zero-waste cooking as the third most popular trend.

“The Association’s 2019 What’s Hot report reflects contemporary consumer cravings in tandem with emerging societal dining trends,” says Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research for the National Restaurant Association. “We’re seeing a more eco-friendly perspective and greater emphasis on global flavors/cuisines as well as enhanced availability of healthful items/children’s meals and the exploration of new food sourcing options.”

The survey indicates that Americans crave foods that not only nourish them but also help sustain the planet. Plant-based and veggie centric foods are no longer just for vegetarians. In fact, three of the 15 hottest items are plant-based sausages/burgers, veggie-centric/vegetable forward cuisine and plant-based proteins. Hyper-local sourcing, including restaurants that grow produce in their own gardens, also made the Top 10 list.

Zero-waste cooking, which transforms food scraps, damaged produce and leftovers into culinary delights, ranks third on the list of overall trends for 2019 and second in the culinary concepts category. Chefs are taking a second look at items they trashed in the past — using coffee grinds to flavor homemade ice cream and showcasing cabbage butts in crowd-pleasing stir-fries.

Global flavors also ranked highly, with the trend heating up from last year. Globally inspired breakfast dishes claimed the fourth spot on the survey, followed by global flavors in kids’ meals.

In category after category, global flavors shine brightly. The Israeli soda gazoz ranks second in the non-alcoholic beverage category. Thai-rolled ice cream placed first among sweets. African cuisines, condiments and spices trended across several categories, including items that originated in North, West and East Africa (Ethiopia). Chefs identified North African cuisine (think tajine and fuul) as today’s “hottest” global flavor.

New cuts of meat, such as shoulder tender, oyster steak or Merlot cut, cooled some after nabbing the top spot for the past two years. As for “yesterday’s news,” chefs ranked overnight oats, anise-flavored cocktails and pretzels in desserts as trends that have come and gone.
Top 10 trends for 2019

1. Cannabis/CBD-infused drinks
2. Cannabis/CBD-infused food
3. Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
4. Globally inspired breakfast dishes
5. Global flavors in kids’ meals
6. Hyper-local (e.g. restaurant gardens, onsite beer brewing, house-made items)
7. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
8. Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine (e.g. fresh produce is star of the dish)
9. Chef-driven fast-casual concepts
10. Craft/artisan/locally produced spirits
Top trends by category

KIDS‘ MEALS
1. Global flavors in kids‘ meals
2. Gourmet items in kids‘ meals
3. Healthful kids‘ meals
4. Whole grain items in kids‘ meals
5. Sliders/mini-burgers in kids‘ meals

SNACKS/SWEETS
1. Thai-rolled ice cream
2. Doughnuts with non-traditional filling (e.g. liqueur, Earl Grey cream)
3. Chocolate (responsibly sourced, new flavors)
4. Injera chips
5. Artisan/house-made ice cream

Shakshuka is showing up on some of the hippest menus in LA. People have started to expect to see it on a breakfast menu.

BYRON THOMAS, FOUR SEASON HOTEL, LOS ANGELES

We’re putting sriracha on pizza, but it’s not about it being a Thai hot sauce. It’s looking at all these foods as flavors.

RACHEL YANG, JOULE, SEATTLE
Top Trends by category

PRODUCE
1. Uncommon herbs (e.g. chervil, lovage, lemon balm, papalo)
2. Locally sourced produce
3. Imperfect/ugly produce
4. Exotic fruit (e.g. rambutan, dragon fruit, paw paw, guava)
5. Super fruit (e.g. acai, goji berry, mangosteen)

DISHES
1. Globally inspired breakfast dishes
2. Vegetable carb substitutes (e.g. cauliflower rice, zucchini spaghetti)
3. Street food-inspired dishes (e.g. tempura, kabobs, dumplings)
4. Katso Sando (Japanese cutlet sandwich)
5. House-made/artisan pickles

CONDIMENTS
1. House-made condiments/specialty condiments
2. North African condiments (dukka, zhug, harissa, ras el hanout, etc.)
3. Shichimi spice/powder
4. Gochujang (Korean red-pepper paste)
5. Berbere

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BYRON THOMAS, FOUR SEASON HOTEL, LOS ANGELES
**Top Trends by category**

### GLOBAL FLAVORS
1. North African cuisine/flavors (fuul, tajines, etc.)
2. West African cuisine/flavors
3. Peruvian cuisine
4. Ethiopian/Eritrean cuisine/flavors (Berbere, injera)
5. Filipino cuisine

### GRAINS/PASTA
1. Protein-rich grains/seeds (e.g. hemp, chia, quinoa, flax)
2. Non-wheat noodles/pasta (e.g. quinoa, rice, buckwheat)
3. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth, lupin)
4. Savory granola
5. Teff

### PROTEIN
1. New cuts of meat (e.g. shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
2. Plant-based sausages and burgers
3. Locally sourced meat and seafood
4. Sustainable seafood
5. Heritage-breed meats

### NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
1. Cannabis/CBD-infused drinks
2. Gazoz (non-alcoholic spritzer from Israel)
3. Craft/house-roasted coffee
4. Nitrogen/cold brew coffee

### ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
1. Craft/artisan/locally produced spirits
2. Onsite barrel-aged drinks
3. Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients, herb-infused)
4. Locally produced spirits/wine/beer
5. Rosé cider

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Gazoz (spritzer from Israel)

Plant-based burgers

North African cuisine
RESTAURANT CONCEPTS
1. Chef-driven fast casual concepts
2. Pop-up temporary restaurants
3. Commissaries (e.g. shared commercial kitchen space)
4. Small-plate menus/restaurant concepts
5. Food halls

CULINARY CONCEPTS
1. Cannabis/CBD-infused food
2. Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
3. Hyper-local (e.g. restaurant gardens, house-made items)
4. Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine
5. Natural ingredients/clean menus

“...We call ourselves the ER of food. We don’t let any food die until it’s really dead, and even then, we **donate the parts** to other dishes...”

JEHANGIR MEHTA, GRAFFITI EARTH, NEW YORK CITY
The National Restaurant Association works with the American Culinary Federation for its annual chefs’ survey of menu trends for the coming year. This year, the Culinary Institute of America-trained chefs identified concept trends and ranked 140 items as top trends, yesterday’s news or perennial favorites, as well as by category. Learn more at Restaurant.org/research.

Top Items from each category

- Cannabis/CBD-infused drinks
- Cannabis/CBD-infused food
- Zero-waste cooking (elevated cuisine using food scraps)
- Globally inspired breakfast dishes
- Global flavors in kids’ meals
- Hyper-local (e.g., restaurant gardens, onsite beer brewing, house-made items)
- New cuts of meat (e.g., shoulder tender, oyster steak, Vegas Strip Steak, Merlot cut)
- Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine (e.g., fresh produce is star of the dish)
- Chef-driven fast-casual concepts
- Craft/artisan/locally produced spirits