



Keeping up with on-trend flavors

Chefs, operators cater to increasingly adventurous tastes with cutting-edge ingredients.

While veteran restaurateurs and chefs understand the value of satisfying their guests' culinary cravings with classic tried-and-true menu items, they also recognize the benefits of keeping pace with food fashions and on-trend ingredients in today's marketplace.

More than ever curious consumers are demonstrating an awareness of the changing food landscape, spurring many operators to adjust their menus to accommodate the latest directions and vogueish ingredients.

Health and wellness concerns also play a role in the kinds of ingredients and preparations operators are menuing. "As consumers' taste and dietary preferences change, chef's need to adjust their menus to meet the demand," says

Arlene Spiegel, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates, a New York-based restaurant consultancy. "Customers care a lot about the 'healthy halo' aspects, particularly in dishes that are featured as 'light.'

In the meantime, chefs and operators are continuing to explore new culinary vistas by experimenting with a wide range of on-trend ingredients. Datassential cites several of those more cutting-edge items in its "Flavors & Ingredients To Watch" study. They include: Chermoula, Umeboshi, Turmeric, Finger limes, and Avocado oil.

Other on-trend items include: Poke and Sea vegetables.

Clearly, though, operators and chefs know that not every dish or ingredient promises to be a good fit for every menu. ●