

# Food TRENDS 2015

Aoife Stuart-Madge speaks to the top chefs and industry insiders who reveal what's hot on the menu for the year ahead.



It could be argued that 2014 was the year that Instagram food photography permeated dining culture on a gargantuan level. Take the case of the New York-based restaurant who hired investigators earlier in the year to figure out why they were persistently getting bad reviews online. The most common complaint lobbied against them was that the service was slow or that diners had to wait too long for a table – this was despite the restaurant serving the same number of people per day as they had ten years ago, only with more staff and less menu items. When investigators examined CCTV footage of the restaurant's service area from 2004 compared to 2014 they found waiters were being delayed by demands for the restaurant's Wi-Fi code, spending time taking photos of groups at tables and requests to re-heat food after several minutes were spent taking and filtering pictures on mobile phones after the food was served.

The good news for time-zapped waiting staff is that the hyper-filtered Instagram meals of 2014 are set to make way for a return to authenticity in 2015. This translates to locally-sourced produce, imperfectly-shaped vegetables and a natural approach to plating food. Food futurologist Dr Morgaine Gaye explains, "Food styling is a moment. We've been there, we've had the stacking (stacked foods), the perfectly symmetrical food tower, the phone filters ... What we want now is imperfection. We want a feeling of real, home-cooked food plated up to look like it could have come from you mum's kitchen."



**Robin Gill** Dublin born head chef at The Dairy, London's buzzed about eatery.

Dublin-born Robin Gill, head chef at buzzed-about eatery The Dairy in London, is a pioneer of this farmhouse feel. "We have been accused of almost throwing the ingredients on the plate, as we feel that they are beautiful as they are. The kitchen team is in joint agreement that we hate what we call food being 'finger f\*\*\*\*\*' or messed with. It's all about the ingredients, texture, flavour and freshness. We have built a kitchen garden above the restaurant to emphasise this and serve the freshest products possible from soil to table."

**"It's all about sharing and giving our food back some meaning. The idea that when you eat together the quality of what you eat and the enjoyment you get from a meal is heightened."**

**Dr Morgaine Gaye**

And Irish chefs are perfectly positioned to make the most of this move towards farm-to-table meals, given the variety and quality of local produce open to them. Kate Lawlor, head chef at No.5 Fenn's Quay in Cork says, "The growth of local producers spells positivity for the Irish food industry and for restaurants like ourselves. Irish producers like Toonsbridge and Brendan Guinan (inseasonfarm.ie) are foraging ahead with the idea that they want to give chefs a better product choice, but also a more modern take on traditional produce. It's a very exciting time for chefs. Brendan Guinan has introduced his miniature veg and miniature herbs, something we would have had to go abroad for five years ago; we can now get tomatoes in Waterford, which we also used to have to source abroad ... Then you've got

Ballyhoura mushrooms (ballyhouramushrooms.ie) and Toonsbridge Buffalo (toonsbridgebuffalo.com) – who'd have thought spiced buffalo meat would take off in Cork?" She adds, "Look at Sally Barnes with her Woodcock Smokery (woodcocksmokery.com) she is always doing something different. It's not just your smoked salmon. It's all about being different to your competitor. There is such a high standard of local producers out there, we are spoiled. We are also lucky here in Cork to have Toby Simmonds' English Market on our doorstep. Lots of products come in that way."

These sustainable chains of production bring a sense of realness and authenticity back to dining, and those values will be echoed in the way food is served in the year ahead, with lots of food-made-for-sharing permeating our menus. Tapas and sharing platters will dominate in 2015, predicts Dr Gaye, as the ritual of celebrating a meal makes a comeback. "It's all about sharing and giving our food back some meaning," she says. "The idea that when you eat together the quality of what you eat and the enjoyment you get from a meal is heightened." 'Community dining' where allotment growers share their produce, and 'cook for your street' events, such as the Kinsale Celebrity Chef cook-off, part of the annual Kinsale Gourmet Festival, will all serve to make an event out of mealtimes.

Wade Murphy, head chef at Limerick's 1826 Adare, says, "Places like Cava in Galway have been doing tapas for years, and they have recently reopened. Then you've got Oliver Dunne in Cleaver East and Keelan Higgs in Locks Brasserie in Dublin all doing sharing platters."

Another trend coming to our shores in 2015 is a taste for more bitter flavours in coffee and chocolate, so we'll see an emergence of lots of dark roasts and high percentage cocoa chocolates in the year




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ahead, predicts Dr Gaye. “People associate that darker, more bitter flavour with health. Our tastes are changing. If you go back 20 years, the only dark chocolate out there was Bournville. Now we know all about the percentages, and we have become more sophisticated,” says Dr Gaye.

Chef Wade agrees, noting, “I now use over 70% chocolate in all my desserts. People have a more sophisticated palate for good quality, bitter chocolate.” He adds, “I think we’ll also see a lot more stronger, darker roasts of coffee. Enda McEvoy has just opened a new restaurant (Loam, in Galway) and they do a filter coffee that you do at the table. It’s a very dark roast.”

**Matcha Point** Matcha tea, could well be the next green tea ... declares food futurologist Dr Morgaine Gaye



While Paul Williams from Dublin’s Canteen says, “I think single origin will be very important in coffee, with single origin even coming to the major chains such as 3FE and Badger & Dodo. Filter coffee or ‘pour over’ coffee will also come to the more specialist coffee houses and this will spread to most cafes. Single origin will also be very important to chocolate in artisan and mass market brands like Bean and Goose.”

And it’s not just coffee that is changing, tea is getting a makeover in the year ahead too. Get ready to hear a lot more about

the Japanese ‘superdrink’ matcha. Already available in health food shops to buy in ready-to-drink cans, this antioxidant infused, bright green powder is traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies. “This is the next green tea,” notes Dr Gaye. Perhaps a testament to its growing popularity is the fact that Dublin-based café Kaph on Drury Street are now selling over 300 matcha lattes a week.

Sticking with the beverage theme, there will also be some changes coming to breweries in the year ahead. “Super local will be very important, with most counties having their own brewery,” says Paul, whose healthy-eating café was recently added to McKenna’s Guides 100 Best Restaurants 2014. Paul also points out that Tipperary brewery White Gypsy (whitegypsy.ie) have already brought out a beer made from Irish ingredients.

According to Dr Gaye, fermentation is also set to be a buzz word in food in the year ahead. “There is a lot happening in the world of fermentation. We’ll see lots of prebiotics like kombucha, and lots of different vinegars,” says Dr Gaye. “You might go out at night and have a non-alcoholic vinegar infused with hedgerow and vinegar, muddled with mint, lime and sparkling water.” While Robin Gill says he is already planning to add a kombucha recipe to his cocktail list for his new London site, The Manor. “We are already making our own kombucha and incorporating a kombucha sour into our cocktail list, made with a caramelised honey, bourbon and bitters.

From an Asian superfood to an Irish superfood: Kate thinks seaweed will be

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## Weird Food

**Snake in the glass:** snake wine is on the menu in China and Vietnam. This popular beverage is believed to have restorative properties. It is made by either dipping a snake in rice wine, or by mixing snake bodily fluids, such as blood, with alcohol.

More and more visitors to Iceland are trying puffin heart, a national delicacy, which is, traditionally, eaten raw. Gordon Ramsay has said that he's devoted to them. Also attracting tourists to the country to an increasing degree is hákarl – decomposed shark. The

shark is buried to ferment in its own juices for several months, then cut into strips and hung up to dry.

**Century eggs:** also hot in China. Their name is a misnomer, however: the delicacies are preserved for just a few months. But that's still sufficient to turn the yolk dark green and the white brown.

In Belgium, chocolate-lovers are munching on chocolate topped with insects, which are, after all, an excellent source of protein. The

country was among the first to introduce national guidelines on the sale of insects in the food chain.

One of the best-regarded restaurants in Cambodia, Romdeng, is serving fried tarantulas served with lime and black pepper. The eatery says it serves over 200 a week. Makes your skin crawl.

Grasshoppers are beginning to explode across the globe in countries as diverse as China, the UK, and Mexico. This might be the

most prominent off-beat trend in London in 2015.

In Italy, it looks like there will be a resurgence of cockscombs, the fleshy growth on the top of chickens' heads, in making pasta sauces. The most known of these is *cibreo*, an old classic, which may very well become flavour of the month once again.

**Palatably Strange** Look out for unusual foods and ways of presenting normal foods in 2015.



making waves in cooking in the year ahead, and it's already on the menu at Fenns' Quay. "Kale was the big thing last year, in 2015, it's seaweed. I think we'll definitely see more seaweed on menus," she says. "Our way of selling Carrageen moss is calling it the 'Irish panna cotta'. We've had a massive response and it's become one of our best-selling desserts. People are becoming more health aware, which is great."

This quest for healthy options coupled with the emergence of the Paleo or Caveman diet will result in a lot more cured meats in 2015, says Dr Gaye, particularly in the snacking market. "We'll see biltong and jerky in interesting flavours like hickory smoked and liquor-infused. They are high in protein and very low in sugar so they are in the Paleo diet arena," adds Dr Gaye. Chef Kate has already seen big changes in the availability of cured Irish meats. "We've now got Gubbeen Farm chorizo. I'd buy the Gubbeen chorizo over a Spanish one as the quality is so much better than the stuff that is imported. I have to give so much credit to the small producers that have battled through the recession and believed in their product, and now they are reaping the rewards."

