

Evolving Consumer Tastes

10 Food Trends for 2006



1. Functional foods

As Canadians become more conscious of nutrition and food ingredients, foods with a function beyond supplying daily energy needs will be in demand. Foods that can help consumers manage their health and prevent disease – those with anti-oxidant properties and Omega-3 fatty acids, for example – will be increasingly present in Canadians' diets.

2. Meatless meals

While true vegetarianism may not grow dramatically, the consumption of meatless meals will continue to increase, driven by perceptions of healthfulness and a broadening range of ethnic food options.



3. Spanish flavours

Whether it's sherry vinegar, aged Serrano ham or traditional red wine, Spanish flavours gained wide attention in 2005 and are set to increase in popularity as more and more Canadians try these Old World favourites.

4. Aromatic spices

From the familiar cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg to the more exotic anise, saffron and cardamom, flavourful and aromatic spices will become a simple way to spice up everyday meals.



5. Super fruit

Fruits such as acai – a product of the Brazilian rainforest that is renowned for its high antioxidant content – will appeal to health-conscious consumers in the coming years. Other up-and-coming "good for you" fruits to watch include pomegranate, guarana, noni, mangosteen, goji berries, blueberries and even black currants.

6. Retro desserts

Grown up versions of childhood favourites are making a return this year, from highly flavoured gel squares and other desserts made with gelatin and fruit purees to alcohol-infused rice puddings.

7. Whole grains

With aging consumers seeking fibre-rich foods and specialty grains such as quinoa and amaranth more



widely available, consumers are poised to embrace the nutritional benefits and varied tastes of whole grains.

8. Chocolate chic

Consumers will embrace gourmet and organic chocolate this year, while manufacturers will focus on creating new and delicious dark chocolate products.



9. Artisanal cocktails

Mixologists are turning their backs on simple cocktails that are blended, shaken or stirred and embracing "muddled" cocktails that combine fresh herbs and fruit juices with specialty liquors.



10. Gourmet grazing

A "small meal phenomenon" that has spread to restaurants and kitchen tables in recent years, these small meals – also known as meze, tapas, hors d'oeuvres and appetizers – give consumers a chance to try a lot of different kinds of food, often from different parts of the world.

¹ Canadian Food Trends to 2020: A Long Range Consumer Outlook, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, July 2005

² In Canada: Refocus Your Target Consumer, ACNielsen, 2004

³ "Food trends for 2006," Canadian Living Magazine Online, Jan. 2, 2006

⁴ NET and EPIC (Eating Patterns in Canada), CREST/NPD Group, Dec. 2005

⁵ "Ten trends to watch in packaged goods in 2006," Food Business Review Online, Dec. 9, 2005

⁶ "From the Kitchen and Garden to the Table," globeinvestor.com, Dec. 8, 2005

⁷ "Functional Foods," Food Forecast 2006, Institute of Food Technologists

⁸ "Food fads, fine print in '06," The Washington Post, Jan. 11, 2006

⁹ "Raising A Glass To Unfamiliar Bottles," The New York Times, Jan. 4, 2006

¹⁰ "The Daily Dish," Epicurious.com, Dec. 20, 2005