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Technomic®

THE NEXT BIG MENU TRENDS

10 Ingredients to Watch

Lizzy Freier, Senior Managing Editor

Predicting the industry's next big menu hits is part art, part science. For years, Technomic's menu analysts have had a range of tools at our disposal to help make these predictions—from quantitative methods such as the Flavor Lifecycle and Ignite menu data to qualitative examinations such as Emerging Eats' deep-dive look at independent trends predicted to move into the mainstream. These predictions have helped bolster Technomic's expert position in the industry. And now, we're taking these predictions to the next level.

With the help of our data scientists, we are using time-series modeling to determine what will happen next. By leveraging artificial intelligence by way of natural language processing and machine learning, we're able to create quantitative predictions of where trends are headed. Our predictive model—which takes into consideration historical menu trends, social listening tools and consumer sentiment—forecasts where ingredients, flavors or dishes will go in the coming years.

You can use these predictions to make more informed decisions for the future of your business and position yourself as a thought leader. So, what are the menu predictions for the years to come?

Our Menu Predictive tool has churned out ingredients to watch based on those that have the highest predicted operator penetration growth in the coming two years. Here are the leading flavors.

Mezcal

Pictured right

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 11.1
Q2 2019 Penetration: 8.6%

What is it?
Smoky Mexican liquor produced from the agave plant

On the Menu
Bonefish Grill's Smoky Mezcal Margarita—tequila, mezcal, citrus, pineapple juice and house-infused turmeric simple syrup, finished with a smoky chile pepper salt rim and pineapple garnish

Avocado Toast

Pictured left

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 4.4
Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.8%

What is it?
Open sandwich topped with smashed avocado

On the Menu
Bakers Square's Avocado Toast—smashed avocado covered with arugula and grape tomato salad, topped with two eggs, chopped bacon and feta cheese
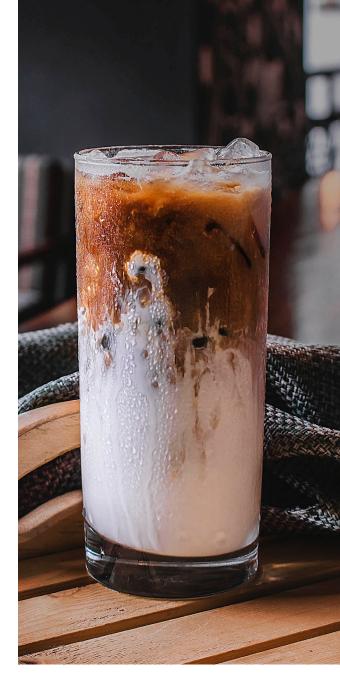
Sauternes

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 4.0
Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.7%

What is it?
Sweet French white wine

On the Menu
BLT Steak & Prime's Castelnau de Suduiraut Sauternes

Cold Brew

Pictured above

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 3.4
Q2 2019 Penetration: 2.1%

What is it?
Coffee or tea beverage that's steeped in cold water

On the Menu
The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf's The Monica—dark chocolate combined with cold brew

Shochu

Pictured left

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 1.4
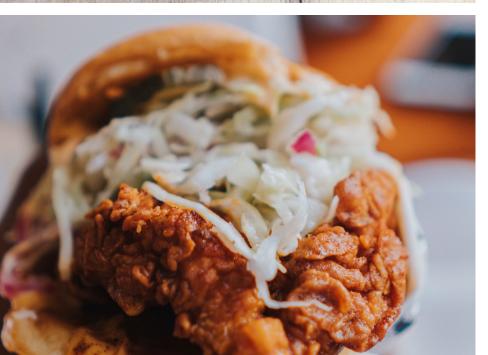Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.1%

What is it?
Japanese distilled beverage

On the Menu
RA Sushi Bar Restaurant's Pineapple Crush Punch Bowl—lychee vodka, shochu, elderflower liqueur, pineapple and lemon, topped with sparkling sake

Creme de Cassis

Pictured top left

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 1.3
Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.1%

What is it?
Blackcurrant-flavored liqueur

On the Menu
Rainforest Cafe's Panama Punch—golden rum, dark rum, peach and banana schnapps, creme de cassis and orange and pineapple juices

Ginger Beer

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 1.3
Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.1%

What is it?
Carbonated beverage with strong ginger notes

On the Menu
Tilted Kilt Pub & Eatery's Passionate Ginger—ginger beer, cranberry and grapefruit juices, fresh lime juice, Monin passion fruit puree and a lime wedge garnish

Volnay

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 1.2
Q2 2019 Penetration: 1.1%

What is it?
Light French red wine

On the Menu
Mon Ami Gabi's Louis Latour "En Chevret" Volnay 2014

Nashville Hot

Pictured bottom left

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 1.0
Q2 2019 Penetration: 0.4%

What is it?
Cayenne-based sauce, typically featured on fried chicken

On the Menu
Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Brews' Nashville Hot Boneless Wings—boneless wings tossed in spicy Nashville hot sauce, served on a bed of Yukon kettle chips with dill pickle slices

Gochujang

Pictured middle left

Two-Year Predicted Growth (Percentage Points): 0.8
Q2 2019 Penetration: 0.5%

What is it?
Korean sauce made with fermented soybeans, dried chiles and garlic

On the Menu
P.F. Chang's Kimchi Fries—steak fries topped with cheddar, mozzarella, kimchi, edamame, Korean ketchup and gochujang mayonnaise

Macro Trends in the Top 10

Based on our top 10 list, a number of macro menu trends immediately stand out. Use these trends to gauge a better understanding of the direction of our industry and help plan for your product development pipeline.

Kick of Spice

Flavor-forward fare has always been essential, but consumers' palates are increasingly moving toward boldness by way of heat and spice. Spicy sauces such as gochujang and Nashville hot fall into this category, as well as spiced notes from ginger beer.

Trendy Ethnic Liquors

Operators today are incorporating trendy liquors from around the globe into their cocktails to amp up their mixology programs. Mexican mezcal has become the new tequila, while Japanese shochu joins other Asian spirits on the rise, such as Japanese sake, Korean soju and Chinese baijiu.

Instagrammable Eats and Sips

Social media is, no doubt, a major influencer of new menu launches. Trendy millennial favorites such as avocado toast and cold brew have ascended through the social spotlight, while colorful ingredients such as dark-red creme de cassis bring a photoworthy aspect to beverages.

Under-the-Radar French Wines

The French regions of Bordeaux (known for sauvignon blancs and cabernet sauvignons) and Burgundy (chardonnays and pinot noirs) have stellar reputations. But somewhat-eclipsed wines from those regions—Burgundy-produced volnay and Bordeaux-produced sauternes—are coming out from the shadows.