



# An Update to Our 2020 Trends

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As we enter the second half of 2020, we are reflecting on our forecasted trends that we believed back in late 2019 would be the most impactful this year. Our hot-button predictions for food, flavor, operations and consumer attitudes in 2020 have pivoted as suppliers, operators, distributors and other foodservice folks have changed courses to navigate through the unexpected coronavirus.

Let's review where and how we see our seven hot 2020 predicted trends evolving with today's new environment.



Pictured: purple kale

## 1. Cool Colors Heat Up

This trend is perhaps even more relevant today. Many of the ingredients that are purple, blue or green in nature are rich in vitamins and minerals and have both nutritional and functional benefits. Because we're in a pandemic, immunity-boosting ingredients most especially are and will continue to be sought after by consumers, and many operators are even touting those benefits directly on menus. Expect to continue to see operators turn to ingredients such as leafy greens to help relieve stress and anthocyanin-rich plants to boost immunity.



Pictured: dalgona coffee

## 2. The Year of the Fad

Although the original ideas behind this trend—headscratcher fare, “mouth magic” ingredients and components that toe the legal line—aren't entirely what we've seen trending, it certainly has thus far been the year of the fad in other ways. Throughout the pandemic, food and beverage trends that have risen quickly through social media then gone away just as fast included home-cooked creations, such as banana bread and Dalgona whipped coffee. When presenting this trend back in late 2019, we predicted fad fare would be made with expensive and/or off-the-wall ingredients—however, current LTOs are driven much more by basic comfort foods and value. That being said, funky innovation can still come from low-cost/high-profit-margin fare, and social media (especially Instagram and TikTok) will continue to drive these fad food trends as many consumers continue to opt to stay home.

## 3. New Forces of Nature

The plant-forward momentum transitioned from foodservice to retailers over the past few months as restaurant operators turned their attention to core offerings as a way to survive. However, innovation is beginning to pick up again, namely with recent plant-based protein launches at top chains including Toppers Pizza and El Pollo Loco. As independent restaurants reopen, expect to continue to see operators using new parts of familiar plants as a way to reduce waste and promote sustainability.

## 4. Eco-Everything

Sustainability continues to be vital for restaurants, but immediate priorities have changed for the industry. For example, early on during the pandemic, restaurants had to swiftly recalibrate their eco efforts to prevent food waste in an environment where dine-in occasions had stopped. To that end, we saw many restaurants become pantries that sold grocery supplies, creating a new model of sustainability. Technomic's “Four S” recovery roadmap calls out sustainability in the final “Surge” phase, and when we reach that stage, we'll see a reinvestment into eco-friendly sustainability in terms of packaging, as well as a measured shift away from single-use packaging back toward reusable cups, plates and utensils.



## 5. Locking into Lifestages

While all consumers have overarching needs that have been directly influenced by COVID-19, each generation's individual lifestages remain a relevant consideration. This is particularly true for millennials, who are in the midst of the parenting lifestage. The tricky balance of months-long stay-at-home orders, working remotely and home-schooling children has created new needstates for many foodservice consumers or, at the very least, has fostered a heightened need for convenient, value-oriented, easily sourced, at-home meal bundles and heat-and-serve kits that feed an entire family.

## 6. Offsetting Off-Premise

This is perhaps the operational trend that has been turned upside down the most, since off-premise initiatives have essentially kept restaurants alive, and reviving dine-in occasions depends upon outside factors. It will take more than menu promotions and experiential innovations to drive dine-in traffic. In this climate, dine-in revitalization is now hinging upon whether states and cities remain open; how confident consumers feel about visitation and face-to-face interactions; the consistent implementation of health and safety practices; and the execution of social distancing guidelines. While restaurants will have to do more to get foot traffic to accelerate, how they go about that will depend upon regulations and concerns that still remain ambiguous.

## 7. The Pre-Recession Jitters

Initial nervousness about an impending economic recession has given way to the reality of widespread unemployment, business shutdowns and in our industry, permanent restaurant closures. Very quickly, our message changed from "prepare for the inevitable" to reflect everyone being thrown into the deep end right away. However, the implication that we originally stated for this trend at the start of 2020 remains the same: the foodservice consumer will increasingly seek out value with low price as the determining factor of that equation, and the takeout/drive-thru/pickup/delivery format will thrive.

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## Want More?

As for brand-new outlook trends, stay tuned for our 2021 forecast. Our team will hash out ideas on what comes next, and as always, we'll release Technomic's annual trends to watch in the fall.

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