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# 2025 Global Restaurant Trends Forecast

**By:**

**Aaron Jourden**

Director, International  
Research & Insights

**Keegan Sims**

Senior Research Analyst,  
Global



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The global pandemic and ensuing years of supply disruption, unabating inflation and general worldwide unease, have produced an extended period of challenging operating conditions for the restaurant and foodservice industry in the U.S. and abroad.

But as pandemic-driven inflationary pressures finally begin to subdue in many—but certainly not all—global markets, lingering labor issues and ongoing potential for market disruptions brought about by extreme weather and conflicts will continue to keep operators and suppliers awake at night.

Despite it all, 2025 will be the year of hope.

Looking ahead, expect to see many of last year's macro trends evolve and mature, while quick-moving fads burn bright and fade. Korean foods, egg sandwiches, beverage chain proliferation and the acceleration of product development—all covered in previous annual global forecasts—remain highly relevant to the mass market, even as newer trends emerge and mature.

As noted before, the need to perk up weary consumers is high on operators' priority lists, and 2025 will be no exception. Expect this to be expressed through experiences, marketing and menu development that are grounded in communal, whimsical and escapist themes. More than ever, restaurants are a refuge of certainty in a world of seemingly constant uncertainty.

With this as context, we are pleased to share our perspective on what's set to influence restaurant operations, marketing and menus around the globe in the coming year and beyond.

## Analogue Alternatives

Plant-based meat alts had a moment in the spotlight, but 2025 will find new stars in the protein category. Ostrich made news as a beef alternative in Japan, and frog legs are trending up on chain menus in China. Consumer demand for new flavors and experiences coupled with the reality of rising costs for many everyday proteins in some cases has elevated the introduction of less-common meats, poultry and other animal-derived products. In 2025,

expect more operators to go beyond standard beef, pork, poultry and seafood to explore a wider variety of animal proteins. At the same time, look for more chains to introduce milks not derived from cows or plants, particularly camel and buffalo milks.

## Imposters, Fakes, Replications & Copycats

In the age of hypercompetitive product development, many restaurant chains are looking to their direct competitors' core menus for product inspiration.

There's a growing number of restaurant brands that apparently see no need to reinvent the wheel, opting to freely imitate, replicate and downright copy successful products found on other chain menuboard. Primarily impacting fast-food chains, expect to see many more new products in the burger, pizza, drink and dessert categories that reference—explicitly or implicitly—signature offerings from leading global brands over the coming year.



## All Eyes on Southeast Asia

Restaurant chains from China, Japan, South Korea, the U.S., Australia and the Middle East are eyeing Southeast Asia for expansion opportunities as they face saturation, slow growth and intense competition at home. Singapore is emerging as the proving ground for entry into this region. Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are solidifying as secondary entry points. Many fast-growing brands from within this region are also eyeing local growth as well as more aspirational global expansion. Watch brands like Kopi Kenangan, ZUS Coffee and Tealive in particular. Quick-service formats, beverage-heavy menus, extensive applications of tech, localized branding and extremely rapid product development are commonalities among the region's leading players.



## “Inherivation”

The strategy of developing innovative new products based firmly on inherited cuisine traditions and standards is nothing new in the restaurant world, but this culinary approach is poised to gain traction across global markets at the chain level. Next year will see more and more operators leveraging the inherivation trend to bring new and differentiated products to the mass market—particularly to cater to local tastes and preferences. Take for instance the modern adaptation of traditional mix coffee emerging in South Korea, or how local brands in Mexico are rethinking traditional chiles en nogada and pan de muerto for contemporary diners. Other preparations getting the treatment include British fish and

chips, Mexican birria, Japanese ramen, Hawaiian poke and Korean chimaek. Even traditions such as Japanese omakase will be taken into new and unfamiliar directions, such as the application to comfort foods like pizza, burgers and fried chicken.

## Escapist Themes

Restaurants will increasingly cater to consumers looking for reprieve from the stresses of daily life. On menus, expressions of this trend may include new products that reference outer space, fantasy and transportation to a far-off land. More experiential forms could be catered picnics in serene locales, immersive group dinners that transport guests back in time, and dining rooms that welcome pet parents and their fur babies.

## Dessertified Snacks

As much as brands have paid increasingly close attention to their sweet options in recent years—with pizza operators in particular revisiting their dessert pizza menus—operators are set to bring classic dessert ingredients to their sides and snacks. Look for global and local operators to introduce such selections as loaded fries topped with ice cream, dumplings filled with chocolate sauce or tteokbokki bathed in sweet sesame pastes as this trend matures over the coming year.

## Regional & Emerging Trends to Watch

When it comes to global cuisine influences, expect to see more milanesa by way of Argentina, more Hong Kong-style barbecue, more Turkish street foods and—as predicted in years past—more casual Korean favorites.

There will be more promotion of love/hate ingredients like cilantro, pineapple on pizza and fish mint. Some might even call these ingredient controversial. For restaurants, it’s a way to spark social chatter.

Expect restaurants to up their use of avocado and sweet corn across all aspects of the menu, including drinks and desserts.



Coffee and tea concepts will roll out more items with matcha, pistachio, and fresh-prepped soy milks and yogurts.

Regenerative flours will get more features in pastas and pizza crusts.

Popular in parts of Asia, konjac will emerge in the west in tea drinks and as a healthy rice or noodle alternative.

We will see more fast-casual and casual-dining concepts with a Pan-Africa positioning, particularly in Europe and North America.

Mexican pambazo sandwiches may emerge on menuboard at fast-casual chains and food trucks alike.

Many chains will be leaning into applying the golden ratio to their menu development, and will be marketing that trending term specifically and loudly. The concept has been gaining momentum among leading operators in Asia, with one global player recently touting its development of a pizza topped with the golden ratio of cheese, as determined by AI.

And finally, look for clever use of marshmallows in classic, whimsical and globally inspired variations on both dessert and savory menus as the surprise hit ingredient for 2025.





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