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5

Key Trends
for 2020

By Aaron Jourden, Senior Research Manager, Global

1. DELIVERY KITCHENS

Much debate surrounds this quick-growing format. Is it the restaurant of the future or a glorified commissary? Do these nonrestaurant restaurants have staying power? And what are we supposed to even call them? Dark, cloudy, headless, virtual, hidden, ghosts? 2020 will give us a better handle on this segment's defining characteristics and who the important players are. We'll also drop some of the many names attached to these venues and get a clearer understanding of who's positioned to take ownership of this nascent operating space. Whether that's restaurant chains, third parties or potential interlopers such as grocers or e-commerce, the coming year will see some clear leadership emerge.

2. LITTLE TO NO ALCOHOL

Spirit-free cocktails, hopped-up waters and kombuchas, low-alcohol wine: to some, the idea of reducing or eliminating alcohol from adult beverages seems counterintuitive. But it is emerging as a bona fide trend on the global stage. The mocktail movement for the new decade is ushering in a sobering array of products that lower or ditch the ABV without sacrificing on the flavor, aroma, mouthfeel and quality of their booze-retaining counterparts—at least that's what makers of these products are aiming for. 2020 will bring spirit-free cocktails to more chain and independent restaurants and bars across the globe, while craft beer makers will give new life to the session beer trend by pushing down ABVs to lows not seen before. Makers of spirits and wines will also continue their push to create libations with little or no alcohol.

3. 50 SHADES OF VEGAN

Veganism is having a moment. Thanks in large part to the boom in plant-based meat alternatives across the restaurant world in the past few years, as well as by movements such as Veganuary, the no-animal-products diet has never exerted more influence on the food and beverage industry. But are consumers actually turning vegan? Not

completely. Most are trying out the diet to eat healthier, to do their part for the environment or simply because veganism is the latest fad. Expect restaurants to roll out more items labelled vegan to meet this new demand from diners who are strictly vegan in the traditional sense as well as the growing cohort who are part-time vegan in the contemporary sense.

4. BEVERAGE BRANDS BREAK OUT

Luckin Coffee may be grabbing all the headlines thanks to its explosive growth, but it's certainly not the only disruptor making waves in the beverage world. Young brands from across the globe are taking on established players. Brands like Tostao from Colombia and Heytea in China are positioning to better meet evolving consumer demands, often with a mix of technology, localized products and lean operating models that address convenience and nix such niceties as seating and Wi-Fi. Expect to hear more about chains from Asia in particular, especially Tiger Sugar, Chaayos, Kopi Kenangan, E-Coffee and Beauty Tea.

5. ODDS & ENDS

These regional trends could break out globally in 2020: collagen-spiked drinks for skin enhancement, Sichuan mala sauce as the next "it" spicy condiment, brown sugar bubble teas, pinsa-style pizzas, halloumi as a vegetarian-friendly meat alternative, the return of sliders on the burger menu, Instagram-unfriendly #sadfood, tamper-proof delivery packaging and delivery-only breakfast menus from casual-dining chains.

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