



Bold New Flavors and Ideas

CULINARY CONNECTION



Leading chefs respond to client preferences and develop flavorful, seasonal, and on-trend menu items

Each year we continue to innovate, adapt, and adjust to the ever-changing hospitality environment—particularly in food service. As nutritional sciences advance, our strategies acclimate. As technologies progress, our operations gain efficiency. And as information becomes readily accessible to the masses, our menus evolve to accommodate new and changing client demands.

Across America we see trending ingredients woven through menus in interesting ways. But how do leading chefs take the subtle demands of their clients and develop bold new ideas that materialize on the plate? To find out, I asked two of the top chefs in my network for their thoughts.

Executive Chef Colby Newman of the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club in Grosse Pointe, Mich., said this when asked how he gains inspiration to innovate his menus, since he's in a position that requires frequent, seasonal changes. "Very rarely do I create a menu without talking to my vendors first about what is in season and their best available products."

Newman knows from experience that his most popular menu items are always the ones utilizing the freshest, seasonal, and available product. "Being a private club chef, it is important for me to have a range of both classic and modern dishes while keeping on trend with new products and techniques."



Rocky Dunnam, CEC, CCA, WCEC, CDM, CFPP is Executive Chef for FoodService Partners, Elizabeth Jane Bivins Culinary Center, NINETEEN49 Catering, and Rock'D Recipes in Amarillo, Texas.

We can all gain insight from Newman's approach, and we should! He is charged with the task of consistently renovating his menu in exciting ways to keep his member base as enthusiastic about dining as he is about cooking. We can easily compare the private club model with non-commercial operations where our clients have similar expectations for their dining experience. Of course, the same ideology that Newman uses may not work regionally where you are located, but the insights behind that ideology certainly still apply.

Executive Chef Dewey McMurrey of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, said this when asked how he decides what trends make it to his menus, as his position is largely determined by a highly diverse student body. "Social media hits and general feedback from the students..." provide the best way to gauge what that demand is.

From this information, McMurrey sometimes prepares samplings to confirm or deny the students' and clients' interest. In a conversation with him, you can infer that the student body has a voice similar to

that of other customers in both commercial and noncommercial sectors. It's our job to keep a finger on the pulse of our clients and forecast change in a proactive manner.

The Web gives us easy access to current trends, ideas, innovation, and even inspiring photos of dishes that we can utilize in various ways in our own unique settings. Each year, organizations like the American Culinary Federation and the National Restaurant Association, and publications like FoodService Director, Eater, bon appétit, etc. provide us with heaps of information regarding not just current trends, but also dying trends and predictions of future evolving ones. Even beyond that, a simple Google search for keywords like Food Trends will populate a list of about 1.14 billion results in less than a second! While it's not advisable to sift through a virtual haystack to find one or two usable ideas that can fit your environment, consider taking McMurrey's advice on utilizing the pulse of our industry to help you determine which nuggets of gold will fit perfectly into your unique operation.

Here's a brief snapshot of a few items you can look at in 2019 that will likely have

an impact on your menus, probably beyond this year alone.

EXOTIC SPICES

We are seeing an increasing demand and use for exotic spices. Bold, flavorful spices from other countries are popping up on plates everywhere, and deservedly so. While there is something to be said for simplistic seasonings like classic salt and pepper, spices such as ras el hanout from Morocco, berbere from Ethiopia, and even rooibos (an herbal tea from South Africa) and matcha (a green tea from China) provide great assistance in developing unique, complex flavor profiles. Even the nation's leading spice companies are on board with items like gochugaru from Korea, and curry from India. Explore some of these more exotic spices in place of the traditional ones in your cabinet.

MUSHROOMS

According to Pinterest, searches for mushrooms have increased 64 percent from just one year ago. This sizable jump comes as chefs and home cooks alike discover the versatility and variety of this timeless ingredient. Furthermore, science is now indicating

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Rocky Dunnam, CEC, CCA, WCEC, CDM, CFPP will deliver a session at ANFP's Annual Conference & Expo (ACE) in St. Louis this summer. On June 27, he will present *Process Over Recipe: Steps to a Consistent Quality Product*. In this chef demonstration, view two tried and true processes which reduce cost and waste while producing a consistent quality product.

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health benefits for varieties like lion's mane, cordyceps, reishi, chaga, and turkey tail, ranging from antibiotic and anti-cancer properties to benefits like better sleep, reduced inflammation and stress, and increased energy and performance. In Eastern countries like China, mushrooms have long been used for both their medicinal properties and for their incredible umami profile in recipes like teas, soups, and even as a meat substitute for many dishes. Talk to your supplier about what types are available, and begin experimenting with new and interesting varieties.

HEMP AND CBD

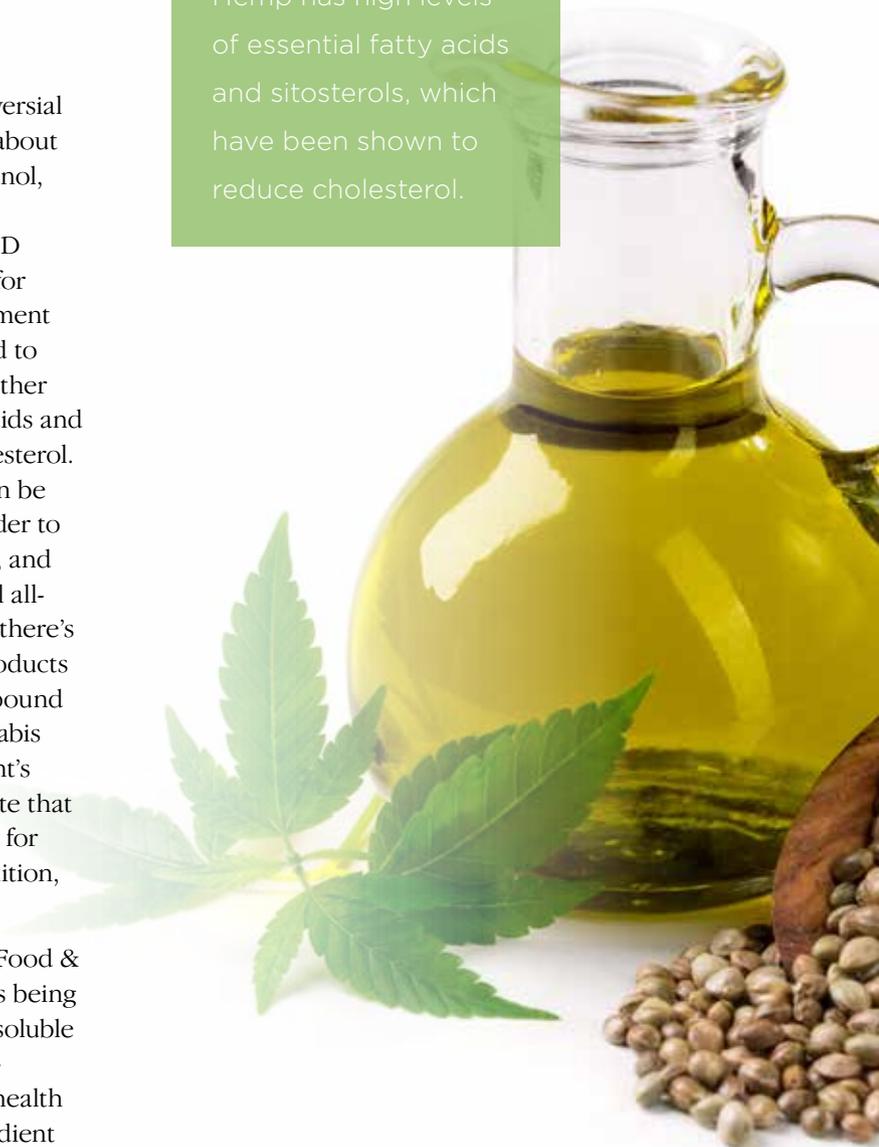
Now before you glance over this somewhat controversial ingredient, let me clearly state that I'm not talking about using a substance called THC or tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive constituent of cannabis. Instead, I'm referring specifically to industrial hemp and CBD (cannabinoids) that the United States has legalized for cultivation via the farm bill or Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Hemp and hemp oil have been referred to as a "superfood" due to its omegas, vitamins, and other nutrients. Hemp has high levels of essential fatty acids and sitosterols, which have been shown to reduce cholesterol. Beyond this, the uses vary widely as well. Hemp can be used as milk in dishes and beverages, protein powder to fortify cuisine (with high levels of key amino acids), and even as flour that can be used to replace traditional all-purpose flour to create gluten-free offerings. Then there's CBD specifically. You've undoubtedly seen CBD products popping up literally everywhere by now. This compound is one of some 113 identified cannabinoids in cannabis plants and accounts for up to 40 percent of the plant's extract. Preliminary clinical research studies indicate that this compound may have possible therapeutic uses for several neurological disorders, anxiety, stress, cognition, movement disorders, and physical pain.

An article published in Forbes on Dec. 29, 2018 by Food & Drink Contributor Beth Kaiserman says that CBD is being infused into coffees, waters, and even into a water-soluble powder. In addition, we are seeing hemp and CBD-infused candy, chocolate, and pastries touting the health benefits of the plant. Understanding that this ingredient is still relatively new in terms of research (and likewise cuisine), paying close attention to its growing popularity,

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and beginning to brainstorm ideas and uses will put you at the spear's tip regarding this "budding" trend. Keep in mind that there are still



mixed feelings about all of this, and you must consider your population before jumping into this brave new world.

THE THING ABOUT TRENDS

Many trends fade nearly as quickly as they surface—like that time we all put sun-dried tomatoes in everything. This truth has driven innovation on our menus for decades, and will continue to do so. Remember, we once thought that the Food Pyramid was the best model for a healthy eating

plan, and then it became increasingly evident that refined carbohydrates maybe weren't the best foundation to build health and longevity.

In 2019, let's look at the ideology of our peers and at emerging trends to shape both our current menu development and to formulate some new ideas! Our clients benefit when we explore bold ingredients, take calculated risks, and experiment with exciting flavor profiles. **E**

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This Level I article assumes that the reader has entry level knowledge of the topic. The desired outcome is to ensure a foundation of basic concepts of the subject matter.

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1. What is one way that we can stay on top of the newest ideas?
 - A. Keep doing what we've been doing for years
 - B. Travel to Japan each year to learn about sushi
 - C. Talk to our vendors about what's seasonal and fresh
2. How do commercial and non-commercial environments compare?
 - A. Both have a clientele with high expectations
 - B. Both run ads during primetime television
 - C. Both will soon become fully operated by robotics
3. How does Chef Dewey McMurrey utilize the idea of "sampling"?
 - A. To get rid of potentially wasted food
 - B. To confirm or deny client preferences
 - C. To get full without having an entire meal for lunch
4. Which is *not* a bold new idea in this article?
 - A. Using exotic spices
 - B. Adding flavorful mushrooms
 - C. Aspics making a comeback
5. Where does Matcha originate?
 - A. China
 - B. The Dead Sea
 - C. Morocco
6. Which is *not* the name of a trending mushroom?
 - A. Cordyceps
 - B. Lion's mane
 - C. Luigi
7. What do sitosterols do?
 - A. Increase muscle size and strength
 - B. Reduce cholesterol
 - C. Reduce pancreatic cancer

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