



THE FOOD FORECAST

What does 2015 hold for the culinary world? Rachel Walker offers some predictions.



When she's not curing salmon in a dustbin on the balcony, or brewing stinky kimchi in her little kitchen, Rachel blogs about food at thefoodieat.org

THE DEEP SOUTH

Start thinking bluegrass, banjos and bourbon, because the American food trend is migrating 'Down South', honing in on the cuisine along Route 79 - from Kentucky through to Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. The trend for Deep South-style BBQ has been gathering pace for a while, with the 'slow and smoky' technique converting many who were never sold on

Britain's notorious 'speedy and charred' method. This year, Southern cuisine will be diversifying beyond BBQ though. Leading the way is The Lockhart in London's Marylebone, a restaurant that has built up a cult following with its cornbread served warm from the skillet. Other frontrunners are Crayfish Bob, who dished out authentic gumbo to revellers at both Glastonbury and Bestival, and Soho restaurant Jackson & Rye, whose shrimp and grits pay homage to the cuisine's Creole influences.

Haute HOME food

Jamie Oliver is right on the money with his Comfort Food series, taking "the nation's favourite dishes to the next level". Forget mince, his shepherd's pie recipe starts by roasting a 2kg leg of lamb for 4 hours, before putting it in a dish lovingly lined with mashed Maris Pipers, cheddar, rosemary and breadcrumbs. The trend is being echoed in restaurants - look to Albion Café in edgy Shoreditch where the Welsh rarebit uses Isle of Mull Cheddar, or Richard Corrigan's Royal Fish Pie at Bentley's near Piccadilly Circus, which contains scallops, lobster and tiger prawns, as well as haddock.

TEA

Hot on the heels of cold-brew coffee, this year is shaping up to be big on cold-brew tea. Steeping loose teas in refrigerated water for several hours produces a milder, less astringent taste, and is delicious drunk straight, or on ice. Bodum's Assam Tea Press filters out the leaves - a cafetière does the job too. It's all part of a larger tea revolution, which has seen the drinking of tea in Riedel 'O' glasses, pairing different blends with different courses at tasting dinners. London tea bar Tiosk has 30 different blends on offer, and there's an increasing variety at supermarkets to try at home too.

LOCALISM

There's an increasing demand for heirloom vegetables, regional ciders, local cheeses and native breeds, as we Brits continue our long-overdue love affair with our culinary heritage. The emphasis is on 'local', not 'exotic'; and on 'seasonal', not 'always available'. In Ireland, Cork's Cafe Paradiso hit the nail on the head with the relationship they cultivated with Gort na Nain Farm; their menu showcases Gorthnanain honey and local cheeses. At The Pig Hotel in Hampshire, 80% of the food comes from within a 25-mile radius.

FLEXITARIANISM

Flexitarianism - or vegetarianism with the occasional inclusion of meat - reflects a shift away from extreme dieting, toward more nutritionally and ethically aware eating. Ultimate A-list couple Beyoncé and Jay-Z exemplify the trend with semi-vegan diets - and the occasional visit to a steakhouse. But more Brits are joining in, as Meat-Free Mondays creep into Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday... Chefs like Tom Hunt, author of *The Natural Cook: Eating the Seasons From Root to Fruit*, lead the way. Rather than creating meat recipes and then adding the 'two veg', Hunt makes seasonal vegetables the 'hero' of the dish, and adds meat or fish only if and when it enhances the recipe.

GRAINS

Quinoa pancakes, buckwheat blinis, spelt porridge and black-rice puddings are all hints that grains are going gourmet. Once dismissed as peasant food, ancient grains are being appreciated for their texture and taste. Part of the reason for the grain revival is its diversity, as is its use in gluten-free recipes. The good news is that new favourites such as freekeh are just the tip of the pile. Look to grain guru chef Yotam Ottolenghi to champion the next wave of grains, from kasha to moghrabieh.

OLD is NEW

Recent food trends flung chefs into the futurist world of molecular cooking, spherification, foams and gels. But in 2015 the pendulum is swinging back. Traditional techniques such as home-curing of meats are being employed by more restaurants, and consumers continue to show an appetite for artisanal crafts like pickling, cheese-making and cold-smoking. Even Aga is having a revival with the recent launch of a compact, two-door City Aga bringing a little nostalgia and country-chic to even the smallest, most modern urban apartments.

GET AHEAD

Bake, pickle, brew, grow and cook your way ahead of the foodie curve at home



Classic American comfort food with a gourmet twist. **The American Cookbook: A Fresh Take On Classic Recipes** £16.99 251291011



When you're not using these for pickling, they make perfect glasses for your gin cocktails. **Kilner Preserve Jars** 0.5L 3 per pack £6.99 (£2.33 each) 83690011



Allow the tea to brew as long as you like then simply remove the infuser. **Bodum Assam Tea Press with Filter** 1L £28 62771011



What could be more local than growing your own? **Rocket Gardens Small Vegetable Garden Gift Voucher** £39.99 52824011



Made from green wheat kernels, freekeh has a delicate smoky flavour, four times the fibre of brown rice and is low GI. **Artisan Grains Freekeh** 200g £1.60 (80p per 100g) 264979011



The chip shop classic goes upmarket. **Square Pie Chicken & Mushroom** 250g £3.49 (£1.40 per 100g) 250683011

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Fancy giving flexitarianism a try? It's easy with our delicious vegan range ocado.com/vegan