

FUTURE OF FOOD  
5TH EDITION

# FORESIGHT IS 20/20

# 2020



CATCHON  
**FINN**  
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## INTRODUCTION

With 2020 on the horizon, we wanted to sharpen our view of the culinary landscape. For CatchOn's fifth edition of our *'Future of Food'* report, we interviewed tastemakers, culinary experts, food critics, chefs and restaurateurs to identify the 20 trends, ideas, places and people that are changing what, why and how we eat in 2020 and beyond.

Gazing into our culinary crystal ball, we've reviewed where we are and predict where we're heading. We've assessed what we'll be eating (less meat!), how the vegan movement will evolve (more activism!), where we'll be travelling (Shikoku, anyone?), what new flavours we can expect (bitter is better) and how chefs are challenging stereotypes (less yelling, more yoga!).

We've observed a hunger for innovation (with plant-based meat alternatives), an appetite for food knowledge (Netflix's piping-hot cooking shows) and a craving for feel-good foods (wellness beer is a thing!).

Yes, we have some meaty issues, but we've mixed it up with some palate-cleansing sweet spots. Chew it over, talk it through and catch up on what we can look forward to in 2020 and beyond.



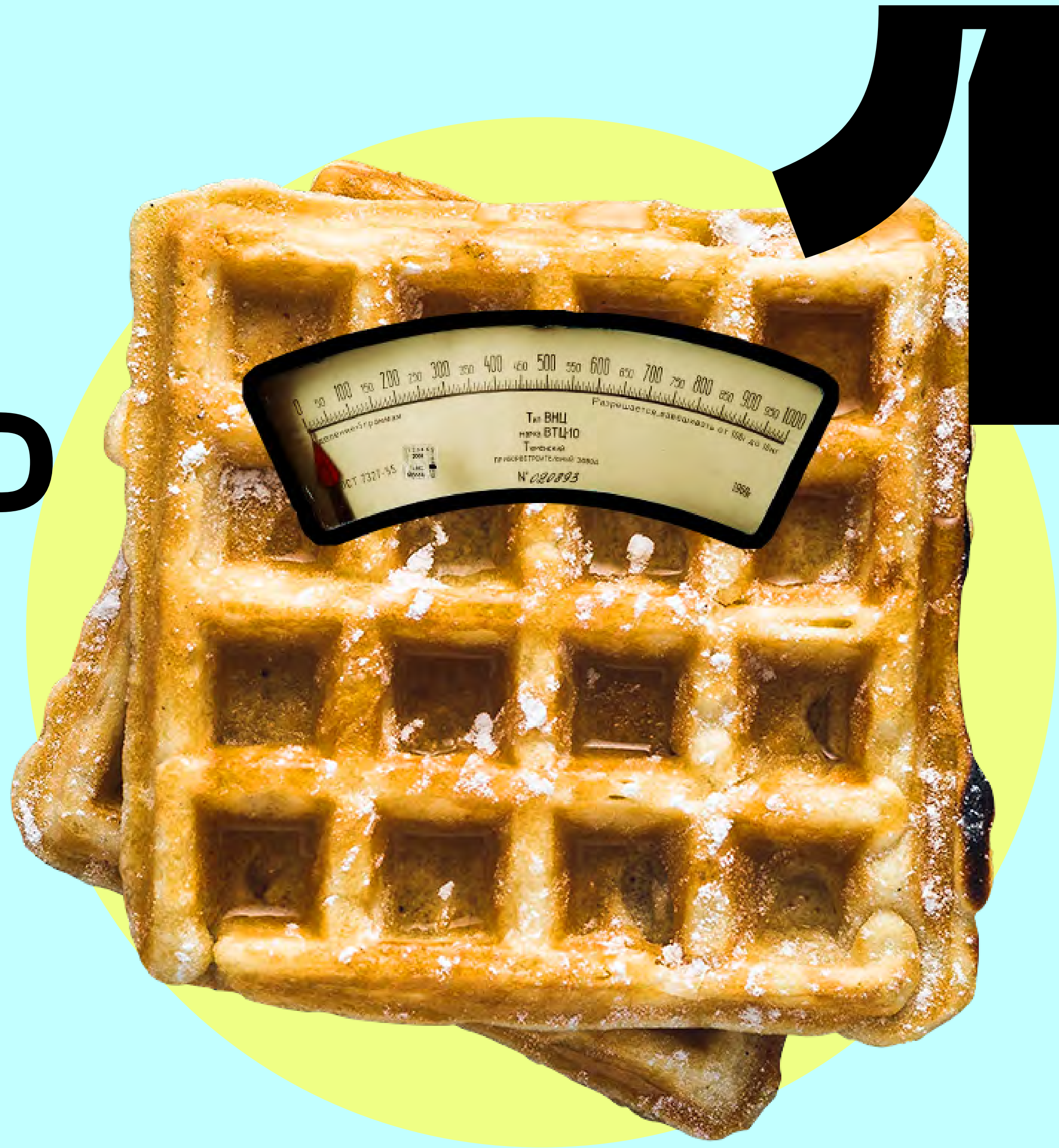
CatchOn, a Finn Partners Company, is a brand communications and PR consultancy based in Asia. While we're usually busy spicing up brands, cooking up creative ideas, stirring up media interest, or making the unsavory palatable, our Insights team is always on the hunt for what's new and next by providing consumer insights, white papers and trend forecasting across the industry sectors we serve. The annual Future of Food, in its fifth edition, is one of our proprietary reports. To receive past and future reports, email us at [coinsights@finnpartners.com](mailto:coinsights@finnpartners.com).

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<b>1 THE 'C' WORD</b> .....	03	<b>11 COUTURE CUTS</b> .....	23
<b>2 THE BITTER END</b> .....	05	<b>12 FEEL GOOD INC</b> .....	25
<b>3 GHOST PROFIT</b> .....	07	<b>13 SINGLED OUT</b> .....	27
<b>4 ROBO CROP</b> .....	09	<b>14 THE PERFECT STORM</b> .....	29
<b>5 TIME'S UP</b> .....	11	<b>15 TESTY KITCHEN</b> .....	31
<b>6 PERSONAL BEST</b> .....	13	<b>16 SECOND BEST</b> .....	33
<b>7 GUT REACTION</b> .....	15	<b>17 ISLAND LIFE</b> .....	36
<b>8 THE BUTTER HALF</b> .....	17	<b>18 SCREEN SAVIOURS</b> .....	39
<b>9 COURSES OF ACTION</b> .....	19	<b>19 ARRIBA TEQUILA!</b> .....	41
<b>10 STEAK HOLDERS</b> .....	21	<b>20 TRAILBLAZERS OF TASTE</b> .....	43

# WORD THE 'C' WORD



**Turns out, not all calories are created equal. We weigh in on how our understanding of food is changing.**

Calories are the source of some serious navel gazing. With the global weight management market expected to generate around US\$348 billion by 2025, many diets are designed to exploit consumers' calorie-counting obsessions. The weight-loss industry is based around a 'calories in, calories out' model, advising dieters to consume fewer calories than they burn.

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“The way food is cooked – whether it’s boiled, baked or microwaved – can dramatically alter its calorific contents and studies show people don’t process calories in the same way. The once straightforward guidelines around calorie intake are now a lot harder to swallow.”

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For almost a century, this simple directive has served many well, from medical professionals advising obese patients, to personal trainers assessing new clients. But with conflicting research on how our bodies deal with energy, many are now questioning long-held assumptions. For one thing, two foods with identical calorific value may be digested in different ways. The way food is cooked – whether it’s boiled, baked or microwaved – can also dramatically alter its calorific contents and studies show people don’t process calories in the same way. The once straightforward guidelines around calorie intake are now a lot harder to swallow.

Governments still rely on calories as tell-all indicators when regulating public health. In 2018, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made it mandatory for chain restaurants with 20 or more locations to list the number of calories contained in standard items in menus and menu boards. To encourage healthier eating, in late 2018 the British government proposed subjecting restaurant dishes and supermarket foods to calorie limits. Under the plan, sandwiches would be capped at 550 calories while a restaurant’s main meals would be restricted to 951 calories.

Problems arise, though, since calorie counts on packaged foods are notoriously inaccurate. These figures ignore the complexities of digestion, the bacteria in an individual’s gut or how the food is prepared.

Scientists are also challenging the standard food pyramid as a guide to healthy eating. Released in 1992 in the States and updated in 2005, the food pyramid fails to reflect the latest information about nutrition. The pyramid’s tiny apex advocates for limited consumption of fats, but ignores the positive (and delicious) benefits of plant oils. Elsewhere, healthy proteins like fish and poultry are lumped into

the same category as processed red meats. The predominantly US-centric approach to global health is also being questioned. Increasingly, researchers are turning to nutrient-rich diets of other cultures – including Ethiopian, Greek, Korean – for inspiration.

In the future, diners are likely to turn to technology for nutritional advice. Apps like Keyto will become commonplace. Keyto raised US\$2.5mil from Silicon Valley investors to fund its pen-sized breathalyser designed to measure users’ ketone levels. There’s also the normalisation of at-home DNA testing. Using off-the-shelf kits from the local pharmacy, consumers can take a simple swab or saliva sample to screen for genetic diseases or determine their nutritional needs. Perhaps a future where your phone will buzz to tell you to lay off that jelly doughnut or rethink your dinner choices is not that far away.

**BITTER END**

# THE BITTER END



**Life is no longer so sweet – and it tastes... good?**

It's not just the vilification of sugar that's changing our preferences for sweetness. It's been a long time coming. By collectively chugging kombuchas, embracing the single origin pour over, and worshipping the church of the Sodastream, we've been fine-tuning our palates with new flavours.

The steady, bitter hum from the crunch of fiddlehead ferns. A piercing moment of acidity sweeping through umeboshi. The prickling saltiness of a tiny caper, whose punch of overwhelming brininess belies its miniature size. Our palates are being trained to crave, more than ever, contrasts of flavour and the strongest specimens are finding their way into kitchen pantries both at home and at restaurants.

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Previously eschewed as polarising, bitterness is finding its way into the zeitgeist as chefs continue to explore the potential of underrated ingredients and diners demand flavour profiles that fall outside their comfort zone. The continued popularity of foraging, and eating locally and seasonally, has shifted the mindset towards a more nuanced appreciation of wild fruits, vegetables and herbs. Japan's bitter sansai, or mountain vegetables, have earned their place on the culinary stage thanks to chefs like Yoshihiro Narisawa, whose eponymous Tokyo restaurant celebrates the season with their intricate, poetic preparations.

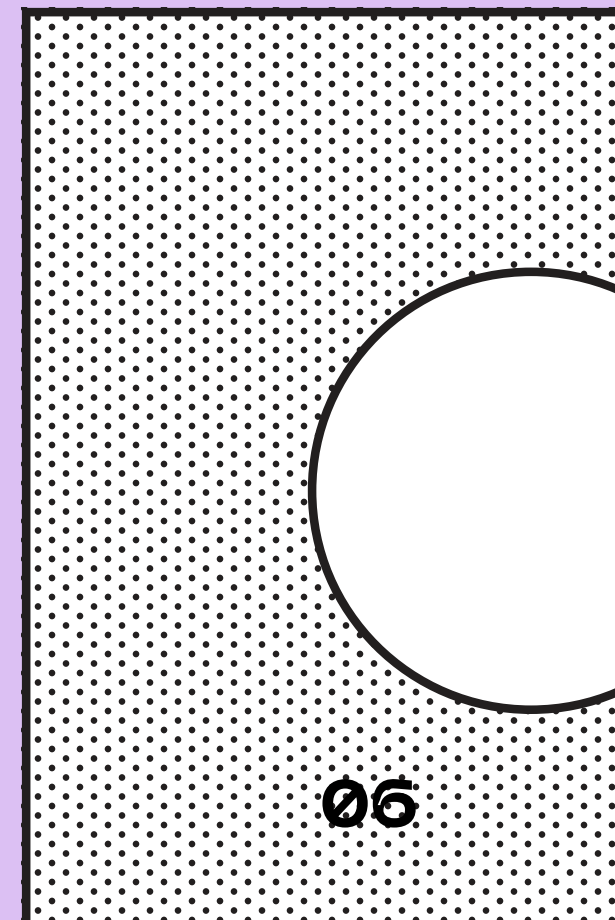
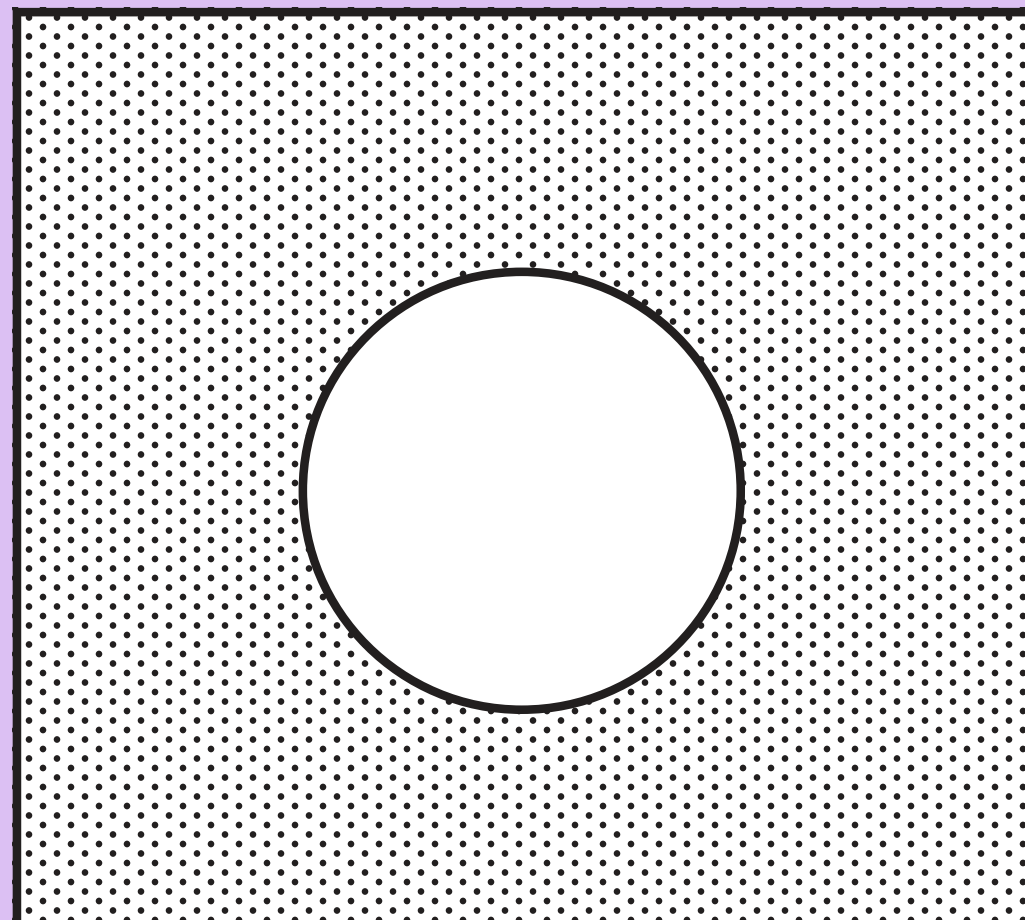
Medicinal herbs, long touted for their health benefits, are being integrated intelligently into dishes by a new generation of creative chefs. Kwang Uh of Los Angeles' Baroo, for example, who learned the art of coaxing flavour from nature during his time with Korean nun Jeong Kwan, presents a fried rice with sichuan schmaltz infused with samgye medicinal herbs: ginseng, jujube and gingko.

"Our palates are being trained to crave contrasts of flavour and the strongest specimens are finding their way into kitchen pantries both at home and at restaurants."

At the same time, souring agents and mouth-puckering foods are hot-ticket items. Think lacto-fermented pickles and kimchi, sour beers, myriad vinegar, shrubs and zingy spices. Homemade fruit wines made in the Japanese style of umeshu are now served as digestifs in Michelin-starred restaurants. Elsewhere, citrus appreciation has shifted from the obvious – Sicilian lemons, blood oranges – to the more esoteric. Calamansi, sudachi and shikuwasa (native to Okinawa, a growing tourist destination) are elbowing for attention and finding their place in recipes both sweet and savoury.

Nowhere is this shift from saccharine to the salty-sour diptych more evident than in the mixology world. Pushing the flavour boundaries, bars such as The Old Man in Hong Kong are bringing the "dirty" back into frame with brine-forward drinks that make use of ingredients such as kombu tinctures and spirits redistilled with shellfish, seaweed and salts.

It may be some time before the proverbial spoonful of sugar returns to relevance. Sugar will be further vilified if governments have their way and start regulating for soft drinks and packaged foods to include mandatory "added sugar" labels. If shoppers are confronted with a label informing them that a 600-millilitre bottle of Coca-Cola contains 16 teaspoons of sugar, they're likely to turn... uh, bitter.





# PROFIT

# GHOST

# PROFIT

**Ghost Kitchens  
embody the spirit of  
entrepreneurship.  
But will they spook  
the restaurant  
industry?**

What's the recipe for success in the F&B industry? Mix in rapid urbanisation, extract the challenges that restaurateurs face (rising wages, crippling rents, overhead costs, staffing issues), blend in the millennial generation's on-demand expectations and – *voilà!* – you've created the perfect environment for ghost kitchens to flourish.

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Ghost kitchens – also known as cloud or virtual kitchens – are restaurant locations built exclusively for takeaway orders. Based on the successful concept of co-working spaces, multiple restaurants and delivery brands operate from a shared kitchen.

This phenomenon is hardly surprising given the global explosion in home delivery services. According to market research figures, the global online food delivery market is currently valued at US\$95 billion and is projected to grow by more than 11% annually through to 2023. The demand is most prominent in Asia where the online food delivery market is estimated at about US\$53 billion, more than 50% of the global share.

China's leading shared-kitchen provider, Panda Selected, provides facilities for over 500 businesses and even offers data analytical services to help merchants adjust menus to boost sales. In India, Bangalore-based Eat.fit, the food delivery business of Cure.fit, an online wellness platform, has established dozens of cloud kitchens across five cities and delivers over 40,000 meals daily to health-conscious diners. Launched in 2016, the company has been valued at US\$500 million. Co-working space juggernaut WeWork launched WeWork Food Labs in early 2019, a dedicated space for start-ups exploring food sustainability solutions. Members can access a kitchen for R&D, a private dining room, merchandising area, and indoor-outdoor event spaces.

The added advantage of ghost kitchens is that brick-and-mortar restaurants can focus on serving their diners rather than being distracted by takeout orders. Their delivery services can function as a separate operation in a more affordable space.

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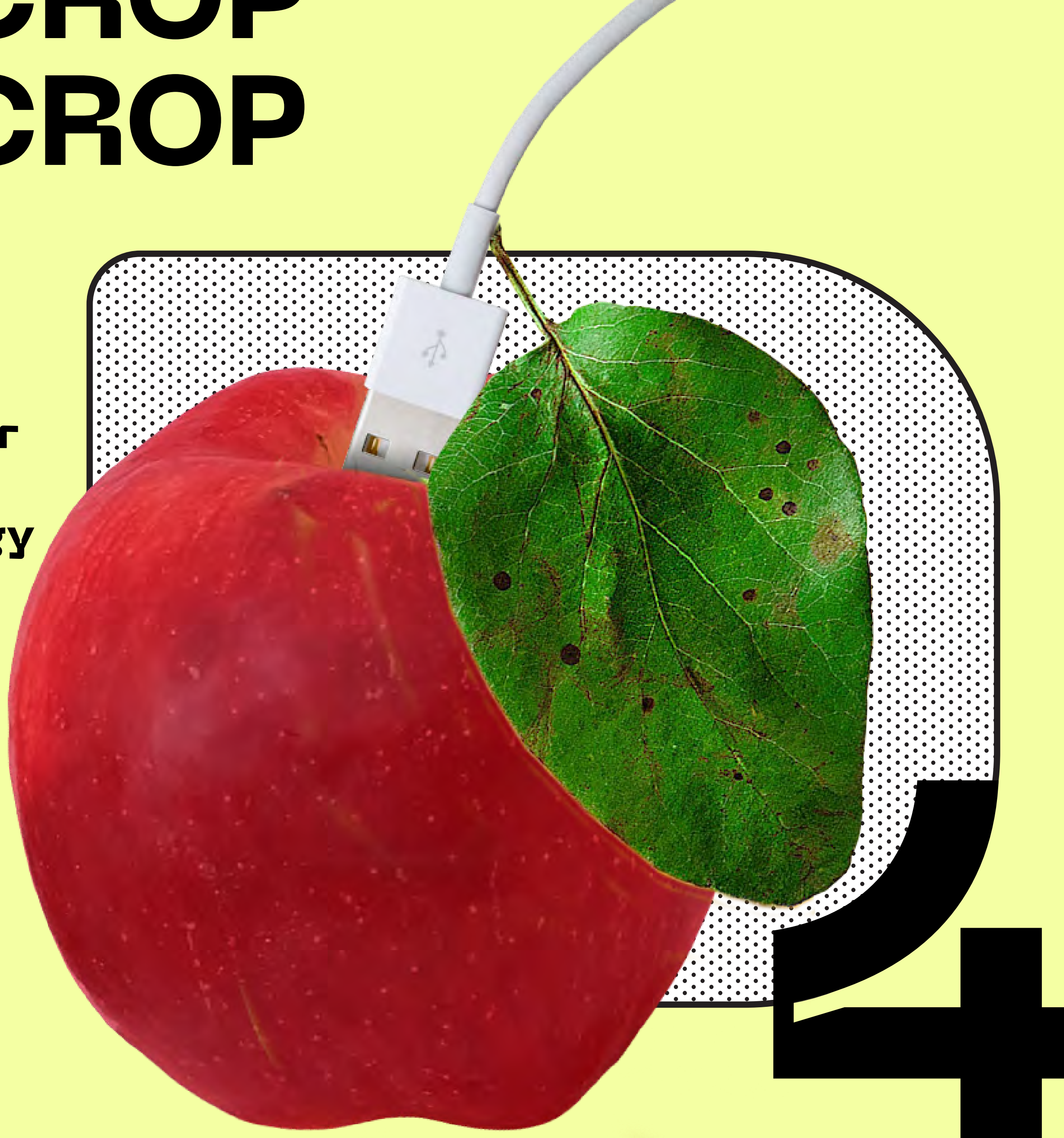
As with any business, the delivery-only model has its pitfalls, as celebrated chef David Chang knows only too well. Chang's delivery-only restaurant in New York, Ando, closed in 2018, less than two years after its much-hyped launch. His other delivery investment, Maple, also failed and was acquired by Deliveroo.

While takeout delivery services and ghost kitchens are destined to grow, there is a downside. Restaurants play an important role in reshaping and

defining a neighbourhood (just look at what Roberta's has done for Brooklyn). Every time a restaurateur opts for an online kitchen rather than a physical restaurant, the neighbourhood loses a little bit of its soul. Even if AI bots replace reservation and ordering functions, and delivery riders become substitutes for table runners, can they ever replace that server who calls you by name, remembers just how you like your heirloom salad, and sneaks a little extra dessert to your table? We think not.

# ROBO CROP ROBO CROP

**Food producers are developing new flavours based on algorithms rather than appetites. When did technology develop tastebuds?**



An online restaurant booking site pairs solo diners together. Bots take our food orders and make reservations. The crossover between food and technology is greater than ever, not just in consumer-facing applications, but behind the scenes in product development.

According to a recent Nielsen report, 76% of new consumer goods launched in the market do not survive beyond a year. With the odds against them, FMCGs are hedging their bets with flavour-testing technology. Foodpairing.com changed the game by assessing the compatibility of different ingredients and creating new flavour combinations. The premise is that if two ingredients possess similar primary aroma compounds, they are likely to be a match made in culinary heaven.

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“Artificial Intelligence has allowed companies to forecast future food fads. The Google Analytics equivalent for food, Tastewise, scrutinises billions of data points across social media chatter to provide real-time analytics of ever-changing culinary trends and fickle consumer tastes.”

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IBM also has a seat at the table with its partnership with McCormick & Company, a producer of seasonings and condiments. In 2018, IBM announced a breakthrough in its research to create new scents for the fragrance industry. In its partnership with McCormick, the tech giant has repurposed this algorithm-learning technology, and integrated marketing and sales data into the equation, to predict winning food flavour combinations. By tapping into

the system’s ability to identify patterns and combinations, the company can reduce a new product’s testing time by up to 70%.

AI has even allowed companies to forecast future food fads. The Google Analytics equivalent for food, Tastewise, scrutinises billions of data points across social media chatter to provide real-time analytics of ever-changing culinary trends and fickle consumer tastes.

Food might be a universal language but different cultures and demographics perceive food in different ways. Gastrograph AI by Analytical Flavour Systems utilises the knowledge they have of a target market’s taste preferences to predict and design flavour profiles specifically for that segment.

Even fast food giants are tapping into AI to create personalised experiences. McDonald’s acquisition of Dynamic Yield means that hungry motorists can soon order from drive-through menus designed based on the weather, restaurant traffic and trending menu items. Taking a leaf out of Amazon’s book, the technology will also recommend additional items according to the ones already in the check-out cart.

With the global food tech market expected to exceed US\$250 billion by 2022, the allure of AI has never been more enticing. In the future, we can foresee restaurateurs using AI to design the perfect restaurant or chefs using flavour intelligence to create a personalised “tasting menu” to cater exactly to the individual’s palate. The way we look at flavours would change completely, palates could become part of a demographic’s profile and the concept of taste would be an automated process.

# 5



## UP TIME'S UP

**Whether it's reverting to ancient techniques or taking ageing and fermentation to new levels, chefs are experimenting with that most precious of all ingredients: Time.**

Last year, San Francisco start-up Endless West unveiled Glyph, the world's "first molecular whiskey." Made overnight, the spirit is biochemically identical to the finest aged specimens. Science, they claim, can now replace the single most luxurious ingredient of all: Time.

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Driven by a faster-is-better approach, brands boast about the speed with which they deliver their services. Companies like Soylent trade off the promise of delivering “a delicious, filling, complete meal...in less time than it takes to boil water.” But the snooze-you-lose era of instant gratification may be over.

We’re seeing a renewed appreciation for processes and techniques that require time to coax flavours from ingredients or alter their texture. Chefs are taking the time to appreciate... well, *time*. They are more prepared to allow foods to transform over a period of time, whether it’s the weeks-long process of producing salted duck eggs or the months or years needed for “real” soy sauce to mature into something inky and complex.

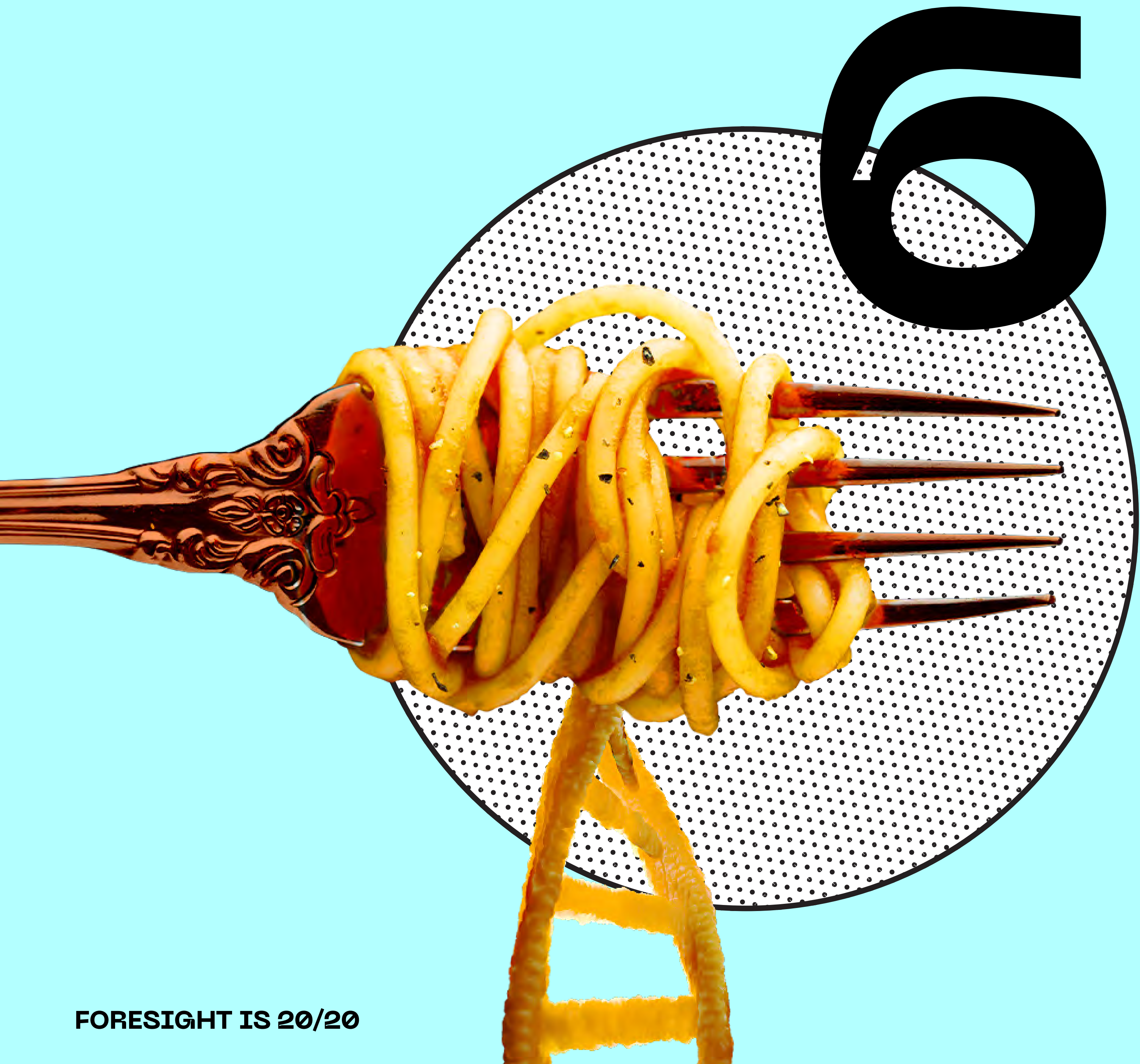
The sixth-generation artisanal butcher Alexandre Polmard knows only too well the rewards that come with time. His butcher shop, Polmard, *éleveur boucher*, stocks the world’s most expensive beef. Understanding the maturation process, Polmard’s elders developed the ‘hibernation’ treatment, where cold air is blown at speeds of 120 kilometers an hour over the meat in a -43°C environment. The method preserves the beef for up to 15 years without any loss of quality. The resultant 15-year-aged steak can command up to US\$3,200 and is featured on the menus of some of the world’s most celebrated restaurants.

This time-reverent trend is reflected in the popularity of fermentation. In the preface to his bestselling book, *The Noma Guide to Fermentation*, chef Rene Redzepi describes tasting a slice of gooseberry that had been fermenting and “forgotten for a year.” He writes, “It’s actually an amazing feeling to wait for something to ferment. It runs totally contrary to the spirit of the modern day.”

“We’re seeing a renewed appreciation for processes and techniques that require time to coax flavours from ingredients or alter their texture. Chefs are taking the time to appreciate... well, *time*.”

Time has always been a qualifier for excellence. For ingredients as diverse as balsamic vinegar or dried tangerine peels, the slower-is-better concept holds true. Whether it’s the patient baker who puts effort into properly fermenting their sourdough, the cheesemaker who sets aside wheels in maturing cellars for years on end, or the Japanese farmer who feeds Kobe cattle with a grain formula made up of 15 different ingredients, these timekeepers are earning our respect – and rightfully so.

We’ve seen chefs draw inspiration from history and time-honoured techniques to navigate uncharted culinary territories, resulting in products like fava bean shoyu that exist in a category of their own. We can expect these newfangled recipes to filter into private homes, with new technology to match. The past decade has already seen gadgets like food dehydrators, smart slow-cookers and desktop yoghurt makers making their way into home kitchens. With our obsession with all things new, coupled with our respect for tradition, we can envisage a future where we’ll be able to create time-dependent flavours with satisfying convenience.



# BEST PERSONAL BEST

**Deep down, you knew you were special. The boom in personalised nutrition confirms it.**

Think you're special? Truth is, you are! A research study conducted by nutritional science company ZOE was designed to measure biological responses to foods. The conclusion? Even twins with identical DNA process food differently. The results fly in the face of the one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition. Armed with this knowledge, consumers are seeking bespoke solutions to better health and inspiring a new industry of personalised nutrition.  
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The democratisation of medical testing means more people can now easily access information about their bodies. Using over-the-counter DNA tests, consumers simply send their saliva swabs or blood samples to labs and – *presto!* – learn what their gut has been trying to tell them all these years, all from the comfort of their home. The genetic profiles can screen for health risks like celiac disease as well as reveal how the body handles nutrients, whether you can really afford that extra slice of cake and your sensitivity to lactose, salt or gluten. A study in Italy revealed that obese patients following a DNA-matched diet lost 33% more weight than those who simply reduced their calorie intake.

Personalised nutrition doesn't end there. Companies like Habit interpret test results to deliver personalised recipes and can even ensure your grocery list is aligned to your nutritional needs. Likewise, the Pinto app asks users to identify their dietary goals then photograph each meal. Assessing the image, Pinto rates the choices according to the users' targets, reviews the ingredients and sends personalised nutrition tips.

Care/Of aims to take the guesswork out of vitamins and supplements. The New York-based company asks users to answer an online questionnaire about their goals, lifestyle and values. Based on the responses, users receive a customised list of vitamins and supplements sent to their door.

Epigenetic experts argue that a personalised diet isn't determined by genetic testing or psychographic traits. They maintain a precise nutrition plan is only possible through an analysis of the microbiome, the trillions of microbes residing in your gut. For now, research in this area is ongoing. With science catching up, though, we could be demystifying the microbiome within the next 10 years.

So what's next for personalised nutrition? With the market expected to reach US\$11.5 billion by 2025, development is likely to accelerate. We can expect to see meal delivery services catering to the nutritional needs of the individual diner. Or smart cooking pans that alert you once the sodium in your meal exceeds your daily allowance. And don't be too surprised if you turn up to a restaurant, are asked to provide a saliva swab or blood sample, and have a meal prepared specifically for your nutritional needs.

# REACTION

# GUT REACTION

# 7



**Food brands are capitalising on our preoccupation with probiotics. It's enough to turn your stomach.**

**What's consumers' No. 1 health concern?**

Digestive health, according to a recent report by Euromonitor International. In 2018, foods that marketed themselves as aiding digestive health accrued sales of US\$70.5 billion, topping products that promise weight loss.

**Here's what we know:**

The human gastrointestinal tract is home to trillions of microorganisms, consisting of up to 1,000 or so different bacterial species. These bacteria, known collectively as the gut microbiota, perform vital functions in the body, from helping digestion and nutrient absorption, to boosting our immune system.

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### **What's the secret to a healthy gut?**

Fibre-rich foods such as vegetables, fruits and whole-grain cereals that optimise the growth and activity of beneficial gut microbiota.

### **Do we need to talk about the 'P' word?**

Any discussion on gut health leads to a debate about the reported benefits of "probiotics." Probiotics – described simply as healthy bacteria – are sold as supplements and found in many fermented foods, such as kimchi, sauerkraut, yoghurt, tempeh, miso and kefir.

### **So what's new?**

Despite probiotics' many promises to boost immunity and aid digestion, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has yet to approve these claims. Inconclusive research aside, the global probiotics market is expected to grow to US\$22 billion by 2022. Brands are flooding supermarket aisles with "probiotic-rich" products and

labels trumpeting "prebiotics" as a key ingredient (essentially non-digestible fibre compounds meant to cause the growth of good bacteria).

Kellogg's rebranded their signature Special K as Special K Nourish by adding probiotics. The manufacturer also released its Hi! Happy Inside cereal, "delivering prebiotics, probiotics and fiber in an all-in-one cereal." Companies are trialling new ways to add good bacteria into snack foods, from probiotic-infused granola bars (Kind Breakfast Bars) and chocolate (Gutsii) to ice cream (Culture Republic), potato chips (Farmhouse Culture's Kraut Krisps) and fermented lemonades (MyGutness). Marketers are also appealing to health-concerned parents. New Zealand brand The Collective launched Super Yoghurts, a range of kefir yoghurts targeting kids. With vitamin D and gut-friendly cultures, the yoghurts are available in a variety of flavours "for kids' taste palates."

"The global probiotics market is expected to grow to US\$22 billion by 2022. From cereals to snack foods, brands are flooding supermarket aisles with "probiotic-rich" products."

### **What's next?**

Latest research suggests it won't be long before we can program bacterial strains to perform certain functions. Biotech companies like Synlogic are genetically engineered probiotic microbes to detect inflammation in the gut, providing sufferers with more precise treatments.

But since the jury is still out on the effectiveness and purpose of probiotics, we can also expect government bodies to start enforcing guidelines when it comes to labelling products. For now, manufacturers don't have to identify the specific bacterial strain on a product and consumers are unaware of exactly what's inside. And with future probiotics becoming more complex, or even genetically altered, the lack of regulation could be... hard to stomach.

HALF

# THE BUTTER HALF



**As consumers move away from dairy products, plant-based alternatives are the big cheese.**

In 2019, chef Richard Ekkebus relaunched his two Michelin-starred restaurant Amber at The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. Apart from plush new interiors, Ekkebus unveiled a bold new culinary philosophy. In a radical departure, Ekkebus's progressive tasting menu dispensed with dairy products, replacing butter, cream and milk with cold-pressed, plant-based oils.

A certified nutritionist, Ekkebus wanted to address diners' changing expectations and health-conscious lifestyles. The dairy-free menu also caters to the rising number of lactose-intolerant or allergy-prone diners.

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“While many fine-dining purists consider dairy integral to European cuisine, acceptance for plant-based alternatives has gone mainstream.”

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While many fine-dining purists consider dairy integral to European cuisine, acceptance for plant-based alternatives has gone mainstream. A decade ago, soya was the only substitute to cow's milk. Today, supermarket shelves brim with plant milk alternatives that are extracted from almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, coconut, hemp, spelt, quinoa and peas. Globally, the non-dairy milk industry is estimated to generate revenues of US\$38 billion by 2024.

Market growth is driven by consumers' interest in healthier eating habits, animal welfare and environmental issues.

You only need to look at Oatly, the Swedish oat drink company, to see how plant-based dairy alternatives have gone from obscure to omnipresent. Since making its US debut in 2016, the company has had to ramp up production by 1,250% to meet consumer demand. With the company now eyeing China as the next target, Oatly factories are set to go into maximum overdrive.

The demand for plant-based dairy alternatives will continue to grow. Supermarkets now stock dairy-free cheese and vegan ice cream. For vegan purists, there's even vegan ice cream for your dog, Pawesome Peanut Butter by Gelatissimo, an Australian company.

Restaurateurs will need to rethink their menus and culinary schools will need to introduce plant-based dairy alternatives into the curriculum. Chefs who specialise in European cuisines will also need to reconsider their affinity for butter and cream and seek out plant-based alternatives. For example, London's Gauthier Soho, a Michelin-starred French restaurant, plans to ditch the dairy and go fully vegan. “For us, it was the customers who have made us take this direction,” explains award-winning chef Alexis Gauthier. “More and more people were asking for vegan tasting menus, vegan courses, so we have answered them.”

# OF ACTION

# COURSES OF ACTION



**The vegan movement is divided into militant and moderate followers. Are the antics of hardline activists leaving a bitter taste?**

Many credit affluent millennials with the rise in veganism. Acutely aware of food ethics, sustainability issues and plant-based alternatives, the purchasing power of this demographic is changing the way food is produced and putting pressure on brands to create vegan products. The growth in veganism has also inspired a subculture of hardline activists whose all-or-nothing approach and militant-style protests have divided the movement. Throughout 2019, across Australia, the UK and North America, animal rights protesters staged sit-ins, raided farms and stormed abattoirs, steakhouses and butcher shops.

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**How popular is veganism?  
Let us count the ways:**

**2,500**

Number of animal rights activists who attended the first protest march in London in 2016.

**>12,000**

Number of animal rights activists who attended this year's protest march in London.

**3.4%**

of the US population in 2015 were vegetarian. Just 0.4% were vegan.

**25%**

of 25-to-34-year-old Americans now identify as vegans or vegetarians.

**17%**

Increase in 2018 in the US of plant-based alternatives to animal-based foods, including meat, cheese, milk and eggs. In comparison, food sales rose by only 2%.

**24.3 bil**

Estimated value in USD of the global vegan food market by 2026.

**95%**

of US grocery stores now sell plant-based meat products.

**140%**

Increase in new food and drink products released in Southeast Asia between 2012 to 2016 that claim to be vegetarian. Vegan claims increased by 440% in the same period.

**65%**

Approximate percentage of the global population who are lactose intolerant and driving the demand for alternative dairy products.

“One research study predicts that by the year 2040, up to 60% of meat that people consume will come from plant-based or lab-grown substitutes.”

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Division within the two camps stems from conflicting definitions of veganism. The Vegan Society, founded in 1944, defines veganism as “a way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purposes.” For purist vegans – or ‘Abolitionists’ – there’s no middle ground.

More moderate vegans (dubbed ‘Vegan Apologists’ by their radical opponents) believe widespread acceptance of veganism can only come through compromise. They support the “Reducetarian” movement that encourages participants to set actionable goals to eat fewer animal products.

Despite their opposing ideologies, both moderate and militant vegans agree the movement will grow. As new plant-based options become available, consumers become more aware of its health benefits and leading chefs start experimenting with meat alternatives, veganism will become the norm. One research study predicts that by the year 2040, up to 60% of meat that people consume will come from plant-based or lab-grown substitutes. Once that happens – and eating animals is denormalised in the way smoking was – the hardliners have won their war.

# HOLDERS STEAK HOLDERS

# NO



**As awareness around the environmental impact of meat production grows, the race is on to find sustainable alternatives.**

That livestock, particularly those in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs or factory farms), are wreaking havoc on the environment is well documented. CAFOs produce over 80% of the meat we eat today, are responsible for around 15% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, and use over 80% of the world's arable land (including the crops grown to feed them).

A growing awareness of how current food processes impact the planet has prompted an urgency for sustainable solutions.

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“Designed to look, feel and taste like meat, brands like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are easing omnivores out of their carnivore lifestyle.”

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With global incomes rising, so do meat consumption and the pressure to produce meat cheaper. To reverse the trend, researchers and marketers are exploring meat alternatives. Designed to look, feel and taste like meat, brands like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are easing omnivores out of their carnivore lifestyle with products like burger patty alternatives.

These meat alternatives often tout nutritional values equivalent to their animal counterparts (or even better), and are seen as a step up from “mock meats” which were mostly derived from soy beans.

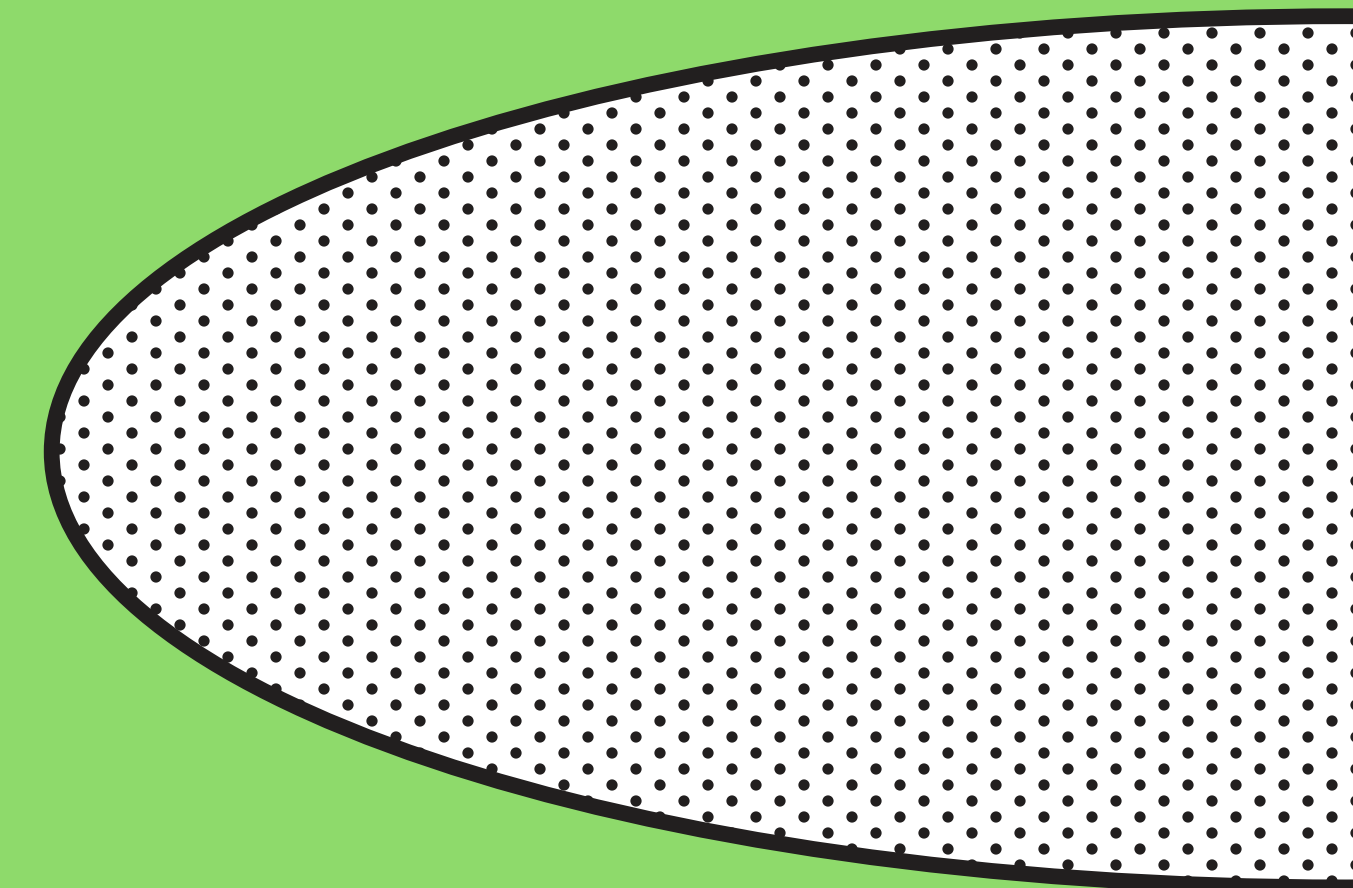
However, these **plant-based meat alternatives** are highly processed, and since most of the formulas are proprietary, the source of ingredients are questionable. With large corporate manufacturers such as Tyson Foods and Unilever on board, is it just another opportunity to produce inexpensive, nutritionally dubious food with the same environmental externalities? Processed plant oils, for instance, are often associated with inflammation, and there have been questions as to whether pea protein, the plant protein of choice for many meat alternatives, are from monocultures. If so, it would mean that we have just swapped one existing

monoculture (soy beans, which are the most commonly used in plant-based protein) for a new one. If that were the case, the environmental harm would potentially be the same.

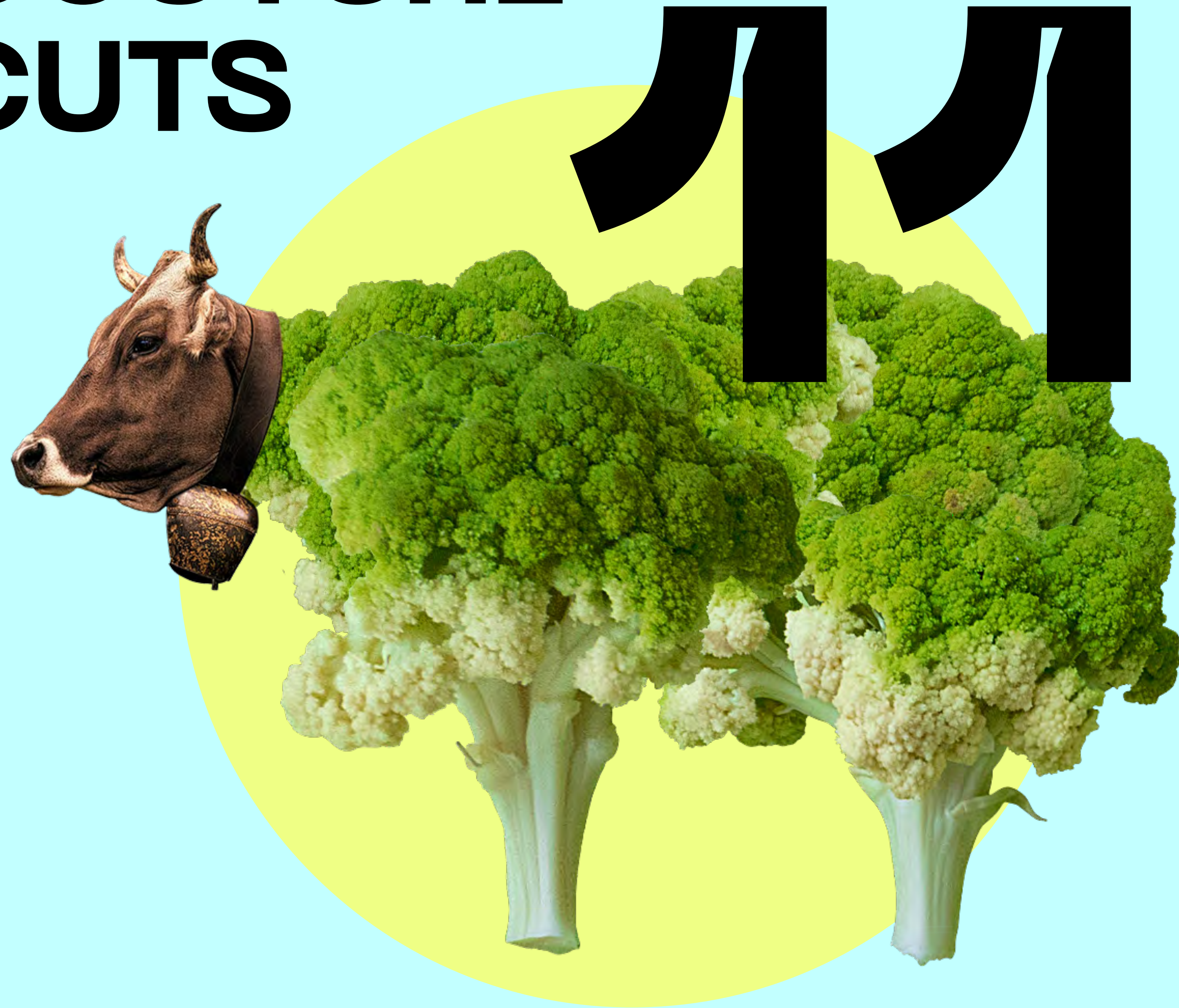
Once the initial excitement about meat alternatives subsides, consumers will be asking these questions, and alt-meat producers will need to have the answers.

Another meat alternative is **lab-grown or cultured meat**. Produced by extracting muscle cells from an animal, and “feeding” the cells so they make copies of themselves and multiply, this option has the potential to be disruptive. While not yet ready for mass market consumption, there are already a number of companies invested in the technology. A few more years may be all it takes for us to be eating burgers grown and fed in a lab.

These replacements will take over some of the market for CAFO-produced meats in the medium term, replacing fast food menu items like chicken nuggets and burger patties. It’s unlikely they’ll become the norm in fine dining, where animal meat will be seen as premium because of its “natural” state and relative scarcity. These attitudes will trickle down to mid-range, chef-led, independent restaurants, although it might inspire chefs to create their own versions of meat replacements or plant-based protein. No doubt meat alternatives are here to stay but greater transparency is expected in the future.



# CUTS COUTURE CUTS



**With calls to reduce meat consumption and eradicate unethical farming, consumers are developing a new appreciation for artisanal meat.**

It's ironic, but vegetarianism has caused a countertrend: the rise of artisanal meats. We know that intensive meat farming is one of the most inefficient, resource-intensive forms of agriculture there is. No longer simply about animal welfare, vegetarianism is about saving the planet. Movements like Green Monday, Meatless Monday and the Reducetarian Foundation remind us to reduce our meat consumption. When we do eat meat, it becomes a treat, and it makes sense to buy the best.

As resources become scarcer – be it time, labour, land, feed or water – the cost of artisanal meats, made outside the factory farm system, is going to rise.  
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“Specialty, artisanal meats are undoubtedly a luxury product, and demand for them will rise with global incomes.”

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Artisanal meats can be divided into two main categories. First, gourmet – usually rich and with fat marbling, such as Kobe beef, and Iberico pork. Second, environmentally sound – grass-fed, local, and free-roaming. Value can be added to both through age, be it the age of the animal at harvest, such as Galician beef (Rubia Gallega) which are usually ex-dairy cows at least a few years old (most commercial cattle goes to the abattoir at around 30 months), or time spent being aged after butchering.

Beyond these qualities, consumers want to know where and how the animal is raised. It’s partly driven by the assurance of food safety (and food fraud), but diners also want to know about methods and philosophies, and be shown proof of provenance in the form of a certification (e.g. organic, protected geographical indication), QR codes that list the name of a particular farm, or the farmer’s name and photo on packaging.

In supermarkets, ubiquitous foam trays are making way for old fashioned butcher’s counters, where shoppers can speak to a butcher about choice of meat, its origins, specific cuts or tips on cooking. When it comes to high-end meats, the line between butcher and meat-focused restaurant may become increasingly blurred. Specialty butchers running their own restaurants have existed for some time, but the likes of Dario Cecchini in Tuscany are now enjoying their moment in foodie circles.

Rare artisanal meats cooked in a unique local manner are also attracting serious gourmards – think Asador Etxebarri in Spain’s Basque Country, or sunflower chicken in Lai Heen, Guangzhou.

With generational affluence on the rise in the Middle East, artisanal meat suppliers will also need to consider adding halal certification and processing to their supply chains.

Specialty, artisanal meats are undoubtedly a luxury product, and demand for them will rise with global incomes. Discretionary spending among millennial and younger generations is trending towards larger bills for dining out, and lower grocery bills for eating in, so we can expect to see more consciously sourced meat options on menus to come.

So next time you order a porchetta, don’t be surprised if you get invited to the farm.

INC

FEEL GOOD  
INC

12



**With the wellness industry valued at an estimated US\$4.5 trillion, brands are eager to cash in and branch out with a range of healthy-sounding products.**

Everyone wants a piece of the sugar-free, Goop-approved pie. Manufacturers are turning up the feel-good factor and marketing products that promise to enhance your wellbeing or help you achieve your fitness goals. The lines between vice and virtue have never been more blurred.

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Drinking beer for good health may seem contradictory, but a range of “wellness beers” want to convince you otherwise. Beer brands Sufferfest and ZĒLUS were originally designed for athletes. The craft breweries imbue their beers with sea salt and electrolytes to boost athletic recovery and include healthy-sounding ingredients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, chia seeds and even bee pollen. Likewise, Kombrewcha is a gut-friendly kombucha with a boozy kick. Available in Berry Hibiscus, Royal Ginger or Lemongrass Lime, Kombrewcha also labels itself as organic, gluten-free and low in sugar.

Brands are also making a connection between your vanity counter and kitchen pantry. Giving new meaning to the term “skin food”, Golde skincare has created edible superfood masks that can be applied to your face or ladled into your sugar-free smoothie. The Clean Greens face mask is formulated with chlorella, spirulina and mango juice, described in promotional material as “a green juice for your face.” We can look forward to a range of beauty products that claim to restore your inner and outer beauty.

In 2018, beverage brand Kin released its range of alcohol-free “euphorics.” According to its co-founder Jen Batchelor, euphorics are designed to relieve stress and evoke a state of bliss “through a mixture of nootropics, adaptogens and botanics.” Promising the buzz without the booze, Kin’s website proclaims its product “opens the mind, calms the body and connects the spirit.”

“As consumers become savvier, there is a need for greater governmental regulation to help navigate the wellness food space.”

Increasingly, supplements and vitamins are also getting the “spoonful of sugar” treatment. Grown-up, palate-friendly gummies are now available for glowing skin, shinier locks and a better you. Available in vibrant colours and sugary flavours, they are sure to make their way into millennials’ pill cases.

We need to appreciate that the term “natural” is a misnomer. Without a formal definition by the FDA, the term doesn’t address food production, processing or manufacturing methods. Even the implication of any nutritional or

health benefit is taken for granted. As consumers become savvier, there is a need for greater governmental regulation to help navigate the wellness food space.

# 13



## SINGLED OUT

**Monocultures will break us, but we love them too much.**

Monoculture farming is an industrial approach to agriculture where only a single crop is farmed to maximise productivity. The pundits argue that monocultures are needed to feed the world. Are they?

Supermarket shelves overflow with products reliant on monocrops. Almost every biscuit has wheat and palm oil, and even baby formula contains high fructose corn syrup.

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Today's cheapest, most accessible food is processed, full of refined carbohydrates and processed fats. This leads to the curious case of malnutrition combined with obesity, a public health issue that comes at an enormous cost to governments (and taxpayers). Current estimates for these costs range from US\$147 billion to US\$210 billion per year. Obesity is most prevalent among those with the lowest income.

In the US, communities that are underserved by fresh food grocers (so-called "food deserts", which are typically low-income, rural communities) are seeing an uptick in "dollar stores", small grocery stores that almost exclusively offer processed food.

These trends will continue as long as monocrops of corn, rice, wheat and soybeans (which occupy just under 50 percent of the entire world's agricultural land) continue to be the main source of sustenance.

Agricultural land is under threat, however. Monoculture methods require an increased use of synthetic fertiliser, causing a decline in soil quality. Compounded with the effects of climate change, yields are set to decrease. To processed food producers worldwide, this means higher food costs and the need to seek out other ingredients. As current farming methods produce lower yields, it will prompt a complete overhaul of the industrial food sector.

For plants, more resilient seeds will be developed, and non-terrestrial growing, such as hydroponics and aquaponics, will replace some of the supply. In these scenarios, the risk of growing a single crop remains – that a deadly disease could wipe out an entire crop. The extinction of the Cavendish, the world's dominant species of banana, is the perfect cautionary tale.

We will also see a rise in smaller, multicropped farms that are more biodiverse (more resilient to disease, and better for sustainable yields in the long run), which will serve communities within a smaller radius. As a result, our diets would include more whole plants rather than industrially processed ones.

"Supermarket shelves overflow with products reliant on monocrops. Almost every biscuit has wheat and palm oil, and even baby formula contains high fructose corn syrup."

When it comes to meat, seafood, and dairy, apart from a small number of specialty livestock, technologies such as lab-cultured meats are expected to eventually replace the current single-species farming model. Significant shifts like these will take some time. Processed food as an industry developed over more than half a century, and isn't about to come down at the first sign of monoculture collapse.

In addition, most monocrops are commodities, and changes to their production patterns will impact financial markets and diplomatic relations (trade, aid, and so on). It is nonetheless interesting to observe that

food, farm, and nutrition policies are being addressed by most candidates in the 2020 US presidential campaigns, reflecting a growing impact of food issues on people's lives.

Ecology dictates that monocultures can't last forever, but it's yet to be seen whether industry and policymakers will shift capital and subsidies away from them, before devastating natural consequences force our collective hands.

# STORM

# THE PERFECT STORM

**Climate change is impacting how we farm and what we eat. Does this dark cloud have a silver lining?**



Rows of lush vines spill out into the valley. The sun is beating down, and farm workers are clipping bunches of grapes for the winemaker. It's harvest season, but this isn't France or Italy. It's Åstad Vingård, a property in Sweden, where in 2011, the owners deemed it warm enough to grow grapes and make wine.

Indeed, some crops in high-latitude areas have reported increasing yields thanks to climate change. As we know, though, climate change is doing more harm than good.

It was once thought that higher carbon dioxide levels would be good for plants, and they do indeed grow more quickly in those environments. The downside: they become less nutritious.

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“The United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that if we continue living the way we have – with a population of 9 billion by 2100 – the frequency and severity of extreme weather events will threaten the stability of our food supply.”

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Temperature and weather extremes – from droughts and floods, to snow dumps and heat waves – are shortening growing cycles, causing pests and diseases to thrive, restricting water supply and eroding soil, lowering yields across the board, be it milk or wheat. Drier soil increases the severity of heat waves, which dry soil further, leading to a vicious cycle.

Farms, animals and populations have either already migrated, or will be migrating soon, due to climate change. These mass-migration movements come with a host of ecological concerns. A number of marine diseases have already spread to cooler waters, alongside popular fish and shellfish, such as mussels and oysters, and is set to continue as Earth’s temperatures rise.

Greenhouse gas [GHG] emissions have been rising since at least the 1960s and show no sign of abating. From 2007 to 2016, agriculture, forestry and the food production system are estimated to have contributed to 21-37% of the world’s GHG emissions while nature provided a 29% “sink” (reversal or absorption) in response. In short: we’re barely breaking even – and we haven’t even accounted for the remaining 63-79% GHGs from other human activities, such as fossil fuel use.

The United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that if we continue living the way we have – with a population of 9 billion by 2100 – the frequency and severity of extreme weather events will threaten the stability of our food supply.

To combat this, scientists and institutions like the Crop Trust are running programmes to **identify weather-tolerant and disease-resistant qualities** in plants and help breed them. In a decade, your piña colada might be made using *Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr, a pineapple with drought-resistant properties.

Other solutions to climate change rely on nature, for instance, **afforestation** (planting new forests), **reforestation** (replanting destructed forests), and conservation of peatlands and mangroves. Reforestation is particularly popular, thanks to a controversial study that claimed up to two-thirds of all man-made carbon emissions could be reversed by planting 2.2 billion acres of trees.

Limiting the increase of global average temperatures to 1.5°C per the Paris Agreement is a challenge, but with the advances in technology, awareness, and maybe even political will, we have a fighting chance.

# KITCHEN

# TESTY KITCHEN

**Chefs and restaurant workers are at boiling point. An industry that once embodied a survival-of-the-fittest ethos is finally addressing mental wellbeing in the workplace.**



Professional kitchens are pressure-cooker environments. Not only do chefs face long and irregular hours, they need to meet the daily expectations of finicky customers, struggle with budget constraints, reinvent their menus to stay relevant and drive the restaurant's creative vision. Further upping the anxiety levels is the burden to earn, add or retain a Michelin star, or ascend the list of The World's 50 Best Restaurants. And while other industries advocate for a work-life balance, the restaurant culture still promotes the "work hard, play hard" ethos where long hours, late nights, after-work partying and drug-fuelled hedonism are the norm.

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According to the World Health Organization, depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability across the globe. A 2018 study from the Pew Research Center reveals that service workers, particularly the millions who work in the hospitality and restaurant industries and rely on tips, are more likely to suffer from depression, sleep problems and stress.

This brutal environment is taking its toll on restaurant workers. A survey of 102 UK chefs by Nestlé Professional's Chef Range earlier this year found eight in ten chefs reported experiencing poor mental health and 48% agreed that not enough is being done to address **their mental wellbeing in the workplace.**

But changes are happening. Chef Paul Kitching, who owns the Michelin-starred 21212 restaurant in Edinburgh, introduced a four-day week for his staff to "fuel the team's creative flair." Other chefs and restaurant owners offer employees gym memberships or yoga classes to help reduce their stress levels. In an effort to bring balance to the hospitality industry, Australian chef Paolo Arlotta launched Chefs of Yoga, a programme that has instructors visiting restaurants prior to service to conduct in-house yoga classes. The intention is to reduce anxiety and help staff manage their stress throughout the day.

"The kitchen's brutal environment is taking its toll on restaurant workers. A survey of 102 UK chefs found eight in 10 chefs reported experiencing poor mental health."

There are other programmes designed to address the mental health crisis in the industry. #FairKitchens aims to normalise conversations around mental health by providing chefs and managers with guidelines on how to approach topics of anxiety, depression and substance abuse with their employees. There are also online resource centres for chefs and employees in the hospitality industry. The websites Chefs with Issues and I Got Your Back offer personal stories from chefs, forums for discussion and tips for improving workplace wellness.

This growing awareness of the mental health epidemic affecting the restaurant industry will only encourage more support groups, open discussions and changes to workplace conditions. Chefs are also more willing to embrace and promote wellness therapies, from mindfulness to yoga. With more conversations about how to address mental health issues, professional kitchens are likely to see more meditation and fewer meltdowns.

# BEST

# SECOND BEST

**When it comes to culinary innovation, these second-tier cities are first-rate.**

# 16

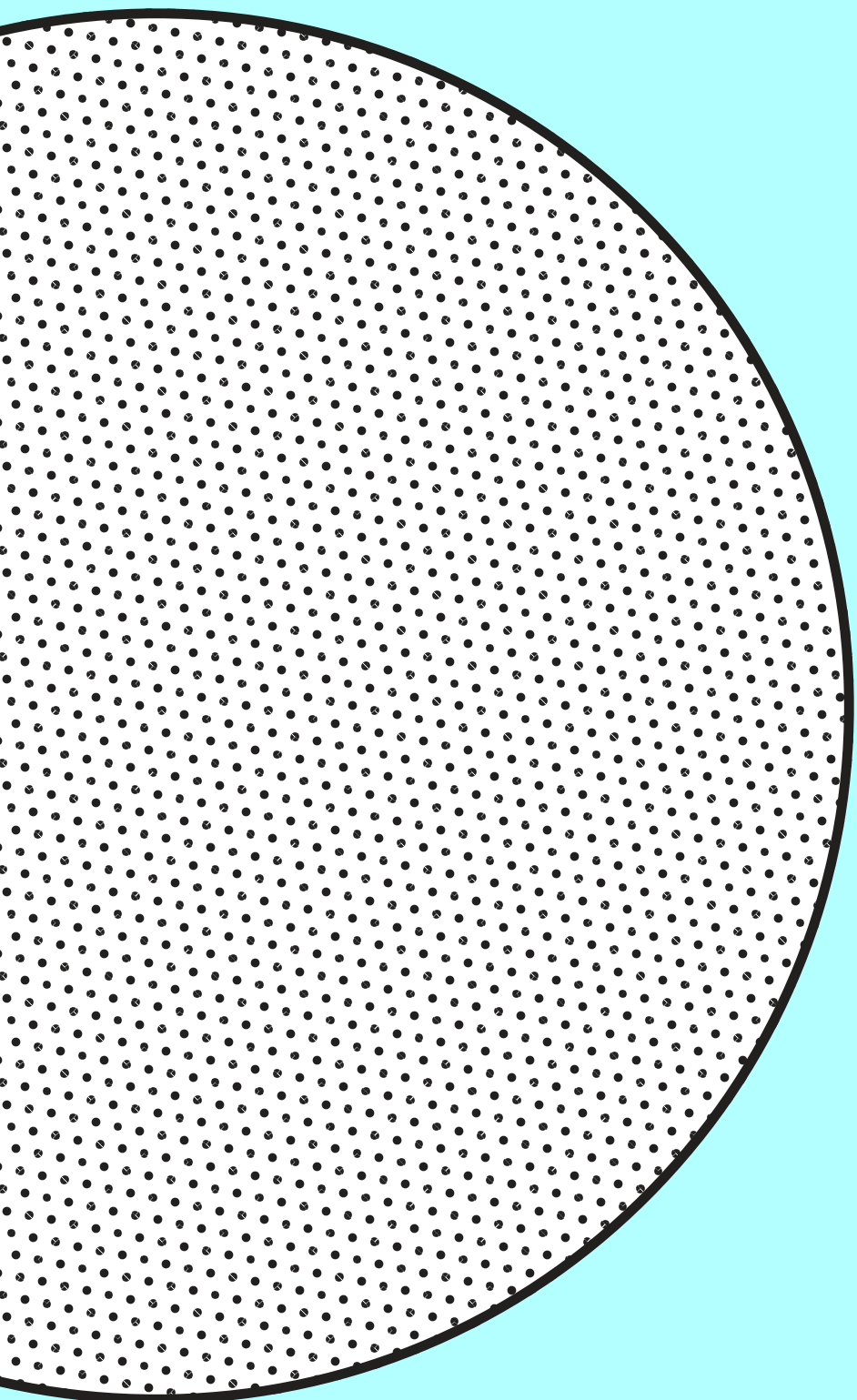


**Second cities are giving capitals a run for their money.** Cheaper rents and infrastructure development make them attractive destinations for chefs looking to open in less competitive and more conducive environments.

These are all dining destinations on the up, cities with scenes that match – and in some cases outdo – their flashier and larger rivals. The best bit? You’ll often dine at lower prices when compared to their better-known capitals.

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“The Cantonese megacity is not exactly small in size, but it has always played second fiddle to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing when it comes to dining.”



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#### **Hamburg instead of Berlin**

With just 20 seats, there can be a three-month wait to eat at three Michelin-starred The Table by Kevin Fehling. A tasting menu may include his lobster with lardo, yuzu, and champagne foam, a multi-layered dish that explains why he was Germany’s youngest chef to earn the ultimate culinary accolade. Chef Fabio Haebel’s eponymous restaurant promises ‘Nordic French’ cuisine such as cod in sauce vierge with capers, or potatoes cooked in hay. Nineteen courses, not including amuse-bouches, represent incredible value at €85 per person. There’s also 100/200 that promises “one room, one stove, one cook” as chef Thomas Imbusch

cooks at two temperatures (hence the restaurant’s name) and reduces food to the bare essentials in dishes closely based on the nose-to-tail philosophy.

#### **Shenzhen instead of Shanghai**

The Cantonese megacity is not exactly small in size, but it has always played second fiddle to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing when it comes to dining. That, however, is rapidly changing, led by the arrival of Ensue, the first restaurant outside the US from Christopher Kostow, best known for his three Michelin-starred The Restaurant at Meadowood in Napa Valley. Sitting atop Futian’s Shangri-La Hotel, Ensue combines breathtaking views with innovative cuisine inspired by some of China’s finest produce. Next up: Oslo’s Esben Holmboe Bang of Maaemo is set to open his second restaurant, a Norwegian-Chinese concept.

#### **Porto instead of Lisbon**

Portugal has ranked high on recent culinary radars, but many choose to miss the capital and head instead to the northern city of Porto, where the dining scene has much to offer – not to mention its proximity to Douro Valley

wine region. At Euskalduna Studio, chef Vasco Coelho Santos, who worked at both Mugaritz and Arzak, crafts a 10-course degustation menu along with a few surprises. At Almeja, where chef João Cura roasts wild mushrooms with parsnips, and serves fish with a seriously decadent sauce made with lard and butter, local produce is the draw.

#### **Brisbane instead of Sydney**

Although Sydneysiders and Melburnians would doubtlessly recoil in horror at the thought, Brisbane has seriously upped its culinary game in recent years. Yes, we know Sydney isn’t Australia’s capital and Melbourne’s restaurants aren’t too shabby, but it’s the change of pace in Queensland which has caught our eye. A new development project at Howard Smith Wharves has bought a raft of new eateries, including two from celebrated Sydney chef and restaurateur Jonathan Barthelmess. Brisbanians also recently welcomed two outstanding establishments: Hellenika at the swish new Calile Hotel, and the highly anticipated outpost of Three Blue Ducks at W Hotel. Brisbane’s skyline will also transform in the next few years with the construction of a US\$2.46 billion casino

at the new Queen's Wharf precinct. Comprising 50 new cafes, restaurants and bars, the city will also welcome a slew of new luxury hotels, including The Ritz-Carlton and Rosewood. And with luxury hotels on the horizon, can world-renowned celebrity chefs be far behind?

### **Chengdu instead of Beijing**

Every dining city worth their salt has a Sichuan restaurant of repute, so it's not surprising that the vast province's capital is a culinary powerhouse in its own right. Celebrated chef André Chiang opened The Bridge, joining stalwarts like Yu Zhi Lan where the extraordinarily talented Lan Guijun crafts beautiful dishes highlighting lesser-known Sichuanese flavours and ingredients. More recent openings also include Yu's Family Kitchen where some of the 30 or so dishes are inspired by what used to be known as molecular gastronomy.

### **Lyon instead of Paris**

Whisper it in Paris, but Lyon has long been the country's gastronomic heart and soul. New young chefs have added to the city's already rich tapestry of restaurants from such legends as Paul Bocuse. Many go under the label "bistronomie" that combines a relaxed setting, service and price point with seriously accomplished cooking – places like Les Apothicaires, where chefs Tabatha and Ludovic may serve smoked sturgeon with pickled radish or burrata with fermented squash, kombu and thyme. Likewise, at Le Pierre Scize perfectly rendered scallops join a sauce of pink peppercorns from Madagascar in creamy harmony.

"LA at the end of 2019 while Enrique Olvera and Daniela Soto-Innes will also bring their A game to the Arts District with two new dining concepts."

### **Los Angeles over New York**

Let's face it, LA's been hot for years, but recent developments like the revamp of the Arts District into a creative hub and the overhaul of *The Los Angeles Times'* food section mean that major chefs are looking to spread their wings in the City of Angels. Matt Abergel from Hong Kong's Yardbird will open up Yakido Yakitori in downtown LA at the end of 2019 while Enrique Olvera

and Daniela Soto-Innes will also bring their A-game to the Arts District with two new dining concepts: Damian (modern Mexican restaurant with a mezcal bar) and Ditroit (a casual eatery serving house-made tortillas and tacos). Bringing some old-world British charm to Los Angeles, St. John, the iconic London institution, will open its first restaurant outside England in Culver City.

# LIFE ISLAND LIFE



**In a sea of mediocrity, these islands are standing out for their restaurant scenes, culinary traditions and local produce.**

As unfamiliar airports like Launceston, Calvi and Vágur become new food gateways and getaways, island life has begun to take on a whole new meaning for those with adventurous palates. Maybe it's the sense of isolation, independence, or unique terroir, but global gastronomes are looking to islands as sources for culinary creativity and unusual ingredients.

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Often home to maverick chefs who eschew the traditional route to creating successful restaurants, these destinations punch above their weight when it comes to produce and ensure that visitors leave with a true sense of taste and place.

What's more, given how diners are increasingly seeking out connections to the food they eat by understanding the environmental and cultural context behind ingredients and dishes, it seems likely that island dining will only continue to grow in popularity.

### **The Faroe Islands**

The frigid waters of the North Atlantic are home to islands that define frontier food. If fermented tallow made from lamb intestines, salted gannet or whale blubber sound like endurance tests rather than dining, then maybe the Faroe Islands are not for you. They do, however, reward truly adventurous travellers and diners with places like Koks where chef Poul Ziska's 18-course tasting menus wow with local produce and techniques largely based around fermenting, smoking and drying. His cuisine has won critical acclaim, including two Michelin stars, while its sustainability credentials are second to none with most ingredients coming from in or near the remote islands. Razorbill, anyone? Truly dining at the edge.

"The frigid waters of the North Atlantic are home to islands that define frontier food. If fermented tallow made from lamb intestines, salted gannet or whale blubber sound like endurance tests rather than dining, then maybe the Faroe Islands are not for you.."

### **Tasmania**

Tasmania has long been a bountiful source of produce beloved by ingredient obsessives like legendary Japanese chef Tetsuya Wakuda. From saffron to salmon or olive oil to wasabi, surprising but stellar produce reflects the island's pristine environment. Tasmania's dining scene has likewise truly come into its own, with compelling options such as a degustation of modernist cuisine at

Dier Makr or at Franklin, chef Analiese Gregory's brilliant and fuss-free restaurant featuring an assembly of impeccable ingredients, including her extraordinary dessert of potato tuiles sandwiching brown butter mousse and salted caramel. Beyond the capital Hobart, expand your horizons at places like The Flinders Wharf, which sits on an island off the island for possibly the ultimate in food escapism.

“While Taipei’s street food is rightly famous, there’s also an established fine-dining scene where local and international chefs have won Michelin stars.”

### **Corsica**

If simple, rustic cured meats and cheeses are your bag, then it doesn’t get better than the beautiful and remarkably diverse island of Corsica. Even if the French region often feels fiercely independent, locals love a long wine-filled lunch, in common with their neighbour to the north. A signature dish is the intense, gamey civet de sanglier or wild boar casserole, rich with chestnuts, fennel and copious amounts of booze. But more subtle and refined dishes also tempt at restaurants like La Table de Cala Rossa where French and Italian influences combine and the perfumes of the maquis – the island’s famed wild shrubland – bring dishes rich with rosemary, mint, fennel and thyme. Then for true gastronomic creativity and innovation, two Michelin-

starred Casadelmar is home to Fabio Bragagnolo’s refined creations that show a lighter side to the island’s often hearty traditional dishes.

### **Sicily**

Calling Sicily a culinary wonderland won’t surprise many given its reputation for simple but brilliant dishes like arancini or caponata. However, its fine-dining scene is also drawing attention to new contemporary restaurants and the island’s impeccable, sustainable ingredients. Le Cattive sits inside the stunning Palazzo Butera in Palermo and overlooks the city’s ancient port, serving beautifully crafted plates to match glasses from owner Tascante, the famed winemaker. Likewise in dynamic young chef Salvatore Vicari’s eponymous spot in the ancient town

of Noto, where whimsical plates include tortelli with ricotta and a cream made from local almonds, sage and asparagus, or kingfish with beets and jerusalem artichoke.

### **Shikoku**

The island of Shikoku in southern Japan is another unique terroir thanks to its mountainous interior, fertile plains and coasts, while its four prefectures all boast their own culinary styles, dishes and famed local produce. That helps to explain why it was recently voted the country’s best place to eat (no mean feat given Japan’s stellar reputation). Kagawa is famous throughout Japan for the quality and number of its restaurants serving thick, chewy sanuki udon, but seafood is the standout at the sweetly named Restaurant on The Sea in nearby Teshima. The minimalist but warm surroundings also serve as a local community space, underlining the sustainable credentials which underpin so many of Japan’s food producers and artisans. The region around Ehime produces more citrus than anywhere else in Japan; in Tokushima it’s all about the pork bone ramen; and in the south,

Kōchi borders the Pacific Ocean and features a signature delicacy of bonito fish seared over burning rice straw.

### **Taiwan**

While Taipei’s street food is rightly famous, there’s also an established fine-dining scene where local and international chefs have won Michelin stars and earned a ranking in Asia’s 50 Best Restaurants list for seriously innovative cuisine. Leading the way are places like Gēn Creative in Taipei, where three chefs from different countries joined forces to craft stunning plates, and where sustainability and sourcing are front and centre. Such was their genuine passion that they founded an event called Cookmania, now an annual affair, where local and international chefs gather to discuss issues they face and how to solve them. Elsewhere, Alex Peng’s remote restaurant Akame focuses on foraged, wild local ingredients and celebrates his indigenous aboriginal Rukai culture to brilliant effect, while Kai Ho’s play-on-words Tairroir smartly and successfully fuses French and Taiwanese traditions.

# SAVIOURS

## SCREEN SAVIOURS

# 18

**Foodies are indulging in a steady diet of charismatic chefs, culinary explorations and cooking competitions. Can this insatiable appetite for food media be satisfied?**

The first cooking programme aired on the BBC on 12th June 1946. Hosted by English chef Philip Harben, the 10-minute show educated viewers on how to make lobster vol-au-vents. In 1962, Julia Child debuted as *The French Chef* and cooking shows became aspirational, indulging American viewers with glimpses of an exotic culture and a foreign cuisine. Since then, cooking shows have evolved from instructional to inspirational.

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“Cooking shows can be more than merely instructive. They can fuel viewers’ appetite for discovery, prompt conversations around culture and bolster culinary tourism.”

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When the Food Network debuted on cable television in the US in 1993, producers had to fill an entire schedule with cooking-centric series. Spicing up the home-cooking formula, they served up an entertaining smorgasbord of reality shows, culinary tips and cheerful cooks. The shows expanded viewers’ food knowledge, introduced new cuisines and ushered in the era of the celebrity chef.

Food Network demonstrated that cooking shows can be more than merely instructive. They can fuel viewers’ appetite for discovery, prompt conversations around culture and bolster culinary tourism.

In recent years, streaming giant Netflix has sparked a renaissance in food programming. Whether it’s the globe-trotting travelogues of *Salt Fat Acid Heat*, *Ugly Delicious* and *Street Food*, or the good-natured reality shows *Nailed It*, *Sugar Rush* and *The Final Table*, audiences have devoured Netflix’s tasty selection. Not confined to the kitchen, Netflix’s cooking shows – particularly *Cooked* and the Emmy-nominated *Chef’s Table* – view the world through a wide lens to celebrate the cultural heritage of food and uncover the inspirations and personal histories of world-renowned chefs.

Beyond the small screen, gastronomes are supplementing their food media diet with smart podcasts. From *The Splendid Table* and *Eater’s Digest* to *The Sporkful*, *Bite* and *Racist Sandwich*, the most popular podcasts tackle critical food issues, dishing on dining trends, race, culture and food politics.

Credit Danish chef René Redzepi for shifting food discourse from the aspirational to the academic. Since 2011, his annual MAD Symposium “unites a global cooking community with a social conscience, a sense of curiosity, and an appetite for change.” It’s a mission shared by the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery, a precursor to MAD, that has been attracting food historians and research scientists since 1979. Not surprisingly, the symposium has spun off into a limited-series podcast, *Ox Tales*, featuring interviews with social anthropologists, cultural historians and food scholars.

With this ever-expanding world of food media, have we reached a tipping point? Far from it. Cookbooks are defying all odds and enjoying a sales boom. *The Pinch of Nom* cookbook, by Kate Allinson and Kay Featherstone, sold

over 200,000 copies earlier this year, becoming the fastest selling non-fiction book on record. And Hulu, a Netflix competitor, announced a two-year development deal with David Chang and Chrissy Teigen to produce a slate of new cooking shows for the network. “Food has become cultural currency today,” says Chang, who launched his own multi-faceted media empire, Majordomo Media, in 2018. “People know more about food than ever before. There’s never been a better time to eat [than] today.”

So sit back and binge.

# TEQUILA:

# 19

# ARRIBA TEQUILA!



**Gin is no longer  
the 'in' sprit as  
ultra-premium tequila  
raises the bar.**

Tequila was once regarded as a cheap spirit served only in shot glasses and paired with a wedge of lime and a lick of salt. Premium tequila makers, though, are challenging this stereotype and giving the much-derided spirit a newfound respectability. Tequila's success has been driven by a shot of star power with celebrities from George Clooney and Justin Timberlake to *Sex and the City's* Chris Noth launching their own premium tequila brands. Beyond endorsing their respective brands, these stars are helping to reposition tequila as a top-shelf spirit. Clooney and his business partner, Cindy Crawford's husband Rande Gerber, founded Casamigos tequila in 2013. Four years later, Diageo bought the company for a reported US\$1 billion.

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This attention to the market's premium segment is translating into sales. According to the International Wine and Spirits Record (IWSR), in the past three years, tequila sales have risen at a rate of 9% year-on-year while production levels in 2018 increased by 13.9% over the previous year, the second-highest volume to date.

There's also been a shift in consumer behaviour. Drinkers are now more interested in sipping or savouring tequila than slamming it. To appeal to the high-end market, producers are finding innovative ways to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

For example:

**Storywood Tequila** is billed as the world's first tequila aged in Speyside malt whisky casks, prompting the tagline "Born in Mexico, shaped in Scotland."

**Patrón Tequila** communicates the brand's rich artisanal production story, highlighting the fact that only 100% Weber Blue agave from the Highlands of Jalisco, Mexico, is used. The company also crushes the agave fibres with an ancient tahona wheel, a traditional, time-intensive process.

**Tequila Ocho** identifies its terroir as the point of difference. Ocho prides itself on being the "first tequila to designate both the year it was produced and the precise field from which the family grown agaves were sourced."

"There's been a shift in consumer behaviour. Drinkers are now more interested in sipping or savouring tequila than slamming it."

Other brands are marketing themselves as sustainability champions.

**Cazadores** promotes its zero-waste production process and aims to make its distillery 100% sustainable by using agave waste to power its plant.

Despite the booming sales, demand for premium tequila comes from the North America market. "Tequila struggles in markets such as China, which would potentially provide a massive boost in its future," says Spiros Malandrakis, industry manager for alcoholic drinks

at research firm Euromonitor. "But it hasn't managed to crack them just yet, perhaps because emerging markets have historically tended to embrace products that they see as premium. For decades, tequila was associated with anything but premium." But once Chinese consumers and other Asian markets start to appreciate premium tequila as a luxury product, Mexico's native spirit will be calling the shots.

# OF TASTE TRAILBLAZERS OF TASTE



# 20

That they've inexorably changed the dining landscape of the last 20 years isn't news. That they will continue to change the way we eat in the coming 20 years is.

## THE FLAVOUR SAVIOURS

**Yuki Chizui**  
**Nadeshiko Sushi, Tokyo**

Having opened an academy to teach women the art of sushi making, she is challenging gender discrimination to make female sushi chefs the new norm.

**Josh Niland**  
**Saint Peter, Sydney**

This young Aussie chef is adapting the nose-to-tail philosophy for fish and hooking in diners with his creative techniques.

**Ángel León**  
**Aponiente, Cádiz**

Proving that there is plenty more to the sea than just fish, he made waves thanks to his unparalleled commitment to seafood sustainability.

**Danny Yip**  
**The Chairman, Hong Kong**

Credit Yip for rescuing and reviving Cantonese recipes and provincial cuisines that were on the brink of being lost forever.

**Peggy Chan**  
**Grassroots Initiatives, Hong Kong**

Through her efforts with Grassroots Pantry, Nectar and now Grassroots Initiatives, Chan has convinced Asia that plant-based cuisine is not an exercise in compromise.

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**Musa Dağdeviren**  
**Çiya, Istanbul**

He painstakingly recreates regional dishes in order to preserve and protect Turkish culinary traditions.

**Kwang Uh**  
**Baroo, Los Angeles**

Experimental, Buddhist-inspired cuisine that offers hints on the future of fermentation. Look out for Baroo's reopening in 2020.

**Darren Teoh**  
**Dewakan, Kuala Lumpur**

Malaysia might be known for its spice trade and rich archipelago diversity, but now he's about to put its culinary pedigree on the world stage.

**Pierre Thiam**  
**NOK by Alara, Lagos**

He distilled the essence of the African diaspora and history into a distinctive dining experience and showcased it on the world stage.

**THE**  
**CRUSADERS**

**Douglas McMaster**  
**Silo, London**

The culinary mind behind the world's first fully zero-waste restaurant, he's provided a food systems blueprint for other chefs to follow.

**Dan Giusti**  
**Brigaid, New York City**

The Noma alum is revolutionising cafeteria cuisine and transforming the way students eat, one school at a time.

**Gabriela Cámara**  
**Contramar, Mexico City**

Tackling Mexican tourism and food policy while running restaurants, could we be looking at a future presidential candidate?



**Emily Broad Leib**  
**Harvard Law School's Food Law and Policy Clinic**

She uses her position to address major issues in the food system, including food waste.

**Chris Cochran**  
**ReFED**

As Executive Director of ReFED, a non-profit organisation created to reduce food waste in the US, Cochran has created a data-driven road map to cut food loss in the US by 50% by 2030.

**David Hertz**  
**Gastromotiva, Brazil**

Cofounder of Gastromotiva, he fights unemployment and social inequality using cooking and nutrition classes to "create opportunities for those living on the margins of society."

**Kwame Onwuachi**  
**Kith and Kin, Washington D.C.**

His memoir *Notes from a Young Black Chef* sheds light on racism in the world of fine dining and is being adapted for the big screen.

**THE OLD/NEW**  
**GUARDS**

**René Redzepi**  
**Noma, Copenhagen**

He put Denmark on the culinary map but it's his work on MAD (and a new educational facility) that'll shape the future of the industry and rewrite the restaurant rulebook.

**Dan Barber**  
**Blue Hill at Stone Barns, New York**

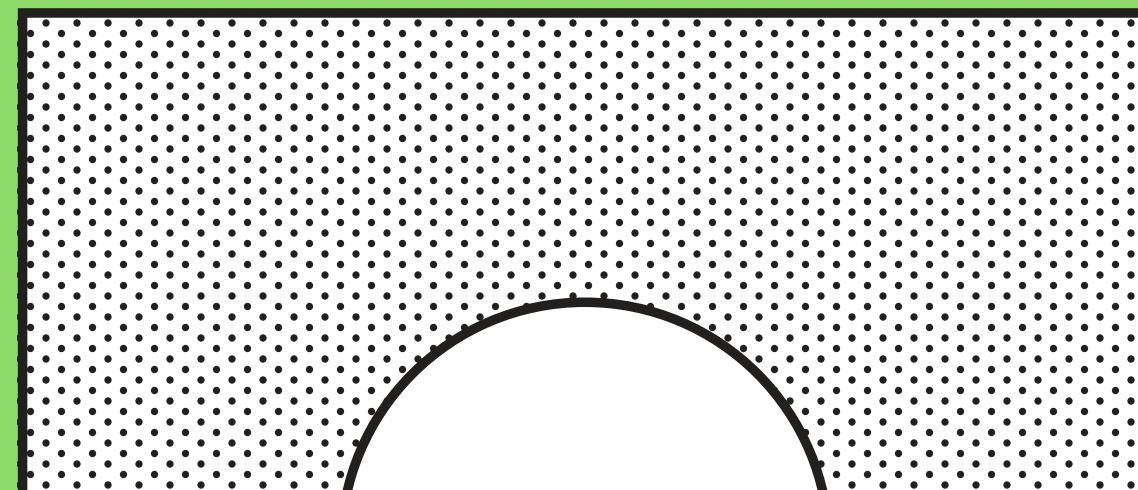
His passion turned the spotlight on food provenance and sent chefs back to the farms.

**José Andrés**  
**ThinkFoodGroup**

Feeding individuals and families impacted by disaster through his World Central Kitchen, this chef-turned-philanthropist inspires with his culinary skills, compassion and political clout.

**Victor Arguinzoniz**  
**Asador Etxebarri, Axpe**

For reminding us that despite all the trends, cooking starts with fire.





### About Marriott International

Marriott International has always been at the forefront of the Restaurant & Bar industry and the proof is in the pudding – 33 Michelin-starred restaurants, innovative events and industry-leading initiatives, all offering locally relevant experiences with a distinct perspective, a tireless commitment to attracting, developing and retaining F&B talent and world class loyalty programme. With a finger on the pulse of the international F&B landscape and a hunger for what's to come, Marriott International is well-poised to be the purveyor of keen consumer insights and pioneering trendsetter for restaurants and bars alike.

Marriott International is proud to sponsor CatchOn's fifth edition of "Future of Food" report and is thrilled to see how the sieved insights and trends forecasted would filter into 2020 and beyond.

CATCHON

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