

Food + Drinks

Chefs Predict the Biggest Food Trends of 2015

From ramen to abalone, here's what you'll be eating this year.

BY **GERALDINE CAMPBELL**



As the year of whole roasted cauliflower, avocado toast, and [spatchcocking](#) comes to a close, we're looking forward to the next big new thing. Will 2015 be the year of the rabbit? Will abalone be the new uni? Will ramen really go mainstream? We tapped some of the country's top culinary talents to see what they predict for the year ahead in food. Here's what they had to say.

More restaurants will have in-house foragers.

Chef Jonathon Sawyer employs his own forager at his smart, northern Italian-inspired restaurant [Trentina](#), which opened this summer. And he thinks we'll see an increasing number of chefs doing the same. "That's where you get real individualism," he notes, adding that besides foraged fruit, vegetables, and herbs—pawpaw, garlic mustards, and Appalachian allspice, say—we'll also see woodland proteins like Canadian goose, acorn-fed squirrel, grouse, and wild turkey.

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Charcuterie: Not just for pork.

Brad Farmerie, executive chef at New York City's Michelin-starred [Public](#), predicts a broader spectrum for charcuterie platters. Think lamb bacon and turkey jerky, but also bottarga, octopus salami, and dried scallop shavings. Even vegetables will make an appearance, as with the potted foie gras-like mushroom mousse at his downtown restaurant [Saxon + Parole](#).

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Fermented foods are the next charcuterie.

Not only does every culture has some version of fermentation, fermented foods—like vinegars, shrubs, kimchi, and sauerkraut—have live cultures that are good for gut health. "We saw chefs start to experiment with fermentation in 2014," says *Top Chef's* Tom Colicchio, "but 2015 will be the year of fermentation. From kimchi to pickles to salumi, every restaurant will be doing some sort of in-house fermentation."

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Small fish are the big new fish.

[Underbelly's Chris Shepherd](#) has become one of Houston's most vocal advocates of bycatch—essentially, the stuff you catch when you're trying to hook something else. Next year, the James Beard Award-winning chef predicts we'll continue to move from a "big fish" culture to a more everything-goes approach. "Smaller fish are so delicious and versatile—there are so many applications for them," he says. For example? "Needlefish and belt fish that are caught in shrimp nets can be used for house-made fish sauce, bouillabaisse, dried fish chips, etc."

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Abalone is the next uni.

Michael Tusk (chef-owner of [Quince](#) and [Cotogna](#) in the Bay Area) noticed an increase of abalone on restaurant menus, a trend he expects to continue into 2015. "California, especially, is benefitting from amazing new companies sourcing pristine abalone," he says, citing United Artisan in San Francisco and [Monterey Fish](#).

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Rabbit will become the other other white meat.

"I think 2015 will be the year of the rabbit," predicts Giuseppe Tentori, executive chef of Chicago's [GT Fish & Oyster](#). "It has such a delicious flavor, no matter how you prepare it, but I love to confit or braise the legs, as well as stuff the loin and wrap it in bacon." She's not a chef, but Bronwen Hanna-Korpi, the president of [Belcampo Meat Co.](#), also believes rabbits are the meat of the future.

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Ramen will go mainstream.

From agedashi tofu to whiskey, coffee siphons to samurai sword-quality cutlery, it's safe to say all things Japanese are already very much in vogue. And when it comes to ramen, there's no shortage of noodle-centric spots, from boite-like dives to upscale spots helmed by Michelin-starred chefs. But Sawyer thinks the dish will become even more prevalent. We'll find ramen on menus in non-Japanese restaurants. It could become as pervasive as the burger.

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Peel-to-stem is the new nose-to-tail.

In 2014, most chefs said vegetables would continue their rise from side dish to feature event, while predictions about the new kale ran the gamut from arugula to beet greens. Katie Lee, cohost of Food Network's *The Kitchen*, added a new dimension to the vegetable debate: "Chefs are going to be cooking from peel to stem," she says. "Peels will be left on root vegetables for more texture. Carrot tops that are usually discarded will be the stars of pesto."

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Blood will replace eggs.

Molecularly speaking, blood and eggs are fairly similar—which has chefs swapping eggs for blood in breads, biscuits, pasta, and the like. "Blood adds an animal, umami flavor," Sawyer says. Francis Derby, executive chef of Gotham West Market's [The Cannibal](#), is "working on a gougère that contains pig's blood that we plan to stuff with pig's-liver mousse." And you thought blood sausage was adventurous.

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Bang bang is the new Sriracha.

Sriracha, a.k.a. cock sauce, isn't going anywhere. But Phet Schwader, chef and co-owner of New York's [Khe-Yo](#), says bang bang—a combination of chilies, garlic, fish sauce, lime juice, and cilantro—is on the rise: "Bang bang is a platform of sweet-sour-salty with a significant kick that brightens flavors for a lot of different types of proteins and vegetables. We use it for dipping, marinating, grilling, poaching, and glazing."

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There will be a wheat revolution.

Sure, there are still a lot of gluten-free-recipe fans, but chefs like Marc Vetri are betting on a wheat revolution in 2015. Earlier this year, the Philadelphia native started milling his own flour in a grain mill above his [eponymous restaurant](#). The reason? "We do it because it simply yields a better product," Vetri says. "The resulting freshness, texture, and, most importantly, flavor are like nothing I've ever experienced." What's more, restaurants are already partnering with producers to grow and mill grains like wheat, barley, buckwheat, and rye. And some chefs—like Vetri and Alex Stupak (who grinds his own masa at his New York taqueria [Empellón Al Pastor](#))—are milling in-house. Michael Tusk, the chef-owner of San Francisco's two-Michelin-starred [Quince](#), predicts grain will be the next foodstuff (consider chocolate, coffee, wine) to go "single origin" (from just one farm or geographical location). "I expect to see more awareness and discussion of monocultivar grains in the coming year," says Tusk, who worked with chefs and food experts like Michael Pollan, Dan Barber, and Sean Brock on the documentary [The Grain Divide](#).