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# **FUTURE MENUS** 4

TOP FOODSERVICE TRENDS FOR DELIS  
2026



Unilever  
Food  
Solutions



# FUTURE MENUS 4

**IN 2026, THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY IS ALL ABOUT MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE – DOING MORE WITH LESS, FINDING REAL VALUE, AND MAKING EVERY DISH COUNT.** *Diners are craving food that feels genuine and tells a story,* **WITHOUT THE EXTRA FUSS. WITH TIGHTER BUDGETS, MENUS ARE GETTING SIMPLER, LOCAL INGREDIENTS ARE TAKING CENTRE STAGE, AND SMART USE OF RESOURCES MATTER MORE THAN EVER.**

People still want to enjoy their meals, but they're looking for comfort and connection, not just the next big trend. Authenticity is everything: guests want to know where their food comes from and why it matters. Health now means real benefits and good ingredients, not empty buzzwords.

Technology is helping kitchens run smoother and making dining more convenient, but the heart of hospitality – the human touch – remains just as

important. Gen-Z is setting the pace with their focus on value for money, creativity, and experiences that feel personal and real.

For chefs and restaurant owners, **Future Menus 4** is about practical innovation: do what works for your team, tell your story honestly, and serve quality and value for money in every bite. Consider this your toolkit...



# GET #PREPPED FOR TOMORROW WITH UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS



#Prepped for tomorrow

Unilever Food Solutions (UFS), accounting for 20% of Unilever's Foods Business Group, operates in over 75 countries as a dedicated supplier for the foodservice industry. At our core, we are a business of chefs for chefs. The expertise of our global network of over 250 in-house chefs informs everything we do, establishing our strategy around three key pillars: high-quality products, industry inspiration and best-in-class services.

We recognise the high demands professional chefs place on food products and ingredients to streamline kitchen operations. We specialise in high-quality products that improve profitability, enhance consistency, and help unlock on-trend flavours. Our leading-edge portfolio features power brands like Knorr Professional, Robertsons and Hellmann's. We excel in creating product recipes that perform exceptionally in professional kitchens and outshine the competition.

Keeping menus trendy and inspiring is a constant challenge for chefs, especially with the ever-evolving influences of social media trends, shifting consumer demands, and economic factors. Our annual Future Menu Trends initiative highlights major global culinary trends, demonstrating how chefs can bring these trends to life in their own kitchens, enhancing both creativity and profitability. We also strive to support chefs by offering an ever-growing selection of unique and classic recipes available on our website.

We understand the pressure and skills required by professional chefs to run a successful kitchen. Our culinary training programmes supply chefs with best-in-class services and food industry tools for professionals in the foodservice industry. From the basics of Food Safety to advanced World Cuisines, we've got it covered. We also aim to improve kitchen environments by fostering a positive culture. Our Positive Kitchens initiative addresses challenging conditions commonly encountered, providing tools, training and inspiration for efficient team management, effective communication and overall well-being.

UFS is constantly pushing to better serve the foodservice sector by taking a digital-first approach. Our mission is to foster global relationships with professional chefs and culinary communities, encouraging growth and creativity.

# TRENDS SHAPING OUR INDUSTRY



## CULINARY ROOTS

### HERITAGE ON TODAY'S MENU

Culinary Roots continues the passion and respect for indigenous heritage and culture into 2026, with renewed energy. Tradition is not only preserved but celebrated, and food becomes a catalyst for fresh creativity. In 2025, the focus was on rediscovering heritage dishes and giving them the reverence they deserve. This year, the trend takes on a lighter, more joyful tone: traditional recipes and ancient techniques are becoming more accessible and relevant to today's diners.



## STREET FOOD COUTURE

### ELEVATE CLASSICS, TELL YOUR STORY

This year, Street Food Couture continues to evolve, but with a renewed sense of focus and intention. In 2025, diners showed strong interest in premium ingredients within their meals. In 2026, they go deeper – seeking to appreciate the craftsmanship, skill, and regional pride of the chef behind the plate.



## BORDERLESS CUISINE

### WHERE EVERY PLATE TELLS A STORY

In 2026, Borderless Cuisine goes beyond simply mixing flavours – it connects identities, stories, and traditions. Chefs move past basic combinations to create dishes that honour origin, celebrate craftsmanship, and build cultural bridges. From ingredient-driven mashups to true cultural cross-pollination: every plate tells a story, every technique pays tribute.



## DINER DESIGNED

### MAKE EVERY MEAL PERSONAL

Diner Designed is evolving with a renewed sense of clarity. In 2025, the trend leaned into personalised meals driven by technology, build-your-own formats, and theatrical, interactive dining. In 2026, it finds balance – with flavours shifting toward simpler yet still enjoyable, thoughtful, and dynamic meals, while restaurant service becomes smoother and more efficient.



# CULINARY



# ROOTS

**Culinary Roots continues the passion and respect for indigenous heritage and culture into 2026, with a new energy about it. Tradition is not just preserved, but celebrated, and food is fuel for fresh creativity. In 2025, the focus was on resurfacing heritage dishes and paying them the reverence they deserve. This year takes a lighter, more joyous tone: ancestral recipes and ancient techniques are made more accessible and relevant to today's diners.**

The appeal is in tasting something real. Gen-Z diners are increasingly drawn to ingredients and dishes

with history, like ancient grains and ancestral stews that tell stories of places, people, and time. Rising political instability is encouraging people to celebrate what's close to home, while concerns for the climate have people looking for super-local, resilient, sustainable ingredients. At the same time, younger generations are creative and open to new interpretations.

Full-service restaurants are the natural homestead for Culinary Roots, where chefs get personal and support local suppliers. Keep note of the growing trends for foraging and one-pot stews, and increased use of

kunafa (beyond Dubai chocolate!) and buckthorn, ingredients with deep cultural histories and community ties.

Culinary Roots goes beyond nostalgia. It's about reimagining heritage as a living, joyful, delicious journey.

# CULINARY ROOTS

**Heritage is Hypey**—Indigenous ingredients and ancient grains are premium, pride of place on modern menus.

**Low and Slow is in Style**—Tagines, koshari, egusi soup. Family style and fire cooking.

**Spices are Personal**—DIY dry rubs, Indonesian bumbu kits. Spices are hands-on and hyper local.

**Chefs as Storytellers**—Think Gen-Z remixing grandma's recipes.

**Cuisine = Identity**—Oaxacan, Andean, and Emirati food are booming as diners crave authenticity. Africa emerges as the next area of discovery.

## TRENDING CUISINE

The distribution of cuisines indicates a volatility in regional cuisine interest.

**Basque**  
A Southwestern European cuisine spanning Spain and France.

**Oaxacan**  
A southern Mexican cuisine.

**Emirati**  
A diverse span of the UAE.

**Algerian**  
North African cuisine.

**Sichuan**  
From the southwestern Chinese province.

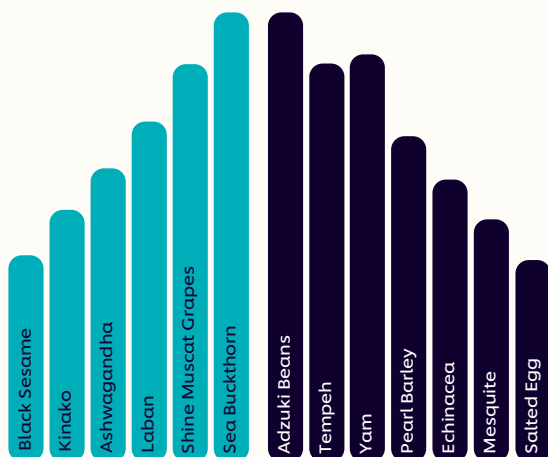
**Andean**  
A range from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.



**KEY** ■ Trending ■ Emerging

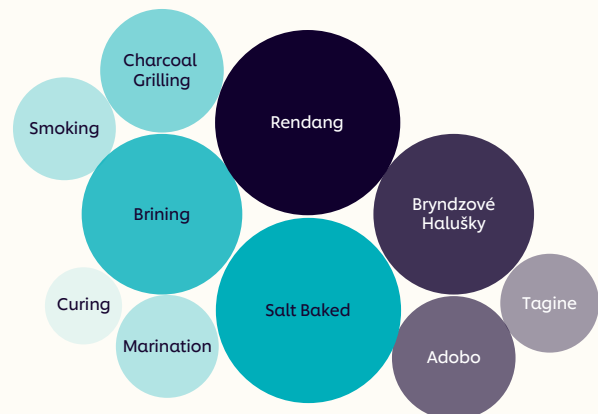
## TRENDING AND EMERGING INGREDIENTS

Local, often foraged, provenance with functional benefits.



## TRENDING AND EMERGING TECHNIQUES

Viral trends and tactile cultural connection.





# INGREDIENTS TO WATCH

## CULINARY ROOTS

WRITTEN BY Ryan Cahill

WANT YOUR DISHES TO ATTRACT ATTENTION? CONSIDER THESE TRENDING INGREDIENTS IN YOUR *Culinary Roots* RECIPES.



**Culinary Roots is about tapping into our heritage dishes. It's a celebration of local history and an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the recipes that are intrinsically linked to our identities – something which has become increasingly important for younger generations**

**For 2026, there are some stand-out ingredients that are making their mark within Culinary Roots. Consider incorporating these into your Culinary Roots creations to grab the attention of diners...**

### Yuzu

Yuzu is a Japanese citrus fruit, which is both sour yet floral. It offers a fragrant twist to sauces, desserts, cocktails, and dressings, often in place of lemon or lime for a more unique flavour profile. Its versatility and exotic aroma make it a firm favourite globally.

### Turmeric

Turmeric is an earthy, golden root used for centuries in South Asian and Middle Eastern cooking. Now known internationally for both its flavour and health benefits, it often appears in lattes, soups, sauces, and wellness bowls. Its deep colour and anti-inflammatory properties have made it a staple in Culinary Roots, and the possibilities of its use continue to grow and develop.

### Black Sesame

Regularly used across East Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine, Black Sesame offers a nutty and roasted flavour. It's regularly used in ice-cream and Tahini-style spreads, savoury crusts and plant-based milks and is often utilised for texture and a hint of bitterness to both sweet and savoury dishes.

### Tamarind

Tamarind is a tangy, somewhat sweet pulp used in cuisines from Thailand to Mexico to India. It adds Umami and a lightness to chutneys and sauces across diverse culinary traditions. Its global versatility and bold flavour make it a go-to for chefs crafting cross-cultural Street Food and sauces.

### Tempeh

Tempeh is a fermented soybean product from Indonesia, rich in protein and gut-friendly probiotics. Its firm texture and nutty flavour make it ideal for grilling, stir-frying, or marinating in global Street Food formats. Tempeh fits perfectly into plant-based and fusion menus, bridging Southeast Asian tradition with modern health trends.

# HOW TO MAKE A RESTAURANT PROFITABLE (AND KEEP IT THAT WAY)

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

HERE, UFS EXPERTS OFFER SOLUTIONS TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS TURN A PROFIT – *time and time again!*



**Behind the beautifully garnished plates and the Instagrammable ambiance lies the cold, hard reality: food establishments often run on razor-thin profit margins.**

**However, our research suggests that operators are getting smarter – there's a growing focus on extracting value from cheaper ingredients. Think tinned fish, upcycled pastries, fermented foods and tiered twists on global favourites.**

**These simple suggestions might just be the key to turning a profit...**

## 1. Versatile Concepts

Fried chicken is a global favourite, but its preparation and presentation vary widely. From the U.S. drive-thru, casual Asian or Latin American, to elevated European dining, this dish offers a unique opportunity for operators to maximise profitability while meeting diverse consumer expectations. The beauty of fried chicken lies in its adaptability. By leveraging one common ingredient – chicken – and pairing it with a signature sauce like gravy, operators can create multiple menu applications that fit different cost and labour models. This approach ensures consistency, scalability, and strong margins.

## 2. Tiered Applications

There are three simple ways to approach fried chicken recipes. First up, a basic application concept which is simple, low-labour and cost-effective. An example would be classic fried chicken served

with ready-to-use gravy (e.g. **Knorr Chicken Gravy Mix**). The profit advantages include minimal prep time, easy execution, and high throughput for QSRs and commissaries. Simple customisations include gluten-free flour or plant-based swaps for dietary needs. Next up is an elevated application with a concept that adds creativity without sacrificing efficiency. This could be fried chicken thighs topped with kimchi slaw or a fried egg for a premium twist. There's slightly higher labour but increased value, making it ideal for casual dining and grab-and-go formats. Incorporate regional flavours like curry-infused gravy for borderless appeal. Finally, we have highly skilled applications – refined, chef-driven dishes for premium markets. This could be brined chicken breast with pickled radish, beet purée, and herb-enhanced gravy. Here, you have a higher ticket price offsetting the labour, perfect for full-service restaurants.



An appealing add-on could include gut-health ingredients or “better-for-you” positioning to attract health-conscious diners! These solutions are designed for scalability, supporting central production kitchens and multi-unit chains. They offer flexibility to work across quick-service and full-service restaurants as well as retail distributors. With a clear tiered structure, they also enhance profitability by helping operators choose concepts that best align with their business model.

### 3. The Power of Data

Profitability is mastered off the plate. Data is the lifeline of a sustainable restaurant. By analysing sales patterns, you can forecast customer flow and plan your purchases more

accurately, reducing waste and avoiding stockouts. Researching ingredient prices when developing recipes helps in understanding your food cost percentage. And don’t ignore the past! Instead, look back and use historical data to determine peak dining times and staff.

### 4. The Unsung Hero of Profitability

By using a consistent, high-performing base – like Knorr products – chefs can reduce prep time and labour, maintain flavour integrity under varied conditions such as heat lamps and high-acid environments, and create endless variations with minimal additional cost such as adding herbs, spices, or fermented elements.

### 5. Profitability Is a Daily Grind

Achieving profitability isn’t a one-time milestone; it’s an ongoing effort. Efficiency, creativity, and adaptability are your best friends. From rethinking your mise en place to embracing new preservation techniques like dehydration and pickling, every little adjustment can make a difference. Running a profitable and sustainable restaurant might be a challenge, but for those who do it right, the rewards – financial and otherwise – are oh-so-satisfying.





# BEEF STEW

## WITH UMFINO MAIZE MEAL







# BEEF STEW WITH UMFINO MAIZE MEAL

BY **CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**

A celebration of South African culinary roots, this slow-simmered beef stew delivers deep, comforting flavour layered with aromatic spices and tomato richness. Served with creamy umfino-style maize meal and morogo greens, it highlights traditional ingredients and techniques while presenting them with a refined, contemporary touch.



**CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**

Digital and Innovation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Durban

## INGREDIENTS (10 Portions, 1.6 kg)

### Beef Stew

1.5 kg Stewing beef, bone-in or boneless  
30 ml Sunflower oil  
250 g Onion, chopped  
200 g Carrot, chopped  
10 g Garlic, crushed  
10 g **Robertsons Smoked Paprika**  
10 g **Robertsons Mild & Spicy Rajah**  
200 g **Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto**  
25 g **Knorr Professional Beef Stock Granules**  
1.2 L Water  
**Knorr Aromat Original**, to taste

### Umfino Maize Meal

500 g Maize meal  
1.8 L Water  
5 g **Knorr Aromat Original**  
300 g Spinach or morogo, chopped  
50 g Butter or margarine



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## METHOD

### BEEF STEW

- 1 Heat oil in a heavy pot. Add the stewing beef and brown well on all sides.
- 2 Add onions and carrots; sauté until softened. Add garlic, **Robertsons Smoked Paprika** and **Robertsons Mild & Spicy Rajah**; cook briefly to release flavour.
- 3 Add **Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto** and cook until they break down slightly.
- 4 Add the **Knorr Professional Beef Stock Granules** and water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 1½–2 hours until the meat is tender.
- 5 Season with **Knorr Aromat Original**.

### UMFINO MAIZE MEAL

- 1 Bring the water to a boil in a pot. Add **Knorr Aromat Original**.
- 2 Gradually add the maize meal while stirring to prevent lumps.
- 3 Reduce the heat, cover and cook for 20–25 min, stirring occasionally.
- 4 Add chopped spinach or morogo. Cook another 5–10 min until the greens soften and the maize becomes well combined.
- 5 Stir in butter or margarine. Adjust seasoning as needed.





# ROOIBOS AND HONEYBUSH SMOKED CHICKEN



## WITH CAPE CITRUS GLAZE



# ROOIBOS AND HONEYBUSH SMOKED CHICKEN WITH CAPE CITRUS GLAZE

BY **CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**

Rooted in South African flavour and crafted for the modern deli, this smoked chicken dish brings together heritage ingredients with a refined, contemporary finish. Fragrant rooibos and honeybush create a uniquely local smoking base, infusing the chicken with gentle, earthy sweetness, while a rich braising liquid ensures tenderness and depth. Finished with a glossy Cape citrus glaze of apricot, naartjie and subtle savoury notes, the result is a beautifully balanced dish - smoky, sticky, and vibrant.

## INGREDIENTS (8-10 Portions)

### Chicken

1.2 kg Chicken,  
cut into 8-10 pieces  
30 ml Olive oil  
15 g Salt  
5 g Black pepper  
15 g **Robertsons  
Smoked Paprika**  
5 g Ground ginger  
5 g Crushed garlic

### Braising Liquid

1 L Water  
30 g **Knorr  
Professional Chicken  
Stock Granules**  
150 g Dry white wine  
or apple cider  
15 g Brown sugar  
3 ea Bay leaves  
5 g Coriander  
seeds, crushed  
1 Zest of 1 naartjie  
or orange

### Braising

### Smoking Mixture

20 g Rooibos  
tea leaves  
15 g Honeybush  
tea leaves  
60 g Brown sugar  
5 g **Robertsons  
Smoked Paprika**

### Cape Citrus Glaze

60 g Apricot jam  
30 g Naartjie or  
orange juice  
15 ml Lemon juice  
125 ml **Knorr  
Professional  
Soya Sauce**  
5 g Dijon mustard  
125 ml Braising liquid  
Pinch of salt



**CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**

Digital and Innovation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Durban



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## METHOD

- 1 Season the chicken with oil, salt, pepper, **Robertsons Smoked Paprika**, ginger and garlic.
- 2 Combine water, **Knorr Professional Chicken Stock Granules**, wine, sugar, bay leaves, coriander seeds and citrus zest in a pot.
- 3 Bring to a simmer. Add the chicken and simmer gently for 20 min to partially cook. Cut into segments/chicken portions.
- 4 Line a deep pot or wok with foil.
- 5 Mix rooibos tea, honeybush tea, sugar and **Robertsons Smoked Paprika**.
- 6 Spread the mixture over the foil and place a wire rack on top.
- 7 Arrange the partially cooked chicken on the rack. Cover tightly.
- 8 Heat over medium-high until smoke forms (about 5 min). Reduce to low heat and smoke for 20–25 min.
- 9 Allow the chicken to rest in the smoke for 5 min.
- 10 Combine jam, citrus juices, **Knorr Professional Soya Sauce**, braising liquid and mustard. Simmer for 3–4 min until glossy.
- 11 Brush the chicken generously with the glaze. Grill for 5–8 min until caramelised. Brush again before serving.

## NOTES

- 1 Rooibos and Honeybush are used as a fragrant, distinctly South African smoke source, replacing traditional Asian teas like Longjing. This imparts an earthy, slightly sweet, and aromatic flavour to the chicken.
- 2 Start heating on medium-high for about 5 min until smoke begins to form, then immediately reduce the heat to low. This prevents the tea mixture from burning and produces a clean, slow smoke for the main 20–25 min period.
- 3 When making the glaze (jam, citrus juices, raising liquid, and mustard), specifically simmer for only 3–4 min until it becomes glossy. Over-reducing it will make it too thick and prone to burning on the grill; this short window ensures the perfect sticky, brushable consistency.





# PORK POTJIE STEW



WITH RED LENTILS, STEAMED BREAD,  
PICKLED VEGETABLE AND MOROGO



# PORK POTJIE STEW

## WITH RED LENTILS, STEAMED BREAD, PICKLED VEGETABLE AND MOROGO

BY **CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

This pork potjie stew celebrates the heart of South African heritage cooking, where slow simmering and simple ingredients create deeply satisfying flavours. Tender pork, lentils and warming spices are cooked together until rich and comforting, then paired with fluffy steamed bread, sautéed morogo and bright pickled vegetables for a dish that reflects the diversity and nourishment of traditional home cooking.



**CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

Demand Creation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Johannesburg

### INGREDIENTS (10 Portions)

#### Pork Stew

2.5 kg Pork stew pieces  
80 ml Oil  
15 g **Robertsons Steak & Chops Spice**  
120 g Spring onion  
15 g Garlic  
15 g Ginger  
200 g Green pepper  
15 g **Robertsons Smoked Paprika**  
15 g **Robertsons Medium Rajah**  
300 g **Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto**  
20 g **Knorr Professional Chicken Stock Granules**  
200 g Red lentils  
30 g Water  
300 g Carrot  
50 g Pickled vegetable atchar

#### Steamed Bread

500 g Flour  
5 g Salt  
50 g Sugar  
10 g Yeast  
350 ml Water, lukewarm

#### Morogo

300 g Spinach, julienned  
200 g Kale, julienned  
150 g Onion, medium, diced  
30 ml Oil  
10 g **Robertsons Veggie Seasoning**

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Add pickled vegetable atchar as a side relish in a small ramekin or serve small amount on a the plate for the stew and dumplings and mororgo.



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## METHOD

### PORK STEW

- 1 Season pork with **Robertsons Steak & Chops Spice**.
- 2 Heat oil in potjie and brown pork in batches until golden. Remove and set aside.
- 3 Sauté chopped spring onion, garlic, ginger, green pepper, **Robertsons Smoked Paprika** and **Robertsons Medium Rajah**.
- 4 Add **Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto** and cook 5 min.
- 5 Add **Knorr Professional Chicken Stock Granules** and lentils that have been soaked in and strained from water.
- 6 Add pork stew 30 min after lentils, adding a little more water and chopped carrots.
- 7 Slow cook for +- 45min to 1 hour; check softness of stew, lentils and vegetables.

### STEAMED BREAD

- 1 Add flour, salt and sugar together.
- 2 Mix together lukewarm water and yeast.
- 3 Mix dry and wet ingredients together and knead dough until elastic in texture.
- 4 Cover dough 45-60 min to proof.
- 5 Add water (not too much) to a large pot with a saucer or trivet.
- 6 Punch down dough and shape. Let rise 15 min in bowl and then place into pot and cover steam for 1 hour.
- 7 Do not open the lid for first 40 min so bread does not flop. Keep checking that pot has water so not to burn.

### MOROGO

- 1 Chop kale and spinach (including stems) julienne style and dice onion.
- 2 In a pan with oil, sauté onion and season with **Robertsons Veggies Seasoning**.
- 3 Add greens and sauté for 15-20 min until soft yet still green.



# CRISPY CHICKEN KOTA







# CRISPY CHICKEN KOTA

BY **CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

The Kota has become a defining favourite in South African cuisine, known for its hearty layers and bold flavour combinations. In this version, crispy breaded chicken, spiced chips, fresh vegetables and creamy atchar mayonnaise are packed into soft bread, creating a comforting dish that reflects the vibrant, nostalgic flavours of local culinary heritage.

## INGREDIENTS (2 Portions)

### Chicken

250 g Inkomazi  
100 g Water  
15 g **Robertsons Chicken Spice**  
400 g Chicken breast portions  
250 g **Knorr Professional Original Chicken Breeding**

2 Eggs  
2 slices Cheddar cheese  
100 g Ice berg lettuce, shredded  
100 g Tomato, sliced  
500 g Potato, large  
50 g **Hellmann's Tangy Mayonnaise**  
30 g Atchar

### Kota

350 g Half loaf uncut bread (divide in half for two portions)  
10 g **Robertsons Chip & Potato Seasoning**



### **CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

Demand Creation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Johannesburg



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## METHOD

### CHICKEN

- 1 Mix together inkomazi, **Robertsons Chicken Spice** and water and coat the chicken well with the mixture.
- 2 Marinate for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator.
- 3 Remove marinated chicken from the fridge and coat generously in **Knorr Professional Original Chicken Breeding**.
- 4 Ensure each piece is evenly coated for crispiness.

### KOTA COMPONENTS

- 1 Prepare the slap chips by peeling and cutting the potatoes into thick kota-style chips. Fry at 160 °C until soft.
- 2 Increase oil to 180 °C and fry again until crispy and golden.
- 3 Season with **Robertsons Chip & Potato Seasoning**.
- 4 Cut the half loaf into two equal kotas. Hollow out the soft centre, keeping the crust intact.
- 5 Fry the eggs sunny-side up or over-easy.
- 6 Mix atchar and **Hellmann's Tangy Mayonnaise** as a base for the Kota (you can also top your Kota with more).

### ASSEMBLY

- 1 Spread atchar mayo inside the hollowed bread.
- 2 Add shredded lettuce and tomatoes.
- 3 Place crispy fried chicken pieces.
- 4 Add cheddar cheese slices.
- 5 Add the chips on top.
- 6 Place fried egg on top or inside (optional).
- 7 Finish with extra atchar mayonnaise if desired.





# CRISPY CHICKEN SALAD



WITH MOROGO GREENS



# CRISPY CHICKEN SALAD WITH MOROGO GREENS

BY **CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

Traditional morogo greens take centre stage in this vibrant crispy chicken salad, where heritage ingredients meet contemporary presentation. Tender greens are paired with fresh vegetables and subtle sweetness from dried apricots, creating a balanced and flavourful base. Finished with golden crispy chicken and a creamy dressing, the dish celebrates the versatility of indigenous greens while bringing familiar South African flavours onto a modern plate.

## INGREDIENTS (4 Portions)

### Chicken

250 g Chicken breast

150 ml **Hellmann's**

**Creamy  
Salad Dressing**

200 g **Knorr**

**Professional Original  
Chicken Breading**

200 ml Water

### Morogo & Greens

250 g Swiss chard

200 g Kale

80 g Baby heirloom  
tomato, quartered

80 ml  
Cucumber, sliced

20 g Dried  
apricots, julienned

50 g Red  
onion, julienned

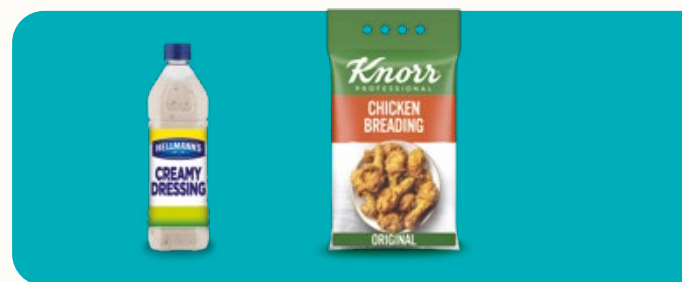
60 ml **Hellmann's**  
**Creamy  
Salad Dressing**



**CHEF LATOYA MARIVATE**

Demand Creation Chef

Unilever Food Solutions, Johannesburg



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## METHOD

### CHICKEN

- 1 Place the chicken breast pieces in a bowl. Add the **Hellmann's Creamy Salad Dressing** and mix until the chicken is fully coated. Cover and marinate for at least 2 hours in the fridge.
- 2 Remove marinated chicken from the fridge.
- 3 Mix the **Knorr Professional Original Chicken Breading** with a little water. Coat the chicken evenly in the breading mixture. Shake off excess to ensure a thin, even crust.
- 4 Place the coated chicken on a roasting grid and cook until crispy.
- 5 Allow to cool slightly, then slice into strips or cubes.

### MOROGO & GREENS

- 1 Rinse the morogo, swiss chard, and kale thoroughly. Blanch briefly in hot water (20–30 sec), then cool in ice water.
- 2 Drain and squeeze out excess water.
- 3 Roughly chop the greens.
- 4 Combine the blanched morogo, swiss chard, kale, baby heirloom tomato, cucumber slices, dried apricots and red onion in a bowl.
- 5 Toss gently to mix and drizzle with **Hellmann's Creamy Salad Dressing**.



# STREET FOOD



# COUTURE

**This year, Street Food Couture continues to elevate – but with a renewed sense of focus and intention. In 2025, diners took a keen interest in the gourmet ingredients going into their dishes. In 2026, they’re moving deeper, to appreciate the craftsmanship, skill, and regional pride of the chef behind the plate and the story it tells.**

The friendly price point gets younger people into the premium cuisine of the Street Food Couture scene. Amid this generation’s time poorness, economic challenges and tightening budgets, they’re seeking affordable

luxury: ‘real food’ that engages them with the wider world, which also feels healthy and sustainable. Street Food Couture thrives in quick-service restaurants that are nimble and adaptable for the proprietor, and fast and accessible for the diner. Think fast service, smaller portions, freshly-made dishes, lighter sauces, and close-to-home-sourced ingredients. They feel like authentic and thoughtful places to eat, as shown by the recent rise in interest in K-food, skewer cooking, and Indian chaat.

Street Food Couture goes beyond the person and the end plate. It’s a story of process, craft, and shared joy that

celebrates the chef and opens up a world of eats.



# STREET FOOD COUTURE

**Street Classics Reimagined with Crafted Precision**—Take globally loved street staples, like bao, burgers, and rice rolls and elevate them with premium proteins, artisan condiments, and refined plating.

**Bold Global Fusion Without Losing Authenticity**—Incorporate traditional recipes from cuisines such as Greek, Filipino, and Middle Eastern while staying true to their origins.

**The Rise of Ingredient Icons for Social-First Menus**—Visually striking and flavour-packed hero ingredients: ube, smoked sea salt, hot honey, and heritage pork to create menu items with instant Instagram and TikTok appeal.

**Technique-Driven Theater at Every Service Point**—Street cooking methods (wok hei, spit roasting and skewer grilling) in open kitchens.

**Sustainable Street and Planet-Friendly Crowd-Pleasers**—Adapt sustainable, high-impact ingredients (e.g., finger millet, black turtle beans, orange tomatoes) into familiar street formats such as loaded fries and sliders.

## TRENDING CUISINE

Middle Eastern and African cuisine is gaining recognition in general terms like shawarma etc.

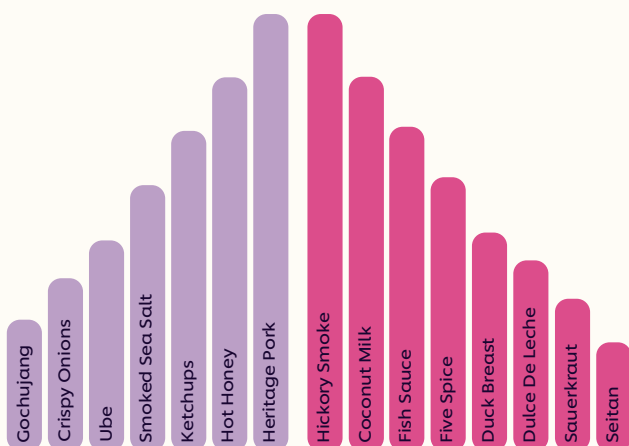
<b>Greek</b>	<b>Persian</b>
<b>Latin American</b>	<b>Middle Eastern</b>
<b>Pan Asian</b>	<b>Filipino</b>
<b>Argentinian</b>	<b>African</b>
<b>Sri Lankan</b>	
<b>Vietnamese</b>	



**KEY** ■ Trending ■ Emerging

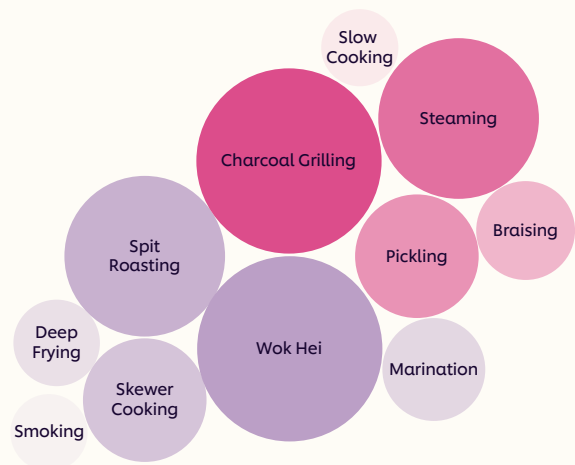
## TRENDING AND EMERGING INGREDIENTS

Novel and interesting ingredients are among the fastest growing searches, with rapid YoY increases in ube, gochujang, and smoked sea salt. But also in condiments (hot honey, ketchups) and desserts (chia Seeds, biscoff).



## TRENDING AND EMERGING TECHNIQUES

North African cooking techniques of skewers and charcoal grilling are becoming popular.



# INGREDIENTS TO WATCH

## STREET FOOD COUTURE

WRITTEN BY Ryan Cahill

WANT YOUR DISHES TO ATTRACT ATTENTION? CONSIDER THESE TRENDING INGREDIENTS IN YOUR *Street Food Couture* RECIPES.



**Street Food has been around for over a thousand years, and yet it continues to evolve year on year. New flavours, textures and cuisines mean trends within Street Food are ever-changing, offering exciting new culinary experiences for diners who are after a straight-forward meal.**

**For 2026, there are a few key ingredients that are making their mark on the Street Food trend. Consider incorporating these into your Street Food couture creations to grab the attention of diners...**

### Ube

Already a Street Food staple in many Southeast Asian countries, Ube is a root vegetable known for its bold striking purple colour and its sweet, nutty flavour. The ingredient has frequently cropped up in desserts, filled buns, lattes, and ice-creams and continues to attract the attention of diners.

### Chilli Crisp

With origins in China, Chilli Crisp is a crunchy, spicy condiment made with chilli flakes, garlic, and oil. It brings a perfect balance of heat, Umami, and texture to any dish. It's become an increasingly popular ingredient to elevate noodles, dumplings, and even burgers with a kick.

### Smoked Sea Salt

Smoked Sea Salt infuses dishes with a subtle smoky aroma without the need for actual smoke or fire – which is perfect for those looking to introduce this flavour profile.

### Hot Honey

You're probably not surprised to see Hot Honey on this list – it's cropping up everywhere. Hot Honey combines the classic sweetness with a spicy chilli kick. It's perfect for drizzling over fried chicken, pizza, or roasted nuts. This sweet-heat combo is a rising star in Street Food.

*We understand that using ingredients that are more sustainable is important, especially when the largest growing generation (Gen-Z)*

*are paying close attention to how restaurants and business owners are bettering the planet. With that in mind, the following two ingredients are sustainable and perfect additions to Street Food dishes.*

### Finger Millet

This ancient cereal grain has quickly become a Street Food staple. Common in India where it's used in Ragi Dosa or Porridge-style snacks, it adds a rustic and earthy bite to dishes like wraps, Dosa-style crepes, sliders and buns. It's also naturally gluten-free, rich in fibre and a source of plant-based protein, making it perfect for people with intolerances or following vegetarian/vegan diets.

### Orange Tomatoes

Orange Tomatoes are ideal for high-flavour dips, Street Food-style relishes, burger stacks, or smash sauces. But as well as being packed with flavour, they're also vivid and visual, helping to turn dishes into something memorable and striking, especially for younger audiences who are keen to create social media snaps of their meals.



# TAKE STREET FOOD TO THE NEXT LEVEL

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**TAKING PRACTICAL FOOD OFFERINGS AND TRANSFORMING THEM INTO VIBRANT DINING EXPERIENCES, THE STREET FOOD REVOLUTION IS IN FULL SWING. HERE IS HOW YOU CAN EMBRACE IT AND BE PART OF IT, ALL WITHIN *your own culinary world.***



**Responding to a growing demand for bold flavours and innovative presentations on a budget, the art of Street Food has globally expanded into one of the leading creative powers of gastronomy. Street vendors are reinventing their classic recipes by incorporating gourmet ingredients, modern cooking techniques and cultural fusions.**

**At the same time, the use of social networks has allowed these local businesses to get worldwide recognition, inviting diners to explore new flavours and share their experiences, generating a community around Street Food. Suddenly, what once emerged out of necessity has become an artistic expression that celebrates a region's culinary diversity and creativity.**

**The beat of the street is one we can all move to – and here are seven adaptable ideas that will help bring that energy into any space.**

## **1. Themed Pop-Up Events**

Hosting temporary events that celebrate different types of dishes from around the world allows you to embrace variety as the essence of Street Food, which can help attract new audiences and maintain the interest of regular customers.

## **2. Interactive Experiences**

Being able to watch the food being prepared is appealing for the diners, particularly when it comes to the techniques used in creating their Street Food favourites. Provide memorable experiences with workshops where customers can learn how to prepare typical dishes.

## **3. Rotational Menus**

A menu that changes regularly reflects the daily evolution of the Street Food offerings – featuring new recipes or specialties from different regions. This can encourage customers to return and try something new.

## **4. Creative Pairings**

Offer drink recommendations that complement Street Food dishes. This can enhance the dining experience and increase sales.

## **5. Customisable Options**

Bringing in diners' personal preferences, Street Food allows customers to customise their dishes, choosing ingredients or spice levels, and giving them a sense of control over their satisfaction.

## **6. Collaborations with Local Artists**

At the heart of Street Food is culture – and culture comes in all shapes and sizes. Invite local artists to showcase their work in your business, which can help bring their audience and enrich the consumer experience.

## **7. Loyalty Programs**

A rewards program that offers discounts or free meals after a certain number of purchases will increase loyalty and encourage customers to return.

# FALAFEL AND PORTOBELLO MUSHROOM BURGER







# FALAFEL AND PORTOBELLO MUSHROOM BURGER

BY **JIRAROJ NAVANUKROH**  
AND **MAURITS VAN VROENHOVEN**

Healthy, vegetarian, and full of texture, this burger is inspired by the nourishing staples of Middle Eastern and Greek cuisines. The patty is made from falafel and fried until crispy, then topped with a juicy portobello mushroom seasoned with umami-rich vegetarian chicken powder to add a satisfying meatiness. These elements are paired with sweet onions dusted in citrusy sumac and a traditional tzatziki, creamy and bright with citrus and herbs. Crunchy pickled vegetables bring a tangy acidity that balances the flavours, creating a wholesome, satisfying, and moreish meal.



**JIRAROJ NAVANUKROH**  
Executive Chef  
Unilever Food  
Solutions, Thailand



**MAURITS VAN VROENHOVEN**  
Global Lead Creative and Brand  
Development Chef,  
Unilever Food Solutions,  
the Netherlands

## INGREDIENTS (4 Portions)

### Falafel Burger

300 g Chickpeas,  
tinned & well drained  
60 g White onion,  
in pieces  
6 g Garlic, cleaned  
& chopped  
4 g Knorr  
Aromat Original  
2 g Cumin, ground  
1 g **Robertsons**  
Peri-Peri Spice  
10 g Olive oil  
4 g Fresh mint leaves  
7 g Fresh coriander  
7 g Fresh parsley  
24 g Chickpea flour  
(30 ml)

### Pickled Vegetables

25 g Green chillis,  
deseeded & julienned  
200 g Carrot, peeled  
& julienned  
200 g Radish,  
thinly sliced  
6 g Garlic cloves  
(3 cloves)  
200 ml Water  
100 g Vinegar  
20 g Sugar  
3 g Salt

### Portobello Mushrooms

80 g Portobello  
mushrooms,  
thickly sliced  
30 ml Olive oil  
1 g **Robertsons**  
Veggie Seasoning

### Tzatziki

150 g Greek yoghurt  
50 g **Hellmann's**  
Fine Whip  
5 g Dill, finely chopped  
10 g Parsley,  
finely chopped  
5 ml Lime juice  
5 g Garlic,  
finely chopped  
Salt & pepper, to taste

### Smoked Paprika Onions

100 g Red onion, thinly  
sliced in half rings  
5 ml Lemon zest  
1 g **Robertsons**  
Smoked Paprika  
7 ml Red wine vinegar  
7 ml Olive oil  
7 ml Parsley,  
finely chopped  
Salt to taste

### To Serve

10 g Fresh mixed  
micro herbs  
4 pcs Brioche buns



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## METHOD

### FALAFEL BURGER

- 1 Place all the ingredients for the falafel into a food processor and pulse until well combined but not completely puréed.
- 2 Shape them into the desired size (100 g patties) with the use of a ring.
- 3 Freeze the falafel for a couple of hours before deep frying.

### PICKLED VEGETABLES

- 1 In a pot bring the water, vinegar, sugar and salt to the boil.
- 2 Place all the vegetable in a bowl and pour over the pickling solution.
- 3 Cool and store in the fridge for a few days.

### MUSHROOMS

- 1 Pan fry the sliced portobello mushrooms in olive oil and season with **Robertsons Veggie Seasoning**.

### TZATZIKI

- 1 Mix all ingredients together until combined.

### SMOKED PAPRIKA ONIONS

- 1 Mix all ingredients together until combined.

### TO SERVE

- 1 Deep fry the falafel at 175 °C for 8-10 min.
- 2 Toast the brioche buns.
- 3 Spread 15 ml Tzatziki on the brioche bun. Add 15 g pickled vegetables, 1 g micro herbs, falafel burger, portobello mushroom slices and 5 g smoked paprika onions. Close the bun.





# CORONATION CHICKEN BURGER





# CORONATION CHICKEN BURGER

BY CHEF PINKY LINAH MARUPING

This Coronation Chicken Burger reimagines the classic British coronation chicken – known for its creamy, gently spiced curry profile, in a contemporary street-food format. Succulent chicken is paired with aromatic spices, creamy dressing and vibrant accompaniments, then layered into a burger that feels both nostalgic and modern. The result is a dish that balances comfort and sophistication, transforming a traditional recipe into an elevated street-food experience that's rich in flavour, texture and cultural influence.

## INGREDIENTS (4 Portions)

### Chicken

800 g Chicken thighs, 4 each

400 g Knorr

Professional Original Chicken Breeding

### Coronation Sauce

60 ml Sunflower oil

160 g Onions, finely chopped

7 g Robertsons Medium Rajah

7 g Robertsons

Veggie Seasoning

300 g Hellmann's

Tangy Mayonnaise

80 g Fine Foods

Fruit Chutney

5 g Coriander, roughly chopped

### Assembly

60 g Lettuce, shredded

4 pcs Burger buns



### CHEF PINKY LINAH MARUPING

Regional Customer Chef,  
Unilever Food Solutions, Gauteng



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## METHOD

### CHICKEN

- 1 Pre-heat oil in deep fryer to 170 °C.
- 2 Skin and debone the chicken thighs.
- 3 In a bowl, add the **Knorr Professional Original Chicken Breeding**.
- 4 Wet the chicken thighs in cold water and then coat with the breading mix.
- 5 Deep fry until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper.

### CORONATION SAUCE

- 1 Finely chop the onions. Roughly chop the coriander.
- 2 Heat the oil and fry the onions until soft. Add the **Robertsons Medium Rajah** and **Robertsons Veggie Seasoning**. Fry for a further 2 min.
- 3 Stir in the **Fine Foods Fruit Chutney** and **Hellmann's Tangy Mayonnaise**. Add in the roughly chopped coriander.
- 4 Allow sauce to cool.

### ASSEMBLY

- 1 Lightly toast the burger bun. Spread the coronation mayonnaise on the base of the bun. Add some shredded lettuce and top with the fried chicken. Spread more coronation mayonnaise on the lid of the bun and close.



# PREGO CHICKEN BURGER







# PREGO CHICKEN BURGER

BY **CHEF MARY WORTHINGTON**

Inspired by the bold, garlicky heat of the Portuguese-style prego sauce, this Prego Chicken Burger brings vibrant, flame-grilled flavour into a contemporary street-food format. Crispy crumbed chicken is layered with fresh lettuce, tomato and golden fried onions, then finished with a punchy prego sauce and creamy mayonnaise. The result is a burger that captures the spirit of classic street food while delivering a more refined, flavour-forward experience that feels both comforting and globally inspired.

## INGREDIENTS (4 Portions)

### Chicken

450 g Chicken fillets,  
2 each, cut into  
4 slices and flattened  
100 g **Knorr  
Professional Original  
Chicken Breeding**  
Oil for deep frying

### Fried Onions

10 ml Sunflower oil  
160 g Onion, sliced  
4 g **Knorr  
Aromat Original**

### Assembly

120 g **Hellmann's  
Tangy Mayonnaise**  
4 Burger buns  
80 g Lettuce, shredded  
120 g Tomato, sliced  
120 ml **Knorr  
Professional  
Prego Sauce**



### **CHEF MARY WORTHINGTON**

Culinary Experience Chef Advisor,  
Unilever Food Solutions, Durban



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## METHOD

### CHICKEN

- 1 Pre-heat oil to 170–180 °C.
- 2 In a bowl, dip chicken in water, drain off water and coat in **Knorr Professional Original Chicken Breading** by rolling 10 times, pressing 7 times and roll again 10 times.
- 3 Dust off excess breading and deep fry in pre-heated oil until chicken is crispy and golden brown.

### FRIED ONIONS

- 1 Fry the onions in oil and season with **Knorr Aromat Original**.

### ASSEMBLY

- 1 Lightly toast the bun. Spread the bun with a little **Hellmann's Tangy Mayonnaise**, shredded lettuce and sliced tomato.
- 2 Top with fried chicken, **Knorr Professional Prego Sauce** and fried onions.
- 3 Spread **Hellmann's Tangy Mayonnaise** on the lid of the bun and close.





# DIPPING



# SAUCES



# DIPPING SAUCES

## INGREDIENTS

### Peri-Peri Mustard Mayo

250 g **Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise**  
35 g English mustard  
15 ml Peri-peri oil  
1.5 g Coriander powder  
2 g **Robertsons Black pepper**, ground  
0.5 g Salt

### Spicy Tamarind Dipping Sauce

150 ml Tamarind sauce  
100 ml Fish sauce  
20 ml Lime juice  
150 ml Water  
150 g Palm sugar  
25 g Rice, roasted & grounded  
25 g **Robertsons Peri-Peri Spice**  
25 g Spring onion, finely sliced  
25 g Shallot, finely sliced  
25 g Coriander leaves, finely chopped

### Chimichurri Lime Mayo

50 g Parsley, chopped  
10 g Garlic, chopped  
2 g **Robertsons Peri-Peri Spice**  
5 g **Knorr Aromat Original**  
3 g Red chilli, seedless, chopped  
¼ tsp **Robertsons Black Pepper**, ground  
45 g Red wine vinegar  
160 ml Olive oil  
5 ml Lime juice  
1 g **Robertsons Origanum**  
215 g **Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise**  
15 ml Lime juice  
Salt to taste

### PERI-PERI MUSTARD MAYO

A fiery blend of peri-peri oil and tangy mustard, mellowed with creamy mayo to balance the heat and bring a smooth, rich finish to every crispy bite.

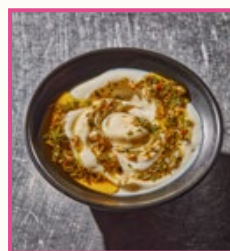
- 1 Combine all ingredients together and season to taste. Mix thoroughly until smooth and creamy.
- 2 Chill for 15–30 min before serving to infuse the flavours.



### SPICY TAMARIND DIPPING SAUCE

Classic Thai dipping sauce, especially popular in Northeastern Thai cuisine. It's known for its bold, tangy, smoky, and slightly spicy flavour profile. This sauce goes well with grilled or fried meat.

- 1 Combine the tamarind sauce, fish sauce, lime juice, water and palm sugar in a bowl. Stir well until the sugar is dissolved.
- 2 Add the ground rice, **Robertsons Peri-Peri Spice**, spring onion, shallots and coriander leaves to the sauce. Mix well and serve in a sauce bowl.



### CHIMICHURRI LIME MAYO

A vibrant blend of fresh green herbs, garlic, chilli and tangy vinegar topped on creamy lime mayo offering a bold contrast of richness and brightness in every bite.

- 1 In a mixing bowl, add chopped parsley, chopped garlic, **Robertsons Peri-Peri Spice**, **Knorr Aromat Original**, chopped red chilli, ground **Robertsons Black Pepper**, red wine vinegar, olive oil, lime juice and **Robertsons Origanum**.
- 2 Stir to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. Set aside.
- 3 In a mixing bowl, add **Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise**, lime juice a bit of salt, then stir to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed. Set aside.
- 4 Put lime mayo into a dipping sauce bowl then top with chimichurri.



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# CREATING A POSITIVE KITCHEN ENVIRONMENT

WRITTEN BY Anna Cafolla

**A HEALTHY, HARMONIOUS WORKING ENVIRONMENT IS  
THE *key to success*. HERE'S HOW TO ACHIEVE IT.**



**Despite what The Bear or shouty reality TV chefs might have you think, the modern kitchen is not a place defined by intimidation, drama and relentless hours. The chefs of today pride themselves on building successful teams and producing exceptional food – dishes that come from a kitchen that's all about respect, collaboration and work-life balance simply taste better.**

**Creating a positive kitchen environment is more than just smooth service. You want a kitchen team to feel like they have ownership, clarity and trust. From giving staff a voice to knifesharp organisational skills, defining success and work-life balance: four top chefs explain how to foster positive vibes in the kitchen.**

## **1. Give Your Team a Voice**

For chef Brandon Collins, everyone deserves to have a say. "It's not necessarily a democracy in the kitchen, but give them the freedom to have some ownership, to buy into your vision," he advises. "Encourage your staff to share ideas on menus, stations and daily operations – something they can all take pride in. This shared responsibility not only motivates the team, but also lightens the pressure on leadership."

## **2. Lead With Respect**

A calm, respectful kitchen is a more effective workplace. "For so long in this industry, we treated people like they were a number, or they were just another person to peel the potatoes or make the mash or steam the vegetables," says Brandon. "When I started in the industry, it was all about getting a good plate of food to the pass, and it was quite hard," says chef James Brown. "If you put a foot

wrong, you were told in an aggressive way. I think it's become more mature. Emphasise clear communication and constructive feedback. Respect builds trust, and when your team knows they can rely on you, they'll support each other and maintain focus under pressure."

## **3. Set Clear Goals**

Be transparent about what success looks like, whether that's consistency or career growth for your team. "I think you've got to be really clear about what the end goal is, what are we trying to achieve and how we want to arrive there," advises James. "Outline expectations, standards and opportunities for the kitchen, removing any uncertainty and strengthening a professional feeling."

#### 4. Keep the Kitchen Flowing

Think of the kitchen like a well choreographed performance, where every role has purpose – so states chef Thais Gimenez. “The kitchen flows beautifully when it’s organised, like a ballet, and everybody knows their tasks,” she says. “The vibe becomes efficient and positive. Provide prep lists, assign clear responsibilities and ensure open communication is consistent.”

#### 5. Promote Work-Life Balance

Treat every member of the brigade with equal respect, regardless of rank. For chef René-Noel Schiemer, everyone should feel like they’re on the same level. “We keep time, and don’t work 10 or 15 hours in the kitchen,” he says. “We work nine hours together and then go home, keeping a balance for families.” Limit excessively long shifts and simplify processes where possible. Chef René-Noel Schiemer suggests basic sauce

bases and pre-prepared components that save time and allow chefs to focus their energy on quality dishes – exactly when and where it matters: “This approach keeps the kitchen organized, efficient and overall, positive.”





# SEVEN QUICK STEPS TO STRENGTHENING YOUR TEAM

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

EVERY TEAM IS ONLY AS STRONG AS THEIR WEAKEST PLAYER, SO A KEY PART OF BUILDING A BUSINESS IS *uplifting every member* ON THE JOURNEY. DISCOVER THE POWER IN BOOSTING YOUR TEAM AND THEIR SKILLSET WITH THE HELP OF CHEF JOANNE LIMOANCO-GENDRANO.



Even with the best ingredients and a high-tech setup, success is not guaranteed without a team that knows exactly what to do with it. Our research found that in 2026, there'll be a shift from the focus being on ingredients to a growing appreciation for the skill and craftsmanship of the chef involved in creating food.

With over 20 years of experience in the business, Unilever Food Solutions' Executive Chef for Gulf & Indian Ocean Islands, Joanne Limoanco-Gendrano, knows what makes a perfect team. Part positive management, part supporting development – because if they succeed, so will you!

Here are Joanne's seven quick steps to strengthen your team:

## Time in Training

Rushing into service without detailed training is a big mistake, so it's important to invest time and money.

This doesn't just mean showing them how to cook, but watching them cook the dish and creating a service simulation before you open. Repetition allows staff to correct errors before real-world cooking.

## Basics Beyond Cooking

Fundamentals like hygiene, safety, and service etiquette are just as critical as recipes. Having a well-rounded crew that knows a bit about every part of the process helps kitchens run smoothly.

## Mentors and Buddies

Pairing staff together encourages learning, accountability, and continuity, all while making sure things operate more sustainably. It also reduces reliance on a single person and builds a culture of shared responsibility.

## The Power of Multitasking

Encouraging the team to explore different interests and teaching them skills outside of their own daily

responsibilities builds long-term investments and interest in their roles.

## Keep Staff Motivated Through Development Programs

Initiatives that combine routine work with extra-curricular programmes and certifications can allow people to grow within the business and take over certain tasks in the future.

## Simplicity is Key

A tighter, focused menu makes it easier for staff in all levels to succeed. Having fewer dishes means faster training, more consistency and strong resilience to mistakes.

## Inspire, Don't Copy

Encouraging staff to utilise their own creativity in reinterpreting trends is a win-win situation. You are fostering a sense of encouragement and pride in their craft, and evolving your business by having the whole team lead into the future.

# BORDERLESS



# CUISINE

**In 2026, Borderless Cuisine takes another confident step, with a sharp focus on authenticity, craft, and respect. The year ahead builds on diners' growing interests in combining global flavours in a way that's respectful, refined, and creative, but taps more into their desire to see the chef's skills and cultural fluency at work. It's not 'fusion' for the fun and show of it, but to see real and exciting culinary exchanges on a plate.**

The appeal for many diners lies in the sense of discovery. And in a world of political uncertainty, migration, and global shifts, Borderless Cuisine

offers solidarity through food. Diaspora communities continue to unlock access to hyperlocal ingredients and techniques – see the growing tastes for matcha or hojicha and curiosity for cuisines from Oaxacan food in Southern Mexico to Chongqing cooking, a spicier sub-category of Sichuan. Younger generations are eager for meaningful experiences found in dishes that are inventive, but still grounded.

Borderless Cuisine thrives in full-service restaurants, where chefs have space to explore and experiment with menus.

Heritage recipes are reinterpreted with modern flair, and there are bold combinations of familiar and lesser-known ingredients. Asian flavours continue to lead, but the range is widening into diverse regions, from Andean to Algerian.

Borderless Cuisine goes beyond fad. These dishes are not random mash-ups, but authentic and delightfully eclectic ways to find something this generation is craving most: cultural connection.



# BORDERLESS CUISINE

## Anchored Plates, Global Sparks—

Creative dishes with local roots, from za'atar-laced marinades to ube-infused desserts.

## Technique is the Passport—

Charcoal grilling, brining, wok hei.

## Borderless but not Identity-Less—

Not a melting pot, but a mosaic where each piece retains flavour and meaning.

## TRENDING CUISINE

### Oaxacan

A Southern Mexican cuisine.

### Andean

A range from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

### Algerian

North African cuisine.

### Emirati

A diverse span of the UAE.

### Basque

A Southwestern European cuisine spanning Spain and France.

### Sichuan

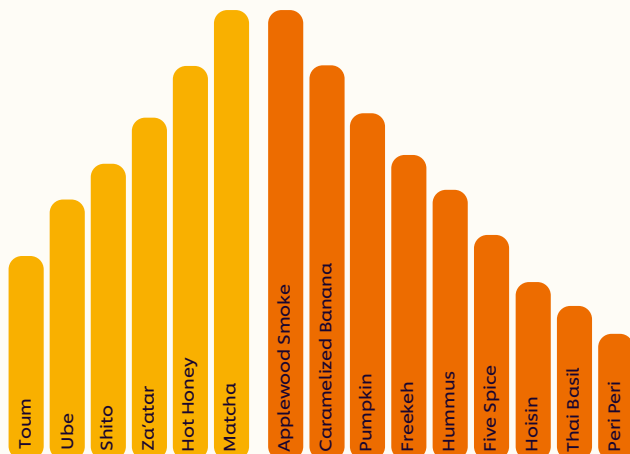
From the Southwestern Chinese province.



**KEY** ■ Trending ■ Emerging

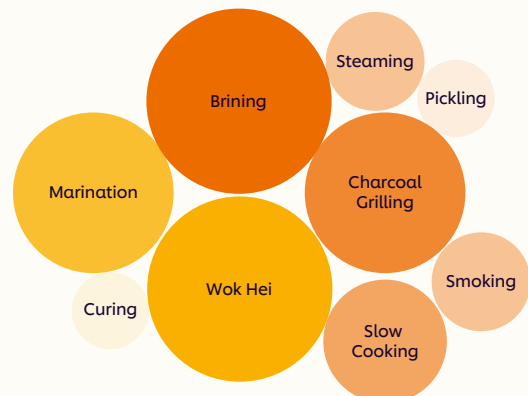
## TRENDING AND EMERGING INGREDIENTS

Ingredients dominate this trend: ube, nam prik and shito, as well as more established matcha and miso.



## TRENDING AND EMERGING TECHNIQUES

Techniques coming to greater prominence: brining, charcoal grilling, marination.



# INGREDIENTS TO WATCH

## BORDERLESS CUISINE

WRITTEN BY Ryan Cahill

WANT YOUR DISHES TO ATTRACT ATTENTION? CONSIDER THESE TRENDING INGREDIENTS IN YOUR *Borderless Cuisine* RECIPES.



**Borderless Cuisine centres around the unity of global flavours. It's a celebration of international dishes, combining techniques and ingredients from around the world and bringing them to some of our favourite dishes.**

**For 2026, there are some stand-out ingredients making their mark within Borderless Cuisine. Consider incorporating these into your Culinary Roots creations to grab the attention of diners:**

### Kimchi

Fermentation continues to be at the forefront of culinary trends, and Kimchi is undeniably the fermentation staple. A Korean side dish, which is usually made from cabbage and radish, Kimchi is bold, tangy, and spicy with a distinct flavour and has become a common element of many dishes.

### Miso

Another fermented favourite, this soybean paste from Japan is known for its Umami flavour. While it was first used as a base for soups, it's now regularly found in glazes, marinades, dressings, and even desserts to introduce a savoury twist.

### Tahini

This creamy paste made from ground sesame seeds is much-loved in the Middle East. Its nutty richness makes it the perfect addition to salad dressings, desserts and smoothies, perfectly complementing both the sweet and the savoury.

### Pomegranate

Pomegranate may seem like an unlikely rising ingredient, but as curious chefs find new ways to stretch the possibilities of this fruit, its popularity increases. Pomegranate can add freshness and acidity to salads, stews, meat dishes, and desserts. It's great in juice form too. Its vibrant colour also helps to give dishes an aesthetic boost.

### Harissa

A North African chilli paste, Harissa is often made with roasted red peppers, garlic, and spices like cumin and coriander. More recently, its smoky flavour has gone mainstream, now used to elevate roasted vegetables, meats, and pasta dishes.



# HOW TO CAPTURE GEN-Z DINERS

WRITTEN BY Rhys Thomas

WHY REVIVING *tradition and storytelling* THROUGH  
FOOD IS SO IMPORTANT TO THIS GENERATION.



**Gen-Z are a very intentional dining generation. With the cost of living rapidly inflating, and markets saturated, they hark for a special experience with each meal. For them, this is often felt through a human connection and historical learning of the food they are engaging with.**

In the world of restaurants and food, diners are perhaps our most fickle customer base. Sometimes this is driven by trends; other times, shaped by society, economics, or the conditions we live in. As new generations become our guests, it's critical to understand what will inspire them, not just through their palate, but also through their minds and hearts.

According to new research, nearly two-thirds of Gen-Z diners view going out for food as a special occasion, even in casual and QSR environments. They also crave new experiences, like trying new cuisines, dishes, and flavours. That means when they do choose to dine out, it's often somewhere new, and getting them to return takes more than just good food.

The good news? Loyalty is paramount. The same study found that two-thirds of Gen-Z would drive further to eat somewhere they like rather than settle for something local. So the question is: how do you earn that loyalty?

Executive Chef for Thailand, Jiraroj Navanukroh, says the answer lies in the experience. "They take photos of their food," he explains. "So presentation is vital. Maybe reimagine how a dish looks: highlight beautiful, satisfying ingredients." In other words, Gen-Z eats with their eyes first. But that doesn't mean you can skip the story.

"A picture paints a thousand words," says the Philippines Executive Chef, Kenneth Cacho. "But those words still need meaning." He expands: "That means honouring traditional techniques, even if ingredients evolve." For Gen-Z, overloaded with options, emotional and cultural connections matter. "Education plays a vital role. We have to show the history of a dish, what it should be, and how our version responds to that history. That's where the connection forms."

This also speaks to purpose. Today's diners want to feel that you stand for something. Whether you're a brand or a chef, your identity matters. Gen-Z can eat anything, anywhere, they need a reason to believe you do it best. That's why your menu should reflect a clear philosophy. You don't need to over-explain it – but the concept has to be felt.

Kenneth also raises an important point about ethics, especially in the age of "borderless cuisine." Gen-Z grew up with global flavours, but telling those stories requires care and responsibility.

"Sinigang is a great example," he says. "It's a soup soured by a fruit – like Tamarind. If I don't have Tamarind, using vinegar isn't authentic. To make it responsibly, I'd need to use another fruit." In this case, the story of Sinigang is that it's fruit-soured. The fruit may change with the seasons, but cutting corners risks losing the very tradition Gen-Z wants to connect with.

# STEAK & CARAMELISED ONION WRAP







# STEAK & CARMELISED ONION WRAP

BY **CHEF DANIELLE VENTER**

This steak and caramelised onion wrap brings together bold flavours and global influences in a modern handheld format. Tender slices of seared sirloin are layered with sweet caramelised onions, crisp lettuce and a smoky tomato sauce, then finished with a bright lime mayonnaise. Wrapped and lightly toasted, the dish combines steakhouse richness with the casual versatility of international street-style wraps, reflecting the cross-cultural creativity shaping today's global menus.



**CHEF DANIELLE VENTER**  
Demand Creation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Durban

## INGREDIENTS (10 Portions)

1.5 kg Sirloin, 150 g per portion	300 g <b>Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise</b>
20 g <b>Knorr Aromat Original</b>	20 g Lime juice
5 g <b>Robertsons Black Pepper</b>	400 g <b>Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto</b>
30 ml Olive oil	10 g <b>Robertsons Smoked Paprika</b> , dry fried
10 large Wraps	20 g Garlic, minced
200 g Lettuce leaves	40 ml Apple cider vinegar
500 g Onion, thinly sliced	20 g <b>Knorr Aromat Original</b>
20 g Sugar	Oil for cooking
30 ml Balsamic vinegar	

## METHOD

- 1 Season the steak with **Knorr Aromat Original**, **Robertsons Black Pepper** and olive oil. Pan sear in hot oil for 3-4 min per side until medium. Rest and slice thinly.
- 1 Slowly cook the sliced onions in oil over low heat until soft and golden. Add sugar and balsamic vinegar, and cook until sticky and glossy.
- 1 Simmer **Knorr Professional Tomato Pronto** with **Robertsons Smoked Paprika**, garlic and apple cider vinegar for 10 min until slightly thickened. Blend to smooth.
- 1 Mix the **Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise** with lime juice.
- 1 Warm the wraps, spread with sauce and add the lettuce, sliced steak, caramelised onions and drizzle with lime mayo. Roll, toast and serve.



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# DINER



# DESIGNED

**Diner Designed is moving forward with a renewed sense of clarity. In 2025, the trend for personalised meals leaned on technology, 'build-your-own' formats, and theatrical, interactive dining. In 2026, it's finding balance, with tastes shifting towards simpler but still enjoyable, thoughtful, dynamic-feeling meals, while restaurant service is smooth and efficient.**

The approachable format gives diners what they crave: a sense of choice in a world of both endless overwhelm, and where much feels curated for them. They want food that bends a little to their needs.

Maybe that means swapping a topping or adjusting a sauce, or a dish that matches growing concerns for health and dietary preferences without dipping on taste or quality. These moments of control make dining feel empowering and fun.

Quick-service restaurants are a natural fit for Diner Designed-eating. For operators, a small degree of flexibility creates big value: it builds loyalty, generates buzz, and adds a premium feel without heavy cost. For diners, it transforms everyday eating: customisable bowls or open kitchens with counter seating for an exciting glimpse of the process

while keeping things quick. Think of the growing appeal of hot-pot restaurants and elevated salad bar concepts that let everyone create their own version of the perfect meal.

Diner Designed goes beyond the plate, and while you might still snap that pic for Instagram before you pick up your fork, the focus has shifted: to ownership of the experience, a sense of choice and connection that makes eating out both routine and memorable.



# DINER DESIGNED

**Customisable Plate-Building Becomes Core to Menus**—Modular dishes where diners can select proteins, sauces, sides, and garnishes.

**Ingredient Stations as Theatre and Efficiency Drivers**—Front-of-house preparation: live carving, sauce finishing, topping assembly

can act as both entertainment and a way to showcase freshness and skill.

**Hybrid Menu Items**—Blending crowd-pleasing bases (burgers, bowls, flatbreads) with rotating seasonal or global-inspired toppings.

**Data-Informed Flavour Rotation**—POS data, online reviews, loyalty programme insights for faster, evidence-based menu tweaks.

## TRENDING INGREDIENTS PER REGION

**Middle East**  
Lemoncello, pistachio, chia seed, kombucha, lychee.

**North America**  
Dill pickle, biscoff, crispy onions, raw fish.

**Europe**  
Hot honey, hickory smoke, peri peri, nduja.

**South East Asia**  
Beetroot, ube, maple, pistachio.

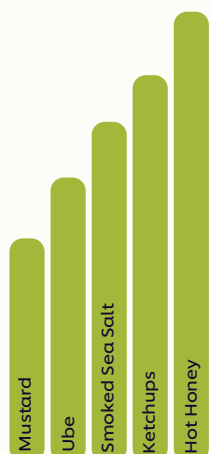
**Africa**  
Boba, espresso, maple, beetroot.



**KEY** ■ Trending ■ Emerging

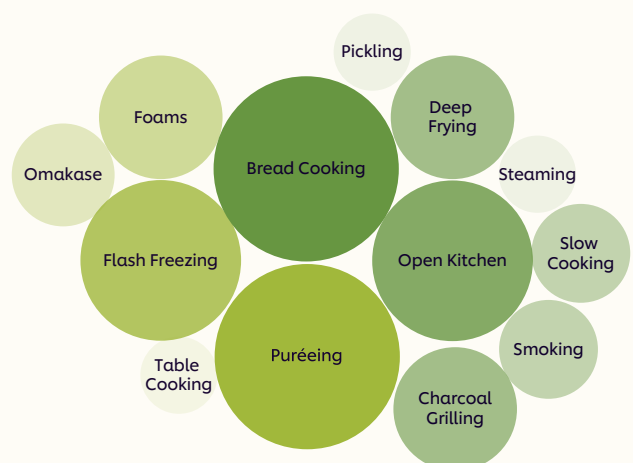
## TRENDING INGREDIENTS

Bright colours such as ube and beetroot, and intense flavours such as dill pickles and smoked sea salt are showing significant growth. Small but mighty customisations.



## TRENDING AND EMERGING TECHNIQUES

New ways of eating, through omakase and communal eating through table cooking and Korean BBQ. Techniques are among the strongest growing topics – foams, purées, and flash freezing.



# DIPPINGS AND TOPPINGS: A GUIDE TO PERSONALISATION

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**IN A TIME WHERE THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOICE PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ATTRACTING NEW DINERS, CHEF BRANDON COLLINS SHARES HIS SECRETS TO EXPLORING MENU PERSONALISATION – *minimum effort, maximum impact.***



**There was a time where the ultimate restaurant experience was about consistency, but as digital connections allow diners to become increasingly aware and vocal in their preferences, the trend of personalisation has a growing role in the hospitality industry.**

**Our research found that customisable plate-building becoming core to menus is the number one most significant point within the Diner Designed trend. Dining has become less about giving strict rules and instructing your guests of every move, and more about providing them with the perfect building blocks to a memorable experience that can never be replicated. With Gen-Z audiences at the forefront of this movement of choice, restaurants are having to respond to the growing individual needs of their future customers. Here, Unilever Food Solutions' Corporate Executive Chef Brandon Collins has tips and tricks on how to embrace this evolution without putting extra pressure on the restaurant and its staff.**

## **Sauces and Condiments**

One of the easiest ways to embrace customisation is offering a variety of sauces, dressings, or vinaigrettes. People love to dip and drizzle! You don't need new recipes – just use sauces you already have on the menu, and make larger batches, like moving from a quarter to a gallon. This allows you to offer a personal experience without adding complexity. The sauces are stable, so nothing goes to waste, and it actually helps service run more smoothly while giving guests the flavour flexibility they want.

## **Toppings and Extras**

Offering toppings and additional ingredients gives diners control and accommodates preferences. We know Cilantro divides opinions, so letting people choose whether they want to include it ensures everyone enjoys the dish. The same applies to other menu items: guests can swap or combine ingredients from different dishes. But the key is using what you

already have. People are creating their own experience in their own sandbox, so the dishes will naturally vary. By monitoring what components are popular, you can inform future menu development and make new dishes easier for staff to execute while keeping customisation simple and appealing.

## **Cooking Technique**

Cooking techniques are another way to let people customise. A chicken tender can be fried, roasted, or griddled, all using the same equipment. For bigger proteins like short ribs, you can offer a braised version or a grilled Galbi-style, using the same components. It also accommodates dietary preferences – someone may avoid fried food in favour of roasting. Technique variation adds perceived choice and enhances the dining experience while keeping preparation practical and efficient for the kitchen.



# DINER-DESIGNED ON A BUDGET, ACCORDING TO FOUR CHEFS

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**AWAY FROM HIGH-TECH, HIGH-COST SOLUTIONS, EMBRACING THE DINER-DESIGNED TREND CAN BE A GREAT WAY TO ECONOMICALLY EVOLVE YOUR BUSINESS AND OPEN DOORS TO NEW AUDIENCES. TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT MOVE, FOUR UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS' CHEFS SHARE THEIR STORIES ON THIS *major food trend.***



**Offering diners an opportunity to tailor their own culinary adventures is an important step in responding to the evolving cultural movement of embracing individuality and choice. Our research shows that ordering apps, QR codes and self-service kiosks are now an accepted and appealing norms in quick service and casual restaurants.**

**But while ideas that embrace technology, AI or visual experiences can be costly, you can also do it in ways that are both cost-effective and creative. With different global perspectives, these four UFS chefs are here to share their stories that will help you in crafting your own version of a diner-designed experience.**

## **Eric Chua Keeps it Simple**

It's important not to overcomplicate things – any menu can embrace that personal feeling with some slight tweaks. Whether it's organising it according to personality types, zodiac signs or birth months, you create a deeper sense of connection with the person that is tasting it. Even just naming it in a way that builds that personal connection is the simplest way to do it. This does require research, but you should be analysing your customer profile anyway – you're operating within your own neighbourhood.

## **Pick and Choose with René Noel Schiemer**

Although this trend is often seen as expensive, there are many cost-effective ways to do it. The easiest one is to make the core dish vegetarian or vegan and then offer five add-ons, like fish, chicken, beef... so you have this base that is simple

and affordable while still giving diners choice. Protein is the most expensive part, so this approach also saves money and reduces waste, all the while creating that key element of flexibility. By keeping the foundation straightforward and letting people personalise with toppings or extras, you can achieve an experience without overcomplicating or overspending.

## **Joanne Limoanco-Gendrano Embraces Education**

I have seen a lot more front of house people getting involved in food preparation – even just the simplest action of pouring things or cracking something in front of the diner can create such a buzz. Fine dining started this, with high-end meals like Steak Tartare conceptualised around the experience of grinding it in front of the customer. Today, this approach has trickled down into all levels of the food industry. Whether it's giving a choice of several ready-made sauces or a Dim Sum cart service where you

mix a sauce on the spot – spicy or not – and people can see it. I recently saw a modern Middle Eastern place doing mini shawarmas, sliced and wrapped table side, pressed over coals. You could even choose to add fries – it's a little window of choice, but a meaningful one nonetheless.

#### Thaís Gimenez Makes Subtle Moves

I think it's all about the experience – and this can be done on a budget by using data smartly. If a customer always orders well-done beef or celebrates their anniversary at your place every year, you already have the information to anticipate their needs. Have the child's chair ready, suggest the meat the way they like it, or note the occasion. Even small tweaks, like presenting the same ingredient with a different technique – braised tomatoes instead of seared tomatoes – creates a new experience at no extra cost. It's about using what you already

know about your customers, changing the wording or preparation slightly, and making them feel seen. That's personalisation, that's Diner Designed, without needing expensive tech or major investment.





# NEW RULES OF DINING ACCORDING TO GEN-Z

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER CREATIVE INDUSTRY, THE CULINARY WORLD IS IN A STATE OF FLUX AS IT SHIFTS ITS FOCUS TO THE FUTURE GENERATION OF BIG SPENDERS. DEFINED BY THEIR OWN RULES AND A CLEAR SET OF PREFERENCES, GEN-Z PRESENTS** *the next big challenge.*



**With fast-growing global spending power, Gen-Z are on their way to becoming every brand's target customer. Our research shows that 84% of Gen-Z eat during their commute and snacks have become a vital part of their working days.**

**Both the richest and the largest generation in humanity's history, they are the future – both literally and metaphorically. In terms of their evolving spending power, long-term growth for any business is impossible without considering their clearly defined choices. But, what do they expect when dining out?**

**Four of Unilever Food Solutions' global chefs dig into their own real life experiences and share insights for getting the future customer on your side. From portion sizes to choice of techniques, these are the steps to future-proofing your culinary business.**

**Brandon Collins,**  
Corporate Executive Chef (US)

One of the biggest things with Gen-Z is that they're not eating large portions. They go out with friends, sit together, and order multiple small dishes rather than big entrées. Shareable, affordable plates work best, and adding small, easy to make mocktails helps because they generally aren't drinking alcohol. They love international flavours in familiar forms – like Kimchi in Risotto balls or Butter Chicken on Nachos – and playful, approachable twists on classic dishes.

**Joanne Limoanco-Gendrano,**  
Executive Chef (PH)

Gen-Z like to have a hand in what they eat. They want choices – what sauce goes with their dish, which side or carb, even little details like sprinkles on fries. Having an interactive element to the dish is important, too. A little Instagram friendly moment, whether it's opening a container, pouring a sauce, or a presentation that creates a visual experience.

**James Brown,**  
Executive Chef (UK)

Gen-Z decide where to eat very quickly – they look on Instagram, and if it looks cool, they go there. They're immediate, informed, and positive, so you have to strike that balance. If you're unsure, ask them first, then refine those findings with your experience. For snackable dishes, you don't always need new items – half portions from other things on the menu, a small salad or snack section, maybe some fresh juices... it has to feel authentic and practical, not forced.

**René Noel Schiemer,**  
Culinary Consultant (DE)

Tapping into Gen-Z isn't easy, but it helps to meet them where they are. In workplace restaurants, they often skip the canteen for trendy Street Food or bowls, so offering fresh, visually-appealing, fitness- or specialty-focused dishes draws them back. Location also matters, so understanding local preferences and offering creative, approachable options is key.

# CREAMY CORN ON A GOB SOUP WITH CORN PAP FINGERS







# CREAMY CORN ON A COB SOUP WITH CORN PAP FINGERS

BY **CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**

Comfort and nostalgia come together in this creamy sweetcorn soup, a playful take on familiar diner-style flavours. The rich, velvety soup is layered with smoky paprika, herbs and crispy bacon for depth, while golden pap fingers add a satisfying crunch for dipping. Familiar ingredients are reimagined in a fun, interactive format that brings warmth, indulgence and a touch of nostalgia to the plate.



**CHEF KIMRISHKA GOVENDER**  
Digital and Innovation Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Durban

## INGREDIENTS (9 Portions, 80 ml)

### Soup Base

40 g Butter  
150 g Onions,  
finely chopped  
100 Celery,  
finely chopped  
3 g Thyme  
415 g Creamy corn  
in a can  
1 Green chilli,  
deseeded  
5 g Garlic, crushed  
1 g Fresh parsley,  
roughly chopped  
380 ml Evaporated  
milk  
20 g **Knorr**  
**Professional Cheese**  
**Sauce Powder**  
4 pcs Baby corn  
on a cob, grilled  
8 g **Robertsons**  
**Savoury Rice**  
8 g **Robertsons**  
**Smoked Paprika**  
100 g Macon/  
bacon bits

### Pap Fingers

1 L Boiling water  
200 g Maize meal  
250 ml Water  
80 g Salted butter  
400 g Sweetcorn  
kernels  
4 Eggs, beaten  
450 g Panko crumbs



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## METHOD

### SOUP BASE

- 1 In a pot, add butter. Once melted, add onions, celery and thyme and sauté until slightly brown, around 5 min. Add creamy corn, deseeded chillies, garlic and fresh parsley and allow to cook for a further 5-8 min on medium.
- 2 Add evaporated milk, **Knorr Professional Cheese Sauce Powder**, **Robertsons Savoury Rice** and **Robertsons Smoked Paprika** and bring to the boil until slightly thick. If the soup appears a bit too thick, hot water can be added to slightly to thin out the soup. Set soup aside.
- 3 Fry macon/bacon until crispy and add to the soup. Place cooled cooked soup into a blender. Once fully blended, strain using a fine mesh sieve.
- 3 In a griddle pan, fry corn on a cob until grill marks show and set aside for garnishing.

### PAP FINGERS

- 1 Make a slurry using 250 ml water and 200 g maize meal.
- 2 In a pot, bring water, salted butter and **Robertsons Savoury Rice** to the boil. Once boiling, add the maize meal slurry and stir continuously using a wooden spoon. The pap should take about +- 8-10 min.
- 3 Once pap is ready, add the sweetcorn kernels and combine well. Transfer pap into a lined tin and cut into lengthy fingers. Set aside.
- 4 Deep the pap fingers in the egg, then in the panko crumbs and deep fry in 180 °C oil for 2 min until brown.

### TO SERVE

- 1 In a soup bowl, add soup, place grilled corn on a cob on top, add fresh garnishes, and sprinkle **Robertsons Smoked Paprika** on top.

### CHEFS TIP

- 1 A small amount of corn and bacon can be fried together on the side to use for garnish. For a deeper colour, **Robertsons Turmeric** can be added.





# HOW TO DESIGN THE PERFECT MENU

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**BRINGING TOGETHER ARTISTIC VISIONS WITH BUSINESS MINDSETS,  
THIS GUIDE FOLLOWS IN *the steps of success* AS FOUR CHEFS  
SHARE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATIONS OF A PERFECT MENU.**



**Creating a menu requires a complex mix of considerations, but the goal is always to build a sense of tension between creativity and profit.**

**Capturing delicious flavours and contemporary trends without breaking the bank is what every business strives for.**

**But how do you get there? Even if perfection feels unattainable, these four Unilever Food Solutions' chefs are here to help.**

**Eric Chua,**  
Executive Chef (SG)

It's all about listening to your diners, knowing what they're looking for and creating a menu that is suited for their dining habits. It's also making sure you regularly check your POS systems and analyse the data. If a dish doesn't perform well, it's time to remove or tweak it. Sometimes you may have the perfect dish, but it's just that your price point is too high.

**Frank Olivarius Jakobsen,**  
Head Chef & Culinary Advisor (DK)

Look for ingredients that allow big variation and maximise your prep time while maintaining quality and flavour. Cut down on ingredients and focus on professional, high-quality items that can be used in multiple ways, like turning potato flakes into a mash, soup, purée, or foam. Combining products creatively matters, too. Mixing bouillons with concentrated flavours or bases allows chefs to develop unique signature dishes while keeping preparation simple. Ultimately, menus should be adaptable, efficient, and inspiring, giving chefs the flexibility to change dishes while delivering taste, value, and a strong, memorable experience.

**Joanne Limoanco-Gendrano,**  
Executive Chef (PH)

When approaching menu engineering, it's really important to keep things tight – mastering 10 to 15 items rather than having a huge menu. A big menu makes you more vulnerable to mistakes, cost issues, and inventory complications, whereas a tighter menu allows you to

manage profitability, ensure quality sourcing, and make it easier to adjust items that aren't moving.

**Thaís Gimenez,**  
Executive Chef (BR)

It's a balancing game where cost, technique, and ingredient choice have to live in harmony. Expensive or rare ingredients can create unique experiences, but focusing on local, seasonal, and indigenous products allows for cost-effective menus while still offering sophistication through technique. Using data about diners can further enhance the experience: knowing preferences, habits, and past visits allows chefs to offer subtle variations or customised dishes.

# TOP TIPS FOR PLATING

IT'S NOT EASY TO KNOW WHERE TO START WITH THE BIG FINISH.  
THESE SIMPLE EASY-TO-ACHIEVE TIPS WILL BRING YOU  
*one step closer to plating perfection...*



## DINER DESIGNED

### Customisable with Colour & Contrast

Bold, eye-catching colour is one of the easiest ways to create a dish that feels modern and shareable. Incorporating trending ingredients like ube (with its vivid purple hue), pistachio (a fresh, muted green), or hot honey (a rich, amber glaze) can instantly elevate a plate's visual impact. These ingredients not only bring flavour but also serve as natural colour enhancers, helping dishes stand out on social feeds and menus alike. Think about layering contrasting colour to create a plate that pops.

### Showcase Choice Visually

Customisation is most powerful when it's practical. Instead of hiding optional elements, present them proudly. Think sauces in mini pitchers, spice blends in tiny ramekins, and toppings in small ceramic bowls or on curated side boards. This not only empowers diners to tailor their dish to their taste but also enhances the visual storytelling of the meal. It makes for a more memorable dining experience.

## BORDERLESS CUISINE

### Techniques for Textures

Combine techniques visually: charcoal-grilled proteins with a creamy sauce, or crispy wok-seared vegetables alongside a creamy ube mash. The textural interplay makes the blended cuisines feel exciting and cohesive. It also goes a long way in showing just how much effort has gone into each individual dish.

### Utilise Plates that Reflect Culture

Present meals in serving dishes that reflect the cultural origins of the recipe. For example, Korean bibimbap should be served in stone dolsot bowls and Indian curries should be served in stainless steel thalis. Italian antipasti on wooden boards and Mexican salsas and stews in molcajetes. These simple serving suggestions will go a long way in creating authenticity for diners.



## STREET FOOD COUTURE

### The Beat of the Street

Diners love the theatre of street food. You only have to have a quick scroll on TikTok or Instagram to see street food accounts going viral due to this category's open approach. Where possible keep cooking visible to bring the vibe of grills, woks, and skewers. You want to invite diners in and involve them in the culinary process as much as possible.

### Messy Sharers

The relaxed nature of street food means it's perfect for messy sharing. With that in mind, look to design dishes that can be passed around, pulled apart, or dipped together. That unique informal feel is why street food has become so popular.

## CULINARY ROOTS

### Highlight the Craft

Technique is one of the easiest ways to showcase your prowess as a chef. With that in mind, let char marks, fermentation vessels, or botanical garnishes be visible so diners can fully see the effort that went into the creation of your dish. It won't go unnoticed.

### Highlight Ingredient Integrity

Keep hero ingredients recognisable rather than overly processed, celebrate their natural shape, colour, and form – especially ingredients that are native to the location of the dish. This trend really celebrates the traditional feel and so authentic ingredients and presentation are paramount.



# BEYOND THE PLATE:

## HOW A DISH TELLS A STORY

WRITTEN BY Dino Bonačić

**LOOKING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF A PLATE, DINERS ARE HUNGRY FOR THE STORIES THAT INSPIRED THEIR FAVOURITE MEALS. AS STORYTELLING BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BUSINESS, UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS' CHEFS SHARE THEIR ADVICE ON**  
*creating meaningful connections* **WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.**



**Whether it's a recipe that's been passed down through generations or an innovative technique that references an important cultural moment – storytelling has an inherent connection to culinary artistry. Except now, the stories behind the meals aren't just a niche interest of a few, but a widely utilised approach in building a lasting relationship with your diners – especially Gen-Z.**

**Our research showing that this group are valuing local, authentic and connected experiences that reflect who they are and what they believe in.**

**Here, six Unilever Food Solutions' chefs share their advice on how to bring storytelling into your world.**

### **Technique Tales** by Eric Chua

Ingredients can be risky to anchor a story on – if I highlight Australian Wagyu and suddenly can't source it, I've created a problem. But technique is different: it sparks imagination and gives diners an immediate sense of flavour and experience. Even with ready-made or CPU dishes, the language of technique can transform perception. Descriptions like '48-stroke wok fry' or '100-second steamed cockle' add precision, intrigue, and a sense of craftsmanship. Technique-based storytelling not only differentiates a brand but also communicates quality and intent in a way diners instantly understand.

### **Beyond the Head Chef** by Thaís Gimenez

Too often, cooks contribute ideas, ingredients, and techniques yet only the head chef gets the recognition. Seeing the names of

different team members next to their dishes, alongside the origin of the ingredients, adds emotion, authenticity, and recognition. It shows diners that the whole kitchen team has creativity worth celebrating, while also building anticipation for who might be behind tomorrow's dish. That kind of transparency and appreciation is a powerful form of storytelling.

### **More Than a Menu** by Brandon Collins

Storytelling in food is deeply personal. That's why chefs can be so protective – it feels like walking into the dining room exposed, because the dish is everything we've worked for. Menus, too, should carry that same personality. When I read a menu, I can tell a lot about the chef behind it – their influences, age, or confidence. Personality comes through not just in the food, but in the way it's described, the choices of words, even the structure.

Whether it's fine dining or fast food, that storytelling – the chef's voice should always be there.

### **The Power of Local**

by Joanne Limoanco-Gendrano

Beyond personal narratives, ingredients, or techniques, storytelling can also come from cultural pride. Dishes that carry a local stamp resonate deeply, because communities want to celebrate their own stories. At the same time, local trends can also spark inspiration. The key is not to copy but to adapt creatively – it helps in staying relevant while still telling their own story.

### **Transparency, Trends, and Simplicity**

by Frank Jakobsen

Diners want to know what's in their food, why it's good for them, and how it fits their needs. For Gen-Z, storytelling happens through TikTok, music, and visuals – they connect food to culture and convenience, focusing on dishes that are eye-catching, easy to eat, and shareable. Simplistic, direct language works better than corporate buzzwords.

### **Head Meets Heart**

by Kenneth Cacho

Too many menus copy trends or lean on over-detailed sourcing claims without real depth. Beyond emotion or ingredients, culinary classics can become a rich source of storytelling. Take double-fried Korean chicken: the method itself tells a story of crispness, science, and tradition. When chefs go deeper in understanding temperatures, starches, and textures, they create dishes with consistency and soul. Authenticity paired with technique ensures the story is not just told, but felt in every bite.





# MASTERING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH GUNGUN CHANDRA HANDAYANA

WRITTEN BY Ryan Cahill

FOR MANY, SOCIAL MEDIA CAN FEEL LIKE A DIFFERENT  
WORLD. THIS TOOLKIT OFFERS SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS  
TO *help turn clicks* INTO CUSTOMERS.



With over 350k followers on Instagram alone, Chef Gungun Chandra Handayana has mastered the social foodsphere. His straightforward yet informative approach matched with delicious looking food has established him as a go-to for food-first content.

In an era where social media can be the making or breaking of a business, it's important to strike the right balance with your content. Here, Gungun pulls back the curtain to reveal how he achieved social media success and helps you on your way to achieving the same.

"Crafting compelling food videos for social media requires attention to every detail from voice to visuals," Gungun says. "Together, the following elements transform a simple food video into a powerful storytelling tool that captivates audiences and elevates the chef's digital presence."

## 1. Determine the Voice-Over

A clear, pleasant, and engaging voice-over sets the tone, guiding viewers through the experience with warmth and clarity.

## 2. Video Content

A trending menu/food that's currently viral and popular. Featuring a trending dish that's currently viral adds instant relevance and appeal.

## 3. Caption or Subtitle

A clear and concise video caption so the message conveyed in the video can be clearly understood even when watching the video without sound. Captions or subtitles should be interesting and informative.

## 4. Trending Background Sound

Use a trending song. Pairing the video with a trending background sound enhances emotional connection and boosts discoverability.

## 5. Video Length

With a maximum length of 55 seconds, the first three seconds are crucial for grabbing attention and encouraging viewers to stay until the end.

## 6. Video Cover

A consistent and visually appealing video cover, complete with attractive fonts and colours, reinforces brand identity.

## 7. Video Title

Finally, a clickbait-style title that sparks curiosity can dramatically increase views and engagement.

# PANTRY

## ESSENTIALS



**95% real Italian tomatoes (more than 30 tomatoes in each can)**

- 24 hours from vine to can for optimum freshness.
- Concentrated product to save prep time, no reducing required.
- Versatile in pizzas, pastas, soups, and sauces.
- Halal.

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**The South African flavour that makes food taste better.**

- Versatile: can be used in multiple applications.
- A balanced flavour that enhances savoury taste.
- Less salt, more flavour.\*
- Halal, vegan.

\*vs normal table salt.

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### Consistent, scratch-like sauce.

- Versatile: pairs perfectly with egg, vegetable, fish and grilled meat dishes.
- Convenient: simply snip, heat and pour.
- No wastage: serve as needed.
- Halal.

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### Consistent taste and a dark brown sheen colour every time.

- Use as a base to add your signature touch.
- No artificial colourants.
- More economical than scratch.
- 800 g makes 5.4 L of sauce.
- 12 hours of preparation and authentic taste, reduced to 12 minutes.

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### 1 kg marinates up to 15 kg of meat.

- Maximum flavour, juiciness, and tenderisation in as little as 15 minutes.
- Made with real chilli for an authentic balance of spicy flavour.
- Tasty and succulent results time after time.
- Contains natural tenderisers.
- Consistent, quality ingredients.

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### 1 kg makes 50 L of stock.

- Made with real chicken.
- Versatile: can be used in rubs, stocks, soups, stews, and seasonings.
- Enhances the flavour and colour of your dish without oversalting it.
- No MSG.
- Halal.

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### 1 kg makes 50 L of stock.

- Made with real beef.
- Versatile base for wet dishes and sauces.
- More flavour without oversalting.
- No added MSG.
- Halal.

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### 1 kg makes 50 L of stock.

- Adds a rich vegetable flavour without oversalting.
- Versatile base for wet dishes and sauces.
- Can be used in soups, stews, sauces, gravies, casseroles and pies, or sprinkled over roasts, grills, savoury omelettes or snacks.
- Can be used during or after cooking.
- Halal.

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### Makes 27 L of soup

- 150 portions per bag.
- Thickens and flavours pies, soups, casseroles, fillings and potato bakes.
- Bain-marie stable.
- Halal, vegan.

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### Made with 99% real potatoes.

- Lump free\* mash in 5 minutes – in 3 quick and easy steps!
- Reduce wastage – only make what's needed.
- Vegan-friendly when made with water.
- Gluten-free.
- Halal.

\*when following on-pack instructions.

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### Best in binding.\*

- Bound salads can be prepared in advance.
- Salads remain visually appealing for longer due to less water separation.
- Made with natural colourants.
- Made with pea protein.
- Vegan, halal.

\*Visit [www.ufs.com](http://www.ufs.com) for more details.

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### Authentic scratch mayo taste and texture.

- Made with real eggs, lemon juice, oil and vinegar.
- Heat-stable for up to 1 hour for delivery
- Dollop-like texture.
- Great flavour carrier to add your signature twist.

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### 1 kg seasons ± 77 kg of vegetables.

- Chunky texture adds visual appeal to multiple dishes such as sandwiches, salads and pizzas.
- Made with real bell pepper, garlic, chilli and herbs for great flavour.
- Halal, vegan.

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### 1 kg seasons 100 kg of protein.

- The perfect blend of black pepper, chilli, garlic, onion, parsley, paprika, nutmeg and more!
- Adds a delicious smoky, spicy flavour to your dishes.
- Halal, vegan.

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### 100% pure paprika.

- Adds a hint of smokiness to dishes.
- Delivers a rich, intense colour.
- Trusted Robertsons quality in every selected herb, spice and blend.
- Non-irradiated, no preservatives, no artificial colourants and free from GMOs.
- Halal, vegan.

**Shop Now**



### 1 kg seasons 100 kg of chicken.

- Adds intense flavour.
- Made with pure paprika to add a golden colour to your chicken.
- Less salt, more flavour.\*
- Non-irradiated, no preservatives, no added MSG, no artificial colourants and free from GMOs.
- Halal, vegan.

\*vs normal table salt.

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### 1 kg seasons 100 kg of fish.

- An expertly selected, unique blend of chervil, parsley, coriander, onion, white pepper, celery and black pepper.
- Adds intense flavour to your protein.
- Non-irradiated, no preservatives, no added MSG, no artificial colourants and free from GMOs.
- Halal, vegan.

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### One spoonful, big aroma!

- Made with 20% turmeric.
- The perfect blend of coriander, turmeric, cumin, methi and chillies.
- Adds great colour for visual appeal.
- Consistent mouth-watering taste and aroma.
- Non-irradiated, no preservatives, no added MSG, no artificial colourants and free from GMOs.
- Long shelf life.
- Halal, vegan.

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### Yield: 50 x 125 ml portions.\*

- Made with real cocoa.
- Perfectly light and fluffy.
- Consistent results in just 5 minutes.
- Suitable for lacto-vegetarians.
- No artificial colourants.
- Halal.

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### Yield: 20 x 125 ml servings per 500 g portion pack; 160 x 125 ml servings per 4 kg box.

- Holds shape in trifles.
- Made in 3 simple steps.
- Stores for 3 days when refrigerated.
- 4 Fruity flavours: Greengage, strawberry, pineapple and orange.
- Halal.

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