



FOOD TRENDS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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The latest Food Trends

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**Trend researcher
Karin Tischer, who is highly**

requested and recommended throughout Europe, travels around the globe to track down trends where they arise. In her research and development institute food & more, in Kaarst/Germany, she and her team develop system-compatible concepts, innovations and recipes. In this interview, she discusses consumer behavior and trends during the pandemic.

Karin Tischer, Food-Trendscout & Corona Crisis Manager, food & more, together with her team, are specialists for lectures on trends, creativity and other workshops as well as leadership and team coaching. Her independent food innovation center is nationally and internationally acknowledged and active in the areas of industry, out-of-home market, B2B and trade across large as well as medium-sized companies in the food industry. In times of the Corona crisis, they offer the following help online and in person: risk management, pragmatic workshops, strategy and innovation workshops, individual consultation and webinars, crisis-specific coaching of managers and teams.

If you look at the different regional cuisines of Europe do you discover common features?

The regional kitchens of Europe have a lot in common and there are products, which are equally accepted and valued in all European countries. However, in

relation we see more differences than similarities, which turns every single European kitchen particularly interesting and unique. For example, chicken nuggets are popular everywhere, but they are implemented dissimilar, depending on the country, the different meat qualities and processing, breading/coating, seasonings and the differences in the taste of cooking fat for preparation. There are also clear regional variances in food and ingredients within individual countries. For example, a north/south and west/east gradient draws character to the sensory preferences. There are similarities in Europe, but above all an incredible culinary variety. Each country has its unique, interesting, multifaceted expression and provides exciting impulses. There are differences in the sensory preference of the countries and that makes it exciting, for example, people eat much saltier in the north than in the south, but in the Mediterranean countries much sweeter than in the north and in Germany.

Which food developments for the coming two years are clearly identifiable?

A variety of trend developments play a role. Especially now due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 4 movements are strongly recognizable. The first one is the megatrend "health" with a higher need for healthy, fresh and health-promoting products. Food has become lifestyle and religion. In addition to the vegetarian diet, vegan has a particularly strong appeal, despite the small target group (currently 1.6% in Germany). They are both symbolic of the great new development for the majority of the population, the trend towards a more plant-based diet, the so-called "Plantarismus". Sustainability and Back2nature, the consumers' desire to get a bit closer to nature is shown by the stronger focus on local and regional products and suppliers as well as vertical farming. On the other hand, there is a greater need for comfort food in this uncertain and special time; these are anchor points that give back a bit of normality. In addition, topics like Food 4.0

- the big change due to stronger industrialization or digitalization and snacking instead of big meals - especially exciting, international street food - play a big role. Pleasure & Quality are in a constant field of tension with each other.

Which food trends do you see medium-term?

The so-called new trade performance: the food retail trade is becoming increasingly gastronomic; there is still a great need for development and potential. Above all the trade needs suitable convenience and frozen solutions, in order to serve the field. Digitalization will also continue and snacking will be even stronger, especially healthy snacks, as well as more alternative drinks, beyond smoothies in hot & cold versions. It should become more casual and convenient for the consumer. In this context, the development and optimization of plant-based alternatives will continue to pick up speed.

Do you see any effects caused by the Corona-Pandemic?

Yes, we are experiencing an absolute exceptional situation with total deceleration respectively change with simultaneous development in rapid time-lapse. Depending on how long the corona pandemic lasts and how much damage it will cause, whether medical, social, economic, agricultural, democratic, actually in every respect, the effects will be different. Due to the rapid increase of the number of people who stayed at home (home office, closed daycare centers and schools, etc.), more is cooked at home and the topic of home cooking receives new attention and appreciation. On the one hand, according to the trend of individualization, personal and unique dishes are being perfected even more. On the other hand, eating together as an emotional experience and structuring element is rediscovered in everyday life. NoSex Food or Unisex Food will be strengthened through communalization in this crisis. The perception of shopping is changing: online shopping in virtual supermarkets has increased a lot and acceptance of the previously hesitant development is increasing. In addition to the increased home cooking and supplying the family, you can see a significant demand for products that are suitable for an uncomplicated life at home. This is how

many frozen products, e.g. Pizza, baked goods, vegetables, fruit and much more, are currently enjoying a significant boost. Also, the delivery business grows significantly due to the severe restrictions in foodservice and catering sectors.

How will the consumption of pork, beef and poultry develop?

Two directions are recognizable. On one hand there is a growing understanding and desire to put animal-welfare, -health, -fitness, -origin, -feeding, -keeping, technological processing etc. up front and to pay attention to higher quality products. On the other hand, there are movements to conserve resources and concepts arise where the whole animal is used and not just premium cuts. Further development enables new culinary experiences, which correspond very much to the spirit of the time and wishes of the consumers. The trend towards less and at the same time more valuable meat consumption is tending slightly. Depending on the period and the expression of the corona crisis, the gap between the users of cheaper discount products and higher priced quality products will further widen. There is a chance a new characterization of premium and luxury will arise. In terms of healthy eating, poultry has been of great importance for a long time. It has a positive image and is likely to become

even more important than before. On one hand, the trend towards high protein meals likes to use poultry for bowls, snacks & co. On the other hand, more turn to home cooking in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Poultry is easy to prepare for the consumer and versatile. A stronger development can be expected in the future.

Which new food products will make a mark on the industry?

There will be developments in different product groups. Sauces will take a new, even more important role because they are often responsible for the definition and character of the food. A never seen unprecedented, gigantic variety with contrasts, that are colorful, lively, innovative and international and which provides a "fresh up" for the increased number of convenience products. Vegan and vegetarian dishes often need support with the taste profile and sauces serve this aspect, e.g. in form of spreads. They also contribute to the big trend of snacking. Furthermore, new products in the field of meatless or vegetable alternatives will grow. There are currently many exciting approaches that stand for variety in protein supply in general or high protein products for fitness lovers. Hemp is interpreted as a new, interesting, trendy ingredient in numerous product categories. In addition, the consumers need for



There is a lot of research around the world and there are currently around 35 laboratories working on in-vitro meat. But there is still a long way to go to achieve financially lucrative and operational implementation possibilities, as well as a general acceptance.