

Goodbye, Kale. Hello, Cauliflower! Top Food Trends for 2015



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Sorry, kale: Your place at the top of the superfood chain is coming to an end.

The nutrient-rich green has been ubiquitous in recent years, popping up in everything from chips to smoothies and even candy. It'll always have a place in our diets, but for 2015 we're moving on to more flavorful culinary delights that both satisfy our palates and boost our health.

We asked some experts to give us their picks for the foods we'll be foraging for in the New Year. Some of their choices may surprise you.

Cauliflower

That vegetable your mom forced you to eat as a child will be a staple in your diet in 2015, according to Stacy Baas, brand strategist and trends watcher with [Earthbound Farm](#). For

good reason, too: This vitamin-packed and versatile veggie can be roasted, mashed or even barbecued. Cauliflower is also gluten-free, making it the perfect substitute in traditional comfort foods like pizza (it makes a mean crust) and macaroni and cheese (replacing the pasta).

Better yet: Kids will be more likely to eat more cauliflower in 2015, thanks to the increasing availability of more colorful varieties, including purple, green and orange.

Matcha

Take your tea to the next level in 2015 with matcha. Matcha is like green tea on steroids: The stone-ground Japanese tea is packed with chlorophyll, catechins and antioxidants like EGCG. Because of this, foodmakers are increasingly working the fine green powder into their cookies, smoothies and protein bars -- some enterprising mixologists are even finding ways to infuse it into cocktails.

Fermented Foods

Expect all things fermented and sour to be big in 2015. Fermented foods like kimchi,

yogurts and pickles could explode in the culinary scene, as will a type of drinking vinegar, known as a shrub.

"With the growing popularity of kombucha, kimchi and Nordic cuisine, consumers' taste palates are becoming accustomed to fermented and pickled flavor profiles," says Amy Marks-McGee, a flavor trends expert with [Trendincite LLC](#). "To add depth and complexity, mixologists are experimenting and creating artisanal shrubs made with aromatic fruits, herbs and spices for their own use in craft cocktails. In line with at-home pickling, novices are also trying their hand at shrubs."

Gochujang

Sriracha is now the go-to hot sauce, but Korean-American chef [Edward Lee](#), featured in the current season of *Mind of a Chef* on PBS, predicts the Korean fermented hot sauce gochujang will make its mark in 2015.

According to Lee, gochujang is spicy with complexity and umami, which brings a hot – yet also sweet, tart and salty – taste to everything from tacos to linguini.

"Ten years ago I would not have imagined that the average home cook would know how to cook with it," said Lee of the hot sauce, which is featured in traditional Korean dishes like bibimbap. "Now, I get calls from home cooks all the time asking where they can get the sauce because they want to learn how to cook with it."

Baobab

Move over, acai and goji... there's a new superfruit on the scene. The [Specialty Food Association](#) predicts that baobab will burst on the scene in 2015 as the next big fruit. Baobab (pronounced BEY-oh-Bab) comes from the baobab tree, a tree native to mainland Africa, Madagascar and Australia.

The baobab fruit is about the same size as a mango. Cracked open, it contains a powdery, chalky substance stuffed full of fiber and calcium. You can also eat it plain, but the flavor is bit tangy and sour, so your best bet is to get your fill of the nutrient-packed fruit in smoothies, cookies, energy bars and more.

Mushrooms

Long hated by children and picky eaters everywhere, the omnipresent mushroom is about to get a reputation makeover. Mushrooms are rich in B vitamins and other vital nutrients – and a 2014 study by the University of Buffalo found that mushrooms might help lower glycemic responses. Shiitake and oyster mushrooms will be the real stars of the mushroom renaissance, thanks to the naturally-occurring substance Beta-glucans, which are believed to boost immunity.

According to Sandra Carter, PhD, MPH and CEO of [Mushroom Matrix](#), food lovers can expect to see more mushroom blends on the menu at their favorite restaurants thanks to its meat-mimicking texture. Gives a whole new meaning to mushroom burger!

Jerky

Snap into a Slim Jim? Oh no. The dried meat often associated with gas stations is about to get a gourmet makeover, thanks to its protein-packed and low-carbohydrate nutrition profile.

Traditional beef jerky is still very much a staple, but companies like [Fusion Jerky](#) are now introducing more artisanal flavors. Look for combos such as Chipotle-Lime Beef Jerky, Basil-Citrus Beef Jerky and Garlic-Jalapeno Pork Jerky in the new year.

Crickets

Yes, you read that correctly. You've probably already eaten a cricket or two in your life without knowing it, thanks to FDA regulations that allow a certain amount of insect parts to be present in the foods you buy. However, a few enterprising companies are now purposely adding a powdered version of the tiny chirpers to their products. Why? Crickets actually contain 15 percent more iron than spinach, a ton of vitamin B12 and two times more protein than beef.

Want to try some for yourself? The cricket-infused (and gluten-free!) [Chirps](#) chips are set to hit shelves in February.

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