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2023 Global Restaurant Trend Forecast

Aaron Jourden

Director, International Research & Insights



The time has again come to reflect on the year in foodservice that was and take a stab at what we think will come for 2023 and beyond.

While our [forecast for 2022](#) certainly got several predictions right, some expectations didn't fully hit the mark—at least not yet. And more than a few unforeseen events snuck in along the way.

Inflation, labor and supply disruption were the dominant challenges for the hospitality industry and, unfortunately, these don't appear to be going away in the near term. On the positive front, breakfast had the boom we projected, particularly at chain restaurants within the quick-service segment. Halloumi popped up on more chain menus and several emergent regional restaurant brands had banner growth years—particularly tech-driven brands cropping up in Asia. We also saw ghost kitchens lose a bit of their shine, as we forecasted.

In contrast, egg sandwiches have not yet dethroned the almighty crispy chicken sandwich (although there's still time to make it happen in 2022!), functional desserts didn't break out to the degree we had predicted and tlayudas didn't get the star-making year we anticipated.

There were some curveballs in 2022 as well. The terms [“cabbage-gate”](#) and [“lunchflation”](#) entered the restaurant world lexicon, there was a well-reported

[butter board phenomenon](#), and the pesky issue of [french fry and potato shortages](#) has impacted restaurants across parts of Asia throughout the year.

With that as our backdrop heading into 2023, here's Technomic's best glimpse into what will impact the restaurant industry internationally over the coming year.



Sustainability and environmental stewardship will inform the direction of the restaurant industry more than ever.

Now or Never

With the pandemic fresh on our minds and pressing environmental and social issues impacting everyday life more than ever, 2023 will be the year

of bold action. And that starts with addressing the health of the planet. Restaurants will take a now-or-never approach to their sustainability strategies, from packaging and restaurant operations to marketing and menu development. And this is not just from forward-thinking chefs and emerging concepts, but major global chains will become much more visible with their sustainability initiatives as well. The time to make a change has never been so necessary.

Plant-flation

Is there a bubble set to burst in the plant-based category? Some argue that plant-based—and particularly branded meat alternatives—is still in a nascent phase, with increasing consumer appeal globally and significant white space for growth. Others say it was overhyped from the start and oversaturated now, representative of a niche menu category at best. While the category has received more than its share of attention, there's no real bubble set to burst, at least from a global perspective. Rather, the plant-based movement is primed for its next evolution moving into 2023. Most significantly, restaurants and consumers will turn attention back to more traditional forms of nonmeat proteins such as tofu, seitan and—what will be the new superstar of the plant-based ecosystem—tempeh. Also

set to shine is perennial favorite cauliflower, as well as avocado and contemporized iterations of the black bean patty.

Takeaway Takes From Delivery

Dine-in occasions globally are hovering at about 5% lower than pre-pandemic levels and the majority of that has gone to delivery. But that's about to change. Rising food and beverage costs are putting price and value at a premium, but consumers won't sacrifice quality or the convenience of off-premise consumption. That will make third-party delivery fees the biggest industry villain since the single-use plastic straw. 2023 will emerge as the year that takeaway steals part of the share that delivery has been accounting for since the tectonic shift toward off-premise spurred by the pandemic. Expect operators to accelerate the rollout of off-premise formats that put collection counters, pickup windows and drive-thru lanes front and center.

By Way of Lebanon

2023 is going to be a year where global street foods shine, and none will do so more brightly than those coming from and through Lebanon. Dishes from

Lebanon are poised to pop next year thanks to indulgent, healthy, meaty and also veggie-friendly preparations that satisfy a wide range of dining preferences. While already influential and popular in the region and more broadly, Lebanese cuisine will get a refreshed look in 2023, not just on the menu but as the impetus for new restaurant concepts as well. Think kibbe, shawarma, labneh, mezzes, pickled veggies and man'oushe served up in elevated and contemporized formats from food trucks to fast casuals, and from brewpubs to the prepared foods section of your local grocer.

Seasonal Stretch

Restaurants are increasingly taking liberties with the 'limited' in their limited-time offerings to get in early on the excitement of seasonal flavors and preparations. While pumpkin-flavored coffees and treats being released well into swimsuit season has become the poster child for this trend, it's also evidenced by Christmas in July promotions, pan de muerto arriving months ahead of Dia de los Muertos and sakura-themed offerings released well outside of cherry blossom season. For 2023, expect restaurants to get even more unconventional with the seasonal products they

release (particularly those tied to holidays and events) to surprise and excite their guests. And pumpkin may very well make the leap from ubiquitous fall favorite to year-round option at many coffeehouses.

Sushi, Poke & Ceviche

These authentic seafood preparations from varied parts of the globe have become widely accessible at restaurants around the world. Combined, the trio of loosely related preparations has spurred some of the most inventive menu development in recent years. And—importantly—each has proved well-suited for the takeaway and delivery era. Expect more innovation using sushi as a starting point, with the [Mexican-style adaptation](#) garnering a wider audience. Poke concepts will continue to flourish around the world and make more inroads into the Asia-Pacific region. 2023 will also mark the emergence of the fast-casual cevicheria as a viable concept to scale. Each will also inspire a new crop of virtual brands, including those that swap fried chicken for fish and some that bring more plant-based alternatives to the party to further democratize these exciting platforms.

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info@technomic.com | technomic.com



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