Mediterranean Rim: Culinary Trend Mapping Report

Description: Mediterranean Rim: Culinary Trend Mapping Report

The Mediterranean Rim diet is not only a delicious, commonsense approach to eating and cooking, it also gets the thumbs up for its health benefits from the scientific community. This diet typically features a small but potent group of ingredients prepared in a simple yet satisfying manner—thus leaving ample space for creativity in the kitchen.

CCD Innovation has been tracking the growth of this trend since the mid-1990s, along with Americans' long love affair with flavors from the area, especially Italian, Spanish and Greek cooking. What's new now is that restaurant chefs, food producers and foodservice providers are serving up familiar foods from the region but elevating them in ways that continue to excite the palate. In addition, food professionals are looking beyond comfort cuisines from this area and exploring less charted culinary landscapes.

We believe the continuation of this hot trend from fine dining to fast casual still has plenty of room for product development and growth, which is why we offer this in-depth look at the Mediterranean Rim diet. This trend has evolved over the past 20 years and in this report we examine the current drivers that continue to sustain excitement, adoption, and interest in Mediterranean Rim food across five stages:

Stage 1 – Italian Sformato: The sformato is a unique little culinary entity, having the sophistication of a soufflé but employing technique that is far easier and even a little homey.

Stage 1 – Octopus: As U.S. demographics continue to diversify, interest in this type of sea creature will only grow. We anticipate octopus appearing in specialty food seafood salads with a Mediterranean feel that includes olives, roasted peppers and tomatoes.

Stage 2 – Egyptian Dukkah: Dukkah has many attributes of a snack food—a nice crunch, a little bit of salt and a spice kick. It also works well as a low-sodium savory seasoning for all sorts of dishes: Fold dukkah into hummus or dip. Stir it into whole grains or pasta dishes. Whisk into salad dressing. Add to a roasted root soup, such as carrot, for some extra strong flavor.

Stage 2 – Dips Beyond Hummus: The demand for Med Rim dips taps into Americans' interest in finding healthful snack foods that taste great. Besides being wheat-, gluten- and (often) dairy-free, Mediterranean spreads can be low-fat, low-cholesterol, high-fiber, protein-rich options for vegetarians, vegans and health-conscious consumers of the carnivore variety. These kinds of refrigerated dips come in convenient packaging making healthful, grab-and-go snacking a possibility for everyone from toddlers to teens and busy Millennials to baby boomers.

Stage 3 – Moroccan Preserved Lemons: While these condiments are easily made at home, preserved lemons require sufficient time to mature (from 30 days to a couple of months), which makes them a tough sell to many home cooks; consequently, the opportunity is ripe to supply these preserved beauties to consumers at nonspecialty prices.

Stage 4 – Spanish Paella: There's been renewed enthusiasm for this classic dish, as evidenced by its presence on many independent restaurant menus. We see this as part of chefs' personal exploration of traditional Spanish cuisine as well as a way to offer a unique, sharable dish that can also be made in many different ways.

Stage 5 – The Mediterranean Diet: The Mediterranean way of eating—a diet rich in olive oil, nuts, seafood and produce—has long been touted as good for one's health. Of course, health benefits are not the only reason this cuisine has become increasingly popular in the United States: A winning flavor profile, readily available fresh fruits, vegetables and seafood, and a growing interest in global regional cuisines has helped Mediterranean food become so popular, not only in its more mainstream forms, like pita bread and chips, hummus, and Greek yogurt, but also in newly emerging Mediterranean-inspired fast-casual restaurants that offer diners healthful meal options.

The Culinary Trend Mapping Report is an indispensable tool for those whose job it is to stay abreast of
what's hot—and what will be—in the food world.

The reports leverage the CCD Innovation's signature Trend Mapping technique, a validated method for identifying which culinary trends are gaining traction and which are simply flashes in the pan.

Each 65+ page journal is packed with trends, data, strategies and insights on the food industry that simply aren't available anywhere else. To further enrich our already industry leading analysis, our reports now include new charts, listings, and other features based on results culled from Datassential MenuTrends, a database that tracks 7,000 distinct U.S. restaurants and over one million menu items.

Each Issue of the Culinary Trends Mapping Report

Identifies the maturity level of foods and ingredients according to CCD's unique, proprietary 5-stage trend mapping process.
Concentrates on a theme that is affecting the food industry, and then looks at the emerging and established trends along the Trend Map that are shaping this theme.
Delves into these trends and what they mean for you and the manufacturing, retailing, and foodservice industries.
Gives strategic insight into how consumers are thinking of and reacting to new foods and ingredients.
Provides business know-how regarding opportunities, challenges, and ways to implement current trends into foodservice, retail, and packaged goods operations.
Presents a feature interview with a member chef from CCD's exclusive 80+ member Chefs' Council who offers expert analysis and unique perspective on a specific trend.

Trend Mapping

Trend Mapping is guided by the premise that major food trends pass through five distinct stages on their way to the mainstream:

Stage 1: The ingredient, dish and/or cooking technique appears at upscale dining establishments, ethnic and popular independent restaurants.
Stage 2: The item is featured in specialty consumer-oriented food magazines such as Bon Appetit plus retail stores such as Sur La Table that target culinary professionals and serious home cooks.
Stage 3: The item begins to appear in mainstream chain restaurants—Applebee's or Chili's—as well as retail stores such as Williams-Sonoma that target recreational cooks.
Stage 4: Publications such as Family Circle and Better Homes and Gardens pick up the buzz.
Stage 5: Finally, the trend makes its way to quick service restaurant menus and either starts to appear or gains increased mainstream presence on grocery store shelves.

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