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## Daily Insight Article:

### THE 8 BIGGEST FOOD TRENDS WE LEARNED AT THE BITTEN CONFERENCE

FROM RESTAURANTS DESIGNED TO BE INSTAGRAMMED TO THE HAWAIIAN FOOD TAKING OVER FAST CASUAL, HERE ARE THE EIGHT BIGGEST FOOD TRENDS TO KNOW NOW.

There is no denying the power of Millennials' food obsession—and their food preferences. Millennials [have been](#) outpacing Boomers in dining for years. Sales of "hipster" products [have been](#) soaring, with revenue of organic foods doubling between 2003 and 2014, specialty coffee shops tripling since 2002, and craft beer becoming 19% of the overall U.S. market. Big food brands have been attempting to keep up by creating more Millennial-friendly products and acquiring independent brands. Many of those big food brands [are seeing](#) stunted growth thanks to the unique eating habits of younger consumers, who are eating fewer courses, eating more healthy snacks, and demanding for fresh, unprocessed foods. (Research suggests that Millennials and Gen Z are the only groups that will increase their organic and fresh food purchasing through 2019.) They're constantly on the lookout for the next new tastes to try, and Ypulse research found that [91% of 18-33-year-olds](#) are open to trying new foods.

We're [always looking out](#) for what those next new tastes will be, so this month, we attended [Bitten](#), an event all about the future of food. The speakers at the conference were billed as "innovators and thought-leaders—those who are disrupting the food space." Innovation and disruption were a constant theme these thought-leaders discussed—as were young consumers and their new approach to dining. Restaurant consultant Michael Whiteman informed attendees that the top 10 branded food brands have lost 4% of their market share in the last five years—to young, entrepreneurial companies. According to Bitten, "Whether you're an agency, brand, entrepreneur, startup, policy-maker or cook... there is no more important or exciting topic today than the state and future of food." Here are eight of the biggest trends we learned at the event:

#### 1. Restaurants Want To Be Instagram-able

Remember when restaurants and chefs were annoyed by the new trend of taking pictures of your plate? Those days have disappeared quickly as food pic sharing has gone mainstream, and Instagram has become a powerful platform for brands to gain fans on. Now, having customers Instagram your food is the goal—so much so that new restaurants are being designed to be Instagram-able. Lauren Moyal, founder of branding agency [Paperwhite Studio](#), reports that restaurants now see their brand is existing beyond the restaurant, being shared indefinitely online, and her firm has begun "to design restaurants with that Instagram moment in mind." Their work includes Insta-popular NYC spots Jack's Wife Freda and By Chloe, the latter of which was [founded by](#) two Millennials, "aiming to make vegan food more accessible and Instagram-friendly." According to Moyal, "Now when we're in design reviews, talking about typography and colors and logos, one comment is always "this will make a great photo" or "people will photograph this."

#### 2. For Millennials, Food Is A Competition

All of those Instagrammed food moments (see: #Food #Foodporn #Foodgram) aren't happening randomly. Moyal suggested that for younger consumers, dining out has become a form of entertainment, and food has become a competition. Where you're able to go and how long are you're willing to wait for food are badges of honor for Millennials, who, as we know, are seeking out sharable experiences and making [food the new status symbol](#). Documenting that plate or bite has become a way to document your victory in the food game. Moyal declared that, "Instagram photos have become a trophy for the people who are going to the restaurant. You've competed to get in, waited on line, or on the phone to get a reservation. Photos are the first thing that people are doing when they sit down."

### 3. Food X Fashion

AnneStine Bae, founder of *Brutal Magazine*, "focuses on showcasing talent from varying creative industries through the lens of food and fashion" and discussed the growing synergy between the fashion world and the food world. She pointed to model Karlie Kloss's vegan cookie company, Karlie's Kookies, and a 2012 co-branded effort from Banana Republic and *Bon Appétit* as notable examples. In the latter, the retailer created a "desk to dinner" collection, which was featured on OpenTable along with *Bon Appétit* content. Luxury fashion brands are not immune to the trend: in 2015, Prada took over Milan restaurant Pasticceria Marchesi, and they're [currently](#) looking globally for more locations to purchase, which Bae says is a part of "Revamping Prada brand into something more edible."

### 4. "Spiking Sweet With Heat"

We've talked about the [Sriracha effect](#), and Millennials' love of spicy foods is continuing to impact the industry. In his rundown of major food trends, Michael Whiteman said, "Snacks are moving from sweet to savory, and spicy." The spice takeover is showing up in unexpected places, and while "before recently salted caramel was the go-to dessert flavoring," now desserts and other sweet treats are getting a spicy infusion. Examples include [Sriracha ice cream](#) with chocolate chips (from Brooklyn, delivered to door in a monthly subscription), spiced honeys, Kind's Thai sweet chili snack bar, and Chobani's recent introduction of spicy yogurt flavors, like mango Sriracha.

### 5. They're Lining Up For Poké

Poké is "the next raw fish craze," and potentially the next fast casual craze, currently making Millennials line up for lunch in New York. The dish, which comes from Hawaii, could be described as deconstructed sushi in a bowl, and recently four new poke spots, including Wisefish, and Pokéworks, have opened in NYC. Pokéworks offers bowls, but also another potential food trend: the pokeritto, a burrito sized-poke roll. Whiteman reports that "sushi-ritos" are already all the rage in California. (By the way, signs at Pokéworks encourage their young patrons to share Instagram shots of their meals, and tag the restaurant.)

### 6. "New-ish Jew-ish Food"

Whiteman continued his trend list with the resurgence of Jewish (or "Jew-ish") foods, citing [Russ and Daughters Cafe](#) (which happens to be an Instagram foodie favorite) as a restaurant at the forefront of the trend. He explains that today's young chefs are exploring their own ethnic roots in cuisine, and reexamining heritage cuisines. They're putting their own spins on dishes, and "juggling grandparents' traditions with modernism."

### 7. Fast Casual Is Becoming A Star Chefs' Game

According to Whiteman, "Chipotle didn't invent fast casual, but ran like hell with it." As we've reported, fast casual is a huge food industry movement, with [new competitors appearing](#) it seems every week. Increasingly, those competitors are led by star chefs, and the list of big food names who are opening fast casual eateries is "constantly growing." (See: David Chang's Fuku, Danny Meyer's Shake Shake, Bobby Flay's Bobby's Burgers, [and many more](#).) Those chefs see fast casual as a way to create a bigger legacy—and profit margin—than a pricey-to-run standalone restaurant. After all, it's the only restaurant type that is

currently growing. When Top Chef winner Harold Dieterle announced he was closing his two New York restaurants, [he told](#) Eater, “The cost of doing business in New York is going up and up and up...It's been very frustrating...I'd like to maybe do some consulting work and perhaps eventually get into a fast casual concept.”

### **8. Bowls Are Big**

Poké isn't the only bowl in town. According to Whiteman, people are “bonkers for food in bowls”— especially at fast casual chains. Acai bowls, porridge bowls, and more are being offered up to Millennials, who can't seem to get enough of the home-y dining experience, which Whiteman says is reminiscent of something that mom or grandma would have served. No wonder nostalgic Millennials craving childhood comforts are gobbling them up.

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