



2017's HEALTHY FOOD TRENDS

We've talked to those in the know to find out what we'll all be eating in the coming year. Butternut squash boodles and savoury porridge, anyone?

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Did you embrace courgetti, coconut oil and smoothies and pack in the protein this year? Want to know which new superfoods you can look forward to eating in 2017?

Industry insiders have been busy developing the latest products in response to our buying habits, so read on to find out what's in store for you and why. It's time to get even more adventurous...

SAVOURY YOGHURT & SNACK BARS

With sugar off the menu, savoury is where it's at – including yoghurts, snack bars, porridge and granolas. In America, they're infusing the flavours of carrot, beetroot, sweet potato and tomato into yoghurt for a savoury (with a hint of sweet) accompaniment to all sorts of food, so soon you'll be popping savoury yoghurt into your shopping basket too. Look out for savoury (gluten-free) snack bars, such as Rude Health's beetroot, pumpkin or sweet potato bars (99p for a 35g bar; rudehealth.com). And try making savoury porridges and granolas with foods such as avocado – find recipes in *Spoon*, Annie Morris and Jonny Shimmin's new breakfast recipe book (see page 29).



2. FOODIE MEAL KITS

Want to eat healthily but too busy to cook? In the past, we might have turned to frozen ready meals, but in 2017 we'll continue cooking nutrition-filled meals at home using meal kits delivered to our door. Arriving complete with photo recipe cards, these schemes save you shopping and prepping time by weighing out and delivering all the ingredients. Hellofresh.co.uk, which works in partnership with Jamie Oliver, whose recipes it uses, is probably the best-known, but others include Mindfulchef.com and Riverford Organic Farmers (riverford.co.uk). Supermarkets are getting in on the act, too. Waitrose is currently trialling 'Dinner for Tonight' meal-for-two kit bags in 22 branches.



3. WATERMELON JUICE

Move over coconut water. This year, watermelon juice will be the drink to grab after a workout. Watermelon rehydrates, speeds metabolism, detoxifies and is rich in potassium and L-Citrulline, which aids muscle recovery. One of its biggest fans is Beyoncé, who mentions watermelon in her song *Drunk in Love*. She also now holds a stake in WTRMLN WTR, a cold-pressed, bottled watermelon juice. UK-based Mello (mellodrinks.co.uk) makes juice from cold-pressed watermelon and cantaloupe – find it in independent stores and in Waitrose.



4. SUSTAINABLE FISH

Love cooking fish but worried about its sustainability? Brands and supermarkets will this year be offering more frozen fish that's certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC; msc.org) in response to customer feedback. A league table of MSC-labelled frozen products, contained in a recent MSC report, was headed by Birdseye, which recently became the UK's first frozen brand to be 100 per cent MSC certified. Sainsbury's, the UK's biggest overall retailer of MSC-labelled seafood, came second, closely followed by Tesco, which tripled its MSC-labelled frozen seafood in the past 12 months.

6. THE NEXT COURGETTI

Could this be the year of the boodles? We may have exhausted the things you can do with courgetti and cauliflower 'rice', but healthy foodies still love the idea of replacing carbs with vegetables and supermarkets keep coming up with new products. This year's vegetable carb substitutes are likely to be butternut squash, spirals into 'boodles'; aubergines, turned into buns, 'pasta' sheets and chips; and sweet potatoes as 'toast' (simply cut slices and pop them in the toaster). Look out too for gluten-free pea pasta and edamame spaghetti, and – in Sainsbury's – 'rice' made from beetroot.



5. COCONUTS FOREVER

We still love this tropical food, but brands such as The Groovy Food Company (groovyfood.co.uk) are now experimenting with coconut as flour, sugar (delicious on porridge) and protein. Meanwhile, Motion Nutrition (motionnutrition.com) is making coconut-based sports supplements, such as Organic Coconut Whey Protein, which contains coconut flour (high-fibre, high-protein with healthy, energising fatty acids), whey concentrate and a dash of coconut palm sugar (for natural, low-GI sweetness). The biggest coconut sensations this year, though, will be jam, vinegar and jerky (dehydrated coconut flesh). Try Buko Organic's Coconut Jam (bukofoods.com), made from coconut milk and nectar, and Biona's (biona.co.uk) coconut vinegar (fermented coconut sap).



ORGANIC IS BACK

Sticking up for the environment and animal welfare, growing numbers of people will be buying organic in 2017, even if it means paying a bit more. 'Consumers want to know where their food comes from, and believe organic food is food they can trust,' says the Soil Association. The Association reports a six per cent increase in organic sales through supermarkets over the past year, but some supermarkets, such as Sainsbury's, are seeing far greater increases – including a 57 per cent year-on-year rise in sales of organic sauces and pasta and 17 per cent in sales of fresh organic poultry. A growing number are buying organic vegetables through box schemes, such as the one by Riverford Organic Farmers, who says sales are up 10 per cent year on year. We'll also be buying organic when it comes to health and beauty products, sales of which increased by 21.6 per cent in 2015.

VITAMIN D IS A MUST

The big food brands have been adding vitamin D to items such as margarine and infant formula milk for years, but, due to wider awareness about the risks to our health of low levels of vitamin D, more foodie brands are now adding the nutrient to their products. Vitamin D is essential for helping you absorb calcium and phosphorus for healthy bones, and a deficiency is thought to have many detrimental effects on overall health. The best natural source is sunlight, but as that's often in short supply in the UK, some supermarkets, including M&S, are now enriching their pre-packed sandwiches and sandwich rolls with vitamin D. Foods that are naturally rich in this important vitamin include mackerel, sardines and eggs.



9. KALETTES AND SPROUTS

Still eating kale? Keep up – the new superfood brassica in town is kalettes. Kalettes, in case you're not familiar with them, are a British-bred cross between kale and Brussels sprouts, look like mini cabbages and are great blanched then stir-fried or roasted. Milder and sweeter than Brussels sprouts, kalettes' fans include Gwyneth Paltrow and Miranda Kerr. We won't be turning our backs on the humble Brussels sprout though – Sainsbury's reports August sales of the vitamin-C rich veg were up 43 per cent this year. Grate them raw into salads!



10. NOURISH BOWLS

#buddhabowl is now one of Instagram's most popular hashtags – and is likely to remain so during 2017. Like so many food trends, nourish bowls (also known as Buddha or 'hippie' bowls) have come over from America. They're a kaleidoscope of greens, proteins, nuts and seeds, topped with spicy or creamy dressings. Cookery writers such as Anna Jones have helped make these popular in Britain, and M&S is launching three, including an Edamame & Black Rice Nourish Bowl, costing £3.50.

11. DRINKING FOR THE GUT

Gut health is increasingly being shown to be key to overall wellbeing, so we'll be turning to fermented drinks such as kombucha and kefir to keep those healthy gut bacteria happy. Kombucha is a sparkling fermented tea drink (tasting a bit like cola without the sweetness) originally from Manchuria, while kefir is cow's milk that's fermented with living kefir grains. Both are wonderfully refreshing after a workout. Buy them in delis and some supermarkets; Sainsbury's, for instance, sells Milko Kefir (£1.35 for a litre) and sales have risen by 166 per cent year-on-year. Planet Organic stocks both kefir and kombucha. Try Nourish Kefir (nourishkefir.co.uk), made in South London using organic milk (£3.50 for 500ml; planetorganic.com).



READER OFFER

Buy *Living Tea* for the special price of £9.99 including p&p (rrp £12.99) by calling Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting the reference 'HU5'.

12. CHARCOAL

Eating charcoal is a red-hot trend! It's been used for thousands of years as a natural detox as it soaks up toxins in the body. The form found in food and drink is activated charcoal, made from natural sources such as coconut shells. Expect to find it in anything from tonics and cocktails to eye-catching black burger buns, savoury wafers and biscuits, macaroons and ice creams. On the drinks front, Botanic Lab (botanic-lab.co.uk) is leading the way with its Isotonic juice (£60 for 8 bottles) made with medical-grade charcoal, already being used by sportspeople. Waitrose is selling a Charcoal Smoked Salmon Bagel developed by Heston Blumenthal, as well as Miller's Damsels charcoal wafers.



13. NEW NON-WHEAT FLOURS

With growing numbers of people cutting down on gluten, exciting new flours are arriving on shelves. A favourite will be buckwheat, a seed produced by the rhubarb family, which is being used in noodles, blinis and galettes (Breton pancakes). Make them at home using Doves Farm (dovesfarm.co.uk) buckwheat flour. Chickpea (gram) flour is also poised to soar in popularity, already making an appearance as Chickpea wafers at high-end restaurants such as Fera at Claridges (feraatclaridges.co.uk). Look out, too, for Hodmedod's flours (hodmedods.co.uk), made from peas, fava beans and quinoa. Or try cricket flour, yes from crickets, from gathrfoods.com (see no 19). The newest kid on the block, though, is tiger nut flour, made from the tiny mineral-rich root vegetable. Visit thetigernutcompany.co.uk.



14. COTTAGE CHEESE RETURNS!

Yep, really! Low in fat, high in protein and one of the most nutritious dairy foods, this '70s slimmers' favourite is the perfect food for anyone watching their waistline. Dating back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, cottage cheese is made by curdling milk and draining away most of the liquid whey, resulting in a fresh-tasting dairy product that's high in protein and low in fat. Now, thanks to the hunger for high-protein foods, it's back. Waitrose has seen sales of its LoveLife Calorie Controlled fat-free cottage cheese increase 13 per cent on last year. And M&S has given it a makeover, says M&S product developer Rosie While, with exciting new flavours including Red Pepper Tapenade and Smoked Salmon Dill (£1 for 100g), each with less than 100 calories per 100g pot. Ideal as toppings and for sandwiches, the cheese can also be used as a base ingredient for quiches and omelettes.

FOOD WASTE PRODUCTS

Horried at food waste – the UK still bins £12.5 billion worth of food each year, including 1.6 billion apples – we'll be finding more creative ways of tackling it this year. So we'll be eating root to leaf, pickling and soup-making, shopping little and often rather than in one big shop, and buying in bulk (so there's little or no packaging) from stores such as The Dry Goods Store (thedrygoodsstore.com) or direct from producers. We'll also be salving our consciences by buying healthy food products that are themselves made from food waste. Snact (snact.co.uk), for instance, makes fruit jerky snacks from fruit and veg that has been rejected for being too small, too ugly or too abundant – in 2016, it saved around 50 tonnes of food. Supermarkets will also be doing their bit by selling discounted wonky veg, and growing numbers of us will be eating in pay-as-you-feel cafés run by The Real Junk Food Project (realjunkfoodproject.org) that converts food destined for waste into healthy and delicious meals. We'll also be harnessing technology to fight waste, using apps such as OLIO (olioex.com), which connects you with local people and stores to share unwanted food.

16. INSECT POWER

Bored with the usual energy bars and protein shakes? Now, you can get a workout boost by munching crickets – probably not whole, but ground into flour and popped into energy bars. 'Crickets are the world's most nutritious and sustainable source of protein,' says Shami Radia, co-founder of Eat Grub (eatgrub.co.uk), which makes cricket flour energy bars in Coconut & Cacao and Cranberry & Orange (£19.99 for 12). 'The insects also provide iron, calcium and zinc, and plenty of omega-3,' he says. Gathr Foods also uses cricket flour in its Crobar energy bars (£7.99 for four, gathrfoods.com). Look out too for Cricket Bolognese sauce made by One Hop Kitchen (onehopkitchen.com). ■

