

Trend Watch

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TOP TAKEAWAYS

Smithfield. 2016 CHEF'S TABLE

In February, Smithfield kicked off the 2016 Chef's Table season in Los Angeles, California, at Pistola, an upscale, traditional Italian restaurant. Pistola Executive Chef Vic Casanova and Corporate Chef Frank Dominguez co-collaborated to create an unforgettable menu featuring Smithfield's DURoC and Log Smoked Bacon product lines. Chefs from the Los Angeles area attended this invite-only cocktail party to taste Smithfield's pork products and enjoy an evening with other industry chefs. Guests also had the opportunity to learn about the Smithfield commitment to sustainability in addition to the Smithfield product line. The food was plentiful, and the company was even better. From upscale restaurants to resorts & hotels, chefs from all over the area were in attendance. The restaurant was transformed into the perfect atmosphere for tasting stations, where guests were able to try different Smithfield products with an Italian twist. Smithfield is headed to Charlotte, North Carolina, for its next Chef's Table at the beginning of May.



CRISPY SMITHFIELD PORK CHEEK

"Milanese" wild arugula, sweet 100 tomatoes, lemon & parmesano reggiano



DUROC PORK TENDERLOIN

Wrapped in prosciutto, braised kale, white bean puree & Cinzano



SLOW-ROASTED DUROC PORK BELLY

Beluga lentils, caramelized shallots & salsa verde



TUSCAN DUROC SPARE RIBS

Garlic, rosemary & tomatoes



CASARECCI

Neapolitan DURoC Pork shoulder ragù, chili & pecorino

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DATA TO NOTE



Restaurants Are Changing Their Menus To Cater To Snacking

The upswing of snacking has continuously made news over the past year. Consumers, specifically Millennials, have changed their eating habits and are eating smaller portions more often. Snacking has transitioned into a huge part of daily life—accounting for 18 percent of all restaurant dining occasions, according to the NPD.¹ Chefs have been paying attention and are offering smaller portions to their consumers. Some restaurants are even changing up their menus and offering smaller portions of all their dishes to meet the snack-sized demands. Once traffic and revenue started to increase, restaurants really had no choice but to expand their offerings of snack-sized dishes. In a recent study conducted by Penton Food and Restaurant Group, 43 percent of restaurateurs saw an increase of revenue from snacks alone in the past two years.²

These days, everyone is constantly on-the-go. Consumers are drawn to mini-meals or snacks because they are quick and affordable, giving the energy needed to carry on throughout the day. Smaller portions or shareable items also perform well in social settings. Diners who go out in groups can order sampler platters or appetizer flights and taste different dishes. Restaurants who offer these smaller-sized portions will benefit from increased revenue and traffic as well as give their customers what they want. From sliders to mini tacos, the options are endless when it comes to creating snack-sized dishes.



BACON CHORIZO MEDJOOLS
Medjool dates stuffed with house chorizo, wrapped in house bacon, piquillo sauce.

Feast, Bloomington, IN



BALSAMIC GLAZED PORK RIBS
Crispy Brussels sprout leaves, sea salt.

Bar Siena, Chicago, IL



PIG EARS
Crispy pig ears tossed in a smoky spice mix, served with orange-fennel aioli.

Blind Butcher, Dallas, TX



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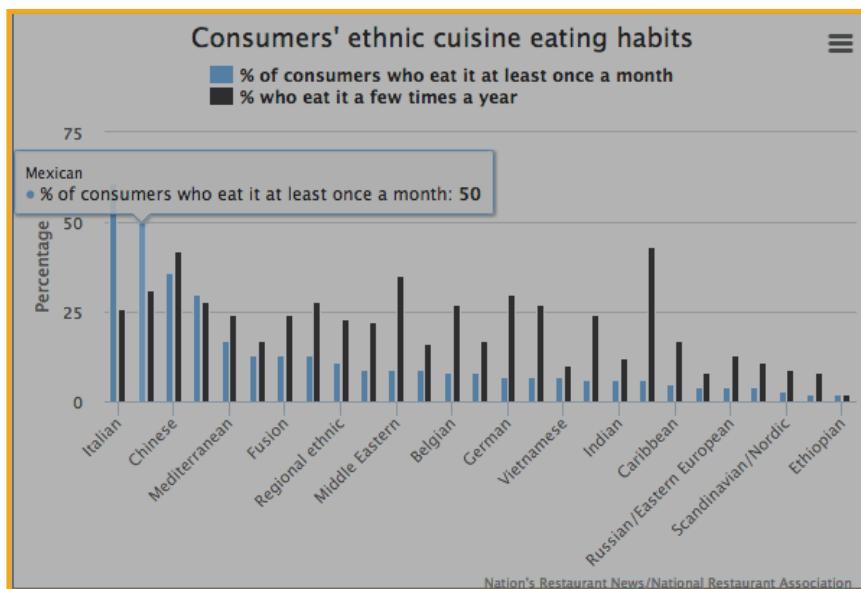
PORK IN THE NEWS



Mexican Takes a New Turn

Mexican cuisine has always been pretty consistent in terms of what consumers could expect to appear on menus. Consumers get their ethnic fix without straying too far off the comfort path. In a recent survey by the National Restaurant Association, out of 1,000 participants surveyed, half said they eat Mexican food once a month.³ Mexican-American has largely penetrated the market - tacos, burritos, fajitas - all familiar to and loved by the American consumer. Recently, chefs have been exploring modern Mexican and taking the ethnic cuisine back to its authentic roots. While chefs may have their different spins on modern Mexican, the common thread that runs between them all is fresh, fusion and authenticity.⁴

Modern Mexican takes a California-vibe of fresh and healthy, but punching with big flavors. The sweet, spicy, salty and sour flavor profiles that are so prevalent in Mexican cuisine is really what brings consumers back for more.⁵ When mixing two cuisines, such as Mexican and Asian, the fusion of the two brings so much flavor and complexity to a dish that it really wows customers and allows for chefs to explore their culinary creativity. Mexican food features an array of meat-based dishes- pork often has the spotlight in Mexican dishes. Since pork can be used in many different applications, it's perfect for Mexican Street fare- more casual and finger-style foods. Tacos and tamales are two popular street foods commonly filled with pork, along with other ingredients. Carnitas, one of the most popular authentic dishes, is always made from slow roasted pork shoulder, which results in a tender, 'fall-apart- in-your-mouth' entrée. Chefs love that pork allows them to cook delicious, traditional Mexican fare, or they can use it to create fresh and innovative spins on already popular dishes. From pork al pastor to a pulled pork taco, pork's heartiness and adaptability allows it to soak in the Mexican flavors and shine on a menu.



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OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING

Chefs Turn Up Flavor and Freshness

Modern Mexican means chefs can use their own creativity to showcase the authentic and fresh flavors of Mexican cuisine. Chefs are breaking the mold of 'typical' Mexican-American dishes that are commonly on menus and are putting a new twist on a consumer-favorite cuisine.



AL PASTOR

Grilled pork shoulder, roasted pineapple, white onion, avocado salsa, cilantro
täkō, Pittsburgh, PA



SMOKED PORK QUESO FUNDIDO

Otter Creek organic cheddar, spicy salsa negra-glazed smoked pork skirt steak, añejo cheese, grilled white onions
Frontera Grill, Chicago, IL



ROASTED PORK LOIN

Topped with jalapeño relleno, fresco-oaxaca cheese, chile-champagne jelly
Babita Mexicuisine, Los Angeles, CA



BRAISED PORK

Chile seco peppers, mushrooms, cilantro cream
Mesero, Dallas, TX



LECHON

Roasted suckling pig, habanero coconut mole, eggplant, corn tortillas
The Black Ant, New York, NY