

Trend Watch

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'Tis the Season for Comfort Food

The onset of the holidays will have many people craving hearty, delicious, comforting dishes that bring about feelings of warmth and happiness. It's also the time of year when consumers start seeking out holiday flavors. Nostalgia is playing a big role in food trends right now, as consumers crave food that reminds them of childhood or special family moments.¹ To satisfy this hunger for comfort and tradition, it's time to start shifting menus toward winter flavors and heartier meals.

62%

of adults say their favorite comfort food reminds them of their childhood.²



52% of consumers age 18-34 desire more ethnic soups.³



38% of consumers say they would order an Asian-style soup.³



Soup's On!

Late fall is a perfect time to start highlighting soup and stews on the menu, especially when 65% of consumers are more likely to purchase soup or stew when it is cold outside.

Soups, especially those that feature ethnic flavor profiles, are associated with satisfying cravings and offer feelings of comfort. After all, 60% of consumers order soup because they are in the mood for it! Tomato-based soups and cream-based soups are especially comforting, as they provide a familiar platform to feature unique ingredients. Soup and stews are excellent vehicles to feature pork as the star protein, especially when it comes to bacon: 47% of consumers consider ordering soups that feature bacon.³

FOR MENU INSPIRATION, CHECK OUT THESE TWO PORK-BASED, ON-TREND SOUPS THAT OUR SMITHFIELD CHEF PARTNERS CAME UP WITH:

PORK CHOP POSOLE | SERVES 2



- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 2 6oz. Chop Shop Pork Chops, Bone-In
- 4 cups Posole Broth (recipe to follow)
- 1 cup sliced cabbage
- 4 radishes, sliced
- 1 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 2 limes, juiced
- 1 cup hominy, drained and fried until crispy

Posole Broth:

- 6 guajillo chiles, seeded/destemmed, torn in pieces
- 2 ancho chiles, seeded/destemmed, torn in pieces
- ½ yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 6 garlic cloves
- 2 Tbsp. pork lard
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1 tsp. Mexican oregano
- 4 cups stock (preferably pork)

For Posole Broth: Toast chiles briefly for one minute in dry cast iron pan to toast. Cover with water and soak for 30 min. Transfer chiles to a blender; add onion and garlic, along with 1 cup water. Purée till smooth. Heat lard over medium-high heat. Add chile purée and cook, stirring for 4 min. Add stock, ham hock and Mexican oregano. Bring to a boil, reduce to a slight simmer and cook uncovered for 30 minutes. Strain and reserve.

Season pork chops. Heat a sauté pan over high heat with 2 Tbsp. canola oil. Cook flipping once until pork reaches 145°F. Toss cabbage, radish, cilantro and lime juice in a bowl to combine. Season to taste. To serve: Place posole broth in bottom of shallow serving dish. Add pork chops, top with cabbage mixture and garnish with crispy hominy.

1 The National Culinary Review. "Cultural Contradictions Drive FoodService Trends." October 2016.

2 The Harris Poll. "Comfort Foods, Sickbed Snacks and Celebratory Nosh: What are Americans' Favorites?," January 2016

3 Technomic, Left Side of the Menu: Soup & Salad Consumer Trend Report, 2016

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PORK BELLY RAMEN | SERVES 2



Broth:

- 1 quart chicken, vegetable or seafood stock
- 2 Tbsp. mirin or dry vermouth
- 2 Tbsp. miso paste
- 2 thin slices fresh ginger
- 2 tsp. soy sauce

Simmer stock, mirin (or dry vermouth), miso paste, fresh ginger and soy sauce in a saucepan for 10 min. Strain before using. Plate the pork belly with noodles, boiled egg and spring onions in a bowl. Top with broth.

Ramen:

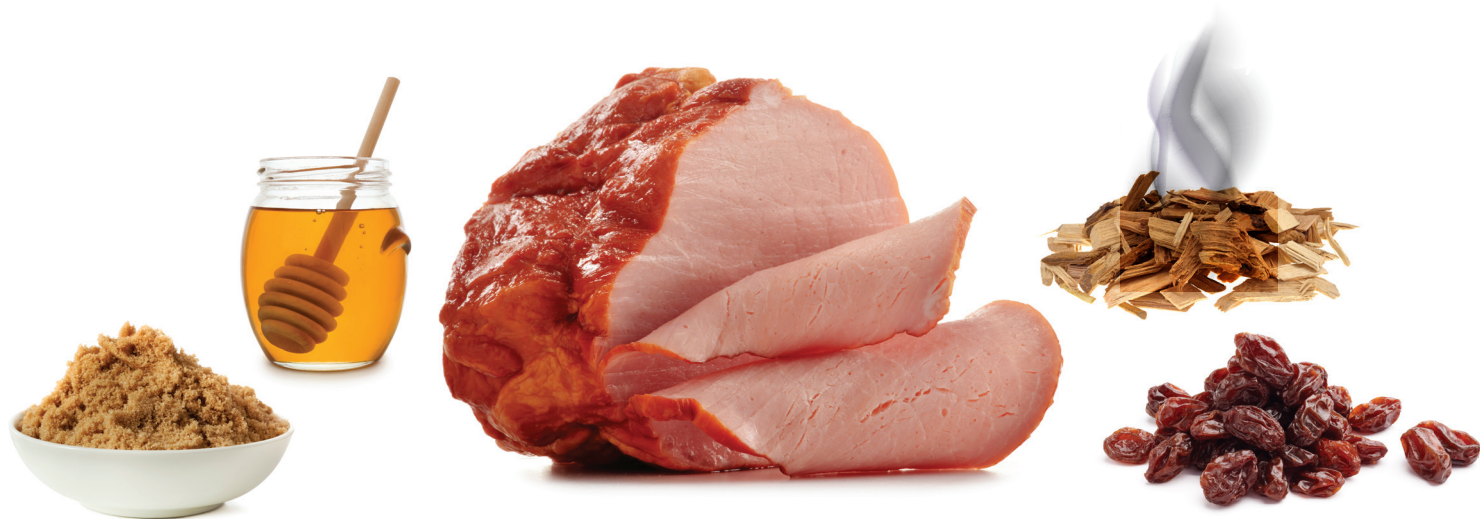
- 8oz. *SmokeNFast*® Pork Belly, sliced
- 1 pkg. noodles, cooked (13 oz.)
- 1 boiled egg, cooked to preference
- bunch of fresh spring onions, sliced

Ham: The Ultimate Holiday Centerpiece

Though turkey has its place during the holiday season, don't make the mistake of overlooking ham. Ham has strong ties to the holidays: It's been the star of many holiday meals, both at home and away from home, for many years. There's a reason ham is often featured at the carving station when consumers are dining out for their holiday meals – people love it! With a 52.4% menu penetration, ham is featured on menus more often than turkey, whose menu penetration is 45.2%.⁴

⁴ Datassential Menu Trends, November 2016

FOR SOME INSPIRING AND TRENDY FLAVOR IDEAS, TAKE A LOOK AT HOW THE VEGAS BUFFET SCENE HERO-ED HAM ON THANKSGIVING MENUS THIS YEAR:



- BUFFET AT WYNN **BROWN SUGAR-GLAZED BONE-IN HAM**
- FIRELIGHT BUFFET **BAKED HAM WITH RUM-RAISIN SAUCE**
- GARDEN COURT BUFFET **HONEY-GLAZED BAKED HAM**
- BUFFET AT TREASURE ISLAND **SMOKED CARVED HAM**

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Sugar, Spice and Everything...Bacon

Bourbon, toffee, chocolate, brown sugar, caramel, maple, fudge. All of these flavors scream holiday season. And all of these flavors are excellent to pair with bacon. Featuring bacon in desserts is one of the hottest trends right now – the popular protein has surged 137% on dessert menus over the past four years.⁵ And with chocolate ranking as the second most popular comfort food in America,⁶ there is no denying the power these two ingredients have to make mouths water.

This holiday season, venture outside the box and incorporate bacon into your seasonal desserts. The innovative twist on a traditional holiday dessert is sure to grab people's attention. Check out some bacon-infused desserts Smithfield featured at recent Chef's Table events:



Bacon Bread Pudding

Brioche, bacon-infused custard, candied bacon



Nutella® Cookie Sandwich

Chocolate cookies, Nutella cream, candied bacon



Bacon Cream Puffs

Smithfield bacon cream, candied bacon and caramel drizzle

⁵ Datassential, Dessert Report, 2016

⁶ The Harris Poll. "Comfort Foods, Sickbed Snacks and Celebratory Nosh: What are Americans' Favorites?", January 2016