

## What's hot – our key food predictions for 2018

**Already a key trend in 2017, we expect to see a further increase in healthy eating over the next year.**



Whilst our 2017 Review of the [Top 100 Innovative Food & Drink Products](#) included plenty of sweet treats and comfort foods, there was still a definite move towards major innovations in healthy eating too.

This trend is definitely set to continue through 2018, with consumers becoming even more informed about which foods and drinks can contribute to a healthier lifestyle.

Here are some of our key predictions for the year ahead...

### **Going vegan**

What was once a slightly odd fad has already started to grow in popularity and gain acceptance with the wider public.

The more traditional vegan benefits – animal cruelty, sustainability and environmental impacts – are now being overtaken by the obvious health benefits of a plant-based diet.

Restaurants which used to struggle to provide vegetarian options, are now coming up with vegan dishes to meet consumer demand – and food producers are also developing new and innovative products to appeal to vegans and other generally health-conscious consumers too.

No matter how many give up on 'Veganuary' before the month is out, some habits are likely to stick. The race is on to produce tasty meat-free 'food-on-the-go'.

### **The seeds of life**

With the ever-growing popularity of vegetarian and vegan food, consumers need other sources of protein – and seeds are an easy way to replace the protein that's missing as a result of eating less meat.

There's already a wide range of seeds on the market – chia, hemp and sunflower to name but a few – and we expect these natural-based foods to be heading towards the top of many shopping lists in 2018.

### **'Free From' for health**

The growth in gluten-free, dairy-free and soy-free products began with a desire to provide alternative foods for people with genuine intolerances to these food constituents.

Nowadays, more and more people are simply embracing these 'free from' products because they think they are being healthy. Is there a backlash to come? The next phase could be a rise in reduced gluten/dairy options for those keen to cut down, rather than cut out whole food groups.

### **Ditch the carbs**

In an effort to tempt consumers away from traditional carbohydrate staples like rice, pasta and bread, many producers already make interesting alternatives – like black bean spaghetti, carrot penne and even cauliflower rice.

We expect this trend to continue, with more innovation from producers and more take-up by consumers too.

### **For wannabe chefs**

With carefully weighed-out fresh ingredients and simple instructions, meal kits can turn even the least skilled cook into a bit of a maestro in the kitchen.

There's a certain satisfaction to cooking a meal from scratch – and the wealth of meals kits available on the market tap into this perfectly.

These kits are expected to continue flying off the shelves throughout 2018 as more and more consumers also realise that they are normally a much healthier option than ready meals.

### **#Insta-food**

Social media is already awash with proud food photos. The desire to share what we're eating – only 'virtually' of course – shows no signs of abating.

We predict that as the year progresses, food producers will refine their products and serving suggestions to allow consumers even more scope to #wow their friends with their latest culinary triumphs.

## About us

At Cambridge MR, we keep in touch with the nation's tastes by finding out what real consumers think of all the food and drink products out there.

Our annual review uses data from [Cambridge MR Fast Foodfax](#) – our in-house proprietary tool which holds over 20,000 consumer assessments of FMCG products built up over 30 years.

No other agency can tap into such a rich stream of market intelligence to look at how the food industry has developed over the past year, and predict likely trends for the future.

### Get in touch to find out more:

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