



## Appetisers hot topic

Appetisers need to be delicious, adventurous, and familiar says John Kauffman, Director of R&D Meat Systems Coatings with Kerry.

*In a recent study\* 84% of participants in North America selected 'great taste' as the most important factor when choosing away-from-home (AFH) appetisers. This was followed closely by value and quality of the item.*

We know that appetisers are an indulgent way for a group to start off a great eating experience. But what is 'great taste' in today's environment?

Over the last two years there has been an emergence of new profiles such as:

- Ethnic Spicy - Harissa, Habanero, Serrano and the increasingly ubiquitous Sriracha.
- Mexican cheese – Chihuahua and Manchego
- Unique proteins
- Ethnic comfort foods

We have also seen the adoption of items including:

- Charcuterie plate – prosciutto, soppressata, pickled veg, premium cheeses
- Pickled ingredients – kimchi, artichokes, cucumber slices, ginger, peppers
- Seasonal veggies
- Poutine

The introduction of these types of items has led to a proliferation of some former newcomers to the scene like kale, brussel sprouts and beet salads; sweet potato fries and tacos / flatbreads and small shared plates.

But at the top remain the ubiquitous kings of the appetiser heap – the delicious, sharable and customisable megatrenders, otherwise known as the 'tailgate favourites', including:

- Sliders
- Wings
- Quesadillas
- Mac and cheese

Markets are amazing in the way they can shape themselves, while remaining focused on the fact that appetisers need to be delicious. When one examines how the 'emergence' and 'adoption' items roll into the 'ubiquitous', it's rather harmonious.

In the US, for example, look at the foods placed on the bar top or table for the Super Bowl or other social event. The offerings are very much funnelled into those familiar ubiquitous items that are made unique with a new flavour profile and sharable format illustrating the megatrend.

One example would be Korean style double fried chicken wings tossed in a tangy sweet ginger glaze along with a side of spicy kimchi. This eating experience will touch all the bases, ultimately delivering that new flavour profile while still keeping it close to home.

It's delivered in a familiar format (such as chicken wings) but also by introducing the seasonal vegetable that happens to be pickled. It all appears simple but is very much designed with an intent to engage and expand the palette of the group of people sharing the dish.

Over the years the sophistication and willingness to be adventurous has grown through exposure of international and creative options found on social media and channels like the Food Network. This exposure to different profiles has encouraged consumers to be more adventurous and keep pushing the boundaries. One great example is to look at how ubiquitous sushi has become in even smaller cities across the US.

People want delicious, people want new, and people want familiar – and Kerry can help deliver it all.

Contact Kerry about appetisers.

\*Source: Datassential Menu Trends

