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YUM! BRANDS | COLLIDER LAB

What's Next in Dining

2027 FOOD TRENDS REPORT

the Way We Eat



SAYS A LOT ABOUT WHERE CULTURE IS HEADED

Defining and tracking the direction of culture is a blend of art and science (or, as we call it, a sciency art). The good news is that as one of the world's largest restaurant companies, Yum! has access to platefuls of research from around the globe and together with our internal strategy agency, Collider Lab, we turn those signals into a glimpse of where culture is headed next.

Looking toward 2027, we're seeing people continue to rewrite the rules of what and how they eat. **Snacking** is becoming a way of life, with young people 2x more likely than consumers 25 and older to visit a restaurant for a snack occasion. And while convenience, ease, and speed still matter, the retail **experience** is increasingly driving the category, with being seen as "very cool" now the #1 attribute fueling momentum in QSR. Food is becoming a passport to tasting the world, as **globally-inspired flavors and formats** increasingly signal what feels new and modern, making up 35% of the Top 20 modern menu ideas we tested, up from just 5% in 2025.

These aren't isolated trends. They're interconnected signals of a deeper cultural shift that will shape what people crave, how they choose, and the role restaurants play in their lives.

This report was created in collaboration with our internal strategy agency Collider Lab.

2026 Rewind

CHECKING IN ON LAST YEAR'S PREDICTIONS

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1 THE ME-ME-ME ECONOMY

People see eating moments as little "for me" luxuries whether solo or in a group.

SOLO ORDERING
PEAKED Q1 2025 AT
47% OF ALL OCCASIONS
& HAS HELD STEADY AT
45%



2 CHOICE THERAPY

People want it their way. Small choices: sauces, beverages, BYO bundles give them a sense of control.

IN 2026
OUT OF ALL
MENU IDEAS TESTED
GLOBALLY
60%
OF THE TOP 10
FEATURE CUSTOMIZATION



3 VIBE-MATHING

People are increasingly using deals to help them afford "something new and exciting" to maximize the vibes at QSR.

110
INDEX
VS. ALL OCCASIONS
UP FROM A **102** INDEX IN 2024



2027 Trends

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1 Perma Snack Mode



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2027 TRENDS

1 Perma Snack Mode



Taco Bell's Limited-Time
Crispy Chicken
Crunchwrap Slider

PERMA SNACK MODE

Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.
The next generation isn't waiting for any of them.

They're eating in the in-between – snacking, sipping, grazing and grazing some more across the day. Smaller portions, mini meals, sides, sweets and drinks are becoming just as much a part of the QSR occasion as the traditional combo meal.

And unlike the "little treat" moment of recent years, this isn't occasional. It's becoming the way we eat everyday, as smaller portions to satisfy our cravings become increasingly normal.

PERMA SNACK MODE



THE SNACKS GENERATION

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18-24 YEAR OLD QSR CUSTOMERS...

VISIT

1.2x MORE OFTEN AT **2-4PM**

& **2x** MORE OFTEN AT **8-10PM**

2x MORE LIKELY TO VISIT FOR A **SNACK OCCASION**

20% VS 10%



...COMPARED TO **25+**

PERMA SNACK MODE



KFC Tender

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SNACKS

TACO BELL



Gordita Crunch Duos



Crème Brulée Crunchwrap Sliders



Mini Dipping Burritos



Mini Taco Salad

In 2026 Taco Bell launched a series of **mini & slider-sized LTOs.**

NEARLY

3/4

OF TESTED MENU IDEAS

GEN Z & MILLENNIALS WERE MOST CONFIDENT IN

SKEWED TOWARDS

SNACKS & DESSERTS

IN 2026

SWEETS

50%

OF THE TOP 10

ALL-TIME PERFORMING

MENU IDEAS ARE

DESSERT ITEMS

ACROSS 6000+ TESTED

Double Chocolate Shake



Blue Wave Shake

Habit

In 2026, Habit Burger & Grill launched **a series of limited-time frozen treats** including the Double Chocolate Shake & Blue Wave Shake

SIPS



Iced Coffees

Krunch Shakes

Boba Refreshers

Sparkling Lemonades

In 2026, KWENCH by KFC, **a hand-crafted specialty drink lineup,** launched in select global markets

18-24 YEAR OLD

QSR CUSTOMERS ARE

1.3x

MORE LIKELY TO

TO ORDER A BEVERAGE

COMPARED TO **25+**



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2

the Crave for Experience

2027 TRENDS

THE CRAVE FOR EXPERIENCE

THE CRAVE FOR EXPERIENCE

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“A UNIQUE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE”

IS A TOP DRIVER OF SHARE

IN THE QSR CATEGORY AMONG SPECIFIC MARKETS

#2 INDONESIA

#3 SINGAPORE



“IS VERY COOL”

#1 PERCEPTUAL ATTRIBUTE

DRIVING MOMENTUM IN QSR

For years, QSR’s biggest battleground was Ease. Brands won by being faster, cheaper, & more convenient than the competition. While Ease is still important, today’s consumers are placing greater value on how a QSR experience makes them feel.

In fact, being seen as “very cool” has risen to become the #1 attribute driving momentum in the QSR category (while the impact of ease related metrics like speed, value, and convenience remains relatively flat).

What makes for a cool experience isn’t dictated by any single dimension; **rather it's the sum of many elevated details across people, product, & place.**

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THE BELLRISTA EFFECT



1 HOSPITALITY

THE **PEOPLE** EXPERIENCE

There's a business reason to prioritize employee interactions for sales growth, and Live Mas Café takes it to the next level with their new "Bellrista" role focused on hospitality.

#1

DRIVER OF
GUEST EXPERIENCE
CONTINUES TO BE

EMPLOYEE HOSPITALITY

THE CRAVE FOR EXPERIENCE



A BETTER BYO BURGER BOX

Habit Burger & Grill launched two family meal deals in an easy to share box style packaging

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2

WRAPPED IN EXPERIENCE

THE **PRODUCT** EXPERIENCE

Taste alone is no longer enough to satisfy cravings. **Today, people are chasing products wrapped in elevated packaging; an exciting experience around the food** (packaging, presentation, partnerships) is the key to unlocking relevance.

MENU IDEAS WITH ELEVATED PACKAGING DON'T JUST LOOK BETTER

THEY PERFORM BETTER

SCORING ON AVG:

+4 Percentage Points

HIGHER IN

POTENTIAL SALES & BUZZ IN TESTING

THE CRAVE FOR EXPERIENCE

3

HANG-WORTHY RESTAURANTS

THE **PLACE** EXPERIENCE

Whether they are dining in or away, people gravitate toward restaurants with aesthetic atmospheres, experiential environments, and social settings.

The shift is particularly appealing to Gen Alpha & Gen Z.

18-24 YEAR OLD

QSR CUSTOMERS ARE NEARLY

2x

MORE LIKELY TO PICK A RESTAURANT THAT OFFERS

"AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS MORE SPECIAL"

COMPARED TO 25+

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THE COLONEL'S NEW CRIB

As part of its larger brand refresh, KFC U.S. has launched Open House: an experience-forward asset design aimed at meeting the needs of next gen QSR customers





2027 TRENDS

3 Edible Exploration

EDIBLE EXPLORATION

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From Pop Mart to K-Beauty to Traditional Chinese Medicine to Latin American Sounds and Afrobeats – online exposure to global cultures continues to grow.

That exposure fuels cultural curiosity and increasingly makes its way onto our plates.

While the world has never felt more culturally accessible online, the increasingly K-shaped economy is pushing people to look for more accessible ways to satisfy their craving for discovery IRL. And food has become their passport. When a big international trip is out of reach, a little taste of somewhere else goes a long way.

> “Due to the cost of living, people aren’t traveling anymore. So **I can go to this café near me** and get a banana milk matcha cold foam drink I saw online **instead of going to South Korea.**”
>
> *- Collider Lab Customer Interviews*

EDIBLE EXPLORATION



Taco Bell's Butter Chicken Taco from India

GLOBALLY-INSPIRED

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Globally-inspired flavors and formats increasingly signal newness and cultural relevance – offering a taste of what's next. But adventure doesn't have to mean unfamiliar. **The sweet spot is often something consumers already know with a twist of something new.**

MENU IDEAS RANKED
HIGHEST ON MODERNITY
IN THE US IN 2026

35%
OF THE TOP 20 WERE
GLOBALLY INSPIRED
UP FROM **5%** IN 2025

MAJORITY WERE
GLOBAL FLAVORS WITH FAMILIAR FORMS
LIKE TACOS, SANDWICHES, & WINGS

FYI

Globally-inspired menu ideas have **equal purchase frequency** intent across income groups

low **<$100K** | high **$100K+**

EDIBLE EXPLORATION

HOW OUR BRANDS OFFER A TASTE OF THE WORLD

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Habit Burger & Grill's first Chef Residency brings **Korean inspiration across the menu.**

Customer Spotlight

"[I like this item because] it's a **different flavor and culture** that people **get to experience**."

- Collider Lab Customer Interviews



KFC launched a **global menu refresh featuring a global sauce pantry of over 20 flavors**, such as Honey Chili Crisp, Chimichurri Ranch, Mango Masala.



TACO BELL

Taco Bell US fans choose their next bite with Global Taco Vote: **India's Butter Chicken wins with 65% of the vote.**

Customer Spotlight

"[I like this item because] it's got the **traditional idea of nachos** that everyone loves with a slight spice and **exotic flavor twist**."

- Collider Lab Customer Interviews

Methodology

At Collider Lab, we design proprietary research tools and frameworks to help brands decode cultural shifts and uncover emerging consumer trends.

Our insights come from a mix of custom studies, social listening, expert collaboration and cultural analysis to uncover how people eat, drink and connect across different moments. We pair this data with ongoing trend tracking and real-world testing to see what truly resonates.

By combining what people say with what they do, we help brands spot the next big shift and design ideas that meet the moment.

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Thank You

KFC KFC KFC

TACO BELL

Habit BURGER & GRILL