THE MINDFUL CONSUMER

Our wellbeing and that of our environment have a huge influence on the way we shop today. It’s redefining how we live, according to the latest research from Waitrose & Partners.

A CONSUMER REVOLUTION is quietly taking place. You won’t see people shouting about it in the shopping aisles, but it’s happening nonetheless. As we become increasingly mindful of our own health, the wellbeing of our family and that of the planet, we’re reshaping how we shop, cook and eat. Welcome to the era of the mindful consumer.

The driving force behind this movement, as our research uncovered, is a desire to look after ourselves and our environment. Just how much this consciousness is taking hold was borne out by the incredible reaction to the final episode of BBC One’s Blue Planet II, a rallying call to tackle the plastic waste in our oceans. The mindful movement marks a subtle shift in how we live, based on the acknowledgement that our natural resources are precious.

We also worry about our personal resources, such as time – or rather the lack of it. Nearly 70% of us feel that the pressures of modern life have increased over the past five years. Close to half are working longer hours, and around four in 10 regularly check work emails in personal time. We manage the relentless pace by taking care of ourselves as best we can, eating more nutritious, less heavy foods, and making an effort to stay hydrated.

At Waitrose & Partners, we’re helping customers in every way we can. We’re facilitating the move towards healthier, lighter evening meals with Canapé Friday. People have also been whipping it into butter and crumbling it over seafood. Delicious to dip, or when served as a canapé. People have also been whipping it into butter and crumbling it over seafood.

THE FACTS & FIGURES

Waitrose & Partners carried out extensive research into the top food and drink trends in 2018. We conducted OnePoll consumer research on a wide range of topics with 2,000 people of all ages – not exclusively Waitrose & Partners customers. This was supported by focus groups in which people were asked in-depth questions about their shopping, cooking and eating habits. Some of the focus group participants share their views with us in this report.

Our research supports insights from our own food, drink and retail partners. It is backed up with sales data from millions of purchases throughout the year.

1. Fluffy jacket potatoes
2. Sticky garlic and chilli prawns
3. Strawberry and rose layer cake

WHAT LED THE WAY IN 2018

JACKFRUIT

Grown in South East Asia, Brazil and Africa, this sweet but sour fruit (pictured below) is now found in burgers and tacos. It’s also a popular vegetarian substitute for pulled pork.

MISO

Sales of white miso paste are up 28%, as it’s increasingly used in non-Japanese dishes (miso-glazed parsnips, for instance) to add a distinctive savoury taste.

CRISPY CHICKEN SKIN

Delicious to dip, or when served as a canapé. People have also been whipping it into butter and crumbling it over seafood.

MODERN MEXICAN

Fresh, spicy Mexican food has rocketed in popularity. The taco is the new sandwich, don’t you know.

AQUAFABA

The viscous quality of chickpea water makes it an excellent egg replacement in vegan merguez or mousse. It’s now mainstream enough to have made it into the Scrabble dictionary (22 points).

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Once the preserve of salad dressings, the purported health benefits and trend for fermented foods have seen sales rise 60% this year.

KEFIR

This naturally fermented drink, similar to yogurt, has long been consumed in mainland Europe. UK sales have almost tripled this year.
THE WAR ON PLASTIC

IT WAS THE SCENE that changed everything. Albatross parents unwittingly feeding their chicks plastic in the final episode of BBC One’s Blue Planet II. Our research found that 88% of those who watched the programme have altered their behaviour as a result.

Since the episode aired at the end of 2017, our customer services team has seen an 800% increase in questions about plastic. A new era of environmentalism has taken hold, and attitudes towards single-use bags, disposable plastic straws and packaging will never be the same.

Our research revealed that more than 60% of people use reusable water bottles more often than they did in 2017 – and this figure rose to over 70% among those aged 18-24. From the Houses of Parliament, which announced a ban on single-use plastics in May, to Love Island – the TV show’s legendary bottles are becoming commonplace. Sales of Waitrose & Partners bottles are up 24% and, according to our research, 60% of us now more regularly hand over a reusable cup when buying a takeaway coffee since watching Blue Planet.

Customers are increasingly purchasing unpackaged fruit and vegetables in our stores, too. For example, sales of loose pears are growing at 30 times the rate of bagged pears, and we expect this trend to continue.

“We’ve seen a big shift in consumer behaviour,” says Natalie Mitchell, Head of Brand Development & Product Innovation at Waitrose & Partners. “Previously, customers wanted to know that we were taking care of things, but now they get actively involved.”

The facts about plastic pollution are as shocking as they are disheartening. Around one million disposable carrier bags are used every minute around the globe and, left uncollected, the plastic in our oceans will outweigh fish by 2050, according to the World Economic Forum.

‘Previously, customers wanted to know that we were taking care of things, but now they get actively involved.’

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 80% of plastic waste in our oceans is made up of single-use bags and straws. And, according to the Crowne Plaza report, we are wasting an estimated 20 million plastic bottles every day.

‘Simple food is the perfect antidote to a busy life. We’re seeing demand for easy recipes with great ingredients, whether for a filling breakfast or a no-fuss dinner.’

ALISON OAKERVEE
Partner & Food Editor

We’ve received 30,000 questions and posts about plastic on @Waitrose Twitter in the six months after the final episode of Blue Planet II – a 16-fold increase on last year.

‘We’ve seen a real turning point in attitudes towards plastics and packaging waste. There’s been a significant and genuine change in behaviour.’

TOR HARRIS
Partner & Head of Corporate Social Responsibility

‘Refillable water bottles are everywhere – you see people with them in meetings, on trains or walking down the street. Whether it’s about caring for the environment or staying hydrated, the result is the same. It feels good and does you good.’

MOIRA HOWIE
Partner & Nutrition & Health Manager

66% of 18-24 YEAR-OLDS ARE NOW MORE LIKELY TO OPT FOR A REUSABLE COFFEE CUP WHEN OUT AND 56% OF 35-44 YEAR-OLDS

60% of us are now more likely to use a refillable water bottle.

67% of WOMEN
54% OF MEN
74% OF SCOTTISH
58% OF NORTHERN IRISH
100% OF LOVE ISLAND CONTESTANTS

Food and drink report
Guide by Waitrose & Partners is highlighting restaurants with our homes and shops: for the first time, this year’s The Good Food fish. Plant-based dining is reaching new heights, and not just in vegetables with the same care and attention we pay to meat and on time-honoured kitchen rituals. Today, we prepare and cook with new courses including the Vegan Christmas Dinner.

Twice as many vegetarian cooking courses as in previous years, launched vegan sections in 134 stores. Our Cookery Schools ran the summer, with beetroot burgers and recipes on waitrose.com rose by 350% over searches for vegan and veggie barbecue.

Executive Chef. Jonathan Moore, Waitrose & Partners’ Weekend newspaper now evolved – people dip in and out of it,’ says

‘Vegetarianism has grown and ‘at weekends’, ‘occasionally’ or ‘on special occasions’. ‘Vegetarianism has grown and evolved – people dip in and out of it,’ says Jonathan Moore, Waitrose & Partners’ Executive Chef.

People are looking for meat-free inspiration throughout the week. Our ‘midweek meals’ recipes in Waitrose & Partners’ Weekend newspaper now include at least two vegetarian dishes. Searches for vegan and veggie barbecue recipes on waitrose.com rose by 330% over the summer, with beetroot burgers and colourful skewer-topping the bill. This year, Waitrose & Partners launched vegan sections in 134 stores. Our Cookery Schools ran twice as many vegetarian cooking courses as in previous years, with new courses including the Vegan Christmas Dinner.

Choosing a no- or low-meat lifestyle doesn’t mean missing out. Whether cooking at home, buying prepared food

More restaurants are offering plant-based dishes. This is the first year we’ve highlighted vegan menus in The Good Food Guide – we’ve got an impressive 107.

‘Because vegetables are taking centre stage, they need to have the wow factor. We’re seeing soaring demand for interesting flavours and textures, so we’re constantly trying to find the next big ingredient.’

Andrew Allchurch
Partner & Head of Fresh Produce Buying

‘More of us are now recognising the importance of eating mindfully. It’s about enjoying food rather than just refuelling; eating more slowly to aid digestion, and taking time to recharge mental batteries.’

Moira Howie
Partner & Nutrition & Health Manager

**QUOTES AND STATS**

**QUOTES AND STATS**

**TREND #3**

**THE NEW VEGETARIAN REVOLUTION**

**ONE IN EIGHT BRITS – or almost 13% of the population – is now vegetarian or vegan, with a further 22% identifying as ‘flexitarian’, according to our research. This means that a third of us now have meat-free or meat-reduced diets. In many cases, these are lifestyle choices that have been adopted over the past five years, reflecting the new mindsets with which people are living their lives.

But attitudes about what it means to be vegetarian or vegan are changing, too, with some people taking an increasingly pragmatic approach. There was a time when choosing a plant-based diet was about taking an ethical stand based on answering principles. For many, this distinction between vegetarians and meat-eaters still exists – but for others, the lines have blurred. Not only does one Briton in five identify as ‘flexitarian’ (semi-vegetarian), but half of all those who say they’re vegetarian or vegan also eat meat ‘at weekends’, ‘occasionally’ or ‘on special occasions’. ‘Vegetarianism has grown and evolved – people dip in and out of it,’ says Jonathan Moore, Waitrose & Partners’ Executive Chef.

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**QUOTES AND STATS**

**TREND #4**

**AVOIDING THE ‘FOOD HANGOVER’**

A FASTER PACE OF LIFE has resulted in a change in our relationship with food. Quantity is out and quality is in. For decades ‘feeling full’ after a meal was an aspiration, particularly in the post-war years. But today, 60% of people find this attitude outdated. They don’t want to feel sluggish and would rather eat smarter to feel healthier.

‘More of us are now recognising the importance of eating mindfully. It’s about enjoying food rather than just refuelling; eating more slowly to aid digestion, and taking time to recharge mental batteries.’

Moira Howie
Partner & Nutrition & Health Manager

**QUOTES AND STATS**
WHAT WE’RE DRINKING

Adventures was the byword for 2018, with an eagerness to try something new – both at home and at the bar

PIERPAOLO’S DRINKS TREND #1
EMBRACING THE NEW

It’s an exciting time to explore the drinks aisle or try a new bar. There’s a real spirit of invention, with unusual or brand new products coming to the fore. We’re bolder with our choices and don’t feel the need to conform to a certain way of enjoying our favourite tipple.

Ice lollies made from Provençal rosé are just one example of this trend for discovery. ‘The frosé’ ice lollies embody the sense of fun that shoppers are craving, and proved a huge hit in Waitrose & Partners stores over the summer. Consumers are certainly ready to experiment and is set to grow further.

SALES OF ORGANIC WINE

Sales of organic wine have increased by 53% year-on-year. The Waitrose & Partners range now includes 54 wines from 18 different regions, and is set to grow further.

A few years ago, if you were offered an organic version of a drink, you’d expect an element of compromise. Maybe you’d find the taste a bit rustic, or the price would make you think twice. This is no longer the case. It’s now impossible to taste two wines and say ‘this one’s organic and this one isn’t’. People are buying organic wines because they’re good.

Today, winemakers think about the degree to which they intervene in their vineyards more than they used to. If they can find a way to grow grapes organically, creating a product that’s as good value and as good quality as non-organic wine – and in some cases even more flavoursome – then what’s not to like?

From drinkers to vintners, it’s time to give organic options serious consideration.

PIERPAOLO’S DRINKS TREND #2
RAISING A GLASS TO ORGANIC WINE

SALES OF ORGANIC SPIRITS

Wines and spirits now make up 10% of the organic range, with brands including Heston Blumenthal’s Spirit Makers, Eau de Vie, and Fentimans.

Organic spirits are designed to mix with soda water, so you get to control the quinine flavour of your G&T.

HALF BOTTLES

Ideal to enjoy midweek, small bottles of wine have seen a surge in popularity.

MOCKTAIL MAGIC

Soft drinks are having a moment, as well-known brands introduce more non-alcoholic options for mocktails.

FLAVOURED GINS

The nation’s favourite spirit continues to thrive, with subtly flavoured gins including hemp, pink grapefruit and Seville orange – along with a citrus sherbert gin from Heston Blumenthal.

FROSÉ

...aka frozen rosé. Online searches for ‘frosé’ have increased seven-fold since July 2016, and visits to the frosé recipe page on waitrose.com have increased by 250% compared with this time last year.

MIXING IT UP
UK COCKTAIL TRENDS

A few years ago, if you were given a cocktail at a bar, you’d expect an element of compromise. Maybe you’d find it too sweet or the price would make you think twice. This is no longer the case. It’s now impossible to taste two and say ‘this one’s organic and this one isn’t’.

‘People are ready to discover the new, the interesting and the different’

We’re also seeing brewers launch increasingly interesting and off-the-wall flavours in their craft beers and lagers.

People are definitely ready to embrace the new, which means we’ll be seeing more of this bravery on our shelves.

Snacks included in this trend for discovery include the Salmon Pops, made with 100% sustainable salmon, and the Seafood Risotto, made with sustainably sourced seafood.

People are certainly ready to experiment.

We’re also seeing winemakers offer an organic version of a drink, which means we’ll be seeing more of this bravery on our shelves.

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Waitrose & Partners

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Food and drink report

2018’s top tipples

13% OF US OWN A SPIRITS MEASURE

SHOEING EITHER A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH TO MEASURING OUR DRINKS, OR A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO COCKTAIL MAKING – OR BOTH

ONE IN FIVE BRITISH OWNS A COCKTAIL SHAKER AND ONE IN EIGHT HAS AN ICE BUCKET

BRITISH FAVOURITES

TO ORDER OUT: PIÑA COLADA

TO MIX AT HOME: MOJITO

COCKTAILS MADE AT HOME – BY AGE

18-24 YEAR-OLDS: PIÑA COLADA

25-34 YEAR-OLDS: PIÑA COLADA

35-44 YEAR-OLDS: MOJITO

45-54 YEAR-OLDS: MOJITO

55 YEARS AND OVER: BLOODY MARY

MEZCAL

The ‘parent spirit’ to tequila. But while the latter is made specifically from blue agave from a few specific areas, mezcal is produced all over Mexico from many more types of agave.

It’s today’s hip spirit.

GREEK WINE

Red wine made from the Greek Xynister grape lends itself to being slightly chilled.

Low in tannins, it’s soft, fruity and pairs well with rich food.

CLASSY CIDER

Cider’s gone posh. But while the latter is made specifically from blue agave from a few specific areas, mezcal is produced all over Mexico from many more types of agave.

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THE GREAT BRITISH ROAST REVIEW

Eating lighter meals midweek is all well and good, but when it comes to the weekend, the Sunday roast still tops the menu. It seems we just can’t get enough of this British institution.

CHICKEN IS THE NATION’S FAVOURITE roast, followed by beef, then lamb. How to cook roast beef is the most popular voice-searched term on our website. But our research also revealed that the meal’s centrepiece is a secondary concern. Brits are twice as likely to choose roast potatoes as their favourite part of the meal than they are to say they like the meat the best.

Roasts are all about celebrating good food in the company of loved ones. In uncertain times, we retreat to life’s certainties, of the meal than they are to say they like the meat the best. Almost one in three of us says the highlight of this meal is the chance to spend time with family. And this figure increases markedly as people get older.

According to our experts, there is also an element of ‘cool, relaxed nostalgia’ going on with the roast revival. This roast-tinted element is borne out in our research: 30% of people say their mum cooks the best roast, while only 18% say their partner does. And spare a thought for the nation’s fathers: just 6% of people reckon that Dad’s roasts are the finest.

Despite regional differences in tastes – gravy is twice as popular in Wales as it is in East Anglia, for example – there are certain universal roast no-nos. Almost two thirds of people say that a roast just isn’t a roast without gravy. And 75% of us agree that chips should never be served with a roast, and 75% of us say that a roast just isn’t a roast without gravy. "By its nature, you’d rarely choose to cook a roast if you were cooking for one. So it will always be a sociable meal.”

People are looking back to old-fashioned values and heritage recipes. It’s about the kitchen being the centre of the home, and the meals that Granny used to make."

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE ROAST?

#1 CHICKEN
2 BEEF
3 LAMB
4 PORK
5 TURKEY
6 GAMMON
7 PIG ROAST
8 DUCK

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF A ROAST DINNER?

38% ROAST POTATOES
19% THE MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATIVE
18% YORKSHIRE PUDDING
7% NO FAVOURITE
7% GRAVY
6% STUFFING
5% VEGETABLES

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT A ROAST?

47% THE FOOD
27% SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY
3% SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS

5% IT’S A RELAXING TIME
3% THE WINE
3% GOOD CONVERSATION
2% GOING OUT TO A PUB

70% OF BRITS SAY ROASTS ARE A GREAT VALUE MEAL.

SCOTLAND
WHILE THE REST OF THE UK Prefers their SUNDAY ROASTS AT LUNCHTIME, SCOT’S PREFER THEIR SUNDAY ROASTS ON SUNDAY EVENING

NORTH EAST
ONE IN 10 PEOPLE HERE LIKES BROWN SAUCE WITH THEIR ROAST – MORE THAN TWICE THE REST OF THE UK

WEST MIDLANDS
PEOPLE HERE ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO ADMIT THEY’VE SERVED SHOP-BOUGHT ROASTIES AS HOMEMADE

NORTHERN IRELAND
IS WHERE PEOPLE ARE MOST LIKELY TO GIFT FOR A VEGETARIAN ROAST

EAST ANGLIA
HORSERADISH IS THE MOST POPULAR CONDIMENT FOR A ROAST AMONG PEOPLE IN EAST ENGLAND

SOUTH EAST
THOSE IN THIS REGION FEEL MOST STRONGLY THAT ROASTIES ARE THE ONLY POTATOES THAT SHOULD BE SERVED

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER
1 IN 5 RESPONDENTS HERE FEEL THE MOST STRONGLY THAT GRAVY SHOULD BE POURRED INSIDE THE YORKSHIRE PUDDING AND NOT ON THE SIDE

LONDON
MORE LONDONERS FAVOUR ROAST LAMB THAN PEOPLE OF ANY OTHER REGION

WALES
CUSTOMERS AT OUR ABERCROBYRY STORE BUY MORE READY-PREPARED RED CABBAGE THAN ANY OTHER WAITROSE & PARTNERS SHOPS

SOUTH WEST
PEOPLE HERE ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE TAUGHT THEMSELVES HOW TO COOK A ROAST

WELL, I’M OFF TO THE PUB...

Partner & Executive Chef
Jonathan Moore

Partner & Food Editor
Alison Oakervee

Waitrose & Partners

Food and drink report
FUTURE TRENDS

Look out for these five foodie fashions in 2019

1 PERSONALISED HEALTH

It sounds like something out of a sci-fi novel, but the mainstream use of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve our health and diet is just around the corner.

Thanks to algorithms, computer programmes, apps and voice-recognition technology, we’ll soon be able to receive accurate, up-to-date and tailored advice on how best to look after ourselves.

Whether through our smartphones, laptops or Alexa-style devices, we’ll be able to view personalised dietary tips and bespoke shopping lists. Access to phone-based GP services is growing in popularity, too. With NHS England publishing its code of conduct for the use of AI this year, a revolution in personalised dietary advice is on its way.

2 THE NEXT BIG SCOOP

Ice cream is having a moment. No longer the preserve of children’s parties or a day at the beach, the popular dessert is entering a new era of Insta-friendly indulgence.

Taking their influences from street food in Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan, trendy new parlours are popping up in the UK and pushing ice cream to the next level of sensory experience. Bubblewrap Waffle and Pan-n-Ice (whose ‘tacos’ are below), are just two London producers experimenting with new textures, colours and flavours – with very tasty results.

And with supermarket ice cream sales smashing the £1bn mark this year, we think this fun trend is only just getting started.

3 WEST AFRICAN FOOD

From Ghana to Senegal and Nigeria to Mali, food from West Africa is set to become the next big thing. Brits love their spicy food, and the flavours from this part of the world are extremely special indeed. Whether it’s tangy chicken yassa or tasty jollof rice, dishes are often cooked in one pot, so lend themselves to the trend for sharing. The vibrancy of the cuisine is astonishing.

4 LET’S GET BITTER

As a nation, we’ve long embraced sweet, sour and salty taste profiles. Now it looks as though their errant cousin – bitterness – is coming in from the cold. Already popular in drinks such as the negroni and Aperol spritz, bitter food is coming to a plate near you.

High-cocoa chocolate and kale are now part of the mainstream, while the trend for charring food over a naked flame is bringing a distinctive tang to restaurants. Our palates are about to take a further leap – forget social convention, it’s time to get bitter!

5 COCKTAIL CHANGE-UPS

Some very different ingredients will be finding their way into our drinks next year. As palates and lifestyles change, and demand for alcohol-free options increases (almost a third of 16-25 year-olds now don’t drink alcohol), mixologists are getting ever-more imaginative.

ALCOHOL-FREE ‘SPIRITS’ will provide even more complexity of flavour

SAVOURY NOTES The likes of pickled onion and beetroot will tickle taste buds

AQUAFABA Chickpea water to be used for vegan foam

KITCHEN TRIMMINGS By including fruit rind and veg peel, cocktails will reduce waste

KOMBUCHA We’ll see this fermented drink make its way as a mixer