

ON THE MENU

Food trends: Technology, fusion and plant-based lead the way

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SOUTH Africa is affectionately known as the Rainbow Nation, and this extends to its food offerings as it continues to tantalise taste buds from across the globe.

And while the country, a growing hot spot for food tourism, is somewhat aligned with international culinary trends, we also have our own unique tastes and meal offerings.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, restaurants were forced to alter their operations and think outside the box, which has led to an explosion of flavour and creativity.

As the nation attempts to emerge from the global health crisis, the *Saturday Star* caught up with some of South Africa's top foodies and chefs to analyse the top food trends for 2023 and why the country is a popular dining destination.

Fehmida Jordaan – Food entrepreneur, social media influencer and founder of the Halaal Goods Market

How would you describe the current food scene in South Africa?

Currently, I think it's experimental but not enough. There are new businesses opening but not enough that are truly unique, with offerings that challenge the taste buds. However, I do think we are heading in that direction, and the biggest change needs to come from consumers willing to push themselves to try new and different things.

What do you think will be some of the biggest food trends in SA this year?

Fusion foods, and in a small way, the revival of old traditional foods and methods in a glamorous, more widely available way. I'm thinking of getting magwinya served in a la carte restaurants, small pop up food scenes that challenge the norms.

How do you think the food scene has evolved in South Africa over the past few years?

I think a lot more people have turned to opening food businesses to survive through the pandemic, which caused many job losses. But they didn't really push the boundaries to pro-



FEHMIDA Jordaan: Food entrepreneur, social media influencer and founder of the Halaal Goods Market. | Supplied

duce real artisanal and interesting food because they were just trying to survive as we are coming out of the pandemic.

What do you think makes South Africa so unique as a food destination?

Sadly, I don't think we celebrate our foods enough, and likewise, with the consumer support, we need more support for local food. We have such a diverse melting pot of cultures and ethnicities, but we don't play enough with the fusion of flavours within this.

Josh Simon: Chef and partner at Harbour Cafe and Courtyard

How do you think the food scene has evolved in the country over the past few years?

Some of the biggest developments

include: The role of technology in the food industry has created more convenience and quick access to food than ever before, like ordering platforms such as Uber Eats and app-based delivery companies.

A move to catering for all dietary requirements beyond vegetarian and health to include everything from veganism to gluten free, with chefs and restaurant owners having to find creative alternatives to meet their customers' needs.

Downsizing menus to focus on a select few dishes.

What do you think makes South Africa so unique as a food destination?

We have rich soil in South Africa,



CAROLINA Rasenti: Chef @Deli at the Acsiopolis precinct. | Supplied

What do you think will be some of the biggest food trends in SA this year?

Affordable luxury and the home gourmet chef, which means today's customer is looking for top quality products and unusual products at an accessible price.

How do you think the food scene has evolved in the country over the past few years?

I believe gone are the days of only going out for special occasions. Eating out is the special occasion. And so, there has been a great return to the "Mom and Pop" shops of the past.

How do you think SA as a food destination sets itself apart from other countries?

We are described as the rainbow nation, and our food offerings are as diverse and as unique as the colours of the rainbow. From the cool blue waters of the Cape, a Snoek braai, to the warm orange of a Durban curry and the green urban forest of the Johannesburg high end dining. No visitor will ever be bored.

Kubendran Moodley: Managing director for Impact Food Services

How would you describe the current food scene in South Africa?

Drive to source ingredients from local farmers and producers;

Spicy flavours in curries paired with artisanal breads and fresh salad sides;

Building your own salad bars allows you to select your specific preferences, and offers the enjoyment of creating your own meal.

What do you think will be some of the biggest food trends in SA this year?

Plant-based food. Huge emphasis on locally sourced ingredients.

Fusion cuisine – local flavours with global food influence.

How do you think the food scene has evolved in the country over the past few years?

Dark kitchens, also known as delivery kitchens or virtual kitchens.

Robotic kitchens – more automation in food equipment.

Increased interest in local/sustainable and organic foods.



KUBENDRAN Moodley: Managing director of Impact Food Services. | Supplied

so we have beautiful produce, and what a lot of people don't know is that our meat and vegetable products are of a very high quality. For example, our Karoo lamb is unique as the animals eat Fynbos and other indigenous Karoo plants, which impart their flavours into the meat.

Carolina Rasenti: Chef @Deli at the Acsiopolis precinct

How would you describe the current food scene in South Africa?

Up and coming. Our top restaurants are now on the world's Top 100 lists, and there is no denying we have the talent and the natural resources to compete with the rest of the world's food scene.