

KAGOME

TREND REPORT HOLIDAY 2025



SEASON OF GRATITUDE



*“Golden light settles,
soft thanks hum beneath the breath—
peace blooms, quiet, full.”*

As we head into the winter season, this report brings together a collection of insights designed to help brands, operators, and culinary teams better understand the evolving food landscape. Inside, you’ll find highlights on winter holiday dining behaviors, the growing influence of cultural celebrations like Lunar New Year, and emerging consumer motivations connected to wellness and social experiences. We also explore the expanding popularity of South and East Asian cuisines, driven by digital food creators, global culinary leaders, and a rising demand for authenticity.

This edition features spotlights on influential food vloggers, chefs, and cookbook authors who continue to shape American perceptions of Asian flavors—showcasing the ingredients, sauces, and cultural stories that make these cuisines so compelling. You’ll also find deep dives into staple items such as fish sauce and nước chấm, along with perspectives on how international events and global travel patterns support wider curiosity for regional specialties. Together, these insights paint a clear picture of where consumer tastes are heading and how brands can stay aligned with shifting expectations.

As we enter a season defined by gratitude, connection, and renewal, this report aims to celebrate diverse food traditions, and highlight new flavors that signal a future filled with opportunity. Whether you’re developing menus, shaping strategy, or simply celebrating the joy of food, we hope these insights offer both direction and optimism for what comes next.

What's in Season NOVEMBER/DECEMBER PRODUCE

VEGETABLES

Artichokes
Beets
Broccoli
Brussels Sprouts
Carrots
Kale
Leeks
Peas
Pumpkin
Spinach
Summer Squash
Sweet Potatoes



FRUIT

Apples
Blood Oranges
Clementines
Cranberries
Grapefruit
Grapes
Mandarins
Meyer Lemons
Oranges
Pears
Tangerines



EXPANDING INTEREST IN CUISINES OF ASIAN AND BEYOND



Madhur Jaffrey



Ming Tsai

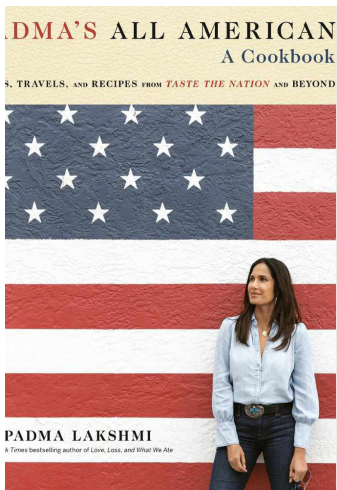


David Chang



Danny Bowien

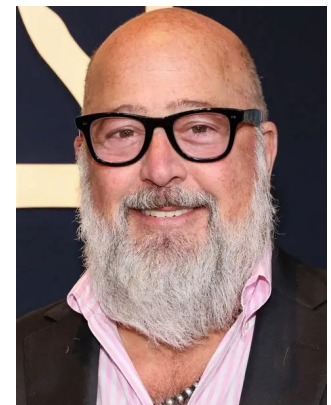
Chinese, Japanese, and Thai cuisines have been staples of the American food scene for decades. While immigration has long shaped what Americans eat, that influence has accelerated in recent years thanks to the rise of food media and the growing visibility of international celebrity chefs, restaurateurs, and cookbook authors. Figures such as Martin Yan, Anthony Bourdain, Andrew Zimmern, Ming Tsai, Andrea Nguyen, Cristeta Comerford, David Chang, Madhur Jaffrey, Padma Lakshmi, Roy Choi, and Danny Bowien have played a major role in broadening national interest in Asian culture and cuisine.



Padma Lakshmi



Roy Choi



Andrew Zimmern

These chefs, cookbook writers, and food personalities have each played a key role in making Asian cuisines more visible, relatable, and respected in America. Martin Yan bridged cultural divides through his long-running PBS show *Yan Can Cook*, teaching home cooks how to prepare Chinese food with warmth and humor. Anthony Bourdain used travel and food-culture storytelling on shows like *Parts Unknown* to introduce American audiences to authentic, street-level Asian food traditions. Andrew Zimmern, via



Martin Yan



Cristeta Comerford



Andrea Nguyen

Bizarre Foods, spotlighted unusual and regional Asian delicacies, helping broaden what Americans think of as “food.” Ming Tsai pioneered an “East-meets-West” cooking style on his television shows, blending Asian flavors with Western techniques in a way that felt accessible and modern. Andrea Nguyen has written deeply researched, beautifully written cookbooks on

Vietnamese cuisine (like *Into the Vietnamese Kitchen*), which helped demystify Vietnamese cooking for home cooks. Cristeta Comerford, as the first Asian American—and first woman—to serve as White House executive chef, has symbolically brought Asian heritage into the heart of U.S. culinary diplomacy. David Chang and his Momofuku empire reimaged Asian food through a contemporary, boundary-pushing lens, powering the modern Asian-American restaurant movement. Madhur Jaffrey helped introduce Indian cooking to many Americans through her warm, detailed cookbooks (e.g., *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*), correcting stereotypes and making complex regional styles approachable. Padma Lakshmi, through *Top Chef* and her travel series *Taste the Nation*, has elevated immigrant food stories, spotlighting how Asian culinary traditions shape American food culture. Roy Choi fused Korean flavors with Mexican street food in his iconic *Kogi Taco Truck*, making Asian food relatable to street-food and fusion dining audiences. And Danny Bowien, with his *Mission Chinese* restaurants, challenged culinary norms by offering creative, minimalist, and playful versions of Chinese-American food—all of which have helped expand how people in the U.S. understand and appreciate Asian cuisines.

Food vloggers and influencers continue to shape the national conversation about emerging flavors and what consumers should be eating. Their content has exposed audiences to a wider range of authentic ingredients and regionally specific dishes, sparking growing interest in South and East Asian cuisines such as those of Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia/ Singapore, and India. If you aren't already following these Asia-focused food creators, now is the perfect time to start!



Joanne Lee Molinaro
@thekoreanvegan
2.5M followers
Vegan Korean Cooking



Mark Wiens
@migrationology
2.5M followers
Influencer Thailand



Emily Kim
@maangchi
6M+followers
Korean Cuisine



Hetal Vasavada
@milkandcardamom
123K+followers
Indian Desserts



Ian Rivero aka IanKewks
@lankewks
1.8M followers
Filipino Cooking



Vince Vasquez
@thetastebud
368K followers
Filipino Cooking



Joedy Tran
@nuocmamafoods
1.7M followers
Vietnamese Cooking
and Travel



Alissa Nguyen
@alissanguyen_
1.6M followers
Vietnamese Cooking

SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTH ASIAN INGREDIENTS, SAUCES AND CONDIMENTS



Fish sauce - is a fermented condiment made by layering small fish—often anchovies—with salt and allowing them to age until they produce a rich, savory liquid. Its origins trace back thousands of years, with early forms appearing in ancient Southeast Asian coastal communities as well as in early maritime trade networks. Today, it is a foundational ingredient across South and Southeast Asia, especially in Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino, and Cambodian cuisines. Fish sauce

provides an essential source of umami, adding depth, aroma, and salinity to dishes ranging from soups and stir-fries to marinades and dipping sauces. Its importance lies not only in flavor but also in its cultural role, reflecting regional traditions, preservation techniques, and the coastal heritage of the communities that produce it.



Nước chấm or nuoc cham - is considered one of the essential building blocks of Vietnamese cooking. It's not just a sauce but a flavor philosophy, capturing the Vietnamese emphasis on balance and harmony. Sometimes referred to as Vietnamese fish-sauce dipping sauce, it typically contains fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, garlic, chili peppers, and water. There are regional variations as well, with Southern versions tending to be sweeter, Northern versions saltier and more straightforward, and Central versions spicier—showcasing the diversity of Vietnamese regional tastes. Though made with only a few ingredients, its depth and versatility are

remarkable. Every household often has its own version. Because nuoc cham is typically served in small shared bowls at the center of the table, it represents family-style dining and communal eating, a core aspect of Vietnamese food culture.



Hoisin - is a thick, dark condiment with a sweet, salty flavor often used in Cantonese and some Vietnamese recipes, sometimes referred to as Chinese barbecue sauce. It is made with fermented soybean paste, as well as additional seasonings like garlic, chilies, and sesame.

WINTER HOLIDAYS FOOD INSIGHTS

Christmas remains the most universal winter holiday, making it ideal for broad, cross-generational campaigns, while New Year's Eve and Day offer strong engagement opportunities with Millennials and Gen X, who focus more on these celebrations. Super Bowl promotions can target Millennials and Gen X for food and beverage tie-ins, as they show the highest participation in this event. Gen Z and Millennials present unique opportunities around alternative holidays like Galentine's and wellness trends such as Dry January, signaling room for experiential and social-driven marketing.



30% of consumers who celebrate Lunar New Year typically go to a restaurant/bar for food/beverages

Cultural holidays like Lunar New Year and Hanukkah, though smaller in reach, resonate more with younger generations, offering brands a chance to showcase inclusivity and authenticity.

The 2026 Winter Olympics will be held from February 6–22 in northern Italy, with events spread across Milan, Cortina d'Ampezzo, and other alpine clusters like Valtellina and Val di Fiemme, making it the most geographically expansive Winter Games in history. With the world's attention on Lombardy and the Dolomites, Italy's culinary heritage is expected to shine, and experts predict a surge in interest for hyper-local and northern regional dishes that showcase authentic flavors and seasonal ingredients.



Source: Datassential, Google, Wikipedia



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