2026-27

Food & Beverage Trends Report







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Food & Beverage Trends

Traditional comfort foods continue to dominate restaurant orders in Canada, with French fries and other potato-based sides remaining the most frequently ordered menu item, accounting for 14.4% of orders in the 12 months ending March 2026. Breakfast items moved further into second place, increasing to 11.7% of orders, while burgers also gained share to reach 9.8%. Together, these results highlight the continued popularity of familiar, value-oriented menu items among Canadian consumers.

While several established categories, including sandwiches, chicken entrées, and pizza, saw slight declines, other segments posted modest growth. Wraps, burritos, tacos, and nachos continued to gain popularity, as did vegetarian menu items, reflecting growing consumer interest in flavour variety and plant-based options.

Overall, the data suggests that consumers continue to gravitate toward classic comfort foods, while gradually expanding their preferences to include more diverse and health-conscious menu choices.

Top 10 Food Trends (% Orders)

RANKING	MENU ITEM	2025	2026	Difference
1	**French fries/potatoes/sweet potatoes/onion rings**	14.8%	14.4%	-0.4% ↓
2	**Breakfast (includes breakfast sandwiches)**	11.1%	11.7%	0.6% ↑
3	**Burgers**	9.4%	9.8%	0.4% ↑
4	**Sandwich/subs**	7.4%	7.3%	-0.1% ↓
5	**Chicken entrées (includes nuggets, strips, fingers, on-the-bone and other)**	7.4%	7.1%	-0.3% ↓
6	**Pizza/panzerottis/calzones**	4.8%	4.7%	-0.1% ↓
7	**Breads**	4.1%	4.2%	0.1% ↑
8	**Donuts/beignets**	3.8%	3.8%	0.1% ↑
9	**Wraps/burritos/tacos/nachos**	3.5%	3.7%	0.2% ↑
10	**Vegetarian (can include eggs and dairy)**	3.5%	3.7%	0.2% ↑

Source: Ipsos Foodservice Monitor

Note: Data are for the 12 months ending in March of each year

Note: Due to rounding, the year-over-year differences may not exactly match the difference between the reported percentages

Percentage refers to "percentage of items" or "percent of orders" that included a particular food or beverage item

Top 10 Beverage Trends (% Orders)

RANKING	MENU ITEM	2025	2026	Difference
1	Hot coffee	38.4%	36.1%	-2.3% ↓
2	Carbonated soft drink/pop/soda	18.3%	18.3%	0.1% ↑
3	Iced/frozen coffee	9.5%	10.2%	0.7% ↑
4	Water (includes tap and bottled water)	5.0%	5.9%	0.9% ↑
5	Fruit juice	5.0%	5.6%	0.6% ↑
6	Hot tea	5.1%	4.9%	-0.2% ↓
7	Beer/cider	2.9%	3.3%	0.4% ↑
8	Iced tea	2.4%	2.9%	0.5% ↑
9	Any energy/sports drink	2.0%	2.5%	0.4% ↑
10	Milkshakes/smoothies	2.2%	1.9%	-0.4% ↓

Source: Ipsos Foodservice Monitor

Note: Data are for the 12 months ending in March of each year
Note: Due to rounding, the year-over-year differences may not exactly match the difference between the reported percentages

Percentage refers to "percentage of items" or "percent of orders" that included a particular food or beverage item

Hot coffee remains Canada's most ordered restaurant beverage, accounting for 36.1% of beverage orders in 2026, despite a modest decline from the previous year. Carbonated soft drinks continue to hold the second spot and remained essentially unchanged at 18.3% of orders.

At the same time, consumers are increasingly gravitating toward cold and refreshing beverages, with iced and frozen coffee, water, fruit juice, and iced tea all posting gains compared with 2025.

Several emerging beverage categories also saw growth, including beer and cider, as well as energy and sports drinks.





FASTEST-GROWING

menu items over a three-year period



1 FRUIT JUICE



2 ICED TEA



3 ENERGY/SPORTS DRINK



5 ICED/FROZEN COFFEE



4 BEER

FASTEST-DECLINING

menu items over a three-year period



1 HOT COFFEE



2 FRENCH FRIES/ POTATOES/ SWEET POTATOES/ ONION RINGS



3 CARBONATED SOFT DRINK/ POP/SODA



4 MILKSHAKES/SMOOTHIES



5 SALAD

Source: Ipsos Foodservice Monitor

How Menu Preferences Vary Across Generations

- Gen Z is driving demand for **comfort foods**. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Gen Z respondents say they are interested in ordering comfort foods and classics when dining out, significantly higher than Millennials (54%), Gen X (56%), and Boomers (55%).



- Older consumers place greater importance on **local sourcing**. Interest in locally sourced ingredients increases steadily with age, rising from 31% among Gen Z to 43% among Boomers, making it one of the clearest generational trends in the data.



- Younger diners are more attracted to novelty. Gen Z is most interested in **limited-time and seasonal menu items** (39%), while interest declines with age to just 28% among Boomers, suggesting younger consumers are more motivated by menu innovation and discovery.



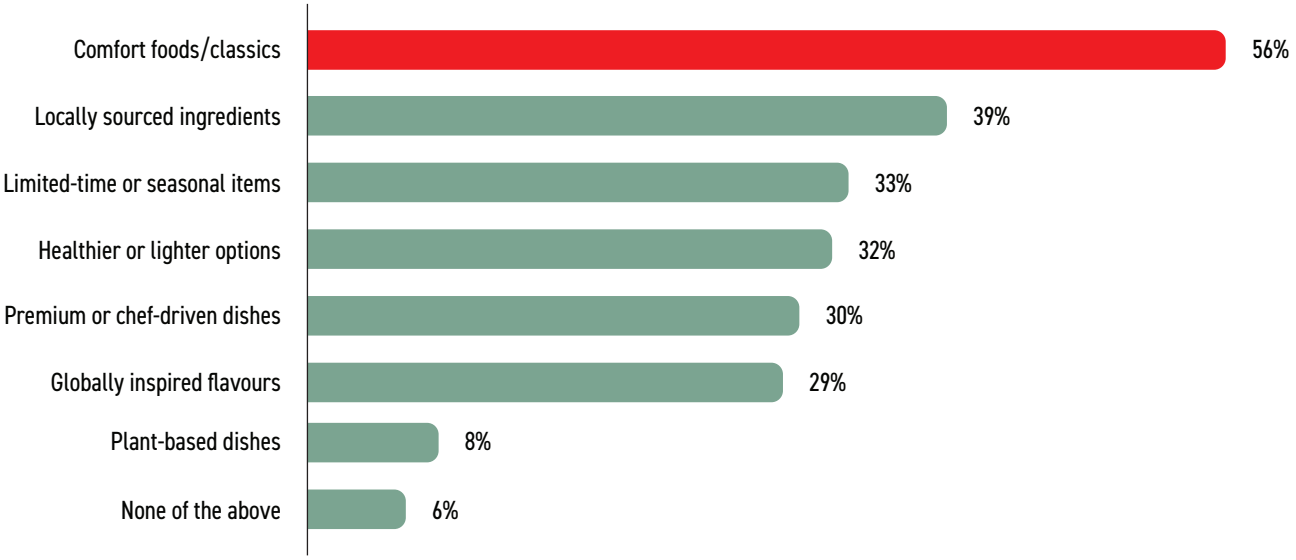
- Millennials and Gen X lead in **globally inspired flavours**. About one-third of Millennials (32%) and Gen X consumers (33%) are interested in globally inspired menu items, compared with just 24% of Boomers. This points to stronger demand for international flavours among middle-aged consumers.



- **Plant-based appeal** remains concentrated among younger generations. Gen Z is more than twice as likely as Boomers to express interest in plant-based dishes (11% versus 5%), reinforcing the role younger consumers play in driving demand for alternative protein options.



TYPES OF MENU ITEMS CANADIANS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN ORDERING WHEN DINING OUT
(SHARE OF RESPONDENTS)



Source: Angus Reid, survey conducted May 2026

Dining Beyond Borders – International Flavours and Cuisines

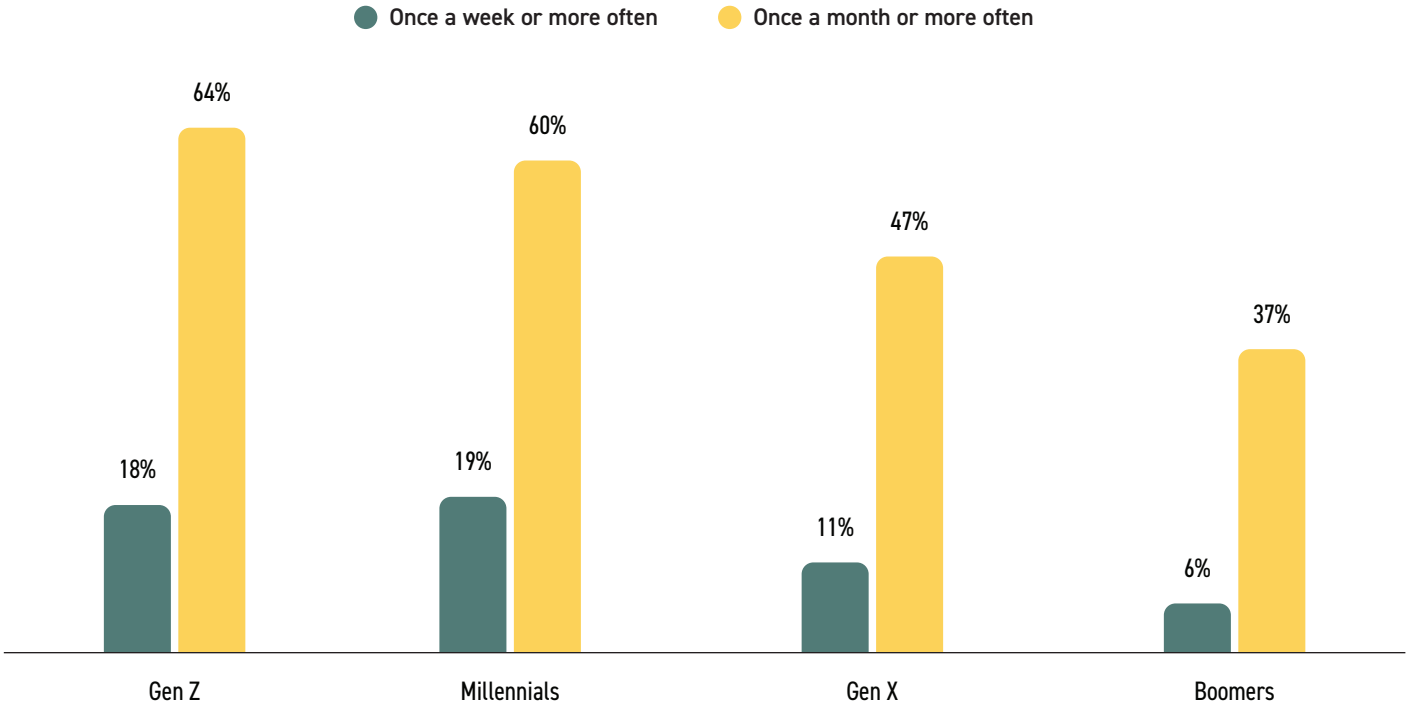
Cultural exploration through dining is a defining trait of younger generations—creating opportunities for diverse menus and authentic flavour experiences.

Younger Canadians dine across cultures more frequently. Nearly two-thirds of Gen Z (64%) and Millennials (60%) enjoy other cultures' cuisines at least once a month, compared to just over one-third of Boomers.





HOW OFTEN CANADIANS ORDER OR DINE OUT FOR CUISINES OUTSIDE THEIR CULTURAL BACKGROUND
(SHARE OF RESPONDENTS)



Q: How often do you order or dine out for cuisine that is not from your cultural background?

Source: Angus Reid, survey conducted May 2026

Cuisine preferences vary with age, with younger Canadians—especially Gen Z and Millennials—showing a stronger preference for globally inspired cuisines such as Japanese/Korean, Southeast Asian, Mexican, Indian, and Middle Eastern foods.



- Older Canadians gravitate toward familiar cuisines. Boomers and older Canadians are significantly more likely than younger generations to order **Canadian/American** (66%), **Italian** (54%), and **Chinese** (51%) food.
- Gen Z and Millennials are driving demand for a broader range of Asian cuisines. **Japanese** and **Korean** cuisine is particularly popular among younger consumers, with 38% of Gen Z and 39% of Millennials choosing it, compared with just 11% of Boomers.
- Millennials are the most adventurous diners. They are the most likely generation to order **Southeast Asian** (35%) and **Indian/South Asian** (25%) cuisine, well above the national averages of 29% and 21%, respectively.
- Interest in **Mexican** and **Latin American** cuisines skews younger. One-third of Gen Z consumers (33%) report ordering Mexican or Latin American food most often, compared with just 18% of Boomers.
- **Middle Eastern** cuisine has stronger appeal among younger and middle-aged consumers. Nearly one in five Gen Z consumers (19%) and 17% of Gen X consumers frequently order Middle Eastern food, compared with only 8% of Boomers.

The Great Cuisine Divide How Restaurant Tastes Differ Across Generations

MOST POPULAR CUISINES BY GENERATION
(SHARE OF RESPONDENTS)



GEN Z
18-29 years old

- 55% Canadian/American
- 42% Italian
- 38% Chinese
- 38% Japanese/Korean
- 33% Mexican/Latin American

Gen Z is Canada's most globally curious generation embracing Japanese, Korean, Mexican and Middle Eastern cuisines.



MILLENNIALS
30-45 years old

- 48% Canadian/American
- 39% Japanese/Korean
- 35% Southeast Asian (Thai, Vietnamese, etc.)
- 34% Chinese
- 32% Italian

Millennials are the most adventurous diners, leading demand for Southeast Asian and Indian cuisine.



GEN X
46-61 years old

- 57% Canadian/American
- 44% Chinese
- 40% Italian
- 28% Southeast Asian (Thai, Vietnamese, etc.)
- 24% Mexican/Latin American

Gen X blends traditional favourites with a growing appetite for international cuisines.



BOOMERS
62 years or older

- 66% Canadian/American
- 54% Italian
- 51% Chinese
- 26% Southeast Asian (Thai, Vietnamese, etc.)
- 18% Indian/South Asian

Boomers overwhelmingly prefer familiar comfort foods and classic restaurant staples.

WHERE THE GENERATIONS DIVERGE

The biggest gaps between generations

	Highest	Lowest	Gap
Japanese/Korean	39% (Millennials)	11% (Boomers +)	28%
Italian	54% (Boomers +)	32% (Millennials)	22%
Chinese	51% (Boomers +)	34% (Millennials)	18%
Mexican/ Latin American	33% (Gen Z)	18% (Boomers +)	16%

Q: Which types of cuisine do you order or dine most often from restaurants?

Source: Angus Reid, survey conducted May 2026

Snack Nation: The Global Flavours Shaping Canada's Snack Habits

From bubble tea to baklava, younger Canadians are embracing international flavours in their snacks and beverages far more than older generations.

- Younger Canadians are driving the popularity of **East Asian flavours**. East Asian influences such as bubble tea and matcha desserts are cited by 42% of Gen Z and 31% of Millennials, compared with just 15% of Gen X and 4% of Baby Boomers, making it the largest generational gap in the study.
- **North American and Canadian flavours** become more influential with age. While these flavours remain the top influence across all generations, they are especially important to Boomers (84%) and Gen X (79%), compared with 70% of Gen Z.
- **European-inspired snacks** have broad appeal but resonate most with Gen Z. More than half of Gen Z consumers (56%) cite European flavours such as pastries and gelato as an influence on their snack and beverage choices, compared with 48% among both Millennials and Gen X.
- Millennials show the strongest interest in **Latin American flavours**. More than one-quarter of Millennials (26%) are influenced by Latin American foods such as churros and empanadas, compared with about one in five consumers in other generations.
- Emerging **Southeast Asian flavours** are gaining traction among younger consumers. Gen Z (15%) and Millennials (13%) are roughly twice as likely as Boomers (6%) to be influenced by Southeast Asian offerings such as Vietnamese iced coffee and pandan desserts.





GLOBAL FLAVOUR INFLUENCES ON SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

% SAYING THESE GLOBAL FLAVOURS INFLUENCE THEIR SNACK OR BEVERAGE PURCHASES AT RESTAURANTS

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
North American/Canadian	70%	72%	79%	84%
European (e.g., pastries, gelato)	56%	48%	48%	50%
East Asian (e.g., bubble tea, matcha desserts)	42%	31%	15%	4%
South Asian (e.g., chai, samosas, pakoras)	21%	20%	19%	19%
Middle Eastern (e.g., falafel, baklava)	20%	22%	21%	19%
Latin American (e.g., churros, empanadas)	18%	26%	19%	19%
Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese iced coffee, pandan desserts)	15%	13%	7%	6%

Q: Which global flavours or cultural food traditions most influence the snacks or beverages you purchase?

Source: Angus Reid, survey conducted May 2026



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR PURCHASING

Food and beverage trends can influence much more than what appears on the menu. They can affect the ingredients you source, the products you keep on hand, the suppliers you work with, and ultimately, the cost of running the business.

As consumer expectations continue to evolve, operators have an opportunity to look at purchasing more strategically, finding ways to respond to new trends while protecting margins and keeping operations practical.

Before You Follow the Next Trend, Ask:

- **Can I source it through my existing supplier programs?**
  Before introducing a new supplier, look at the programs already available to your operation. You may already have access to products that support emerging menu trends while providing additional purchasing value.

- **Are there rebate opportunities?**
  The lowest invoice price doesn't always tell the full story. Rebates and supplier programs can change the overall value of a product over time.

- **Is there an equivalent product worth considering?**
  If you are adding a new ingredient or product, consider whether an equivalent option could provide better pricing, rebates or overall value without compromising what matters to your operation.

- **Can I use it across multiple menu items?**
  Versatile products can help you experiment with trends while reducing complexity, managing inventory and making better use of what you purchase.

Food & Beverage Programs That Work Alongside Your Purchasing

Groupex connects Canadian foodservice operators with supplier programs across key food and beverage categories, including proteins, grocery and frozen products, dairy, beverages and more.

Members can access purchasing programs, pricing opportunities and rebates on eligible products — including many of the products they already purchase.

The opportunity isn't simply to buy differently. It's to get more value from what you buy.

Turn Trends Into Smarter Purchasing Decisions

Trends come and go, but smart purchasing decisions can have a lasting impact on your business.

Understanding what you buy, where your money is going, and which supplier programs are available can help you make more informed decisions—whether you're exploring a new trend or reviewing the products you purchase every day.

The operators who come out ahead aren't necessarily the first to follow every trend. They're the ones who understand their purchasing: what's driving costs, where there's room to save, and how they can get more value from their existing supplier relationships before adding something new.

And smarter purchasing doesn't have to mean changing the way you operate. Small, consistent actions—reviewing contracts, comparing rebate programs, or consolidating purchases with fewer suppliers—can add up to meaningful savings over time without disrupting your day-to-day operations.





WANT TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR PURCHASING?

Download the FREE Restaurant Purchasing Guide

Created for restaurant operators, this practical guide will help you:

- Look beyond invoice price when evaluating supplier value
- Understand how supplier programs and rebates work
- Identify areas where you may be leaving value on the table
- Review your purchasing beyond food and beverage
- Take practical steps toward a stronger purchasing strategy

Your next opportunity to improve margins may already be on your invoices.

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE GUIDE →



Restaurants Canada

INTELLIGENCE

Foodservice FACTS 2026

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Restaurants Canada

The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

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