



TRENDS READY IN 10 MINUTES

The modern consumer is uncompromising on the pleasure offered by food: he cannot limit it due to a lack of practicality. The food product must be tasty, as natural as possible, but especially easy and quick to cook, given the new lifestyles which leave little, time to cook at home.

There is a difficult equation to solve for the producers who innovate in the ready-to-bake, the "already-ready" or in the "pre-baked" product segment. The final goal is to offer the consumer an advantage in terms of practicality, while respecting its expectations about pleasure and naturalness: let's discover the major trends of the innovations responding to this complex request of the consumer.

VEGETARIAN TRENDS 2.0

Last year's most dynamic trend relates to products for vegetarians, and particularly those used as a substitute for the "main course". Historically, the disadvantage for these products is that they are neither practical, nor quick to prepare, nor do they offer too much

pleasure for the consumer. With only a health-related benefit, sometimes not understood by the consumers, the 100% vegetable products have long been rejected. The past two years have allowed a new innovative offer to surpass this problem: vegetarian products, gourmand and easy to cook, offering the consumer an effective response to these expectations. These include, for example, the Meals range of the English producer GoodLife: vegetarian sausages with vegetables, based on gourmet recipes and that can be cooked in 20 minutes in the traditional oven. In addition to the culinary aspect, the recipe guarantees consumer's pleasure: sausage with beet, feta and grilled fennel or even cauliflower and cheddar, all flavored with truffle oil.

We also mention Classic cooking in the United States with its product Garden Lites which combines pleasure, practicality and a 100% vegetable product: a soufflé with cauliflower and brown rice, garnished with a pizza sauce and mozzarella with fine herbs. The vegetable represents the trend, it has acquired the codes of practicality (ready-to-bake) and pleasure (gourmet recipes, selected ingredients) while offering a strong naturalness dimension.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE BISTRO

A second trend recently noticed in the innovative offer is to associate a frozen, ready-to-bake product to an imaginary "bistro": the latter offers both quality (similar to that offered by a restaurant) and naturalness (made with ingredients "du jour", fresh, "from the market"). This association concerns all the components of the product, from its recipe to the packaging, and even its marketing name. Thus, the producer Young's in the United Kingdom offers its prepared Gastro range of dishes to be reheated in the oven with three recipes (cod gratin, spinach and cheese or even Risotto with Alaska Pollock, white wine and parmesan cheese). Still in the United Kingdom, there is Marks & Spencer with its Gastro pub range which offers a new version of the "bistro" cooked dish. In France, Marie launched its Coté Bistrot range of baked dishes inspired from French specific recipes. The premium nature of the ready-to-reheat offer is achieved by accessing the "bistro" universe (quality meals) through the marketing speech and the recipe, with an emphasis on high quality ingredients.

FREE-FROM FOR EVERYONE

The third trend concerns the ready-to-reheat, gluten-free products. First of

all, qualified by the fashion, this craze for the gluten-free does not seem to be losing steam, but to the contrary, in addition to appropriating new promises, it becomes legitimate in the mind of the consumer due to the considerable expectations of the latter: thinness, well-being or even naturalness. All categories of frozen products are concerned. One can find more and more gluten-free,

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convenient and quick to prepare products for the consumers who decide to follow this diet without necessarily having the necessary free time. The producer Zen & gluten-free in France launched small, gluten-free, country breads, ready in 10 minutes in the oven: practical if we have guests, but don't have enough time to bake gluten-free bread. We mention the gluten-free range from Coles Supermarkets in Australia which offers chicken sticks rolled in gluten-free breadcrumbs, to heat in the traditional oven, or gluten-free, ready-to-bake, potato pies.

BEYOND THE CLASSIC MEAL STRUCTURE

The fourth trend is linked to a special eating moment: the aperitif. The producers innovate by adapting their product to this special eating time: adaptation in terms of form, recipe or cooking mode. The aperitif is increasingly privileged by European consumers for three reasons. The first is linked to pleasure: beyond the pleasure of enjoying and sharing a pleasant moment, there is also the pleasure to "patch" one's meal by using small

aperitif portions of everything, to try new flavors and new products without involving a full meal (as may be the case in the restaurant). The consumer is no longer enclosed in the traditional meal structure: it can test everything according to its cravings and its immediate expectations. The second is an economic one: it is less expensive to organize a dinner aperitif for several people than to go together in a restaurant, a significant benefit in this period of economic crisis which does not seem to want to disappear. Finally, a third benefit that must be considered: home-made products bring a security guarantee to the consumer: by cooking the aperitif themselves, the consumers control the composition and the origin of what they propose. The producers innovate in this growing segment with ready-to-bake adjusted products. D'Entremont in France offers small aperitif toasts with selected ingredients (especially PDO cheeses), ready in just 10 minutes. In Canada, Sobeys launched the ready-to-bake, frozen tartlets garnished with duck confit. We also note Sainsbury's in the UK, which offers eight mini-burgers with beef steak and tomato sauce to be cooked in the oven.

The innovative, frozen, ready-to-bake offer must be adapted to the increasingly restrictive expectations of the modern consumer: a practical pleasure, as natural as possible. The producer must innovate in this direction: with the new large food offer, the consumer will feel free to analyse and choose a different product which better matches its expectations at that moment. ■

