

Consumers' relationships with their Kitchens to continue to evolve in 2015

Ever since the invention of the TV dinner, consumers have expressed a desire to get out of their kitchens in less time, but there is increasing evidence that convenience is being redefined and kitchens aren't so bad after all. In 2015 consumers' relationships with their kitchens will continue to evolve as Millennials look for more involvement in their food preparation, multi-cultural influences grow, and "fresh" foods and meals become must-haves.

The fundamental habits of in-home food and beverage consumption are among the most stable consumer behaviours, but food manufacturers and retailers shouldn't take that to mean things aren't changing. In fact, tracking and forecasts have revealed accelerated behaviours and activities among certain groups in the last economic recession. Given these changes, it will be important to understand and incorporate these shifts in consumer attitudes and behaviours into long-term strategic marketing and sales plans.

INSIGHTS ON HOW CONSUMERS WILL APPROACH THEIR EATING BEHAVIOURS IN 2015

The changing face of convenience - inclusion of freshness a must

Frozen dinners and entrees for many years provided the perfect solution for consumers looking to eat a complete meal without the preparation time or kitchen clean-up. But there's rising evidence that consumers are shifting the meaning of convenience to include an element of freshness. It is expected to see consumers use fresh ingredients in their foods in greater numbers; at the same time, they still seek ways to create these meals in a short amount of time. Appliances such as slow cookers, rice cookers, and pod coffee makers are helping consumers achieve the goal of having a fresh item in their homes without sacrificing its integrity.



Share the prize with consumers - belief in individualistic flavourings

As consumers opt for more freshness, there are opportunities for them to make their foods in their own unique ways. For example, Millennials (mid-20s to mid-30s) have an

interest to be "sensibly involved" with their food and beverage preparation. They enjoy the time-saving factor food companies provide, but at the same time want to finish a dish with their



own flavourings. This behaviour was shaped by difficult economic times that forced younger adults, who have historically visited restaurants for their meals, to become familiar, or even comfortable, with their kitchens much sooner than would be expected. For example, at breakfast time, Millennials consume cold cereal less often compared to other generations when they were that age, and they choose eggs and fresh pancakes more often.

Multicultural: more than Hispanic - enduring influences

According to the US Census, there are more than 50 million Hispanics in the United States, and this is one of the fastest-growing population groups. They have had and will continue to have an enduring influence on the way we shop for food, eat, and dine out. We've already seen mainstream movements in consumption that have roots in Hispanic culture. Among these are a strong emphasis on fresh ingredients, heartier breakfasts, and bold seasonings when preparing in-home meals. We also know Hispanics' influence will continue due to their average age. About 60 percent of US Hispanics are Generation X or younger, meaning this quickly-growing group will shape younger generations and a generation yet to be born. While not as large as the Hispanic population, Asians are the fastest-growing racial/ethnic group in the United States. The Census estimates there are about 20 million Asians in the US. While this is far fewer than the number of Hispanics in the US, we're already seeing their influence on how we eat. It's hard to turn a corner in any major city without seeing a Thai, Chinese, Japanese, or Asian fusion restaurant, but these foods typically have been reserved for away-from-home dining experiences. There is an Asian influence on how Americans spice and flavour our foods in the home, as well. ■ Source: NPD

Modernity - New direction for kitchens and bathrooms

The long domination of traditional design in kitchens and bathrooms has given way to transitional and contemporary styles, especially in North American homes. The 2015 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends report from the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), found that transitional designs now tops, with contemporary running a close second. More than 400 designers participated in the study, which was conducted online in late 2014.

White is the most common colour scheme for both kitchens and bathrooms – although kitchens with multiple colour schemes are emerging.



In the bathroom, the leading hues are white and gray – specified by more than 70% of the survey's respondents. Half think gray will continue to run strong in 2015, although a notable number of designers pointed to purple, lavender and lilac as trending.

The top 10 overall kitchen design trends for 2015:

- ❑ Clean with an overall contemporary feeling. A fusion of styles and multiple colours in one kitchen.
- ❑ European-styled cabinets.
- ❑ Multiples of appliances in one kitchen.
- ❑ The rise of steam ovens.
- ❑ Furniture-look pieces.
- ❑ Outdoor kitchens.
- ❑ Fewer standard kitchen tables, replaced by counters or tall gathering tables.
- ❑ TVs and docking stations.



- ❑ Wine refrigerators.
- ❑ Focus on the user experience, from easy maintenance to accessible design and considering the needs of all users in the space, including pets.

Bathroom design trends for 2015:

- ❑ Clean, white, contemporary designs.
- ❑ Floating vanities.
- ❑ Open shelving.
- ❑ Electric heated floors.
- ❑ Purple haze.
- ❑ Trough sinks.
- ❑ Easy use, maintenance and accessibility.
- ❑ Innovative storage.
- ❑ Showers and freestanding tubs. ■

Source : Home & Textiles Today; Pic source : NKBA, USA