11 HOTTEST FOOD & BEVERAGE DINING TRENDS IN RESTAURANT & HOTELS, 2016

The two most noteworthy trends in for 2016 have nothing to do with food. Big disrupters are a revolution in high-speed food delivery to homes and offices ... and a national conversation regarding tipping and pay disparities. Cleansing menus of additives won’t be enough. Why there's a new obsession with fried chicken. Plus 24 buzzwords for the year ahead.

Baum+Whiteman creates high-profile restaurants around the world for hotels, restaurant companies, museums and other consumer destinations. Based in New York, their projects include the late Windows on the World and the magical Rainbow Room, and the world's first food courts. Their annual hospitality predictions follow.

#1 DELIVERY -- AMAZONING AND URBERIZING THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: Consumers will have access to the world's largest (virtual) drive-thru window without ever leaving home!

Tech-driven delivery is 2015-2016's Big Disrupter of food retailing and food service ... aimed at the ultimate consumer convenience ... food brought quickly to homes, offices and (why not?) hotel guests. Delivery affects everyone from McDonald's to your favorite white tablecloth emporium. Smartphoners, latching onto the ease of locating a restaurant, ordering, paying, and getting loyalty points ... without ever speaking to a human being ... are driving this revolution.
Muscling into high-speed food delivery: Google, uberEats, Amazon Prime Now, Postmates, Grub Hub, Yelp. None actually *makes* food ... they're middlemen connecting restaurants and customers ... collecting fees and personal information about who orders what, when and from which restaurants ... valuable additions to what they already know about you. In contrast, some startups are building commissaries in cheap rent locations. Panera's building "food hubs" to handle deliveries without distracting regular shops from concentrating on customers. Starbucks added a delivery-only venue to just the Empire State Building. Domino's is fielding an auto fleet with warming ovens.

And Chipotle's tinkering with a second assembly line so its stores can ramp up deliveries. Most fast-casual outfits ... initially designed for consumer involvement in the assembly process ... will have to wrestle with this delivery challenge.

They're all racing to your door. uberEats gets a limited menu to your curb in ten minutes ... by pre-loading food into drivers' cars. Amazon's Prime Now app gets entire menus delivered in an hour (39 minutes in Seattle). Postmates Pop app promises 15 minutes in San Fran.

It's happening in supermarkets. Amazon Prime in certain New York zipcodes delivers groceries ... and prepared meals ... from supermarkets and gourmet shops in an hour for an extra $7.99. For two-hour service, delivery is free.

An already over-crowded field is ripe for consolidation. Look at Seattle, where Amazon, BiteSquad, uberEats, DoorDash, Lish, Munchery, Square-owned Caviar, Postmates, Seamless, GrubHub, Yelp-owned Eat 24, Peached and others might clog the streets. They're scrambling for scale ... who one knows whether any will be profitable? Amazon just hiked its annual fresh service fee to $299 in New York, Philadelphia and Seattle ... suggesting something's financially askew.

Now things get blurry ... outfits like Amazon and Google ultimately won't care whether consumers order rotisserie chicken from Boston Market or Kroger or Dean & Deluca or a local food truck. This means the battle for food dollars among various distribution channels will intensify. (Example: 7-Eleven and DoorDash are offering on-demand delivery in five US cities.) Furthermore, note that Facebook has added professional reviews ... from Bon Appetit, Eater, San Francisco Chronicle, New York and Conde Nast.
Traveler ... to its site. At the same time, Amazon's teaming up with Fresh Nation to bypass supermarkets entirely ... delivering food from farmers markets directly to homes. This suggests that complete "ecosystems" are emerging that will give consumers one-stop stay-at-home opportunities for food shopping.

Danger for restaurants: Suppose customers are craving barbecued ribs ... and sites like Amazon or Uber or Google gave them a dozen restaurants and gourmet shops near their zip code ... and suppose they included professional reviews of these producers, and suppose they ranked rib restaurants according to some mysterious algorithm that works against certain restaurants? Poof! Restaurants lose marketing control of their businesses. Very blurry indeed.

Finally, check the rear-view mirror because another disruptor is sucking up venture capital: Meal Kits ... dinners-in-a-box (photo, right) containing precise portions of every ingredient, delivered by subscription. People might start cooking again using trendy ingredients, without the bother of shopping. See Blue Apron, Chefday, The Purple Carrot, Plated, Hello Fresh, Peach Dish. At about ten bucks a head, these may be cheaper than takeout. Prediction: Star chefs' names attached to meal kits; restaurants developing their own dinners-in-a-box; and meal kits tailored for specific diets.

#2. SCRAMBLING FOR "CLEAN MENUS" After watching aggressive consumers attack Big Food companies over chemicals and additives, Big Restaurants are all-of-a-sudden dumping some artificial (and other bad-for-you) ingredients from their menus. We're looking at the "healthification" of fast- and fast-casual food. A recent survey found that 36% of consumers worried about "chemicals" in their food ... in another survey, 40% of consumers report it's “very important” that foods use all-natural ingredients, free of GMOs and artificial flavors or colors.

But it won't be enough. Consumers are no longer equate pictures of pastured cows and leaves of grass on menus with health and wholesomeness. They're searching for more holistic
initiatives from restaurants ... control of waste, water conservation, human treatment of animals (and employees), and a host of other eco-social issues.

- **Chipotle Mexican Grill** is purging genetically modified ingredients. Their tortillas still contain preservatives and dough conditioners but they're working feverishly on that.

- **Panera Bread** listed more than 150 artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives that it will send into exile by the end of 2016.

- **McDonald’s** is ridding its chickens of antibiotics used by humans. **Chick-fil-A** will take until 2019. Panera's and Chipotle's chickens are already free. Those antibiotics ... cheap ways of fattening animals ... reduce their effectiveness in humans. **Subway** over the next ten years will rid its meats of antibiotics ... and no longer use azodicarbonamide in its bread, a dough conditioner used in yoga mats and shoe rubber. **Dunkin Donuts** will give the heave-ho to titanium dioxide, a whitening agent used in paints.

Odd that most of this is taking place among fast food and fast casual chains ... with little word from sitdown restaurants, or from hotels that still make a big deal of rooftop beehives. But getting rid of selected no-nos is no mere fad ... everyone will scramble to "sanitize" their menus.

*There's lots of wiggle-room.* Most restaurants pushing for "clean" food haven't tackled oceans of chemicals and colorings in soft drinks and numerous dessert items. Replacing "artificial" additives with "natural" additives means they're still using additives: "natural raspberry flavor" shares no genes with real raspberries ... but it makes good headlines. None of these restaurant companies whispers the word ... "organic."

Next culprits ... sugar, salt and fat present even greater challenges.

Meanwhile, restaurant companies should be stitching together narratives about their overall eco-stewardship.
#3 IS PASTA AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?  We're not joking! In the last five years pasta sales dropped 8% in Australia, 13% in Europe ... 25% in Italy. It isn't a crisis here yet but pasta's down 6% as Americans focus on proteins and shed carbs ... or shun gluten ... or subscribe to Paelo dining. Even carboholics have more nutritious alternatives ... quinoa, chickpeas, lentils, spelt, barley, chia. So it looks like a trend.

Vegetable spiralizers are selling like, well, hotcakes. Chefs will experiment with vegetables ribbons -- zucchini, asparagus, beets, sweet potatoes for example -- replacing pasta. And look for pastas offering a full serving of vegetables ... purees of spinach, tomatoes, carrots incorporated into the dough (photo, right). Maybe spaghetti squash will have its limelight moment (see Vegetables, below).

#4 VEGETABLES STEP UP TO THE PLATE

We've reached a tipping point for vegetables. They're pushing animal protein to the side of the plate ... or entirely off it. Relentlessly rising beef prices, horror over hormones, a scramble for ever-more antioxidants, health-and-diet concerns, growth of farmers markets, locavore drummers, increasing numbers of flexitarians ... all the stars have nicely aligned.

It helps that vegetables are more seasonal than animals, adding menu excitement for restaurants recognizing that buying seasonally reduces food costs ... and keeps menus fresh. Say hello to "Root to Stem" dining ... a logical extension of the nose-to-tail movement ... with restaurants serving vegetables trimmings otherwise heading for the trash. Say hello to "Vegetable Forward" restaurants ... with increasing numbers of chefs deploying flesh as a condiment ... not as the main act on the plate.

USDA says potatoes, tomatoes and lettuce comprise 60% of US veggie consumption. Fast food may be to blame ... but you also might conclude that, like fish, people shy away
from cooking at home what they don't know about. You don't see heaps of romano beans at the supermarket, or rainbow chard, or romanesco ... and tonight not many people are grilling cauliflower steaks ... or fabricating carpaccios of mushrooms. You go to restaurants for that stuff.

Not just vegetarians and vegans ... consumers behind this shift are omnivores who believe they eat too many animals that poop up the environment. No accident that Bon Appetit named quirky Al's Place, in San Francisco's Mission District, as best new restaurant of 2015. Most meat on their menu is listed under "side dishes" ... and the food is headspinningly complex (photo, right) ... sunchoke curry with black lime, cod and grapefruit; brined and fermented french fries with smoked applesauce. Nothing's wasted ... citrus peels are transformed into flavored oils that are frozen for freshness ... eggplant mayo is made with pods of shelling beans.

The transforming idea is that veg-forward restaurants no longer sell hippie food tasting like punishment. They're serving great meals composed mostly (or entirely) of vegetables that are great to look at, satisfyingly memorable and compatible with wine.

All-vegetarian Vedge, in Philadelphia ... has go-whits that add sparkle to any menu: broccolini with smoked onion dashi, sweet potato pate with jerk cashews and pickled onion. A movement leader is Dirt Candy, in Manhattan ... moving this year from a shoebox to a 60-seater. Proprietor Amanda Cohen proved you can bring off veg-only food in a modern context ... pulled, pickled and jerked carrots with peanut mole sauce on carrot waffles, mapo eggplant with baby bok choi, baby pea shoots and eggplant sformata.

At Semilla, in Brooklyn, you find potatoes with turmeric-fermented bok choy. and morels stuffed with ramp bread pudding. Pete Wells of the NYTimes put it perfectly ...
"you will be browsing extensively upon stems, tubers, rhizomes seeds and other plant parts. Semilla tends to save fish and meat for moments when extra depth or intensity are needed."

Squirl, in LA, makes a big deal of vegetable toast with green garlic crème fraiche, spicy pickled carrots, and house za’atar that we show, left, ($8) In the $10 range, Jose Andres' veg-forward fast-cas Beefsteak has two sites in DC Washington and one coming in Philadelphia ... it is a Chipotle format (aren’t they all?) with chicken and salmon accents but, despite its name, no beef. Sweetgreen ... a fast-cas chain hoovering investor money ... has 31 units on both coasts. Sales at healthy fast casual chains totaled about $384 million in 2014, up almost 30 percent from 2013, according to preliminary data from Technomic. Of course, the idea of fresh food has legacy chains in paralysis.

How mainstream are we? White Castle now has a veggie slider ... served on a vegan bun.

Trying to rebuild Japanese sales ... and its healthless image ... McDonald’s this year launched Mogu Mogu Mac, right: A chicken patty with bits of corn, edamame and carrots, topped with ketchup ... promoted as a healthy kids meals. They've launched an LTO organic burger in Germany ... but here we just get breakfast round the clock.
#5 TIPPING AND WAGES ... DO WE HAVE TOO MANY RESTAURANTS?

"Fundamentally, the cost of going out to a fine-dining restaurant is false." Danny Meyer said it last month ... explaining why he's moving his restaurants to a no-tipping policy, thereby raising wages for all of his staffers, front- and back-of-the-house.

In truth, the restaurant industry's amazing growth over the past five decades has depended on artificially low prices that are based upon underpaid labor. In the fast food business, low labor costs are subsidized by taxes on the general public to pay for employees' food stamps and other supplementary welfare payments. In fancy restaurants, your $36 main course could easily have been made by a $10/hour cook sweating in an overheated kitchen.

Social and economic trends move glacially ... and then seem to happen all-at-once. While most people pooh-pooh no-tipping restaurants as un-American, the movement now possess momentum. Fact is that even above $15/hour, restaurants are finding it impossible to hire cooks while keeping their labor costs in line ... indicating two things: 1) Pay is too low, and 2) Prices are too low. If forced to pay the full price for food, would consumers eat out less? Quite probably. You might conclude that we have too many restaurants and not enough cooks ... and that shifts in prices and wages might even things out ... at least that's what they said in Economics 101.

Meanwhile, local governments are passing "living wage" laws, lifting minimum wages, sometimes abolishing tip credits ... raising labor costs for operators. The disparity between earnings of tipped waiters and untipped back-of-house grunts is becoming a
moral issue tinged with class warfare. Meanwhile, waiters sue over untipped sidework ... and lower-down employees are inflamed by how tips are distributed.

Death-by-a-thousand-cuts: State and Federal governments, grasping for every penny, make accounting for tips, benefits, meals, etc. increasing complex and costly ... all prompting operators to think more clearly about giving everyone an hourly wage.

Most no-tipping restaurants tend to be upscale. In highfalutin restaurants with multi-course price-fixed menus, service generally is included in the price. Recently opened Dirt Candy adds a 20% administrative fee. Japanese Ippuku in Berkeley imposes a $6 service charge per person. Ivar’s Salmon House raised prices and wages so workers are paid least $15 per hour ... and declared it a success. It isn’t all sweetness: Two restaurants in San Francisco ... Bar Agricole and Trou Normand ... went tip-free and then switched back because they couldn’t hang onto servers. But the policy is trickling down ... and will continue until the deluge occurs.

Perhaps after Danny ... the deluge.

#6 POKE ... THE NEXT CEVICHE/SASHIMI/CRUDO?

Poke ... pronounced poke ay and poh key ... is a Hawaiian mainstay that’s migrating to the mainland. Basically a bowl of chopped or cubed raw fish (traditionally ahi tuna over seaweed-seasoned rice ... the fish tossed in a capriciously composed marinade: soy sauce, macadamia nuts, green onion, seaweed, avocado, mango, sesame oil, ginger, chiles of varying degrees of heat, numerous Japanese seasoning blends ... you can see where this might lead directly to kale and tofu. Pokerias are cropping on the West Coast and
ahi is giving way to octopus, scallops, salmon, blue fin.

The dish is all over Los Angeles. You also can find it at Laid Back Poke Shack in Salt Lake City. Boston's new Hojoko at the Verb Hotel ... by the hot-hot O Ya team ... has tuna poke with chile water, roasted macadamia dressing and avocado. Seamore's ... an offshoot of New York's Meatball Shop ... has one. Asian-hipster Super Six in Seattle offers ahi, mackerel, shrimp versions.

Evolving: Poke places using the fast-casual menu formats that emphasize glistening raw ingredients on display ... and places using check-the-boxes menus ... both for building-your-own bowls. Metropolitan Market in Seattle has a by-the-pound poke bar ... so do some Whole Foods stores.

6 NEW-ISH JEW-ISH CUISINE

There's a resurgence of Jew-ish food. The (dash) signifies we're talking about chef-driven modern Jewish cookery ... or even modern Jewish heresy ... rather than heavyweight Eastern European dishes.

How come now? Because chefs everywhere are today exploring their roots and cuisines ... examples being Peruvian, Korean, Mexican, Chinese, along with Middle Eastern fusion and Israeli. "Heritage cuisines" are being expressed ... with stories behind them. In the case of new Jew-ish, we're looking at grandchildren and great-grandchildren reinventing dishes and foodways that second-generation immigrants turned their backs on ... except at holidays. Chefs are juggling their culinary traditions with modernity ... without falling into the trap of "fusion" ... and

smoked salmon croquette, everything bagel spread
at Restaurant 27 Miami, credit: Frednesor
mainstreaming dishes that no longer seem so ethnic ... after all, where in the US can't you get a bagel, or something like it.

Atlanta's General Muir typifies the trend, curing its meats, rolling its bagels ... turning out food with only a slight accent: matzoh ball soup, and smoked duck with peaches and blackberry gastrique; chopped liver, but also halibut with heirloom tomato sauce and pea tendrils; gruyere burger with crisp pastrami.

After great success at Zahav (Middle Eastern fusion) in Philadelphia, Michael Solomonov opened Abe Fisher’s, a tongue-in-cheek riff on diaspora food: halibut crusted with challah, chopped liver offset with pastrami-onion jam. Next door there's Dizengoff hummusiya ... a 24-seat joint specializing in hummus topped with daily changes: Persian lamb, spiced turnips, and kale pesto with walnuts; chermoula-marinated turkey with pickled-onions, or beer-braised brisket with roasted beets (around ten bucks a plate).

In Miami's Wynwood arts district, Zak the Baker opened last year in garage ... turning out spectacular bread and excellent but limited kosher toasts, sandwiches, a salad or two, pastries and excellent coffee. A Kickstarter venture, they're now selling 1,000 loaves daily ... moving the bakery to a 7,000 sq.ft. space ... and expanding the restaurant. Today, if you want a table, better do carryout instead.

Shaya ... a New Orleans venture of Israeli Alon Shaya and multi-starred chef John Besh ... calls its food "modern Israeli" ... with roots across North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Turkey and Greece. Little on the menu is geographically specific. Force your gaze past enticing small plates ... five kinds of hummus; foie gras with rose tahini and carob molasses ... and you'll find shakshuka with local shrimp, and lamb with whipped feta and stone fruit tabouleh. Esquire named it restaurant-of-the-year.

Venerated appetizing store Russ & Daughters new cafe on New York's Lower East Side last year opened the floodgates for Jew-ish places, the most interesting being Sadelle's ... by the guys behind Carbone and Dirty French. An exercise in exaggeration and decadence ... smoked fish comes on a tiered stand generally used for shellfish displays (photo, right) ... a glass-box bakery in the dining room.
delivers warm bagels to the table ... and not being even kosher style, it avoids the limits of cliches. So there’s lobster salad, and shrimp and hearts of palm ... along with paprika chicken and salmon paillard ... chopped liver and steak tartare.

A curiosity: Despite anti-Semitic rampages, bagels are on a roll in France, with four chains growing ... Bagelstein says it’ll have 40 stores by 2017; Authentic Bagels sells to about 200 supermarkets and restaurants; and Le Bagel Qui Roule (The Rolling Bagel) has three food trucks on the road.

Others: The Rye Project, San Francisco; Black Seed Bagel in New York ... ripe for chainification; Harry & Ida’s ... an eccentric New York sandwich joint with superb house-smoked meats and smoked eel; Einat Admony, with three concepts from fast food to casual dining in Manhattan ... plus a food truck.

Also, it wouldn't hurt to see The Deli Man movie.

#7 ACAI BOWLS ... PULP BUT NOT FICTION

Move over, smoothies ... acai bowls are the next big hipster food. Using a fruit from Brazil, they're migrating from Hawaii and spreading cross-country. Not seen one? Fundamentally a big-bowl smoothie ... made from frozen acai pulp and soy or other milk plus bananas, bits of other fruit, and lots of ice ... with toppings like granola, chia seeds, chocolate chips, coconut flakes and peanut better. You eat it with a spoon and it tastes fairly close to ice cream. You also pay about $10 ... most often eat it for breakfast ... and possibly skip lunch. Loaded with nutritive stuff, acai bowls unfortunately contain between 60 and 90 grams of sugar ... about what you’d get by chugalugging a 20-oz. bottle of Coke. They already are franchisors ... and you’ll find these bowls at juice bars, smoothie chains, ice creameries, food trucks, even Jamba Juice. Google searches for acai bowls have more than doubled this year.
#8 OBSESSING OVER FRIED CHICKEN

**Sandwich of the Year: Fried Chicken.** Shake Shack made headlines this year with a limited release of a fairly conventional ChickenShack sandwich ... and David Chang did, too, with an incendiary sandwich at Fuku, perhaps a nascent chain. They follow an emerging obsession. No longer just southern, fried chicken sandwiches have gone creative ... and ethnic.

In Fuku's case, you're munching on a mammoth boneless thigh marinated in habanero purée, buttermilk, and Changian spices, deep-fried ... topped with some acidic vegetables. Barbecue maven Mighty Quinn smokes its thighs before frying ... topped with fermented chilies-garlic-lime sauce .... on brioche with pickled cucumbers and pickled celery for crunch.

In LA, Night+Market has an off-menu ultra-crunchy brined-and-fried thigh with ranch dressing, tomato, green papaya shreds tinged with fish sauce, cilantro and fresh jalapeno. Also in LA, Hinoki and the Bird has a lunch-only version topped with shichimi togarashi dressing (see #9, Spice Blends, below) and crisp daikon radish. Meanwhile, McDonald's ... audaciously leading from behind ... slaps the word "artisan" onto its factory chicken.

Most outrageous version?
Kansas City’s Chicken Macaroni & Cheese restaurant serves Chick-A-Roni ... crunchy pieces swaddled in gooey mac-and-cheese in a soft hoagie. Tied, perhaps, with a bizzaro donut shop's chicken breast sandwiched between a griddled pumpkin spiced latte donut.

**Chicken Flavor of the Year: Nashville Hot.** A cult favorite that's spreading across the country ... meant to burn your lips for days on end. Like buffalo wings, Nashville Hot Chicken is dunked in hot sauce after frying; but it ain't plain old hot sauce ... this is a thermonuclear paste of melted lard, sugar, sadistic quantities of cayenne, sugar ...
each chef’s secret spices. It is showing up in fried chicken joints and sitdown restaurants ... usually sitting on what looks like a blood-stained piece of white bread.

In St. Louis, a new restaurant called Southern generates lines for its Nashville Hot Chicken ... run by Rick Lewis, the town's chef of the year in 2013. Johnny Zone ... who cooked at Husk in Nashville ... NHC to LA in Howlin' Rays food truck. Cask & Larder will open next year in Orlando's airport featuring the item. State Park's NHC in Boston bites your entire face with ghost chiles, cayenne, aji amarillo and smoked paprika. Due South in DC puts its version into a sandwich. Carla Hall's opening a NHC place in Brooklyn. The Yardhouse chain added the item this year ... even latecomer KFC has been testing some version of it. We’re waiting for cheffy versions of the dish to emerge ... like Seoul Hot Chicken marinated in kimchee juice.

#9 WHEN HEAT IS NOT ENOUGH

America’s pepperheads are (finally) discovering that heat is not enough ... that food also has flavors. So we're watching an interesting shift from just-plain-incendiary ... to aromatic and flavorful spice *blends* and sauces.

Piri-piri peppers (African birdseye chili) gain notoriety as Nando's Chicken chain expands in the US ... the pepper blended with tamer spices, herbs, citrus peels ... used as bbq rubs or as bases for piquant sauces.

Sweet-spicy gochujang ... a thick Korean bbq sauce ... is made from malted barley, fermented soybean flour, red pepper and rice flour. It is popping up on adventurous menus, especially as a step-up from ubiquitous sriracha in Asian fusion dishes.

Watch for new spice blends from Syria ... a consequence of their maniacal war. Few Syrians (legally) enter the US but their flavors to migrate via Europe without clearance
from Homeland Security. Arabic, Christian and Jewish influences ... warm, rather than hot ... mixtures include allspice, cardamom, ginger, coriander, cinnamon and black pepper.

Red and green curry blends and pastes are catching on as Thai food sweeps the country.

Shichimi-Togarashi ... sprinkled on food ... is a blend red chili pepper, black pepper, sesame seeds, dried orange peel, seaweed flakes and poppy seeds. Also called Japanese Seven-Spice, it starts out hot then shifts to complexity, plus a bit of crunch. Showing up on raw fish, on creamy pastas, as chicken rubs, on burgers ... even on cocktails.

Berbere ... a highly fragrant but hot Ethiopian mix ... makes a great rub or mix for braised food: cardamom, hot peppers, paprika, cumin, clove, cinnamon, fenugreek, nutmeg, turmeric, ginger.

Many star chefs’ secret weapon is a company called La Boite in New York ... run by an Israeli expat ... who concocts all manner of spice blends: verbena-cardamom-sage, saffron-cayenne-lemon- seafood essence. An early user was Eric Ripert at Le Bernardin who now has his own La Boite line.

**Spice-of-the-year: Turmeric** ... showing up fresh in health food shops and juice bars, powdered in supermarkets. It's what makes curry powder yellow ... theoretically cures almost everything, and is getting a big play at retail but hardly showing up on restaurant menus ... yet.
#10 RETAILERS RENEW ATTACK ON RESTAURANTS

In our 2014 forecast we highlighted how US retailers are building revenue by luring shoppers into stores for snacks and meals. Retailers, we said, were discovering what we call the magic of "dwell time" ... the longer you keep a shopper on the premises, the more the shopper will buy per hour of stay. Theme parks understood this decades ago, as did museums with gift shops. The trend has momentum ... because bricks-and-mortar retailers are suffering a serious declines in foot traffic. The trend is a threat to conventionally located restaurants ... particularly because in-store eateries are aimed at high-spending millennials. Who's yanking diners from streets to stores?

- Ladies who lunch aren't enough ... so Saks Fifth Avenue in New York will replace its generic Cafe SFA with L'Avenue, a Parisian restaurant inhabited by boldface names and glitterati. Run by the Costes Group ... with trendy restaurants dotting Paris ... L'Avenue will have other venues in the store to prevent shoppers from leaving hungry ... or leaving at all.

- Outdoor World ... owned by Bass Pro Shops ... inserts large-scale Islamadora Fish Co. restaurants among its hunting, camping and recreations departments. In Brandon, Fl., their 130,000 sq.ft. store has a 7,000 sq.ft. eatery to keep shoppers from wandering off.

- Whole Foods (they're retailers, too) just invested in the boutique high volume sandwich-salad chain, Mendocino Farms, to help them grow ... and, more importantly, inserting units into select Whole Foods Markets and their more popularly-priced 365 stores.

- Lexus (they're retailers, too) has a lifestyle showroom in Tokyo called Intersect ... with a cafe on street-level and a bistro upstairs serving a global French-Japanese-
Mexican mishmash with lots of pretention. More Intersects ... with food and clothing ... opening in New York and Dubai.

- At their Experience Center in Atlanta, Porsche teams an auto showroom with an upscale restaurant called 365 ... serving simple food with regional accents. It looks onto a driver development track. Have the pork jowl with white bean puree and collards for $24 ... buy a Carrera ... have a nice day.

- The big gorilla here is URBN Inc ... owning Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie and gardening shop Terrain. With some restaurants already in place, Urban Outfitters is adding cheffy restaurants in urban complexes ... by Marc Vetri, Michael Symon and others ... to solidify make their stores more meaningful lifestyle destinations.

- In Chicago, Restoration Hardware's flagship has three eating venues run by Hogsalt ... a prolific local chain. They're serving simple stuff but the objective isn't so much a gastro-experience as it is a method for keeping customers engaged. In New York they're opening a store-hotel-restaurant complex.

- Target is testing new food concepts from Freshii, Pizza Hut and Minneapolis-based D'Amico & Sons Italian Kitchen ... replacing their garden variety cafes. About 40% of customers already buy nachos and hotdogs at Target's, so this looks like a branded revenue-enhancing upgrade.

- ABC Home in New York is adding a third restaurant called ABCV ... "V" standing ambiguously for vegetables or Vongerichten. Jean-Georges operates the store's other two high-volume venues..

Look for lots more of this activity ... in bowling alleys, clothing stores, movie theaters, convenience stores, supermarkets ... since restaurants provide unique social experiences that consumers can't enjoy by clicking "buy" on their smartphones.
#11 WHAT SNACKING TELLS US ABOUT FUTURE FLAVORS

We're seem to be moving from three meals a day to ... none! Snacks are obliterating meals. It's not just millennials or dashboard diners ... growing numbers of Americans snack four or five times daily. Snacking increased 47% from 2010 to 2014. We raise this because snack flavor profiles are changing. Restaurateurs (and hotels with minibars and minimarkets) should prowl supermarket aisles. They'll find:

- The ground is shifting away from sweet to savory ... and from high-carb to nutrient dense high-protein indulgent snacks ... evidence that sugar is this year's culinary Satan.

- Even when sweeteners are involved, they're often combined with spicy ... chili-spiked honey, for example. So sweet+heat is a winner and sweet+heat+smokey.

- Spicy-salty-savory ethnic snacks are afternoon favorites and meal replacements ... hummus variations, flavored popcorns (like seaweed-and-sesame), chili-citrus potato chips, mango-chili-lime chips. For really creative stuff, look at Korean and Japanese food shops (photo, right).

- Compound flavors are hot. Jerky ... with year-on-year double-digit sales increases in supermarkets and C-stores ... explains why Hershey acquired Krave, purveyor of Jeff's Famous Jerky, with flavors like sweet teriyaki, cranberry jalapeno ... branching into honey jalapeno bacon and buffalo chicken jerky.

- Plant-based protein get lots of play with millennials (see #4, above: Vegetables Step Up to the Plate) ... bean bars, lentil bars, chick pea snacks. Also why General Mills just invested in Beyond Meat, which develops plant-based proteins (Bill Gates got their earlier).

- Savory yogurts are worth watching not just as snacks but as components of "healthful" restaurant dishes.
Sour replaces sweet. Consumers seek deep contrasts to richness ... explaining why fermented condiments (like kimchee and house-pickled vegetables) are popular on menus. Now you can buy sour gummy bears. Sour beer is a trendlet ... but for afficiandos.

- Tart + Bitter offsets sugar and salt. That’s why you see new packages of kale, crunchy broccoli and other vegetable chips. Check out Kind’s popped grain bars with dark chocolate.

- Bitter itself gains momentum ... especially in beverages. New forms of coffee ... cold brew, carbonated ... and teas, including matcha.

- Good-for-you, good-for-the-earth packaged snacks are getting commanding space on supermarket endcaps ... often near the fresh vegetable aisle ... suggesting that consumers will pay premium prices for products that cover both bases.
