2026 ISSUE #1

•FAMILY-OWNED AND OPERATED•
UPPER LAKES FOODS
EST 1967

The Feed

JANUARY - FEBRUARY

pg. 6
Romantic and decadent ideas for Valentine's Day

WHAT'S COMING *FOR 2026*

New hand-picked products, marketing tips, and recipes to spark your creativity.

UPPER LAKES FOODS | 801 INDUSTRY AVENUE | CLOQUET, MINNESOTA 55720
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What's Hot

· 2026 Culinary Forecast ·

COMFORT AND VALUE DRIVE THE TRENDS

Nothing is cozier than comfort food. Whether it's a smashed burger, spicy noodle dish, or decadent chocolate, consumers have clear cravings, but also want greater community connections on their menus. They're placing a higher value on local sourcing as another way to support the local economy through their dining dollars, and operators are responding by localizing their supply chains, and partnering with local growers and producers to create menu options that are fresh and unique.

In the current economy, nostalgia and comfort alone may not push a trend to the top. Value is still the most important driver for many consumers. That's why when you can hit all the right notes, a trend will take off. Case in point: The smashed burger, which may be the trendiest dish of the year, but it's also hitting the right notes for value. Operators know they can keep the menu price under control because the smashed burger offers lower meat-to-bun ratios, faster cooking times, and reduced food waste. It's a win-win where familiar meets smart.

Source: National Restaurant Association, "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast."

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Top 10 Chart-Topping Trends

From the National Restaurant Association's "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast"

What can we expect on restaurant menus in 2026? Flavors, dishes, and experiences that take us out of the "day-to-day" and transport us somewhere, sometime, or both—without breaking the bank.

This quest for comfort, nostalgia, and "flavor-escapism" intersects with an ever-present search for healthy options and value, as restaurant operators seek out the dishes that satisfy consumers' cravings.

1. Local sourcing

2. Comfort foods

3. Value menus and options

4. Smashed burgers

5. Clear menu labeling, icons, and cues

6. Allergen-friendly menus

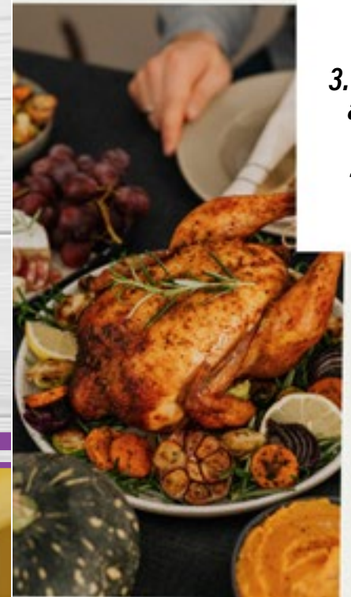
7. Global comfort foods

8. "Cleaner" recipes and less processed menu items

9. Proteins as add-ons

10. Compostable and reusable packaging

Source: National Restaurant Association, "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast."



These Appetizers are Going to be EVERYWHERE in 2026

A NEW LINE-UP OF SAUCES AND DIPS

SAUCE CRAFT HONEY GARLIC SAUCE
463584 - 4/.5 GAL.
A craveable balance of sweet and savory, this sauce combines rich honey with bold garlic and a subtle kick of heat. Perfect for adding depth and flavor to wings, sandwiches, and more.

SAUCE CRAFT SWEET & SPICY MAPLE SAUCE
463583 - 4/.5 GAL.
Delivering a rich maple sweetness with a bold kick of peppery heat-creating a perfectly balanced, craveable sweet heat that brings flavor and versatility to any menu.

HIDDEN VALLEY GREEN GODDESS RANCH DRESSING
463586 - 2/1 GAL.
The perfect blend of creamy ranch and vibrant green herbs, that delivers a bold, herbaceous flavor to salads, dips, and more.

HIDDEN VALLEY GARLIC RANCH DRESSING
463585 - 2/1 GAL.
The perfect fusion of creamy ranch and robust garlic, that enhances everything from pizza to salads to sandwiches to wings with an irresistible, zesty taste.

J.T.M. FOOD GROUP

BEER CHEESE DIP
787048 - 4/5 lb.

VOODOO RANCHER IPA CAJUN STYLE CREAM SAUCE
787117 - 4/5 lb.

CHEDDAR CHEESE SAUCE GF
787044 - 6/5 lb.

LAND O LAKES

BRAVO QUESO CHEESE DIP
214131 - 6/5 lb.

KAUFHOLD'S KURDS

BEER BATTERED WHITE CHEDDAR CHEESE CURD
706772 - 2/5 lb.

BREADED HATCH GREEN CHILI WHITE CHEDDAR CHEESE CURD
706774 - 2/5 lb.

DEEP FRIED RANCH
706776 - 2/5 lb.

OR BREADED WHITE CHEDDAR CHEESE CURDS
706758 - 2/5 lb.

Trident SEAFOODS

CRISPY BATTERED POLLOCK NUGGET
643719 - 2/5 lb.

LOUISA

KICKIN CHICKEN STUFFED NACHO
762009 - 2/5 lb.

JALAPENO MACARONI & CHEESE BITE
762080 - 2/5 lb.

SOUTHWEST FUSION CHICKEN BITE
762038 - 2/5 lb.

AMOY

FULLY COOKED CHICKEN TERIYAKI POTSTICKER
787152 - 60/30 ct. .9 oz.

BUFFALO CHICKEN RANGOON
787148 - 4/30 ct.

McCain

SKIN ON BEER BATTERED POTATO WAVES
762100 - 6/4 lb.

TEMPURA BATTERED CHEESE STICK DIPPERS
762101 - 6/2 lb.

7/16" X 1/2" SEASIDE FRENCH FRY
762102 - 6/5 lb.

TERIYAKI POTSTICKERS

INGREDIENTS

5 ea. Amoy Teriyaki Chicken Potsticker (787152)
2 oz. Sauce Craft Spicy Teriyaki Sauce (235239)
1 oz. Hidden Valley Sesame Ginger Dressing (463315)
3 oz. Taylor Shredded Cabbage (143411)
1 Tbsp. Green Onion, diced (138884)
1 Tbsp. Baron Spices Whole Sesame Seed (280948)
1 pinch Fresh Cilantro, chopped (127771)

DIRECTIONS

Toss cabbage, green onion, and ginger sesame dressing and transfer to serving plate.

Fry the potsticker in 360° fryer for 4-5 minutes or until golden brown.

Arrange potstickers on top of cabbage mixture then drizzle with spicy teriyaki sauce.

Garnish with sesame seeds and chopped cilantro.

Premium proteins and pastas for

VALENTINE'S DAY

16-20 COOKED TAIL-ON SHRIMP
606733 - 1/2 lb.

21-25 RAW TAIL-OFF PEELED & DEVEINED SHRIMP
606717 - 1/2 lb.

U-15 RAW TAIL-ON PEELED & DEVEINED SHRIMP
606722 - 1/2 lb.

16-20 BREADED DEEP CUT COCONUT SHRIMP
604619 - 4/2.5 lb.

STUFFED BREADED SHRIMP
612557 - 1/3 lb. 2 oz.

12-15 HOMESTYLE BREADED DEEPCUT SHRIMP
604648 - 1/3 lb.

26-30 BREADED SEA SCALLOPS
604641 - 1/2.5 lb.

4 - 5 OZ. CANADIAN LOBSTER TAIL
623751 - 1/10 lb.

5 - 6 OZ. CANADIAN LOBSTER TAIL
623752 - 1/10 lb.

6 - 7 OZ. CANADIAN LOBSTER TAIL
623753 - 1/10 lb.

OVEN READY LASAGNA PASTA
383416 - 12/10 oz.

GLUTEN FREE ROTINI PASTA GF
383422 - 8/12 oz.

SPAGHETTI SAUCE W/TOMATO BITS
290296 - 6/#10 can

MARINARA SAUCE
290478 - 6/#10 can

PARMIGIANA ALFREDO SAUCE GF
769069 - 4/80 oz.

ALFREDO SAUCE POUCH GF
769073 - 4/96 oz.

MINNESOTA BEEF MEATBALL GF
515040 - 213/.75 oz.

SHREDDED PARMESAN CHEESE
211886 - 1/5 lb.

GRATED AGED PARMESAN CHEESE IN JAR
212305 - 1/16 oz.

GARLIC HERB CHEESE SPREAD
208832 - 1/3 oz.

- based on data from WalletHub

DID YOU KNOW?

Reservation requests climb by **500%** on February 14th, making Valentine's Day the second busiest day of the year for many businesses.

NEW DESSERTS

Perfect for sharing

9" SALTED CARAMEL CHEESECAKE
793789 - 2/59 oz.

S'MORES CHEESECAKE
716621 - 2/97 oz.

Frozen Bakery

10" THAW & SERVE STRAWBERRIES & CREAM PIE
733670 - 4/38 oz.

10" THAW & SERVE LEMON CREAM PIE
733655 - 6/27 oz.

ASSORTED DESIGNER TOPPINGS *(2 Caramel, Chocolate, & Strawberry; 1 Cinnamon, Raspberry, Mango, Kiwi Lime, White Chocolate Flavor & Blackberry)*
350652 - 12/12 oz.

WHAT'S HOT IN 2026

NEW TWISTS ON THE CLASSICS

The sweet tooth is here to stay, but consumers aren't happy with the same old sugar.

This trend finds some beloved comfort desserts getting new twists, like the sweet and salty flavor of a salted caramel sauce getting the nice bitter kick of espresso. S'mores, the classic camping dessert, is also getting a glow-up, as the reinvented treat hits its stride on restaurant menus. From flambé to smoked (fire is what makes this dessert perfect), s'mores are no longer just chocolate, marshmallow, and graham crackers

Source: National Restaurant Association, "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast."

Snacks for the

BIG GAME

February 8, 2026

TIPS FOR PROMOTING GAME DAY LTO'S

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

Utilize platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to create visually appealing posts, stories, and videos showcasing your specials. Run contests, polls, or share behind-the-scenes glimpses to generate buzz.

EMAIL MARKETING

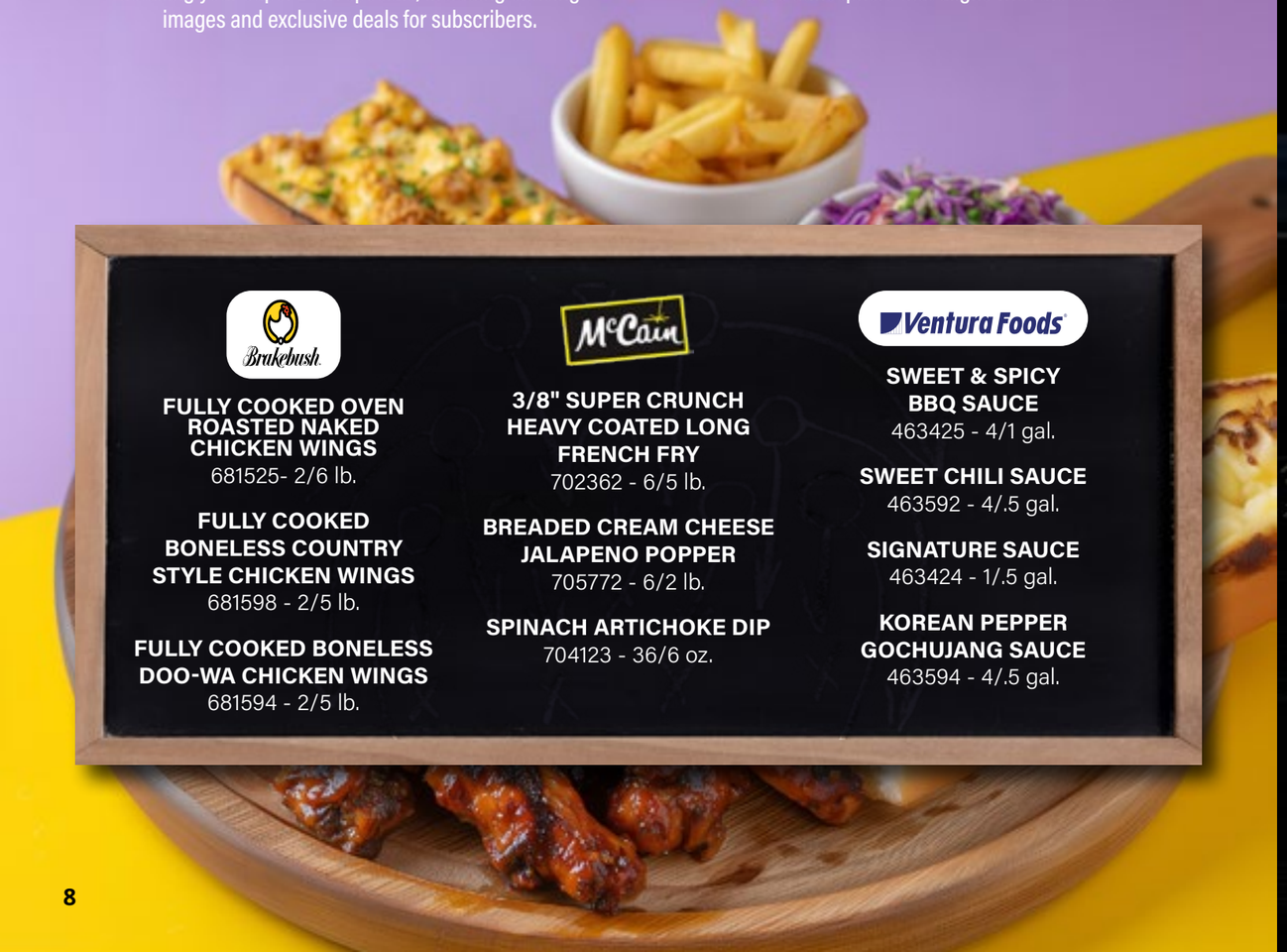
Send out targeted emails to your subscriber list detailing your Super Bowl specials, including enticing images and exclusive deals for subscribers.

OFFER DEALS AND BUNDLES

Create special packages or deals specifically for the Super Bowl, such as discounted group menus, combo offers on food and beverages, or exclusive game-day platters.

DECORATE FOR THE THEME

Deck out your restaurant with Super Bowl-themed decorations, banners, or team colors to create a festive atmosphere that aligns with the event.



Brakebush

FULLY COOKED OVEN ROASTED NAKED CHICKEN WINGS
681525- 2/6 lb.

FULLY COOKED BONELESS COUNTRY STYLE CHICKEN WINGS
681598 - 2/5 lb.

FULLY COOKED BONELESS DOO-WA CHICKEN WINGS
681594 - 2/5 lb.

McCain

3/8" SUPER CRUNCH HEAVY COATED LONG FRENCH FRY
702362 - 6/5 lb.

BREADED CREAM CHEESE JALAPENO POPPER
705772 - 6/2 lb.

SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP
704123 - 36/6 oz.

Ventura Foods

SWEET & SPICY BBQ SAUCE
463425 - 4/1 gal.

SWEET CHILI SAUCE
463592 - 4/.5 gal.

SIGNATURE SAUCE
463424 - 1/.5 gal.

KOREAN PEPPER GOCHUJANG SAUCE
463594 - 4/.5 gal.

A DECADENT LTO IDEA FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY

This St. Patrick's Day, elevate your restaurant's offerings with festive dishes that celebrate Irish flavors and traditions. Our Reuben Soup, created in the ULF Test Kitchen, is designed to captivate diners and encourage them to indulge in the holiday spirit. This crowd-pleasing recipe combines bold flavors in a hearty, eye-catching bread bowl, making it perfect for limited-time specials that boost sales and excitement in your establishment. Let's toast to good food, good company, and a memorable St. Patrick's Day!

Reuben Soup

INGREDIENTS

1 each Rotella's 5" Sour Dough Bread Bowl (716523)
8 oz. Superb NAMSG Cream Base Soup (GF) (294304)
3 oz. Hormel Cooked Round Top Corned Beef (553401)
3 oz. Sunsource Shredded Sauerkraut (283194)
3 oz. Vertullo Classic Gnocchi Pasta (762429)
1 oz. Great Lakes Shredded Feather Swiss Cheese (213040)
2 oz. Good Bread 3/4" Caraway Rye Bread (717824)
2 oz. Baron Spices Whole Bay Leaves (290808)
2 oz. Baron Spices Ground Black Pepper (280898)
2 oz. Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt Box (308709)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare Major's cream base according to instructions. As it comes to a boil, add bay leaves, black pepper, and salt.

Cut caraway rye bread into crouton-sized cubes and toast at 325°F for 7–10 minutes, or until crispy.

In a separate pot, sauté sauerkraut and corned beef for 3–5 minutes. Add prepared cream base and shredded Swiss cheese. Bring to a simmer.

Drop in potato gnocchi and simmer for 2–5 minutes.

Hollow out a bread bowl, fill with prepared Reuben soup, and top with rye croutons.

Rotella's Italian Bakery

BLACK RUSSIAN REUBEN BREAD
715809 - 6/36 oz. 16 sli.

MARBLE REUBEN BREAD
716172 - 6 ct. 14 sli.
716175 - 6/2 lb. 21 sli.

5/8" SLICED MARBLE RYE BREAD
716178 - 6/2.27 lb. 19 sli.

Hormel Foods

COOKED ROUND TOP CORNED BEEF
553401 - 2/7 lb. avg.

COOKED DELI PASTRAMI FLAT
558630 - 2/6 lb. avg

JB Our Service YOUR SUCCESS

1X1 BEEF STEW MEAT
502216 - 2/5 lb.

SUNSOURCE

SHREDDED SAUERKRAUT
283194 - 1/2 gal.
283199 - 6/#10 can

Hidden Valley

1000 ISLAND DRESSING
463345 - 6/32 oz.

ULF PRODUCE GREEN CABBAGE
126649 - 1/10 lb.
126607 - 1/40 lb.

ULF PRODUCE JUMBO CARROTS
127118 - 1/10 lb.
127100 - 1/25 lb.
127001 - 1/50 lb.

Highland market. MERIT

DELUXE BEEF STEW
247156 - 6/#10 can

We'll Drink to That!

After the holiday celebrations wind down, many guests look to reset with healthier habits. Whether they're participating in Dry January or simply taking a short break from alcohol, consumers are increasingly seeking better-for-you beverage options.

Low- and no-alcohol drinks continue to surge in popularity, especially among Gen Z and Millennials, who seek options like alcohol-free beers, elevated mocktails, and even CBD-infused beverages. When guests do choose to drink, many gravitate toward locally produced spirits.

Health-focused hydration is also having a moment. Smart waters, electrolyte-infused drinks, and other wellness-forward sips like "refreshers" are showing up on menus. Because beverage offerings influence where consumers choose to dine, now is the perfect time to refresh your menu with creative, health-forward options. To help you get started, we're sharing two simple, trend-inspired recipes your guests will love.

Source: National Restaurant Association, "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast."

BERRY ME IN BUBBLES

INGREDIENT

2 oz. Lyons Blackberry Passion Fruit Refresher (367198)

8 oz. Sparkling Ice Orange Starburst™ (227787)

1 sprig Fresh Mint (133369)

2 ea. Driscoll Fresh Blackberries (111112)

DIRECTIONS

Fill glass with ice, add Blackberry Passion Fruit Refresher and Sparkling Ice Orange Starburst™.

Stir gently to mix. Garnish with mint and blackberries.

What's Hot in 2026

ESCAPE TO FAR OFF PLACES

The desire to escape is pulling Dubai chocolate to the top of the trending list – and the top of many restaurant menus. The combo of chocolate, pistachio, and kataifi are appearing in many combinations from ice cream to pastry.

Source: National Restaurant Association, "What's Hot 2026 Culinary Forecast."

DUBAI CHOCOLATE COLD BREW

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. Red Diamond Cold Brew, mixed per recipe (217025)

2 oz. Pacific Foods Pistachio Milk (217100)

1 oz. Lyons Designer Chocolate Topping (350658)

.5 oz. Highland Market Honey (353541)

Ice (As needed)

DIRECTIONS

Fill glass with ice. Combine cold brew, pistachio milk, chocolate, and honey in shaker or mixing tin.

Shake until fully blended and chilled.

Pour over ice and serve immediately.

NON-FOODS

Handgards

EXTRA LARGE BLACK VITRILE GLOVES
903007 - 1/100 ct.

LARGE POWDER FREE BLACK VITRILE GLOVES
903006 - 1/100 ct.

EXTRA LARGE POWDER FREE VINYL GLOVES
903102 - 1/100 ct.

NEXSTEP COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

EXTRA LARGE WHITE MAXICOTTON LOOP-END MOP
034206 - 1/1 ct.

MAXIPLUS BLUE MICROFIBER LOOP-END MOP
034208 - 1/1 ct.

MAXISTRONG ANGLED BROOM
034209 - 1/1 ct.

SUNBURST™

LIQUID HEAVY DUTY CHALLENGE DEGREASER
475550 - 4/1 gal.

LIME REMOVER PLUS
475571 - 4/1 gal.

POT & PAN BURST
482224 - 4/1 gal.