

# THE FLAVOR IS KEE

UNLOCKING MENU POTENTIAL

## KEE TRENDS FOR 2022

Let's face it: The past 20+ months have been a whirlwind. As the world heads on its anything-but-linear path toward recovery, food and beverage trends continue to unfold in both predictable and surprising ways.

Many of the buzziest trends from 2021 will carry over into next year, but with an upgrade or a twist.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THROUGH LINES WE'RE SEEING:



Palates are getting **more sophisticated**



People are more familiar with flavors and formats **beyond the mainstream**



**Environmental impact** plays a purchasing role for lots of consumers



Above all else, **flavor reigns supreme**



Read on for our picks on the top trends for 2022, and learn how you can partner with Lee Kum Kee to incorporate them onto your menu with craveable dishes.





## MODERN COMFORT

Comfort food staples like pizza, mac and cheese, and fried chicken aren't going anywhere, but "comfort-plus" is gaining popularity as consumers look for new flavors or exciting spins on the classics.<sup>1</sup> International fare dovetails nicely with this trend, as more diners (especially younger ones) are turning to global dishes like ramen, pad thai or dumplings to satisfy a comfort food craving.

**INTERNATIONAL COMFORT FOODS SCRATCH TWO ITCHES RIGHT NOW: A DESIRE FOR SATISFYING, HEARTY FOOD COMBINED WITH GIVING PEOPLE THEIR MUCH-MISSED TRAVEL FIX.**

- Maeve Webster, President of Menu Matters<sup>3</sup>

KEEP INSIGHT **69%**

of consumers say they'll continue to enjoy the same amount of comfort food that they are now post-pandemic.<sup>2</sup>



### FEATURED LEE KUM KEE PRODUCT

**JAPANESE STYLE PORK BONE SOUP BASE:** This rich, savory soup base is the perfect canvas for creating irresistible ramen and hot pot dishes. Plus, it's incredibly easy to use—just add water and heat! [View Product](#)

### TREND IN ACTION

**RICH AND CREAMY TONKOTSU RAMEN:** Our rich Japanese Style Pork Bone Soup Base serves as the foundation for endlessly customizable ramen noodle soup. Top it with chashu (braised pork), shiitake mushrooms, scallions, nori and a creamy soft-boiled egg. [View Recipe](#)



## HOT, HOT, HOT

From fiery condiments that went viral (hello, chili crisp) to the one-chip challenge that humbled even the most daring eaters, spicy food continues to win with diners. And as palates get more refined, so does knowledge of regional heat (e.g. Sichuan broad bean sauce versus Guilin-style chili sauce). Take this opportunity to educate adventurous consumers with specific regional flavors.

### CHILI CRISP OR CHIU CHOW—IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

Chili crisp is an infused chili oil condiment, much like our Chiu Chow Style Chili Oil. The name "crisp" comes from the delicious crispy bits and seasonings you see in the vibrant oil. Common ingredients include dried chilies, shallots, sesame seeds and mushroom powder.

KEEP INSIGHT **42%**

of consumers are looking forward to new spicy food and flavor trends.<sup>4</sup>



### FEATURED LEE KUM KEE PRODUCT

**CHIU CHOW STYLE CHILI OIL:** Our vibrant red oil gets its irresistible flavor from fried chilies and garlic seasoned with soy sauce, all submerged in a savory chili oil. Sprinkle this versatile condiment on any dish, from noodles to eggs to desserts, or use it as a base for a spicy dipping sauce. [View Product](#)

### TREND IN ACTION

**HOT FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICH:** Buttermilk-fried chicken that's dipped in our delicious Chiu Chow Style Chili Oil and served with pickles and Sriracha Mayo on a potato bun. [View Recipe](#)







## PLANT-BASED FOR ALL

As more Americans adopt an “everything in moderation” mantra, plant-based proteins are in the spotlight, for both health and environmental reasons. Faux chicken, pork and seafood offer exciting center-of-the-plate options beyond the common burger, especially for the growing population of flexitarians and reducetarians. Many operators are also boosting the craveability of classic veggie dishes with umami-rich sauces.

### FLEX-I-TAR-I-AN (noun) -

One whose primarily plant-based diet occasionally includes meat or seafood

### RE-DU-CE-TAR-I-AN (noun) -

One who reduces their consumption of meat, eggs and dairy relative to their own diet

KEE INSIGHT

36%

of adults follow a flexitarian eating plan.<sup>5</sup>



### FEATURED LEE KUM KEE PRODUCT

**HOISIN SAUCE:** The hands-down favorite when you need a punch of sweetness and umami in any dish, this vegan sauce is perfect for stir-fries, marinades and dips. [View Product](#)

### TREND IN ACTION

**PLANT-BASED STIR-FRY:** Create a versatile stir-fry sauce by combining our Hoisin Sauce, Premium Soy Sauce, Sesame Oil and garlic, and then toss it with crisp, seasonal veggies of your choice. [View Recipe](#)



#### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup>Restaurant Business, “Look for Restaurants to Dig Deeper into 2021 Trends and Freshen Them Up for 2022,” by Patricia Cobe on Sept. 2, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Farm Rich survey, conducted in July 2020 with a sample of 2,000 Americans ages 18-55+.

<sup>3</sup>Restaurant Dive, “In for a treat: Work these trends into your 2021 menus,” March 1, 2021.

<sup>4</sup>Datassential, Simply Smarter, “The Amazing Trends Episode,” Jan. 21, 2021.

<sup>5</sup>JFT, “What to Watch for as the Plant-Based Food Market Grows,” by A. Elizabeth Sloan, Aug. 1, 2021.

#### ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

TODAY, “What is chili crisp? This spicy condiment belongs on everything—even dessert,” June 3, 2021, by Vidya Rao.

Chili Pepper Madness, “Chili Crisp Recipe: Spicy Chili Oil with Crispy Bits,” Feb. 3, 2020.

Plant Based News, “New Documentary Explores Whether ‘Reductarian’ Movement Can Help the Planet,” by Jemima Weber, Aug. 4, 2021.