

## the table

# Are you an eggslut or a canned wine connoisseur? Choose your food trend

**Konjac, water kefir, shio koji... foodies will have lots of new things on their plates in 2019, says Harry Wallop**

### Your chocolate fix

With the sugar tax hitting chocolate bars, expect many companies to follow the example of Cadbury, which is to launch a Dairy Milk with 30 per cent less sugar this year. A more appealing development will be the arrival in the UK this month of Tony's Chocolonely (available in Selfridges, then Ocado). With its funky Willy Wonka wrapper and bold promise to create slavery-free confectionery (the cocoa trade is bedevilled by child labour), it's already the ethical choice for Dutch consumers. And the milk chocolate almond honey nougat bar is delicious.

### Sexy eggs

Single-ingredient restaurants are big, and this year Eggslut, a cult Los Angeles breakfast place, is coming to London. All the dishes are egg-related; its signature, the Slut, is made with pomme puree and a coddled egg, which is poached in a glass jar and served with slices of baguette.

Ben McCormack, the editor of the online restaurant guide Square Meal, is not convinced. "I can't think of a single traditional breakfast dish that has been improved with a millennial reboot," he says. Yet even he admits that Eggslut and its dripping eggs will soon be all over your Instagram feed.

### Eating from tins

Come the spring we may well be living off foraged squirrels and the braised remains of a no-deal Brexit. So Jack Monroe's next cookbook is timely. Out in May, *Tin Can Cook* promises to put the chic into austerity cuisine — or at least show us how to rustle up a Catalan fish stew or a cannellini bean beurre blanc using canned or tinned food. Ideal for those fed up with the tyranny of needing 27 deli ingredients for a "simple summer salad" — yes, Ottolenghi, we're looking at you.

### Posh canned wine

If you can't stomach Spam (even if it has been tossed in teriyaki sauce), a can of wine may be more up your street. More environmentally friendly than bottled booze (it's lighter to transport), canned wine is going upmarket. In 2019 Mirabeau en Provence is putting its award-winning rosé into aluminium cans.

### Meaty butters

Nut butters are for wimps, meat fat is where it's at. It started a few years ago with lardo, cured pork fat, being transformed from Italian peasant food to overpriced delicacy, and now



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animal fat is being used in all sorts of intriguing ways, such as in a venison and aged beef fat kebab at Kricket, the modern Indian restaurant. Even Neil Nugent, the executive chef at Iceland, the supermarket chain, is developing a turbot with chicken jus ready meal. "It's an old-school classic combination. We used to cook turbot with braised oxtail in the Eighties," he says.

### A must-have app

The Eaten app is such a simple idea: search for particular dishes at restaurants, rather than cuisines. "Oh, I really fancy a spaghetti carbonara tonight. I wonder if somewhere local does a good one?" Eaten will have the answer. It's all part of our quest for immediate, personalised satisfaction.

### Exotic Asian dishes

Despite often being more intriguingly flavoured than its Thai neighbour, Burmese food is relatively unknown in the UK. That's about to change, thanks to *Mandalay: Recipes and Tales from a Burmese Kitchen*, a sumptuous cookbook by MiMi Aye, published by Bloomsbury in June. Sticky rice doughnuts with jaggery syrup feature in the book, as does a pickled ginger and sesame salad with peanuts, fried broad beans, crunchy fried garlic, dried shrimp, fresh green chilli and tomato. A flavour explosion.

### The new jackfruit

What the Krakatoa is konjac? We asked the same about pulled jackfruit a few years ago. Konjac is a root vegetable, or more technically an edible tuber, that has mainly been ground into a flour and used to make noodles, particularly those weird

zero-calorie ones that were big a couple of years ago. Yet, says Jonathan Moore, the executive chef for innovation at Waitrose, it's "an interesting ingredient that we will see more of in 2019 — it is very low in calories, but high in fibre". Is it tasty though? The jury is out.

### The next rump steak

Venison was on the Christmas menu at a surprisingly large number of supermarkets, and Waitrose — where venison sales jumped 35 per cent last year — is about to launch two new venison steaks: a cherry wood-smoked rump with chocolate butter, and a dukkah-crumbbed steak with a green-harissa sauce. The meat is pretty healthy and pretty ethical, two big boxes that consumers will be ticking in 2019. "Twenty years ago if you were eating venison, it was probably from a red deer, quite strong tasting," says Mike Robinson, a deer supplier and co-owner of the Harwood Arms, a Michelin-starred pub in Fulham, southwest London. "Fallow deer, in contrast, has very pale flesh and a far more delicate flavour."

### A no-booze brew

Those who think that kefir and kombucha are passé need to move on to water kefir. A fermented, lightly fizzy drink, it is basically posh lemonade. Made by fermenting globby grains in coconut water or sugar water, the end result is far less disgusting than it sounds and is a super-healthy alternative to beer, if you are avoiding alcohol. You'll only find it in health food shops and the odd outré bar in east London, but it's likely to spread.



**Faux tuna, made from beans and sea algae oil, has made a splash in the US**

### The umami hit

A gluten-free alternative to soy sauce, shio koji adds a dash of umami and saltiness to any dish. Made from fermented rice, it is a useful ingredient in which to marinate meat. "I think shio koji is amazing," says Nugent, who is experimenting with using it to flavour a turkey in Iceland's 2019 Christmas range (yes, he is already planning that). "It gives you this unexpected flavour. On its own it has little value, but add it to any sauce, be it a Japanese dipping sauce or a gravy or a pasta sauce, and it adds this amazing umami hit."

### This year's flat white

Once upon a time the flat white was hip. Now even McDonald's offers it. True hipsters are heading to Omotesando Koffee in Rathbone Place in the West End of London, the first British outpost of a cult Tokyo chain. It's coffee, but done in a very Japanese way. The iced cappuccino is covered with a layer of bubbly milk foam topped with cocoa powder.

### Store cupboard essential

Dulse injects a savoury hit into whatever you are cooking. A dried seaweed high in protein and vitamin B12, you can add it to noodles or sprinkle it on salad to add texture and depth. Yotam Ottolenghi is a fan and Waitrose now sells it in sachets.

### The eco product

After the war on plastic straws, the next disposable item in eco-warriors' sights is clingfilm. Don't worry, though, your block of cheddar need not go off if you invest in (quite pricey) beeswax wrappers, which are made from waxed cotton and can be washed time and time again. Lakeland, the kitchenware company, is expecting it to be one of the hits of 2019.

### Cool pancakes

A hopper is a Sri Lankan fermented grain-based pancake, left. "Often an egg is dropped into it, along with a curry placed inside it, then it's rolled up and eaten with your hands. It's not dissimilar to a south Indian dosa," says Charles Banks of the Food People, a food trends consultancy, who predicts that this street food will take off here. "It's a much lighter eat than a curry with rice. And it's fermented." Hoppers, which has two branches, is already selling the dish in London.

### Faux fish

Faux tuna, made from beans, soy, lentils and sea algae oil, has made a splash in the US. Now Waitrose is launching fishless fingers here, made of seaweed and tofu, and Sainsbury's is following suit with Sophie's Kitchen smoked "salmon". Meanwhile, Sutton and Sons, a mini-chain of upmarket fish and chip shops in north and east London, has opened a vegan fish and chip shop, the fish made out of banana blossom. Expect to see mock mussels, ersatz oysters and sham scampi on a high street near you soon.