



Les Dames d'Escoffier®
INTERNATIONAL

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Les Dames d'Escoffier International Shares 2025–2026 Food & Hospitality Trends
Global Flavor Exploration, Sustainability, and Experiential Dining Set the Stage for the Year Ahead

November 25, 2025 – Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI), a leading global community of women in food, beverage, and hospitality, unveiled its 2025–2026 industry trends and predictions. Contributions from LDEI's national leaders highlight the evolving landscape of dining, consumer expectations, and hospitality innovation.

Flavors Without Borders

Kate Howell, LDEI 3rd Vice President, predicts that global cuisine is no longer just “novel” but increasingly mainstream. Flavors from Malaysia, Korea, and South America, including Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia, are set to grow in popularity. Menus will feature bold pepper, fermented pastes like gochujang, intense umami sauces, and global mash-ups such as South American-Korean fusion or Malaysian rendang with Latin-style chimichurri. Sweet and spicy blends, dubbed “Swicy,” will appear across dishes, snacks, condiments, and desserts.

Sharon Olson, LDEI Chicago Chapter Executive Director, notes that mashups combining familiar forms with adventurous flavors will continue to flourish. Examples include gochujang-braised short rib tacos and other multicultural dishes that work across price points and dining formats.

Beverage Innovation & Layered Drinks

Kara Nielsen, LDEI San Francisco Chapter President, notes the evolution of layered, garnished beverages. Drinks are incorporating multiple flavors, toppings, and textures, blending elements of dirty sodas, boba, coffee, and matcha into indulgent, Instagram-friendly creations.

Howell also sees tea reinvented as a flavor-forward, non-alcoholic, and low-alcohol option. Tea tonics, iced, fermented, botanical, and cocktail-adjacent, will gain prominence. For operators, this means expanding the concept of tea into “tea bars,” tea tonic pairings, and botanical tea cocktails, appealing to wellness- and experience-focused consumers.

Stephanie Jaeger, LDEI President, highlights the growing popularity of low-alcohol beverages, including lower-ABV spritzes, fortified wines, and sessionable cocktails. These options meet consumer desires for socializing without the after-effects of traditional cocktails.

Sustainability & Ingredient Innovation

Sustainability continues to deepen. Howell emphasizes that consumers now expect high standards in animal welfare, regenerative agriculture, and transparent supply chains. Plant-based and hybrid proteins, including pea, wheat, and mixed botanical blends, are maturing as main-course options rather than alternatives.

Sweet Adventures & Dessert Globalization

Desserts are evolving into exploratory, social-media-friendly experiences. Howell predicts Japanese petit fours, Korean croffles, Latin American sweets, and hybrid creations (sweet + heat, sweet + herbal notes) will become more prominent, positioning dessert as a statement course rather than just a meal finale. Gen-Z’s appetite for creative, bite-sized treats is shaping bakery trends. Nielsen predicts continued growth in global-inspired artisan baked goods such as croissants, layered honey cakes, and filled beignets across restaurant and bakery menus.

Elevated Farm-to-Table Dining

Jaeger also emphasizes elevated farm-to-table experiences using seasonal, hyper-local ingredients. Diners are seeking menus that feel both refined and approachable, offering uniqueness without pretension.

Unique Cuts & Butcher-Driven Dishes

Curiosity and culinary adventure continue, according to Jaeger. Diners increasingly seek distinctive cuts of meat and chef-driven preparations not typically attempted at home.

Health & Snacking Plate Trends

Nielsen points to the influence of GLP-1 medications on menus. Diners are snacking less, favoring high-protein mini-meals and nutrient-dense options, leading operators to offer smaller, shareable plates that appeal to those joining social meals without large appetites.

Value, Comfort & Menu Adaptation

Nielsen and other LDEI leaders highlight that economic uncertainty will drive demand for value-focused, comforting, and versatile menu items. Restaurants may emphasize smaller portions, promotions, and culturally diverse comfort foods tailored to brand and audience.

Industry Resilience & Strategic Expansion

Sheila Crye and Linda Roth emphasize the resilience of restaurant operators, particularly in Washington, D.C., where restaurateurs are purchasing properties to control costs and opening new locations despite regulatory and economic challenges.

Operational & Market Dynamics

Barbara Pires and Barbara Sibley point to labor shifts, price volatility, rising costs, and AI integration as factors influencing restaurant operations. Diners' desire for affordable quality experiences and wellness-focused comfort food will continue shaping menus and service approaches.

"These insights reflect a dynamic industry that is responsive, creative, and resilient," said Stephanie Jaeger, LDEI President. "From global flavors to experiential dining, our members' reflections shape the future of hospitality while prioritizing sustainability, wellness, and meaningful connections."

About Les Dames d'Escoffier International

LDEI is an international organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the fields of food, beverage, and hospitality. The organization's 2,800 members in 42 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and Italy provide leadership, educational opportunities, and philanthropy. Since its founding in 1985, LDEI chapters have raised and donated more than \$10 million to educational, community non-profits, and philanthropic organizations. For more information, visit www.ldei.org and follow LDEI on Instagram @lesdamesintl and Facebook @LDEIdamesdescoffier.