



3 Trends are Lighting Up the New York City Cuisine Scene

BY MERYL PEARLSTEIN ON 05/04/17, UPDATED 05/10/17

Remember when ordering chicken usually meant an ordinary grilled breast, or perhaps a plain paillard topped with greens? Or, if you were going vegetarian, searching for a (boring) nonmeat option of steamed vegetables? My, how culinary choices have changed: Noting today's orientation toward mindful and healthful eating, here are three trends that are grabbing the attention of New York City diners.

Chefs are reinventing chicken with innovative dishes cropping up on menus throughout the city.

Despite having a name that belies an extensive food menu, [Coffeeman](#) leads the elevated chicken train, using a Josper grill-oven from Spain to create wings with a smoky, charcoal flavor.

The gracious and talented Georgette Farkas turns rotisserie into an upscale experience at the eponymous [Rotisserie Georgette](#), where all birds are roasted over open flames, with sauces and garnishes on the side.

Ethnic versions are plentiful, too. Korean chicken wings laced with ginger, garlic and red chili paste raise the heat at [5 Napkin Burger](#). [Sfoglia](#) sears up juicy chicken al mattone (under a brick), an Italian specialty, while Portuguese standout [Lupulo](#) dishes out impressively spicy chicken piri-piri cooked on a wood-burning grill. Completing the European tour, [Little Frog Bistro's](#) tender coq au vin gives you a masterful version of the French staple as do the high-standard chicken creations at Antoine Westermann's [Le Coq Rico](#), where chicken literally rules the roost—eggs and feathers decorate the walls—at the Parisian import. Don't miss the Alsatian-inspired bœuf à la mode with artichokes and Riesling jus.

For more casual choices, chicken appears as a beef alternative at [Shake Shack](#) with a breaded chicken sandwich that's pure bliss. The fried chicken craze isn't going away either. Take note of the long lines for both restaurant seating and takeout at tiny [Root & Bone](#). In another sliver of a space, [Birds & Bubbles](#) on the Lower East Side serves up one of the city's best Southern experiences with sinfully tender dry-brined chicken dipped in buttermilk, pan-fried one piece at a time.

Two other trends are catching fire in the city, one actually using no heat at all. Raw fish isn't a stranger here, appearing on sushi menus for decades, but it's the dressed-up versions and ethnic spins that have grabbed the attention of the health-conscious diner searching for new taste sensations.

Latin America has brought wonderful raw fish choices to New York City. Some of the best are ceviches, fish simply cooked in citrus juices and tarted up with peppers, onions or even mangoes. Enrique Olvera's [Cosme](#) takes wild striped bass and spikes it with poblanos, avocado and black lime, creating a modern Mexican version of Peruvian tiradito.

European influences abound as well. Thinly sliced carpaccio is served four ways at [Natsumi Tapas](#) where Japanese meets Italian, or at [Seabird](#) with branzino slivers dressed with mint, citrus and jalapeños. Crudo, sashimi's popular Italian cousin, enhances the silkiness of tuna, yellowtail and fluke with drizzles of salt, citrus, ginger and chili at [Coarse](#) and [Rouge Tomato Chelsea](#) in Manhattan and Lady's in Brooklyn. French-inspired tartares get a photo-perfect update at [Benjamin Prime](#), with a tuna and salmon duo jazzed up with citrus crème fraîche.

The newest entry in the raw-fish pool isn't actually new at all. Born in Hawaii to take advantage of the area's bounty of fresh fish, poke has made a full-frontal attack on New York City, appearing in restaurants like [Pokeworks](#) and [Sweetcatch Poke](#). There you create your own poke bowl—think salad or breakfast bowls—: Pick your fish, toppings and seasonings, and you have a meal that's healthy and personalized. There's an Italian version of poke made with seaweed salad, tuna and shaved truffle at [Davio's](#) in Midtown, and tuna poke wonton tacos at hipster haunts [Beauty & Essex](#) and [The Stanton Social](#).

Finally, vegetables have moved up the food pyramid from ho-hum to hot.

All-vegetable restaurants are the rage, like Jean-Georges Vongerichten's new [abcV](#) or the enduringly popular [Dirt Candy](#), and while blistered shishitos seasonally heat up menus at [The Woolly Public](#), it's hard to find a restaurant that doesn't have a dressed-up version of Brussels sprouts year-round. This once-maligned veggie is now so cool that it's often referred to only as Brussels.

Other contenders in the veggie category are cauliflower and combos bedecked like beauty pageant contestants. Notable are the crushed cauliflower at [Harold's Meat and Three](#), crowned with fried onions and pepper; [Charlie Bird's](#) Sicilian version with hot peppers and mint; or the fiery Manchurian-Indian florets at [Tulsi](#). A side dish that can hold its own is the vegetable succotash at [Tommy Bahama Restaurant](#), an island twist on the classic with haricots verts, carrots, corn, shiitakes and onions sautéed in jalapeño lime butter and adorned Monet-style with edible flowers. Now, that's a dish that's ready for its close-up.

