Uber Eats reveals most popular foods among South Africans

Uber Eats shares the most popular foods among its South African users for 2018, and the food trend it predicts for 2019.

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2019 will be the year the veganism becomes mainstream across the Middle East and Africa, including South Africa. That's if the latest Uber Eats FoodCast is anything to go by.

Based on the Uber Eats search data, the biggest increases in customer search volumes over the last six months include edible flowers and meat substitutes like seitan and heme. Also, adding to the list is hemp and manaeesh. The ingredients are set to appear on many more restaurant menus across the country in the next year.

Showing the changing palates of vegans and flexitarians, jackfruit, often seen as the vegan alternative to pulled pork which is predicted to fall out of flavour with many as the meat-free offering widens.

In addition, matcha, aloe vera, rolled ice cream are also on the list of items Uber Eats data shows will decline in the coming 12 months. According to the data, coffee will return to being a hot drink, as cold brew also makes the top five list of food and drink items anticipated to be in decline.

To uncover insights around these foodie favourites, Uber Eats analysed more than 191 million searches on the app across Middle East Africa over the last six months.

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Most popular foods of 2018

Alongside predicting what's going to be hot and what's not this year, the 2019 Uber Eats FoodCast also revealed the below as the most popular foods of 2018. Garlic proved to be a firm favourite amongst Eaters in South Africa followed by ginger, coconut, tofu and lastly honey. The super trendy seaweed, gluten-free and quinoa all make appearances in the top 20 food searches of 2018.

For South Africa the top 20 most popular items are:

1. Garlic
2. Ginger
3. Coconut
4. Tofu
5. Honey
6. Hummus
7. Sriracha
8. Quinoa
9. Tahini
10. Vegan
11. Seaweed
12. Miso
13. Pumpkin
14. Kimchi
15. Chia
16. Haloumi
17. Gluten-free
18. Dates
19. Truffle
20. Pho

According to Jeanette Mellinger, head of Uber Eats User Research, as people become more conscious of what they eat, we can expect plant-based superfoods to continue to rise in popularity. "As our search data shows, food preferences are constantly evolving and the latest is a rise in socially-conscious diners. In line with this, we expect to see veganism become increasingly mainstream, rising from just a few percent in each country to a lifestyle choice for millions of individuals.

"Customer search volumes also show that food delivery apps like Uber Eats are quickly transforming food delivery from a guilty pleasure at the weekend, to an increasingly important part of our daily food habits. As we look ahead to 2019, we also expect to see customers search for more low-cost, healthier, 'everyday' meal options," said Mellinger.