

# 17 Trends for 2012

by Cheryl Sternman Rule

**Be honest: How many lists of top food trends have you already read? Five? Ten? Fifty? Forget them all. This one, right here, is the only one you'll need.**

1. Bananas will be yellow.
2. People will eat cupcakes. People will eat bacon. People will eat pie. People will breathe air, drink water and get pregnant, though not necessarily in that order.
3. Kombucha will remain wildly popular, so get used to rolling that word around on your tongue. Of course, only six people know what it actually is. (See page 16.)
4. A well-known pizza chain will invent a new way to put even more cheese on its pizza: by injecting cheese into the cheese.
5. A well-known donut chain will debut a donut whose hole is stuffed with a fully loaded baked potato.
6. Children's menus will still offer chicken nuggets, but they will soon be coated with 100% whole-grain, compostable particulate matter fortified with antioxidants. If you supersize, you'll get a side of sugar-free Swedish fish—now with Sucralose!—and with beet extract listed as the 84th ingredient. So, basically, they're vegetables.
7. Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> will fall out of favor and vitamin B<sub>15</sub> will become red-hot. Time to toss out your old vitamins and replace them with reformulated, more fashionable versions at twice the price.
8. New energy drinks will combine coffee, tea, Coke, ginseng, chocolate and the current formulation, Rockstar. College kids will drink it, then it will be banned, then there will be a 6-hour *Special Edition: Dateline NBC* with sources profiled only in shadow. Then a very special *Intervention*. Then a very, very special *Celebrity Rehab*.
9. Parents will seek ever more innovative ways to feed their kids spinach without discussing, touching, planting, harvesting, thinking about, chewing or swallowing any actual leaves.
10. Kale chips—once the provenance of health-conscious home



cooks—will be co-opted on a grand scale by food manufacturers. Look for pre-packaged versions with extra salt, oil and preservatives. (Flavors include cinnamon-sugar, nacho cheese and lite-bacon-chipotle.)

11. Bye-bye, flaxseeds; hello, chia seeds. Demand for these trendy, plant-based sources of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids will be so high, websites will post how-to guides on getting Chia Pets to mate.
12. Meatless Mondays will be moved to Wednesdays, but will keep its original name for the sake of brand recognition.
13. Tired of ho-hum yogurt in the same 63 varieties? You're not alone. Check your grocer's shelves for new vegan yogurt flavors, such as Tempeh Temptation, Strawberry Seitan and Tofu Teriyaki.
14. Single-purpose slow cookers are a thing of the past. Soon to debut: models that braise beef, simmer soup, whip up Baked Alaska and fold laundry.
15. Probiotic sales have flatlined due to a lack of celebrity endorsements. In the new year, look for JWOWW Probiotics, which the *Jersey Shore* star promises will boost immunity while imparting a savage tan.
16. In addition to products that are gluten-free, dairy-free, peanut-free and soy-free, expect to see more packaged foods that are now food-free. Cup O' Noodles, for example, will have only one ingredient: Cup.
17. Trend stories like this one will dominate newspapers, magazines and websites for another week, and then we'll move on to the Next Big Thing: how to get the iPhone's new Siri to cook us a tasty, healthful meal in under 40 seconds. 🍲

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