

Food Trends for 2010

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It's been a tough year. And I for one am looking forward to the new decade ahead. What can we expect in food and nutrition news in 2010? Here are some global trends predicted by one research group (thefoodpeople.co.uk) ... with a few additional comments:

- **Food cocooning:** A return to the comforts of home and a resurgence of family dinners and dinner parties. Hooray! Research confirms that families who eat meals together benefit emotionally as well as nutritionally. Children who eat meals with their families do better in school and are also less likely to fall into substance abuse, studies have found.

- **Simplicity:** Restaurants and foodies will feature simple preparations with few ingredients. Yep, that chopped apple and some nuts tossed into a salad is now "trendy" as well as a simple way to add extra fiber, vitamins, minerals to meals.

- **Global comfort food — including baked comfort:** I believe this may have something to do with the expansion of Cinnabons in airport terminals.

- **Local:** Farmers markets will gain even more prominence. And locally produced food will be more and more sought after. This means that I will plan to eat more spinach in California and more green chile in New Mexico. And all will be right with the world.

- **Need for treats:** More "feel good" foods such as mini desserts are on the horizon. This trend may be one reason why childhood obesity is the No. 1 top food story of the decade, according to one year-end survey.

- **Street food:** A trend away from restaurants (I'll believe it when I see it) and toward dining trucks, street vendors, informal and authentic ethnic food. This also brings into focus the third top food story of the decade ... food safety concerns.

- **Planet-conscious eating:** I would like to expand this to "plant conscious eating." As we embrace "green" eating to sustain the planet, let us choose more "green eating" to sustain our bodies.

- **National health:** Increase in programs, initiatives, products and even legislation to improve our health, especially diabetes and heart disease. And this, dear fellow Americans, is where I step up on my soapbox. According the American Dietetic Association, we have paid a big price for overlooking or underestimating the important role of food and nutrition in improving our nation's health — "a price paid in lives and dollars."

"We know what works and what doesn't work for real people trying to eat well, be healthy and prevent chronic disease," says the ADA. Now is the time to support programs such as nutrition therapy and diabetes education that save health care costs and prevent major health issues.

Back to basics. Plant a garden. Eat more green. Chop up some vegetables instead of opening a box or can. We can do it! Have a safe and healthful New Year!