



## **Top food and beverage trends for 2024 - by James Famularo**

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Throughout my career, I've witnessed the ebb and flow of many various food trends, from frozen yogurt to poke, omakase sushi to cupcakes, burgers to dessert. While social media continues to amplify the influence of these niche trends, recent market deals indicate a shift away from specific culinary fads.

I've noticed instead a discernible rise in restaurants embracing broader cuisines, and the top-performing restaurants of 2024 thus far in Manhattan and Brooklyn appear to be revolving around this new mindset, with restaurateurs crafting innovative concepts centered around diverse ethnicities. Whether it's a Chinese eatery with a hidden speakeasy in the lower level, or a late-night spot serving Middle Eastern cuisine, there's a noticeable surge in these culturally inspired restaurants.

The strong demand for these types of restaurants has kept my team exceptionally busy since the end of the pandemic, but don't just take it from me — the behavior of New Yorkers speaks volumes. Every restaurateur we speak to is booked solid with reservations almost every night of the week. And once Tik Tok gets wind of a new restaurant, the challenge to score a table becomes even harder. We have brokered a few of these highly sought after restaurant leases, where we were able to see firsthand how the power of social media can lead a restaurant to success.

One standout establishment gaining considerable attention since its opening is Raf's, located in NoHo. From the same owners of The Musket Room, Raf's offers an intimate setting with a blend of French and Italian cuisine. This restaurant opened by our longtime clients is a prime example of how to blend two cultures successfully.

Another example of this broader trend is Hen House, located in a 650 s/f space that we leased at 120 First Ave. in the East Village. Hen House is a fast-casual Lebanese restaurant that focuses on late-night dining and has achieved tremendous popularity since their opening. The owner's journey from a small Brooklyn food stand to a storefront success highlights the impact of positive customer feedback and rapid growth.

In the middle of the West Village's saturated culinary landscape, Libertine, on the corner of Greenwich and Christopher St., stands out as more than just another French bistro. Their unique take on French cuisine, serving items such as "Jambon Persille," has captivated New York restaurant-goers and garnered attention from high-end food critics.

The bar for restaurant success in New York City has been raised significantly, compelling restaurateurs to think creatively and venture beyond conventional boundaries when introducing new concepts.

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