



# SPOTTED... MARCH 26

A sneak peek into consumer demands, flavours, and future trends, spotted in March 2026.

Pickles. Foodservice Launches. The Social Influence.

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# PICK UP PICKLES



# COMFORT FOODS

## FROM SIDE DISH TO STAR OF THE PLATE.

Once relegated to the sidelines of a proper British plate, tucked beside a sandwich or quietly accompanying a pork pie — pickles are having a serious moment in the UK. What was once seen as a humble preserve is now a culinary trend, a health staple, and even a social media darling.

Restaurants across the UK are elevating pickles from garnish to headline act. It's not unusual to see tasting menus featuring house-fermented elements, or burgers topped with signature pickles that define the dish. Even the classic ploughman's lunch has had a glow-up, with chefs swapping standard accompaniments for bespoke, in-house creations.

The rise of pickles in the UK isn't just about food—it's about changing tastes, global influence, and a renewed appreciation for simple techniques done well.



## INDULGENCE WINS.

The rise of elevated comfort food and “premium fast food” reflects a shift in how UK consumers approach indulgence. Rather than traditional fast food, diners are gravitating toward familiar favourites—like dirty fries, stacked burgers and loaded sides—that have been upgraded with higher-quality ingredients, bold toppings and more distinctive flavour combinations.

At the same time, this movement is strongly tied to a “treat but casual” mindset. Consumers still want affordable, accessible dining experiences, but are increasingly willing to pay a little more for food that feels indulgent, shareable and experience-led. Dishes are often designed for visual impact and social occasions—think piled-high, messy, and photogenic plates.

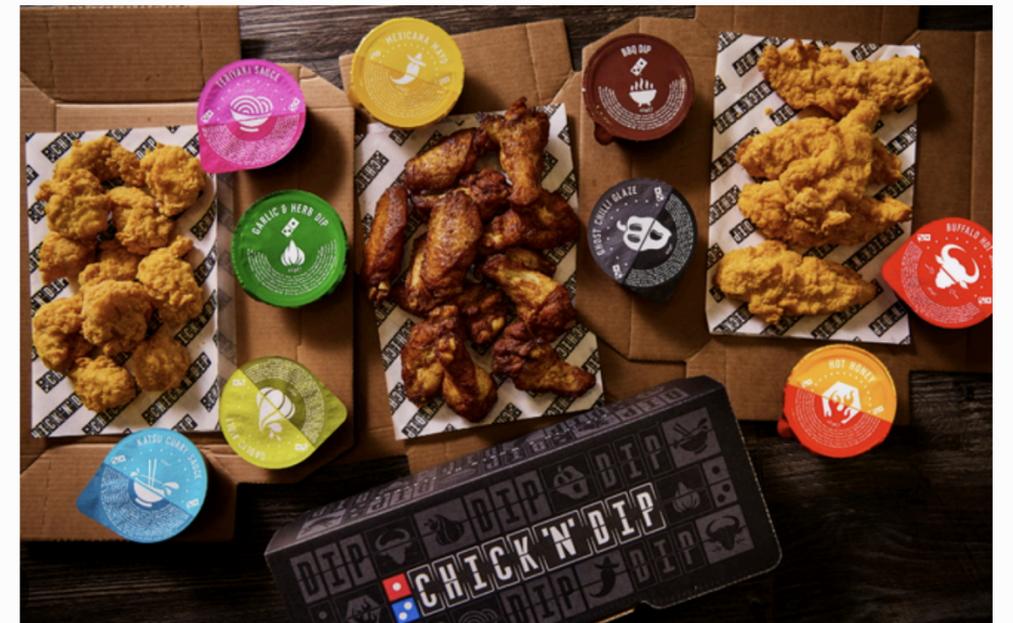
# NEW FOODSERVICE LAUNCHES



McDonald's is doubling down on hybrid sweet-savoury items + dessert collabs, a big 2026 trend.



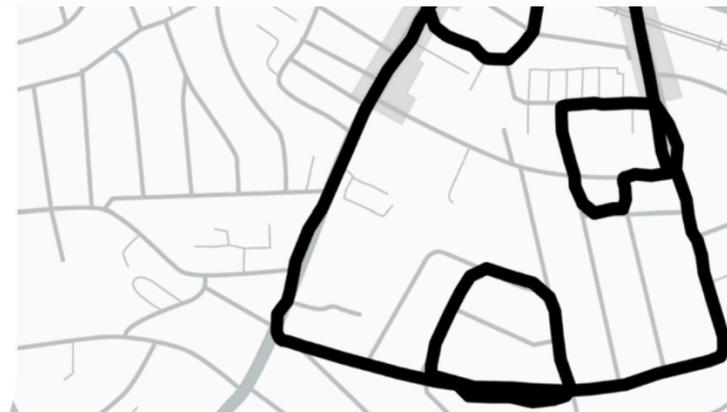
Popeyes shows a strong move toward bundle deals + social eating formats



A move into fried chicken with a range of dips from Domino's

## Map My Pizza Run: Turn Your January Run Into Pizza

This January, we launched Map My Pizza Run - a campaign that turned movement into mozzarella. People across the UK mapped pizza-shaped routes. They ran (or walked) them, and earned money off their pizza at Franco Manca.



FRANCO MANCA

# WHAT ARE WE SEEING ACROSS SOCIALS?



TikTok



YouTube



Social media is currently a major driver of food trends in the UK, with health-focused content dominating conversations, particularly around gut health and fibre. The viral rise of “fibremaxxing” on platforms like TikTok has pushed high-fibre foods, such as beans, seeds and whole grains into the spotlight, reframing fibre as a “fashionable” nutrient rather than a dull dietary requirement.

Visually appealing, functional foods are thriving, with matcha emerging as a standout example. Its bright colour, perceived health benefits and strong aesthetic appeal have made it highly shareable, helping it spread rapidly across UK social feeds and into mainstream café culture.

Social platforms are accelerating how quickly trends move from niche to mainstream by linking content directly to purchasing behaviour. Viral ingredients (like chia seeds or pistachios) and simple recipe formats can quickly translate into retail demand and menu adoption, while health “hacks” and functional eating habits drive experimentation.