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2019 Culinary Trends

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I'm all about food trends, mainly because I like to eat. But also I think as one of the necessities in life, food's influence impacts so many other aspects of life—including the home and garden. A recent piece in *Progressive Grocer* highlighted what one of the country's biggest grocery chains, Kroger, believes will be the top culinary trends for 2019.

- **Regional flavors.** Regional dishes, such as Nashville hot chicken or Southern Appalachian pimento cheese, are finding their flavors in other products like potato chips.
- **Plant-based foods.** It's easier than ever to include plant-based foods into a meal and oftentimes it's thanks to a lab. (By the way, have you tried Impossible Burger? It's pretty darn meaty.) Last year, 30% of Americans had at least one meat-free day per week.
- **Eating styles.** More and more people are buying "better for you" products and subscribing to a style of eating, such as vegetarian or Paleo. Surveys show that 15% of the U.S. population labels themselves as vegetarian or vegan!
- **Gut-healthy foods.** Like healthy soil is the foundation of a great garden, a healthy gut is the secret to overall wellness—and more and more folks are eating foods and supplements that are teeming with probiotics.
- **Low sugar and natural sweeteners.** As folks try to limit their sugar intake, they're turning to low-sugar products and natural sweeteners, such as honey and agave.

Four of these five trends include some sort of wellness factor. And nearly all of these food trends can be used to build a product line-up at your store that hits on what customers are increasingly wanting to purchase. From hot pepper and stevia plants to stocking healthier alternatives on the gift and retail shelves, these are trends you can definitely use. **GP**