

It's a new year and it's time to share some of my observations on emerging food trends I'm anticipating this year. Depending on where you live in the world, some of these trends may have already caught on and are more established than emerging. Or perhaps they will never see the light of day. From what I've observed from trade shows I've attended and fellow professionals I have spoken with, I believe over the coming year or so, we will begin to see more and more of these types of products hit our store shelves – at least in North America

Here's my run down:

Vegan products – Veganism is nothing new, but I'm seeing a significant rise in the number of products tailored towards those following a vegan lifestyle. These products deliver similar flavours and textures to non-vegan products such as milk, cheese, yogurt and even meats! Companies are using nuts like almonds and cashews along with coconut to create a variety of creamy, dairy like indulgences such as yogurt and butter. I've tried these products and I have to say that they tasted amazing. I wouldn't hesitate to purchase them for myself and I'm not vegan. They were that good!

Bone Broth – I predicted this as a health food trend for 2017 and I think I was right. I've been starting to see it pop up in more in healthier and at shows I attended in the past year, I saw a lot more vendors carrying a ready-made bone broth so consumers can just heat and serve. If you've made bone broth before, you know it takes time so this is definitely a time saver. Given the increase in vendors showcasing bone broths, I predict this is going to be an area growing in competition and so I expect to see bone broth being carried on more health food grocery store shelves in the near future.

Mushrooms – Mushrooms such as reishi, chaga and cordyceps are high in antioxidants and touted for their many potential health benefits. Traditionally they have been used in teas, but, I'm seeing more and more products with some type of medicinal mushroom ingredient. Everything from soups, coffee, hot chocolate and stews.

Different types of waters – Last but not least is different types of water. I think most of us are familiar with the ever popular coconut water. While there were a lot of vendors carrying coconut water, I've noticed at some shows I attended that there was an increase in vendors selling water from trees such as birch and maple. These waters are similar to coconut water, in that they deliver electrolytes and vitamins and they have fewer calories and a milder taste – they pretty much taste similar to water. The marketing of birch and maple water here in Canada makes total sense to me since these trees grow in abundance here. Why import coconut water when you can have a locally sourced similar product? Although the product is sourced locally, I expect that it will carry a higher price point so it may be slower to adopt. If you live in North America, and in Canada in particular, keep your eye out for these products. Who knows, maybe in the coming years we'll see water sourced from other plants as this seems to be a growing trend in general.