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## PODCAST EPISODE #7 – FULL TRANSCRIPT

*2021 Food Trends to Watch*

*Mike Kostyo, Food Trendologist, Datassential*



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**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:00:00.06] You're listening to the Kitchen Scene Investigator podcast.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:00:14.46] Hola, Hola, hello, from my kitchen here in Los Angeles and on this final day of 2020, good riddance. I'm your host, Nickie, Jurado.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:00:25.05] **SHOW INTRODUCTION:** Did you ever imagine the radical crazy shifts we've been through this year? OK, so in the kitchen, did you imagine that we would go from a sourdough phase to regrowing green onions to being completely obsessed with charcuterie boards? Actually, I'm not mad at that one

and I can just imagine what 2021 will bring us. I know for me I will continue to miss the inspiration I get from going out to eat. And I started to notice a few topics come up in conversation with my sisters and friends. And they started to have like similarities and patterns. So 2021, what do you got? What do you got 2021? You know, through this podcast, I try to give you the ways and language of the pros. And I got to thinking, what do the pros have lined up for 2021? And I'd like to give it to you, my listener. So the closest thing I could get to a crystal ball and I swear, one of these days somebody is going to send me a crystal ball and it's going to be amazing. But until I get that crystal ball, I invited Mike Kostyo, the lead food trendologist at Datassential, which is this amazing industry-leading market research firm. And Mike is the senior editor of their seven trend magazines, including FoodBytes: *2021 Food Trend Report*.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:01:38.79] So I invited Mike to chat with us to go over the trends, you know, we should be watching for in the year ahead. Mike's a cool dude. He's been on CBS Radio. He was a judge on Food Network's Eating America. Mike has a Masters in Gastronomy from Boston University and holds certificates in culinary arts, baking, wine and artisanal cheese production. In his spare time, Dude has spare time. What's up with that, Mike? In his spare time, he teaches cooking classes and was the founder of Windy City Food Swap and Social, which is a monthly food swap in Chicago. Actually, I

think I kind of want Mike's job because I want to be first in line. I want to be the first to know. Right. Well, I'm hoping this show moves you up to the front of the line to know what to watch for in 2021. As always, we end the show with my favorite three questions to ask every guest. So I've asked Mike what he's drinking, what's making him happy, and his favorite gift to give a friend or colleague. So from sunny Los Angeles, Happy New Year. Stay safe and enjoy this chat with Mike Kostyo, lead food trendologist of Datassential as we talk about the trends in 2021 to watch. Enjoy.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:02:53.56] Hi, Mike, welcome to the show.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:02:56.20] Thanks, Nickie, I'm glad to be here.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:02:57.97] I am so excited to talk about the FoodBytes: Food Trends 2021. I'm a total trend nerd. I love trends. I love to be the first in line and to know everything and then to share it with my audience. So thank you so much for making time during the holidays to chat about this amazing report. And speaking of report, Mike, you have a really cool job. Do you just sit around thinking and writing about food? Like **what exactly is a trendologist?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:03:39.52] Yeah, I get the question, what is the trendologist a lot. And it's certainly something that I never thought I would kind of fall into when I started at our company, which is a food industry market research company, it was just in kind of a communications capacity seven years ago. They knew they needed somebody to do communications. I had a communications background, and so that's how I started at Datassential. And then we've just grown in that time. And that is how the role has evolved into what we call the trendologist at Datassential. And basically, it just means that, one, **it's my job to stay on top of the early-stage trends. So, anything far out there, five, seven, ten years in the future. Uh, two, it's my job to translate those trends for our clients. So, you know, not just we're seeing something growing or we're seeing consumers really showing an interest in something, but what do you actually do with it?** What's the product that you're supposed to make or the dish that you're supposed to put on the menu?

[00:04:36] And then three, we actually produce a number of food trend reports over the course of the year. So, we actually have seven publications. They each cover a wide variety of things. We have one that's called International Concepts that just looks at international trends around the world and what's on their menu and what's trending in those markets. We have one called Dine Around that just looks at US cities and towns and the chefs in those towns and what they're doing. And so I oversee the team that produces those reports. In a normal year, it means a lot of travel. And I would get to go out and go to restaurants and see what's happening and go to clients and talk to them about the trends and get into rooms and really innovate together. I would do a lot of speaking engagements at various conferences, to kind of talk about the trends in the data we're seeing. This year, you know, it's been.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:05:29.14] It's a little different.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:05:31.42] Yeah, absolutely. Uh but we do, we still do it virtually. I still do a lot of virtual speaking engagements. We still do a lot of virtual innovation sessions.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:05:40.19] It sounds like you're managing a lot of information and that type of work is really, really specialized and it's not meant for everybody. **It's a very particular mind that can really flourish doing that kind of work.** Like were you always this way? Like, were you the translator in your family? Like, did you see big picture ideas and had that *jeu ne se quoi* to be able to like, translate? **Are you a translator?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:06:10.03] I hope they would say I'm a translator. I don't you know, growing up, I don't know if I would say that I was a translator so much as I would say I was incredibly curious. I loved reading. I loved just getting my hands on kind of any information that I could find. In high school. I was the editor of the school newspaper. I started a photo club just because it was nice to be able to go out in the community and take photos of people and meet them and interview them. And then **during my undergraduate degree, I studied magazine journalism. So that was the way to really kind of know people, interview people, kind of find out about facets of our society in a more in-depth way.** So I guess that was kind of **the genesis of all of this, is just that extreme curiosity** now over the years, I think. Yeah, kind of that curation and the idea of translating it has become more a part of my toolbar.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:07:06.46] I think that journalism is such um such a priceless tool because curiosity is one thing. But to be able to distill context and point of view is what gives value to this big old box of data. Right.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:07:23.95] I could not agree more. Yeah. And I mean, if anything, we have more data than ever these days. You know, we all walk around with a tiny computer in our pockets that is constantly churning out data that we can use. You know, every brand that we work with, every restaurant operator that we work with has insane amounts of data that they have to crunch. And so it's harder than ever in some ways just because there's so much information out there that we're trying to translate and and make sense of.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:07:53.01] And speaking of making sense of of this information, in doing research for this show, I feel like your point of view is gastronomy more than just culinary?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:08:04.95] Yes, absolutely.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:08:06.36] **Can you help the audience understand the difference between gastronomy and culinary?** Because I feel like in the retail space, it kind of means the same thing, but it doesn't.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:08:16.59] Absolutely. That's that's a great point. Yeah. I think you hear the word gastronomy and maybe you think the gastronomy of a country. So, you think French cuisine or Indian cuisine and you kind of do tend to think that it's just the dishes and ingredients within that cuisine, but **it is actually the intersection of both that. So the intersection of food and our culture as a whole.** So that's really what gastronomy encompasses. And the reason that I got into gastronomy is because **I attended Boston University's gastronomy program** so...

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:08:50.16] Go B U.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:08:51.15] Yes, it was an incredible, incredible experience. **It is a program that was started by Jacques Pepin and Julia Child for anybody that wants to research food from that perspective. So not necessarily you want to be a chef in the future,** but you want to study it from an anthropological perspective or a business perspective. And I had actually worked in politics right after my undergraduate degree and then kind of had enough of that decided, you know, I was going to change careers. And food had really been my passion for a number of years. So I ended up going into this program. I thought I was going to combine the two. I thought I was going to go work for the USDA and I was going to do the food policy track at BU. Instead, the head of the program at that time was the food anthropologist. And so it was a lot more looking at, you know, why we make the food choices that we do and, you know, the food cultures and histories, you know, that kind of inspire us, I guess I would say, in our food choices. And so that's kind of how I evolved in the program. I did get my culinary degree. They do have the option that you can get your culinary.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:10:02.16] Oh, you did?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:10:03.06] Baking degree. Yes, I did end up doing that as well.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:10:06.33] Did you do savory and pastry?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:10:08.73] I did, yes. So I did the culinary program, the one year. And then I did the pastry program the next year. And then I actually ended up doing they have a cheese production artists production program.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:10:20.77] Sign me up right now.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:10:22.08] It was incredible. That was maybe my favorite.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:10:25.20] Oh, my God.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:10:26.88] And I started the wine program. I thought I was going to get my Sommelier certificate, but it's so much memorization. And so I kind of just figured, you know, I'm going to enjoy wine and maybe not so much memorized all the lines in the world.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:10:41.19] Well, I feel like you have all of this information and you have a fantastic point of view and you have legit street cred going through going through the culinary program and pivoting to what Datassential Datassential presents in this in this **FoodBytes trends 2021**. I'm wondering if we could just **chat real quickly about how it all comes together**, because you seem to know how to put stuff together.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:11:11.20] I think I do.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:11:12.57] **How does it work? Like, do you have like a database of all of these menus? I mean, do you have, like, secret shoppers? How exactly does it all come together?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:11:22.26] Sure, absolutely. So the way that FoodBytes comes together every year. And FoodBytes is one of those trend publications that we produce. It's our free publication, so absolutely anybody can get it whether you're in the industry or you're not in the industry. **The way that FoodBytes comes together every year is we actually poll the company.** So we will ask absolutely anybody and everybody at the company, what have you been seeing? What have you been researching? You know, just from your perspective, whatever that perspective happens to be, you know, we have people at the company who kind of do a job like I do and work on the **Trends and Visions team**. And then we have **the data crunchers** and they're just, you know, maybe they came from a different industry that wasn't necessarily food, but they just know numbers really well and so they came to Datassential. But everybody has a say in it because, you know, everybody just has that perspective that we really appreciate. And then we have a team at the company it's called the Trends and Visions Team and we **get together and we distill all that down**. So we it's usually a four or five-hour discussion that happens over multiple days where we look at absolutely everything.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:12:30.21] **So what what exactly are you looking at? Are you looking at menus? Are you looking at sales report? Are you looking at chatter? Do you use artificial intelligence? Like what are the pieces like the big pieces that you look at?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:12:43.47] Yeah, pretty much all the above. **Menu intelligence is the most important for us. So we have a database called Menu Trends.** We update it once a year so we can see what's happening on the American menu, we can see this ingredient is growing, this ingredient is dropping. We actually have a machine learning engine, artificial intelligence engine called Haiku that is based in that program. So it can actually take all of that data and then spit out almost like a crystal ball what it thinks is going to be on the menu in the next four years.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:13:16.59] Oh, wow.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:13:17.25] Yeah. So so you kind of all of the above we do over the course of the year, you know, focus groups and surveys, both consumer surveys and operator or chef surveys. We do, but it is based on the data. So we are a data-centric company where Datassential. So I think, you know, **a lot of times what you'll see from some other reports is it tends to be very anecdotal.** You know, I ate this last week and I think it tasted really good. So I think it's going to be on the menu everywhere. Whereas for us, maybe that could be the starting point. Maybe we ate someplace and then we felt like it was delicious or we felt like we were seeing it a lot. But then we'll dive into the data and see if it actually is backed up by the data.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:13:57.18] So when you're diving into the data, are there different levels of how you analyze, like **does it trend have a life span?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:14:06.12] Absolutely. **A trend has a life span. We track a trend's life span through what we call the menu adoption cycle,** which for the longest time only took into account menus, because when the company started, we would survey consumers and they would say, you know, we trust the chef to introduce it, to introduce us to a trend first before we'll go to the supermarket and buy a new ingredient. We want them to kind of translate this trend for us. Now, that's changing a bit. You know, people have gotten a lot savvier. They're really willing to try new trends earlier. So now it takes into account both retail trends and menu trends. But that **menu adoption cycle, it's a four-stage cycle trend start in what we call the *inception stage* of the menu adoption cycle. It tends to be those fine dining operators. It tends to be those chefs that you're going for that prefix meal where you're trusting the chef to really introduce you to something new.**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:15:01.14] That's the type of chef who will work with one of those really early-stage trends. From there trends move through the ***adoption stage***, which tends to be, you know, if their chef opens up, you know, maybe a more casual space in the neighborhood that's, you know, a little bit of a cheaper price point. Maybe it's that cool bar and grill, but it's also kind of driven by really interesting stuff that tends to be the adoption stage, which is kind of the the sweet spot of the industry right now. You know, a lot of the clients that come to us and they're like, I want to put something cool on the menu. It tends to come from that stage of the menu. Adoption like.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:15:35.79] The adoption stage?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:15:37.61] Yes, the adoption stage. And then from there, it goes to the ***proliferation stage***, which tends to be what we call QSR or quick service restaurants, which most people would call fast food restaurants. So at that point, you know, we'll start seeing some of the McDonald's of the world, the Subways, you know, start to engage with the trend. At that point, you know, it probably is at your local supermarket, you know. And then by the time it hits the final stage, ***the ubiquity stage***, everybody knows it. everybody loves it. You know, it's probably on 60, 70, 80 percent of menus. You'll find it at your local discount supermarket, you know, someplace like that.



**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:16:15.45] I'd be really curious to know your thought on this. **Do you think that the influence of chefs at fine dining have a lot more weight than the influence of, let's say, a street cart cook or even a food truck?** Because here in Los Angeles, what I have found is innovation happens in a it's not a linear line. It doesn't go it's not like Melisse or Providence or Bestia. And those are fantastic restaurants. But, you know, you have the Kogi truck, you have The Triple Threat Puerto Rican food truck. And innovation and opening the eyes to the Los Angeles market happens in this really vibrant and fertile environment. Do you think that a Michelin star chef has more influence than a street cart chef?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:17:09.24] At one point, yes. **I think at one point it would have been true that a Michelin starred chef would have more influence. Now, those walls have broken down so much.** I mean, you know, now we have street carts in the world that have Michelin stars. So I think the idea that, you know, trends only come from fine dining has really broken down a lot. Even fine dining, you know, what we used to call fine dining isn't really fine dining like it used to be. We don't see those white tablecloth restaurants that require you to wear a suit and tie. For many chefs, you know, owning that kind of cool, hip, lower price point restaurant is what they want to be doing.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:17:47.85] **Why do you think it changed? Why do you think that the the fine dining world changed and the trend world changed. What do you think happened?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:17:55.39] **I think a lot of it is information.** So, you know, consumers have a lot more access to information. Before, you know, to try a street food trend, you had to travel to that country to see it happening. Now, you know, we have Tik Tok, we have Instagram, we have social media. We have phones in our pockets where we can share with our friends and family what we've been eating. Now we have access to trends at all levels in a way that we never did before, which I think has really impacted. It's impacted us as an industry. Certainly, you know, before we would talk about trends moving through that lifecycle, they would it would take about a dozen years for something to move from inception to adoption. Now, it takes about half that, about six years. And information is a big part of that just because trends move so quickly.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:18:42.16] Wow. So am I hearing correctly that influencers in the **social media landscape are starting to weigh more heavily on the trends that are that are bubbling and taking root?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:18:55.27] **Yes, absolutely.** Influencers, particularly in social media, are impacting the industry a lot. One way is that, you know, for the longest time, fads were kind of considered, you know, maybe, you know, it's kind of a cool, fun thing that consumers, you know, want to see. But then, you know, it's going to die off immediately. **Now, I mean, fads are actually quite important to the industry because a lot of younger consumers love them so much.** It keeps things interesting when the trend cycle is moving so quickly, the difference between a fad that moves, you

know, in one or two years and a trend that moves them three and four years is it's not necessarily that different anymore.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:19:33.58] You know, I also feel that the **publishing world** and the I hate to call it "world cuisine", because that's so that's a slap in the face. But I do feel that there is a proliferation of books that are not coming from chefs. They're not hey, I'm a chef. I have a restaurant. Here's my cookbook. **These are cooks and culinarians, anthropologist's writers, social media influencers that are getting book deals.** And if you look at what we were seeing on the shelf ten years ago, you would never have seen like Nik Sharma's book or even like "Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat" or any of these really interesting ok "world cuisine" books. You're seeing a lot of proliferation of those. And it's introducing us to ingredients, techniques, concepts, cultures that we did we weren't exposed to previously. And I think it's fantastic.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:20:33.32] Absolutely. I couldn't agree more. And, you know, one of the things that we talk about in the FoodBytes report is that that **role of the chef is evolving**, you know. So whereas **before maybe we would put that chef on a pedestal** and we would see the cool things we're doing, but we **couldn't interact with that chef.** You know, we didn't get to ask the chef any questions. I mean, just in the past year, I mean, we've seen the number of chefs doing Zoom classes doing, you know, Instagram live events. Now, you can actually talk to Samin Nosrat and ask her, you know, I was cooking out of "Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat" and I wanted to switch out this ingredient. And you can actually ask her about, you know, the things that she's seen in her life and what she thinks about the cuisine. So I think, you know, just that kind of **personal relationship that we can have with chefs now is really changing the industry as well.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:21:22.90] That was one of the first. So let's pivot. Let's get let's get into the trends. Let's let's let's dig in. Let's dig in. I can't wait. That's that's one of the things that let me take one step back. What I found really interesting about the report and why I picked up the phone. Well, I didn't pick up the phone. I emailed you why I why I reached out to you is because I'm an insider, but you're way on the inside. And so when a person, way on the inside reflects what you are experiencing. So what I was experiencing was conversations with my friends and my colleagues and then consuming media that is exactly what you're talking about in this report. And so when what I was experiencing was mirrored in your report, I knew that this was hot.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:22:16.77] I want to put that at the front of the report.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:22:19.99] I knew it was hot. I was like, I got to talk to Mike about this. And so I pulled out four or five trends that I think really apply to my listener at home. And one of the first ones was what we were just talking about, **the future chef.** And I think, man, you know, the covid kitchen is killing us. It's like we're we're stranded at home. We're making three meals a day. We're over it. We're over it. And if you don't have a culinary degree or if you aren't trained in how to cook from from technique, not from a recipe,



**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:22:56.66] Yes, yes.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:22:58.17] Then the idea of looking at your shelf of cookbooks and figuring out what to make with your kids, looking in your face like, Mommy, I'm hungry. It's a it's overwhelming. It's incredibly overwhelming. **So to have access to chefs who can entertain you, you know, educate you and inspire you is bomb. It's rock star.**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:23:20.01] Yes.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:23:20.64] It's so exciting.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:23:21.66] And the chefs are excited to you know, **part of the reason that we included that in the report** is because we work with chefs a lot. You know, we work with them, particularly research and development chefs and a lot of the big companies who are behind the scenes. And, you know, they're using these trends to inform the things that they're going to create for the companies they work for in the future. But they often don't get a chance to connect with the consumer and consumer who's going to use the product. And so, you know, the idea for them and we've seen that happen time and time again at these companies, that they can actually put themselves out there, that the consumer or the end user wants to talk to them and wants to say, you know, this is how I use it or this is, you know, what my family thinks of it. Or I want to ask you a question about it. **Most chefs are very creative, passionate people who want to share that with you.** And so I think from both ends of the spectrum, there's a lot of excitement.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:24:15.00] I was excited to see Grant Achatz on social. I mean, so so Chef Grant is from Alinea in Chicago and Alinea is so high on my my, you know, to go list. And it was just so interesting to see him in his personal kitchen, like doing tutorials on fine dining in styrofoam boxes. Come on. Come on. It doesn't get any cooler than that.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:24:43.08] And we heard from a number of those. I mean, **we heard from Grant himself has said, you know, they don't think after even after covid is over that things will ever go back to the way it was previously in terms of fine dining, because they love that opportunity to reach wider audiences.** And Alinea is an amazing restaurant, but it's also an incredibly expensive restaurant that, you know, not everybody is going to get to experience. But I think over the past year, Chef Achatz has found that he's liked connecting with the average consumer. He'd like to show them the things that he can create. So I think we will see, you know, what we talked about previously, that kind of breaking down of the walls between fine dining and street food and, you know, casual cuisine. It's only going to continue more into the future.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:25:30.09] Well, I'm going to put I'm going to put out a wish into the future. And I hope she's listening. But my wish is to have Dominique Crenn.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:25:39.48] Oh, yes.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:25:40.44] Do a tutorial for me. Dominique, Chef. Dominique, if you're listening. Hi, I'm Nickie, and would you please do tutorials for us? She's probably like, I don't have time. I know. So that's that's the first trend that I saw. And I think I think you called it the future chef, right?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:26:00.45] Yeah, exactly. ***The future chef is a chef who will be more personal to the average.***

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:26:06.97] I love it. I love it. And now I want to pivot to something that is near and dear to me because carbs and I are very good friends. Like carbs and I just hang out. We we watch the great, the Great British Bake Off show, we hang out, we're good friends.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:26:29.13] And so in the the 2021 report, I saw that the like the one trend that feels really cozy is ***modern comfort***, like going beyond mac and cheese. Tell me elaborate a little bit about **what this trend is, what it revealed and how do you think it's going to play out in the marketplace?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:26:49.59] Absolutely. So the modern comfort food trend came just because we were doing so many converts that we had so many conversations at Datassential in 2020 about comfort food with clients. Early in March, we started fielding our covid research. Every week we've done about two reports a week where we would just ask consumers across the country, you know, what are you buying right now? What do you want right now? And from the get-go from mid to late March, it was all comfort food was a **stressful time**. Everybody was at home. You know, their families were at home learning, you know, they had to take care of their kids and also be on camera at work. And there's a global health crisis happening. So it's just so stressful for the average consumer. **So it was no surprise that they really wanted those comforting dishes that either they grew up with or they knew their whole family would like. The number one food that everybody wanted was pizza.** It kept coming up over and over and over again. We have a database where we just ask, you know, what do you think about this food? You love it? You eat it a lot and the most love food out of every single food, something like forty five hundred foods that we've ever tested is pizza and has been eating pizza since we've been testing.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:28:02.49] As it should be.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:28:03.53] Yeah. So, you know, earlier, you know, all of these restaurants and brands were coming to us and they said, what do consumers want? What are the comfort foods that they want to see us putting out there? And so it was the pizzas, the burgers, pastas were absolutely huge carbs. Definitely everybody was baking bread. But, you know, by the end, more recently, I will call it the end of the pandemic, but hopefully we're reaching the end of the pandemic pretty soon. But, you

know, **consumers have gotten a little tired of some of that.** They are at home. They're eating the same things quite often. They're not going out to restaurants. And so **they want new things.** You know, they want things that will excite them a bit more. And so we started talking about, you know, what will the comfort foods of the future be? And one way that we could look at that was what do younger consumers consider to be comfort foods? You know, **a lot of times comfort food equates to what we grew up on.** And for a lot of Gen Z consumers, the things that they grew up on are different from the things that I grew up on as a millennial or, you know, things that other generations have grown up on. And so the things that really jumped out as comforting to them might be surprising to the average person. So soup is kind of the ultimate comfort category, and everybody loves a warm, cozy bowl of soup. And so, you know, a lot of times we would talk to a client and, you know, the things that they would turn to immediately where chicken noodle soup, tomato soup, broccoli cheddar soup, those are the ultimate comfort foods.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:29:28.22] **For younger consumer who grew up with more global cuisines, ramen is very comforting to them.** So that's absolutely a comfort food option that, you know, if you are putting a comfort food menu together, you might not think, you know, ramen is the first thing. But for a large percentage of the population, that is very comforting. Health foods tend to not be considered very comforting. You know, it does tend to be those very cheesy or bacon-y carbby dishes. But for some younger consumers, avocados are very comforting. You know, they grew up, they ate avocado toast. It still has that fatty rich kind of taste to it, but they feel better about what they're eating. And so that makes them feel comforted.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:30:09.33] One surprising one to a lot of people is carrot sticks is a comfort food. For a lot of younger consumers you know, they came home and that was kind of a healthy option that their mom or dad would give them after school or that they had in their lunch box. So it kind of recalls those memories of, you know, after school with your parents. And so, you know, I think that surprises people. But for a good percentage of the consumer population out there, carrot sticks are absolutely comforting. **So it's just, you know, kind of rethinking what you consider comfort foods to be.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:30:40.77] In the soup category what I see so prevalent **here in Los Angeles,** and I'd be really curious to know if this is the case across the country, but pho, **pho is so popular** for for good reason. It's so good.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:30:56.70] Yes, I'm sure if I looked in the database right now. Yeah. So ramen is, Pho's almost the next the next iteration of ramen we see.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:31:05.55] So how would you describe Pho? Like what exactly is Pho?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:31:09.45] Absolutely. So **Pho is kind of the almost the next iteration of ramen.** So we saw ramen really growing on on menus, which is a Japanese noodle dish soup. And Pho

is almost the next generation of that. It also comes out of Asia, **it comes out of Vietnam, and it's that same brothy noodle-y usually has a bit of meat in there, type of soup cooked in the same way that ramen broth tends to be for long, long periods of time.** So, you know, you're really getting that rich, comforting umami taste in there. I think the nice thing about Pho is that you tend to put all those herbs on top. So you're going to like you see so much in Vietnam piling up the herbs on top, which also so you get that fresh, healthy flavor in there as well. We've seen Pho growing on menus quite a bit, certainly on the coasts. L.A. has really been a hotbed of Pho.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:32:03.09] Another one to to look at is **pozole.** **So you've seen pozole growing quite often on menus, which is a Mexican meats stew.** That is very comforting, very rich. We particularly see it on winter menus quite often.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:32:17.52] I'm I know pozole because when you work in the restaurant business, you have what you call family meal. And especially here in L.A., it's a Mexican heavy staff. And when they introduced pozole in family meal, I was like, what do you mean family meal? This is like the greatest meal.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:32:37.17] Yes. Yeah.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:32:38.49] It's like with the the big the big chunks of meat and the viscose broth is so beautiful. And the the hominy, the big pieces of of hominy are just so delicious. So, finally in the in the **modern comfort**, did you see anything on the **sweet side**, on the dessert side that popped a lot?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:33:00.42] Sure, absolutely. So, on the sweeter side of modern comfort foods, one flavor that's quickly becoming kind of a staple in the same way that you see vanilla and chocolate is **birthday cake flavor.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:33:13.14] What is birthday cake flavor? What is that?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:33:15.66] It is the birthday cake that you think of. So, it tends to be that really rich sprinkle cake that sometimes maybe has that I don't want to call it a chemical taste to it, but it probably is the box mix where it's incredibly fluffy and just has something about it where all the flavors come together in a particular way. You know, the way we see it quite often used on menus is that is that really **vanilla forward** word also very sweet **sometimes including sprinkles type of flavor** or ingredient that will be used across, you know, now you see it kind of in any dessert category. So, you'll see birthday cake, ice creams on menus. You'll see oddly birthday cake flavored frostings that you can actually frost a birthday cake with. So.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:34:02.61] Oh, wow.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:34:03.09] Really going down the exception hole. But for a younger consumer, you know, it's you know, you grew up, you ate birthday cake, you blew the candles out. It's a nice memory. And so we've seen that growing quite often.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:34:16.54] And I'd love to see a birthday cake flavored like a toaster pastry, like a pop tart.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:34:27.27] And so that is **pop tarts or toaster pastries** in general are another modern comfort foods particularly.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:34:34.53] Oh, really?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:34:35.14] Yeah. You know, and now, you know, that has really grown into the gourmet versions of it. But for a lot of younger consumers, you know, they grew up. That was the thing that they ate in the morning, you know, when they were on their way to school where they could throw it in their backpack. So again, it kind of **recalls their childhood**. But **now**, I mean, we've seen so many pastry chefs really take it in new directions, take it in a really **more artisan direction** where the fillings are farm-fresh fruits and ingredients that you can get from your local farmer's market. The pastry is a lovingly made pastry that's incredibly flaky. So, yes, that's absolutely a modern comfort food is the kind of **next-generation of toaster pastries**.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:35:16.29] Yumbolina, I love it. OK, so pivoting to the third trend that really caught my eye in that is **American Regional Cuisine**. So, what is popping in the regional cuisine category that's going to be something we should look forward to in 2021?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:35:36.65] Absolutely. So, the reason that we chose American Regional Cuisine as a trend to watch in 2021 is **because to some extent in 2020 we kind of had to look inward**. We couldn't travel around the world, we kind of were forced to stay home and a lot of the travel happened more domestically. So maybe you went on a road trip in the US or maybe you explored your local community. Maybe you started to order from local restaurants that you hadn't ordered from before. And so we kind of saw this inward-looking kind of focused in the US. And that also coincided with just this idea of **really giving chefs from across cultures more credit for the cuisine of that we call American cuisine**.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:36:21.33] You know, a lot of times I think when we hear American cuisine, we do we think of apple pie and then there's like a lot of Southern dishes that we tend to think of. But really, you know, we are a melting pot as a country. There are a lot of different people who came to the United States and created the cuisines that we would call American cuisines today. You know, that kind of desire to give chefs and cooks from throughout history, that credit has really resulted in kind of a focus and a **new appreciation for all of these American regional cuisines**. So, they tend to be

cuisines that unless you live in those areas, you may not know them or you may not have as much access to them unless you live on the eastern coast. You may not know **Gullah Geechee cuisine**.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:37:07.02] What is that?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:37:08.20] So it's a Gullah Geechee cuisine is the cuisine that was developed by slaves who were brought over from Africa and they used the ingredients that were available to them on the eastern coast, particularly on the islands off the eastern coast of the US. And so it tends to be ingredients, rices. A lot of the rices that we've actually seen trending in recent years that, you know, some of the companies that have been very successful in recent years, heritage varieties of rices actually come out of Gullah Geechee cuisine.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:37:40.41] What do you mean heritage? What do you mean by **heritage rice**? What does that mean?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:37:44.22] A heritage rice is actually an historic rice that actually if you trace its DNA ancestry back it is I don't know if you would say natural, I guess natural would be a way to say it, but a lot of the rices we eat, you know, tend to be farmed rices that have been genetically modified over the years so, you know, we've just kind of, you know, hybridize them over the years. Whereas these were the original rices that you would find in the United States. You know, the indigenous peoples use these rices, Gullah Geechee people use these rices. So, you know, the same way that you see a heritage tomato where it is that old, you know, heirloom seed that creates that tomato. It's the same way for rice. You know, there's a version of that for pretty much any heritage rice.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:38:30.72] Interesting. And so what are give me like two or three other regional cuisines that listeners can investigate and discover and maybe switch up things in their kitchen by trying these cuisines that that are becoming popular?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:38:45.57] Absolutely. And, you know, we see consumers really want to try these cuisines. They just don't have the opportunity to do it quite as often. You know, one cuisine that I think is really misunderstood in the United States is **Appalachian cuisine**. And so, you know. Yeah, exactly. I think a lot of times people hear that and sadly, you know, they think of, you know, I don't want to use derogatory terms, but unfortunately, I think there are some, you know, misunderstood connotations to Appalachian cuisine that, you know, it is the cuisine that I guess the word hillbilly, unfortunately, comes up a lot when you think of it. But actually, it's a very vibrant cuisine. You know, if you think of how foraged foods have been trending for a number of years, you know, in the U.S., you know, Appalachian peoples have been foraging forever. They've been, indigenous peoples have been, you know, foraging forever. You know, they've been using the ingredients that are around them. And so when you look at, you know, the types of dishes that you would find in know Appalachian cuisine, it's also very comforting. You know, tends to be stews that are cooked for long periods of time, nose to tail cooking again, you know, very, you know, trendy. You know, we've been seeing in our menus for



years now. I mean, they've been cooking nose to tail forever because you had to, you know, so I think that's another reason why you should give some of **these regional cuisines a look is because, you know, they're almost the originators of a lot of these trends that have come up over the years.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:40:16.62] I couldn't agree with you more because to get a stew right is not is not so easy. It's not so easy. You can come out with, like, rubber meat if you really don't know what you're doing or even if you're making bread without yeast. I mean, it takes it takes craft to make bread that doesn't have yeast or it takes craft to butcher an animal and honor the animal, like you said, nose to tail and really know what to do with the beautiful, you know, loin pieces vis a vis, the the more tough, overused muscles. And that takes a lot of intelligence.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:40:56.91] Yeah.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:40:57.48] And a lot of skill to cook down something that it seems tough, but if you know what to do with it, you create luxury.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:41:05.79] Could not agree more. And I mean, **a lot of these dishes that come out of these cuisines, they've been perfected for decades and decades, if not centuries.** At this point. You know, they have them down. They're going to be delicious if you cook them. You know, I think that's what's exciting about them. Another one that you're probably more familiar with. But, you know, for those of us who don't live in California, but **Cal-Mex cuisine.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:41:29.61] Oh, please.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:41:30.57] It's actually not really of California. You know, the fresh ingredients, the coastal ingredients to have there. And then, you know, the Mexican population that has brought, you know, so many of their traditions. You know, we don't get to have as much in the rest of the US. I think you're starting to see it a bit more, but we just don't have access to it in the same way that you guys do.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:41:50.43] And I'm so excited that you brought that up because Mexican cuisine, I'm not an expert on Mexican cuisine whatsoever, but what I have seen in being having been in California for 15 years is that **Mexican cuisine isn't just tacos.**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:42:06.41] Oh, absolutely.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:42:07.74] And it isn't just burritos. There are so many beautiful dishes that I've I've discovered, you know, from Oaxaca or from the coastal regions. And they have no semblance to what the middle of the country or even the East Coast has ever seen. It's it's fresh ingredients. It's delicious. The the the ingredients are honored in a very different way. And it's so exciting to see, you

know, something that you just don't expect from, like the normal, you know, expectations of Mexican food. And I'm excited for it to roll out across the country even more.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:42:46.17] Yeah, absolutely. I think that's such a good point to just about the **regionality of all cuisines**. You know, I mean, we have these, you know, regional cuisines in the US, but just about every country does as well. You know, I mean, there's no really such thing as Mexican cuisine. There's regions within Mexico that have their own cuisines. We're seeing the same thing with Indian cuisine, that **consumers are getting a little bit more savvy** in the US about, you know, the regions of India and the different cuisines that you would find there. So I think that's also **part and parcel of just the information that we have access to today**, like we talked about before.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:43:20.23] And I do want listeners to know that I'm going to put all of this information in the show notes. I mean, we still have some topics to cover, but it could feel overwhelming when you're listening to a podcast and you're like, wait, what did what did they just say? So I will include all of this in the show notes.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:43:35.89] O k, and now pivoting to taking care of ourselves, you know, through food. One of the one of the trends that I saw that was I was like, OK, let's let's talk about this because I want to feel better about myself. Is **Global Health and Immunity Boosters like functional food?** Tell me a little bit about what you're seeing in this trend and how you see it rolling out in the year to come.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:44:01.30] So the Global Functional Food Trend that we're talking about for 2021 also came out of some of the research that we did in 2020 surrounding covid, which is, you know, it is it's a global health crisis. People are worried about their health. And so at the same time that they were eating comfort foods, then, you know, maybe some things that weren't as good for them. They were still concerned about their health and the health of their families as well. But a lot of people, you know, they were having to feed their family three times a day. And so they wanted to make sure their family was healthy. And so when we asked consumers, you know, how are you eating? You know, how do you want to eat in the future? **One of the surprising statistics to us was that over half of consumers said that they wanted to see immune-boosting ingredients in absolutely every food that they eat.** So a lot of times, you know, we'll work with the client and we're going to put a healthy dish together where we want to put some immune-boosting ingredients into a dish. It's the categories that you immediately think of those healthy categories, smoothies probably being the number one or a smoothie or something like that. You would expect to find, you know, those healthy ingredients there. But consumers told us we want to see healthy and immune-boosting ingredients on burgers. We want to see them on pizzas. We want to see them in burritos. You know, it was kind of a surprising, you know, something that came out of the research.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:45:22.66] Wait a second, Mike. Wait, wait, wait, wait a second. You mean to tell me I can boost my immunity with my pizza order? I don't know. How does that how does that work?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:45:35.08] It sounds ridiculous. But actually, when you ask consumers, what do you perceive to be immune boosting? I mean, there's a lot of foods out there that are absolutely immune boosting. You know, greens are definitely kales and spinach is that, you know, any of those really hearty greens? I mean, you can put that on top of a pizza, you know, make it a little bit healthier. Garlic is one of the top ingredients that consumers perceive to be very healthy and immune-boosting. And we put garlic in anything. You know, we put garlic and burgers and pizzas and pastas.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:46:04.06] **The number one category by far that, you know, most people consider to be immune boosting is vitamin C and citrus.** So and you could put that pretty much anywhere. I mean, we see, you know, citrus fruits used in deserts. So there's absolutely no reason that you can't use these ingredients in a more indulgent dish. And so that kind of informs some of this research that went into this, you know, look at global immune-boosting ingredients.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:46:29.26] And part of it was this idea that almost what you were just talking about with American regional cuisine, that it's been perfected over long periods of time, hundreds of years. In some countries, you know, they've been using what we call **super foods** in the US for thousands of years. You know, they've known the functional benefits that they get out of some of these foods and they've been using them for thousands of years. And so we've seen a lot of interest in past years from consumers to start using a lot of these super foods. You know, we see **açaí berries** growing on menus. We've seen **quinoa** grow is such an important ingredient on menus. So we wanted to look at what's the next generation of these.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:47:10.93] And so I have to give credit to we have a **registered dietitian at the company, Marie Molde, and she was the one who informed a lot of this research and a lot of the ingredients that we speak about.** So I wish I was actually more of an expert and these very particular ingredients, you know, some of them I couldn't even pronounce before we put the report together. A lot of them tend to be adaptogens.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:47:34.57] What does that mean?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:47:35.88] So an **adaptogen is an ingredient that helps your body adapt to stress.** And of course, we've been very stressed out in the past year. And I imagine life in general tends to be very stressful. So even when, you know, the pandemic is over, it's not like, unfortunately, a lot of our stresses go away. So adaptogens have been a real focus for the industry, so, you know, a lot of the ones that we include in the report tend to be adaptogens. **There's been a real focus on roots over the past couple of years using roots to create flours.** So to, you know, so, you know, flours that you could bake with or create a cracker with or something like that. We see it a lot in beverages. **Beverage innovation tends to be a really hot category.** For a while there, we were seeing those next-generation coffees, kind of Bulletproof coffee that was supposed to be good for your brain. So we're seeing a lot of kind of that innovation start to happen with some of these ingredients as well.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:48:31.68] Sounds so exciting. I mean, food is medicine. **Food is medicine.** And now pivoting to the final trend that that really caught my eye and that is global flavors that we could try in our kitchens, flavors, dishes and ingredients. Can you give listeners a **sneak peek into some of the flavors, dishes, and ingredients that are going to pop that they should check out?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:48:55.88] This section of the report is my favorite section of the report. We do it every year. **It's the ten flavors and ingredients that you should have on your radar.** They tend to be very forward-looking. So it tends to be ingredients that you'll see three or four or five years down the road really start showing up on menus. They're informed by our databases. They're informed by where we've been eating out and then actually fielding research based on it. And they're probably one of the most anticipated parts of the report because it's very easy. You know, it's just I can use this ingredient, you know, next year and kind of be cool and trendy. And so, you know, some of the ones that are in there that I think are so exciting, I just personally, I think are very delicious are um one is **fermented honey.**

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:49:40.97] What?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:49:41.39] It actually it surprises people for a number of reasons. One, just you know, they've never heard of it. But to the idea that you can even ferment honey, because honey, by its very nature is actually, you know, an ingredient that is antibacterial. There's a reason you can keep honey in your kitchen for one hundred years and it's going to be just as good in one hundred years as it was when you put it in there. But actually, if you use some of the raw honeys that have been trending in recent years and you add just a little bit of water to them, you break down that sterile environment and now some good bacteria can start growing in there. And so, you know, fermentation has been huge for for quite a while now. We see kombuchas on menus. We see how the next generations of yogurts. And so this takes, you know, sweet, natural honey - who doesn't love honey. **You can use it in a baked good. You can use it in a dessert. But it gives it that, you know, slightly funkier, you know, almost more sour flavor that just kind of ups the interest level. It's absolutely delicious.** And I think maybe of all the trends that we covered in that section; I think it's the one that you'll probably be seeing the most often in the next couple of years.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:50:50.33] Wow. Fermented honey. I had no idea. I had no idea. And if you could if you could give maybe one or two other ones from the ingredients or dish list.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:50:58.85] So one that we've covered. So, you know, like I said, consumers are very interested in citrus because it does tend to be considered an immune-boosting ingredient. And so there's a citrus fruit that we've seen growing on menus for a couple of years now, particularly in cocktails. Actually, there's a number of restaurants in L.A. in their database that I know feature this ingredient. But it's **Sudachi**, which is a citrus. It comes out of Japan. It's quite common in Japan. If you've ever used ponzu, which is kind of that citrus soy sauce that tends to include Sudachi citrus. We

see it quite often because **it's used as a kind of Next-Generation version of yuzu**. So if you've seen yuzu a lot on menus, you know, that chef who kind of wants to take it to the next level and do something that people haven't seen, they might use Sudachi citrus. It's a little bit more floral. It kind of doesn't have some of those sharp notes that you may consider, you know, with limes or lemons that you see in the US. And again, it's just the applications for any citrus fruit that unless you can use them in cocktails, you can use them in desserts. We see it quite often if you're making a meat entree or a veggie entree. If you're going to do that final squeeze of citrus at the end to really brighten up the dish, Sudachi citrus kind of takes it to the next level.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:52:17.03] I love it.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:52:17.81] Another one in there, **honeysuckle**. We're seeing honeysuckle growing on menus quite a bit and we're actually seeing it growing in retail products a bit more, kind of early-stage retail products. We've seen floral flavors really growing for a number of years. Rose, you know, not you know, Rosé has been growing, but then the actual flower rose and the flavor that you can get from roses has been growing for quite a bit. Now, the interest in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine has really driven an interest in rose flavored things. Lavender continues to grow on menus, and so this is kind of, again, that next generation of it. It's another forged ingredient. Some people have been foraging for it for years. You'll see foragers make honeysuckle syrups quite often. Oh, yeah. And but now we see it used again across the menu. Cocktails are another big category for this. There are a couple of bottled liquors that use honeysuckle in it, but you'll probably start seeing this really grow as a flavor more in the next couple of years.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:53:20.73] You've given our audience so many interesting tidbits and things to think about in incorporating these trends in their kitchens. But, honestly Mike, **to try new flavors and to try new ingredients. It's not cheap.** It really is not cheap. What would be your **advice on assimilating or incorporating some of these ideas and ingredients and trends into the everyday kitchen?** Like what would be your advice?

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:53:48.21] That's a great point. We often run into that with consumers that it is not cheap. And particularly now. If you're at home and you're making food for your entire family, you often can't take that risk that, you know, at the end of the day, your whole family is not going to like the dish that you put on the table. And so people do tend to be risk-averse in that way. You know, they don't necessarily want to commit the money to trying a new trend. But what we often say is whether you're in the industry or not in the industry, to **use what we call safe experimentation as kind of your starting point.** And so that's the idea of taking something that you already know and love. So it's things, you know, we've talked about today, burgers, pizzas, pastas, things like that. You already know that. You know, that's a dish that you tend to enjoy. You've maybe made it a few times. So you understand, you know, the foundation of how to put that together. And then, you know, think about the ingredients in that dish and what you could possibly swap out for something a little newer or, you know, maybe something that you're not quite as used to. A pizza, you can pretty much put anything on a pizza at this point. So,



you know, if there's a new flavor that you've been meaning to try, you know, maybe make that pizza and just, you know, try a little bit of it on that pizza. Worse comes to worse. You know, you put it on one slice of the pizza and you don't like it while you have the rest of the pizza and you'll be OK.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:55:08.52] And the reason we say this is **because this is almost the holy grail for somebody working in the industry to create a dish**. We when we concept test dishes, we'll, ask a whole battery of questions. But, kind of the two that are most important to a chef creating a product in the industry are one **purchase intent**. So does somebody actually want to purchase this dish that I've created and then two is **uniqueness**. You know, it's actually fairly easy to get high scores on purchase intent. You could put a piece of pizza on the menu and everybody wants to eat it. That's a very easy way to get it. But it's not unique. Nobody has the come to you to get that particular dish. They can get it anywhere. And so you also want to be fairly unique. So they have to come to you. But it's also really easy to get very unique score. So, you know, you could put olives in ice cream and everybody is going to say, yes, that's very unique. But then in the opposite way, you'll see those purchased intent scores go down. Nobody wants to eat olive of ice cream. And **so if you can create a dish that combines the two and, you know, sounds delicious, but also is a little bit different, that's kind of a slam dunk** in the industry and probably will be, in some respects, a slam dunk in your own kitchen as well.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:56:19.53] I love the I love the idea of **template cooking**. You know, like **using the templates that you already know in your kitchen and then swapping stuff out** that is really functional for my listeners at home. Like, that's that's a concept we can really, you know, wrap our heads around and go, OK, I can handle that. I can I can take my my grain bowl and then augment it with the ingredients from the regional cuisine from the south. And that's manageable because, you know, how do you know how to make your rice and you know that you're building flavor from the bottom up. And at the same time with soups, if you know how to make a really good broth, then taking it in a more Asian way, you know that you need soy, sesame, ginger, garlic, but you know you know how to build the soup. So thank you for sharing that, because sometimes you get these great guests and they have all these great ideas. And my listeners at home are like, what? No, no, I'm not making that. That sounds terrible. That sounds absolutely terrible.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:57:29.07] Here, here's one thing I really want to try next year, and that is the incorporation of sausages into bread products. So, OK, I know this is I know this is not on your on your on your list, but it does go back to what you were talking about in template cooking. So, **Nduja** is gaining ground here in Los Angeles, right there is a small restaurant called Rustic Canyon and oh my God, the iterations that they say they do with with that sausage is, oh, it's so enticing. So I do want to try my template cooking using that sausage next year.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:58:11.64] Oh, absolutely. I think a really good, I always thought, you know, everybody can constantly ask, but what's something I can really start with? Um one I always say is start with **black garlic**. You can actually get it at Costco now. You know, everybody loves garlic and you



know, people I put ten times the amount of garlic that's called for in a recipe because I love garlic so much. **It's the same flavor profile as garlic, but really deep and rich and roasted and toasty.** And so anywhere you use garlic, just swap in black garlic and it'll become this next level umami-rich dish that you can't believe came out of your own kitchen. I always say that's such a great starting point. This black garlic.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [00:58:52.35] I love that. I love that. Well, I don't want to hog up your entire day. And I'm so grateful that you've spent so much time with me and my audience so much that I want to pivot to the three questions I ask every guest, because you're not only an expert in your field, but you're also, you know, you have your universe of interest and things that you like. So the three things I like to end the show with are what are you drinking? It doesn't have to be alcoholic. And, it's covid. So if it is, it's all right. No one cares. What's making you happy in the culinary trend world. And what is your favorite gift to give a friend or colleague? **So let's start with what are you drinking?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [00:59:37.14] I love these questions. What am I drinking? Mine is alcoholic. Maybe that is the one area that I've tried to up my game on the most while I've been at home over the past year, is learning how to craft better cocktails and use, you know, more interesting ingredients in cocktails. And so **my favorite thing right now is making mulled wine, simple syrup.** So actually just taking the spices that you would use in the mulled wine and infusing them into a simple syrup. And then you can take that simple syrup and swap it into any cocktail that calls for any type of simple syrup or honey or sugar or whatever it might be. So I made a simple syrup, **mulled wine, simple syrup negroni** the other day that you had, like the bitter flavors that you love in a negroni. It was really balanced and had that, you know, holiday flavor that you associate with this time of year. That's what I'm drinking right now.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:00:31.23] When you say mulled, you mean m-u-l-l-e-d a spiced wine. OK, well, I got to try that.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:00:38.88] So good and easy. Anybody can do it.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:00:41.19] I love that idea. Now, moving on to the next question. **What is making you happy in the culinary trend world?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:00:49.35] I love this question. You know what's making me happy in the culinary trend world because it has been such a tough year. And I think, you know, people, you know, maybe feel like there's not a lot that we can be thankful for. But if anything, I think, you know, the past year has really shown us the things that really matter to us and that what we can be thankful for. I think the nicest thing that came out of a lot of the research that we did in the past year was **how much the food industry means to people out there.** You know, we had to ask a question, you know, what are you excited for when things open back up again? And we thought, you know, that a lot of people would answer, oh, you know, I can't wait to, you know, drink again. I can't wait to have a birthday party again

with my family. And we thought, you know, those would kind of be the top answers that people would say, and that is important to them. But actually, **the number one factor for a lot of people was that they couldn't wait to get out and support their local restaurant and food community.** Again, that's why they really wanted to get back there. And so I think, you know, and just being in the industry, you know, the way that so many people have come together to help each other, it is very cutthroat industry. Margins are very small. But I think in the past year, we've seen so many people kind of forget about all that and just trying to help each other survive. I think has been a really nice thing that has come out of the past year.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:02:08.34] That's nice to hear. I always say that dining out isn't just dining out, that there is so much magic that happens around a table. Life happens around a table, and it's it's where you share ideas. It's where you share your life experiences. And restaurants and eateries are a magical place and they're getting they're getting decimated. And I really wish that, our, I'm angry at the lack of support of of small businesses. I'm angry at the unnecessary level of devastation in the restaurant business. So I share your sentiment that it makes me happy that people want to support small businesses and restaurants really does. And finally, Mike, **what is your favorite gift to give a friend or colleague?**

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:02:59.11] Ah, great question. My favorite gift to give a friend or colleague is **a set of good knives, at the very least, a good chef's knife.** I think so years ago, I gave a set of knives to a couple of friends who are getting married and I was so excited about it. And then I found out after the fact that it's apparently bad luck to give knives for a wedding because they're sharp and it could cut the marriage in half and lead to divorce.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:03:29.37] And so I was like, well, maybe I should stop giving knives. Maybe this is bad luck. Well, I honestly, I still give them. I think, having a good knife in the kitchen, a good sharp knife in the kitchen. I mean, that's what should be in your hand all the time. You know, if you really get comfortable with it, the things that you can create with it, you'll have it for the rest of your life. When you talk to a chef, that's the most important thing in their arsenal. I just say a really good knife in the kitchen is absolutely essential.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:04:00.94] Well, I don't have enough knives.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:04:05.44] And I really, you know, a design piece these days do this really well with the knife culture that you see so really beautifully designed knives out there to give as gifts.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:04:17.80] **One of the first shows that I did was a deep dive into Japanese knives ([click to listen to Japanese Knives 101 show](#))** And wow, I was blown away by the variety and quality of knives. Well, Mike, I am so grateful that you've spent so much time with us today. And I think that the audience has a lot of great tidbits to explore within their own kitchens. So from the bottom of

my heart and on behalf of the audience, I just want to say thank you. Thank you so much for joining us today. I appreciate it.

**Guest: Mike Kostyo:** [01:04:48.86] Thank you. I've really enjoyed being on the show and I do I hope people got, you know, a lot out of it. **Like you said, food is about more than food.** You know, eating out is about more than just eating out. **It's kind of the one way that we have to connect with our family members or friends.** And the course of a normal day, it's often the only way that we have to be creative over the course of a normal day. So I hope people really have a passion for cooking and cuisine and eating in general and and have a really great 2021. I really hope that next year we're going to see some exciting stuff happening.

**Host: Nickie Jurado:** [01:05:26.53] Well, there you go. And now you're first in line with some of the top food trends to watch in 2021. You can actually [download the report](#) on Data Essential's website Datassential dot com. That's d-a-t-a-s-s-e-n-t-i-a-l dot com. I did put everything in [show notes](#), so there are some links. There are resources to help you shop and cook the trends from food by 2021 trends to watch. You can get your notes and resources on [my website](#) - Kitchen scene investigator dot com. And if you love the show, please do give it a review or support the show with a donation on my website - Kitchen scene investigator dot com. From sunny Los Angeles, Happy New Year. Stay safe and I will see you next time. Bye.

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