

Food forecast to whet the appetite

Fried gnocchi, Romanos
Picture: Pina Broccoli Anaia



Pandan cake, The Baking Jin
Picture: Jin Yee Chung



Arepa's Station
Picture: Pina Broccoli Anaia



Pina Broccoli Anaia, a Canadian living in Cambridge who writes the acclaimed food and drink blog One Two Culinary Stew, tells **Alice Ryan** what's on the menu for 2018.

A brand new year brings the discovery of exciting culinary concepts and the celebration of tried-and-true favourites. Trends may come and go, but good food and drink is always in fashion. These are some of the delights we'll be experiencing, sipping and savouring this year.

Gin

Gin sales in the UK have been soaring and show no signs of slowing down. Gin-thusiasts are quenching their thirst for new discoveries through gin clubs, monthly subscriptions and distillery visits. Gin clubs held in pubs, bars and wine shops are an informative and social way to share the love. Subscription boxes delivered monthly to your door provide an element of surprise. The Cambridge Distillery goes a step further and has a dedicated Gin Laboratory for blending your own gin, in addition to tasting, buying and learning about this juniper-based spirit.

Orange wine

Rosé may have made its mark as a fashionable wine, but orange is the new pink. Orange colour that is, not the citrus fruit. Orange wine gets its amber hues by leaving the skins of white grapes to macerate with the juice for days or months to create different colours and flavours. This bold wine packs a punch with its robust palate, intense aromas and nutty, sour taste. Known as the "fourth wine" after red, white and rosé, orange wine is a thrilling discovery that is steadily gaining in popularity.

Alternative dining

The rising popularity of pop-ups, supper clubs and street food indicates foodies are still seeking alternative ways of eating out. Taking social dining a step further, chefs are making use of the kitchens in pubs and cafés to showcase their culinary skills through pop-ups. Cooks are hosting cosy supper clubs in their homes or at unusual locations. Street food collectives, such as Cambridge's foodPark, organise regular lunch time spots and periodic night markets to bring the finest food trucks to the masses and in turn, help mobile traders find an appreciative audience.

Fried gnocchi

Gnocchi might be difficult to pronounce but these Italian potato dumplings are easy to eat. When boiled they make a soft, pillowy pasta that partners well with a variety of sauces, but frying them takes the humble potato to a whole

new level. Swap hash browns or roast potatoes for fried gnocchi to jazz up a full breakfast, or serve them as a side dish with fish or meat. Simply pan-fry them right out of the packet in a little olive oil until they are crisp and golden. Fried gnocchi are nothing new but Cambridgeshire-based Romano's revived the idea on social media with several appetising photos and serving suggestions.

Paola Davies-Romano has her own secret recipe for fried gnocchi alla romano so be on the lookout for these tasty morsels.

Lucy and William Lowe at Cambridge Gin Laboratory
Picture: Keith Heppell



Arepas

Arepas are a type of corn flour flatbread with the added bonus of being vegan and gluten free. The dough is shaped into a patty then grilled. Arepa's Station, based in Cambridge, make its own Venezuelan arepas then split them open and stuff them with delicious fillings such as avocado, chicken, pulled beef, white cheese, fried plantains and black beans. Seasoned with guasacaca – a herby avocado sauce – their freshly prepared arepas make a very appetising sandwich.

Pandan

Nigella Lawson recently declared pandan as the next big food craze in the UK but Cambridge's The Baking Jin has been using this green tropical plant for years. A software engineer by day and baker by night, Malaysian-born Jin Yee Chung puts his own unique twist on his amazing bakes, much to the delight of his customers. Pandan is particularly fragrant and infuses a wonderful aroma and vibrant green colour into cakes and desserts but the leaves can also be used to wrap meat, fish or rice prior to steaming. We'll be seeing more pandan creations such as light, airy chiffon cakes and their bright green essence.

Doughnuts

There's no mistaking it, doughnuts are soft fluffy clouds with an endless variety of fillings. But how can something as simple as fried dough cause so much excitement? When Cambridgeshire's Shelford Deli, Urban Larder and Tom's Cakes announce doughnut day, they sell out almost immediately. The legendary doughnuts at Pump Street Bakery in Suffolk even received a mention in an Oscar acceptance speech.

Veganism

Vegan foods such as tempeh, seitan, tofu, kombucha, quinoa and spirulina are more accessible as veganism becomes increasingly mainstream. It's not just vegans who are enjoying the delights of a plant-based diet. For example, many have discovered the deliciousness of jackfruit, which has a texture remarkably similar to pulled pork. Stem + Glory in Cambridge as well as Cradle and Kind Cuisine, both in Sudbury, have made great strides in introducing all-vegan menus to a wider circle. Ely Markets' wildly popular annual Vegan Fair features Cambridgeshire's best vegan producers and makers.

■ For more, visit Pina's blog at onetwoculinarystew.com.

Plant-based dining



Heidi White, Cambridge foodPark
Picture: Keith Heppell



Doughnuts, Shelford Deli
Picture: Pina Broccoli Anaia

