

'Free from' eating movement gains momentum

By [Sam Linsell](#)

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Food trends in general will always cross the spectrum. There will be those that lean towards health, as this is a global mega trend that is not going away, and there will be micro trends that center around a specific food item that might not be healthy; for example, gourmet artisan doughnuts. We are only just starting to see these in South Africa, but I predict there will be more.

The 'free from' eating movement is gaining momentum as people grapple with the notion of what healthy food really is, as we get bombarded with mixed messaging in the media. We are seeing a wider range of wheat and gluten-free baked products and other 'free from' food.



There is definitely a strong move away from commodity meat eating among the more affluent and people are starting to source meat protein where the animal has been ethically raised. The notion of eating less meat is catching on in a bigger way and there will be an increase in demand for vegetarian protein and/ or meat substitutes. People want to know where their food comes from and shopping at markets where there is a closer connection to the source, is popular.

Growing product trends

There is a growing focus on veganism and more vegan products are becoming available in retail, as well as in food service. Chefs are challenging themselves to create delicious and inspiring vegan dishes and more vegetarian and plant focused restaurants are opening.

Fermented foods will continue to grow and products like kimchi and kombucha will become more mainstream and readily available vs. having to source these at specialty stores.

Turmeric - the super healthy Asian spice is popping up every year, as people get excited about Golden food. Fresh turmeric root is now easily available in retail stores in SA, so we will likely continue to see turmeric in focus for 2018.

We have started to see more seaweed on menus and sea greens have arrived in-store with large SA retailers now selling fresh samphire. We are also surrounded by the coastline, so this is great resource for us.







People are also shopping more frequently and eating smaller meals on more occasions; seeking on the go snacking food products. Individual and portion controlled products are also now readily available in supermarkets. People are looking to artisan foods and want to know where their food comes from.

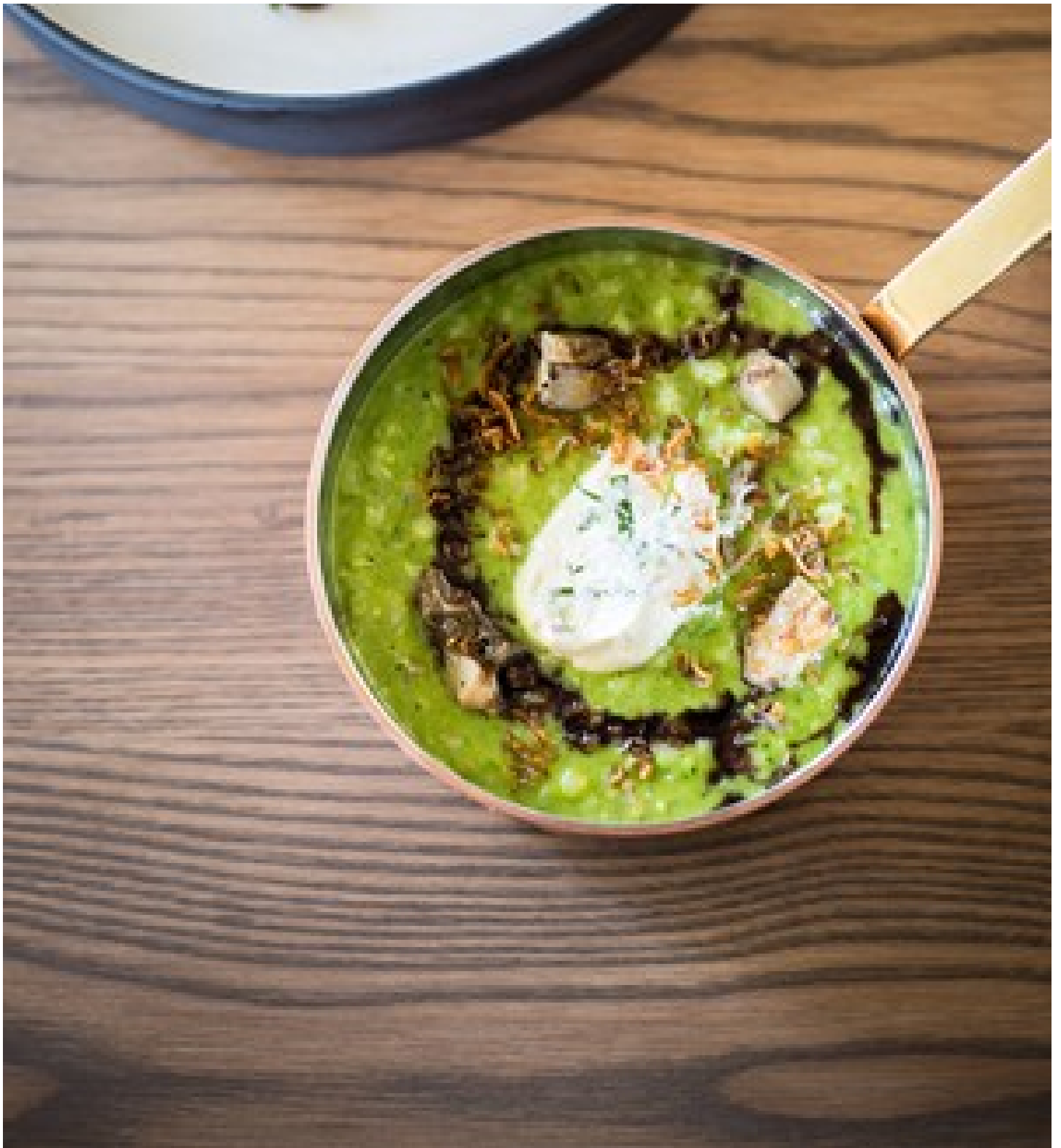
Food considerations and alternatives

In terms of restaurant trends, the world is becoming more aware of food waste and the concept of nose-to-tail dining and root-to-leaf consumption has definitely become a focus for restaurants as chefs find creative ways to utilise more of the produce they buy in.

Poke hit Cape Town last year with the opening of a poke restaurant and we are seeing it popping up on a few menus. Whilst it has been around for ages internationally and in the USA, it definitely has not peaked for us in SA yet, so 2018 will likely see more of this delicious and super healthy Hawaiian dish featured perhaps with a few localised or alternative ingredient variations – customisable meals such as these are highly suited and very popular with millennials.







Small plate dining or tapas has become a trend that is probably here to stay – and the social aspect of sharing food has fast become appealing, offering diners variety in a meal.

One trend I would love to see catch on in SA that hasn't yet, is innovation centered around breakfast and brunch dishes – our menus are generally quite boring and tend to be very egg and bacon focused. I would love to see more salad and vegetables on morning menus and see brunch being a bigger deal.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam Linsell left a successful career in FMCG marketing a decade ago to build her dream life around food creativity. She is based in Cape Town, South Africa where she works as a professional food stylist, food writer and food photographer. If she is not working with clients, she is busy creating food content for her multiple award winning food blog [\[http://drizzleanddip.com/ DrizzleandDip.com\]](http://drizzleanddip.com/).

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