

# NATIONAL CULINARY REVIEW

**NOURISHING,  
REFRESHING,  
HEALTHFUL &  
DELICIOUS**



## **CLASSICAL VS MODERN STOLLEN**

A timeless holiday  
loaf gets a fresh,  
contemporary twist.

## **ACF GREATER BALTIMORE CHAPTER**

ACF's Large Chapter of  
the Year.

## **HOPING FOR A SWEET FUTURE**

Strategies and tips for  
creating show-stopping  
desserts.



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# NOURISHING, REFRESHING, HEALTHFUL & DELICIOUS

By Jeffrey Spear

The beverage column on restaurant menus is experiencing a makeover. While traditional drinks such as sugary sodas and caffeinated coffees and teas are still widely available, there's a growing number of functional, healthful, nutrient rich, and undeniably nourishing beverages being added to the list. Even the bar menu is evolving, welcoming creative mocktails and innovative zero-proof spirits with greater frequency.

According to Datassential, 61% of consumers are interested in purchasing functional foods and beverages. They're looking for healthful benefits that promote heart health, immunity from sickness, increased energy, improved gut health, and hydration. What's undeniable is that choices supporting wellbeing are not just trending. They've become a priority.

## Not Your Average Cup of Joe

Coffee continues to dominate the beverage menu, with 62% of adults saying their day doesn't begin without it. This being said, mushroom coffees are becoming an attractive alternative. They function as a pick-me-up and, at the same time, contain ingredients that deliver clean energy, support gut health, eliminate the jitters, help manage stress, and enhance cognitive function—all benefits you don't get from your average cup of Joe. While there are concerns about taste, many of the alternative coffee brands are blends of coffee and specific varieties of mushrooms that promote a natural coffee flavor.

## Zero-Proof Making a Splash

No- and low-alcohol cocktails are taking up more space on beverage menus, with "zero proof" the top-growing descriptor overall. More importantly, mocktails still embrace the essential elements of a great cocktail, using fresh-squeezed juices, flavored syrups and bitters, tonics and carbonated waters, and botanicals and herbs. In the hands of innovative mixologists, these ingredients, combined with zero-proof spirits, functional beverages containing CBD, or other relaxing ingredients, deliver truly memorable drinking experiences. If you're looking for proof, just take a look at the creatively conceived cocktail menus at Wild Child (Shawnee, KS) or Rob Roy (Seattle, WA).



## Meeting the Demand for Protein

Chefs looking for ways to satisfy consumer demand for protein-forward beverages are leaning towards eggs. According to **Chef Nelson Serrano-Bahri**, Director of Innovation at the American Egg Board, “Eggs are both versatile and effective. They can be used to deliver enhanced nutrition as well as noteworthy culinary experiences.” When asked about inventory control, he adds, “Whether chefs choose in-shell pasteurized eggs, pasteurized liquid eggs, or egg powders, these ingredients have an attractive shelf life, help minimize waste and effectively address food safety concerns.”

From a culinary perspective, eggs contribute to enhanced emulsification and aeration, producing indulgent, velvety textures in a variety of applications including coffee toppers, cocktails, shakes and smoothies. Plus, watching bartenders crack eggs into specially formulated cocktails infuses a little showmanship into the production.

## In Search of Probiotics

Fermented foods have been gaining popularity among chefs who have recognized their culinary attributes and found them an exciting challenge to make in house. Adding to this are the many health related benefits from probiotic foods, including improved gut health and overall well-being. Among these, kombucha, water kefir, and milk kefir have been well received, experiencing newfound popularity in a wide variety of applications.

Kombucha, dating back more than 2,000 years to ancient China, is a fermented drink made from black or green tea along with sugar and a bacteria culture. Increasingly popular as a substitute for alcoholic drinks, naturally low in sugar with the added benefits of probiotics, it is enjoyed in a manner similar to beer without the intoxicating ramifications.

Similarly, water kefir is a fermented drink made using kefir grains that convert sugar water into a naturally carbonated probiotic drink. Recognized as a plant-based alternative to conventional sodas and alcoholic beverages with a wide range of healthful benefits, water kefir is an excellent base for house-made sparkling beverages and cocktails.

If you're more familiar with milk kefir, commonly referred to as “drinkable yogurt,” it can be used to make a rich and creamy smoothie or cocktail. If you're making your own kefir, whether

dairy or plant-based, it can be further cultured and thickened to create a tasty substitute for sour cream, cream cheese and even butter, all with the benefits of probiotics. Read more on page 16.

At Paloma, a stylish Oaxacan-inspired restaurant in downtown Santa Fe, NM, Beverage Director **Carley Callis** brings a passion and unique perspective to her culinary creations. Relying on research and an avoidance of industrial foods to create a nourishing and somewhat esoteric menu, she explains, “Having functional and nutritional beverages involving house made vinegars, tepache, whey, and plant medicine is at the core of my culinary and life affirming philosophy. I make these ingredients in house, not because they're trending, but because they are historically and nutritionally sound.”



Carley Callas, Beverage Director at Paloma (Santa Fe, NM)



Papaya Tepache with Papalo - tepache fermented with papaya maceration. On ice, this beverage is extremely refreshing. At room temperature, it simulates wine that's been aged with skin contact.

Along with Paloma, restaurants such as Cafe Evergreen (Sarasota, FL), Seabirds Kitchen (Costa Mesa, CA), True Food Kitchen (Scottsdale, AZ), Cultured Cafe (New Haven, CT) and Earthbar (several locations) feature low and no alcohol beverages, coffee alternatives, kombucha, water kefir and milk kefir on their menus. They understand the value these beverages represent in terms of nutrition and well-being, and the broad appeal they have among their guests.

**“As long as you start with absolutely fresh, high-quality ingredients, you’re in good shape.”**

## RECIPES

### PASSION FRUIT SPRITZ

by Jeffrey Spear

The flavor of fresh passion fruit combined with zero-proof spirits makes this a truly distinctive and healthful cocktail. If you prefer a full-strength beverage, feel free to use your favorite gin or vodka.

Makes 1 cocktail

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz. alcohol-free gin or vodka
- 1½ oz. passion fruit pulp
- 1½ oz. simple syrup
- ½ oz. lemon juice
- 1 cup ice, more for serving
- Club soda, as needed
- 1 slice or twist of lemon, for garnish

#### DIRECTIONS

Place the alcohol-free spirit, passion fruit pulp, simple syrup, lemon juice and ice in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously.

Fill a cocktail glass with ice, then strain the cocktail over top. Add club soda, as needed, to fill the glass. Garnish with a twist or slice of lemon and serve.



### PASSIONATE DREAM

by Jeffrey Spear

The blend of fresh passion fruit with the rich creaminess of milk kefir will make your guest's dreams come true. If you prefer a full-strength beverage, feel free to use your favorite gin or vodka.

Makes 1 cocktail

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 wedge fresh lime
- Turbinado sugar (or colored bar sugar), to rim the glass and for garnish
- 2 oz. plain kefir
- 2 oz. passion fruit pulp
- 1½ oz. alcohol-free gin or vodka
- 1½ oz. simple syrup
- Ice, as needed

#### DIRECTIONS

Wet the rim of a martini glass with the lime, roll in the turbinado sugar, then set aside.

Place the kefir, passion fruit pulp, alcohol-free spirit, simple syrup and ice in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously.

Strain the cocktail into the prepared martini glass and serve.

