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Hot Restaurant Concepts for 2015

New York is a financial capital, entertainment capital, a shopping capital -- and a food capital too! Despite expensive rents and busy diners, restaurateurs are compelled to bring the latest trends here – and 2015 will be no exception. Look for the following concepts to make news – and diners happy in the year ahead.

BY FAITH HOPE CONSOLO

Bring on the Beef!

Shake Shack is a global phenomenon, and continues to open new locations around the city. At press time, Danny Meyer and Co. had just opened the seventh in Manhattan. And we still have a lot of New York to cover. Bareburger is expanding around the metropolitan area, and has begun moving west, with a unit in Ohio. It proves that diners are willing to spend a bit more for high-quality comfort food.

Haute is Hot.

Great chefs are opening concepts around the city, from the aforementioned Danny Meyer and Union Square Hospitality Group (including upscale pizza at Marta at the Martha Washington Hotel) to Charlie Palmer's eatery at the upcoming Knickerbocker Hotel. Look for other concepts from Geoffrey Zakarian and Fourth Wall.

Loving it Locavore.

Food is perceived to be fresher when it's grown close to home. There are also environmental advantages to transporting food over short distances. Whether it's pizza (such as L'inizio or Roberta's, the latter in Bushwick), American cuisine (Bell Book & Candle, Flatbush Farm), or even fast casual (Chipotle and Panera Bread), farm-to-table is a trend most hope will be healthier for diners, and the industry. Existing eateries such as Rosa Mexicano also are joining the crusade, so expect more!

Beer Halls.

You may wonder whether you're in Brooklyn or Bremerhaven with the proliferation of beer halls around the borough – and the rest of the city. Berg'n has opened in Crown Heights, the latest in a slew of debuts that also include Bernheim & Schwartz in Harlem, Dig Inn (offering local beer and wine) in NoMad and more. Many of these offer artisanal and locally made beers (see above), so experiment!

Ramen Rules!

No longer merely sustenance for struggling actors or hometown fare in Tokyo, haute slurping is the new call to action in New York thanks to such recent offerings as Ivan Ramen on the Lower East Side, Totto Ramen in Midtown, Takashi in the West Village and Mu Ramen in Long Island City. More are expected.

Better Dining in an Unexpected Place.

Our local airports! JFK's Terminal added Blue Smoke, Shake Shack and Red Rooster, among others. Now it's Newark Liberty's turn. The airport will add 55 new dining options over the next couple of years, with the first debuts set for mid-2015. Look for Saison from Alain Ducasse, Vanguard Kitchen from ABC's Dan Kluger, a vegan offering from Amanda Cohen, Mexican street fare from Alex Stupak and more.



The New Mediterranean.

Bored with Greek and Italian? Try the sunny cuisines of Israel. At the forefront are Bustan on the Upper West Side (with its own Taboon oven) or Balaboosta on Mulberry Street. More expansion is expected.

No Meat, No Wheat.

Holdovers from last year, vegan and gluten-free dishes increasingly are being included on menus around the city – usually indicated on the same menu everyone else receives. Look for grains such as buckwheat (a form of rhubarb, believe it or not), amaranth and quinoa, and mushrooms to become more prevalent.

Juice Bars.

Quick and healthy (or offering dessert in a glass), these are expanding all over the city, including Botica in Greenpoint and The Squeeze in Bushwick. But the list of openings is endless – Juice Press, Liquiteria, Juice Generation, Organic Avenue and more all have major expansion plans.

And let's just see what evolves from there! Happy New Year and Happy Dining!