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Fresh Salads, Small Fruits, Desserts in Convenience Stores ... Top Food Trends Forecast for 2019

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/read/2018112981401>

Summary: Food Business Lab, a research center under the Seoul National University, announced 'Top 7 Food Trends for 2019' on November 29. The trends forecast includes: 1) Small fruits such as strawberries and cherries that requires no cutting; 2) Single variety or origin for premium tastes; 3) Ready-to-eat prepared meals; 4) Fresh salads; 5) More desserts in convenience stores; 6) TV programs under the theme of eating and cooking; and 7) Vegetarian and animal welfare products.

Increased Market Inventory Lowers Fresh Onion Price

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/read/2018112981421>

Summary: According to the Korea Agro-Fishery Marketing Corporation (aT), the wholesale market price of fresh onions marked 660 won per kilogram as of November 29, about 30 percent lower than past years' average. The weak price of onions is due to increased market inventory from a good local harvest this year. The local onion harvest this year has amounted to 1,521 metric tons, which is a significant increase from past years' average, 1,243 metric tons. Imports of onions have been on a decline, reflecting the high market inventory. Onions imported in October amounted to 2,311 metric tons, down 86 percent from the same month last year.

Will Entry of Blue Bottle Expand Specialty Coffee Market in Korea?

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181126/93041169/1>

Summary: Leading café chains in Korea, including Starbucks and Hollys, are reportedly making additional investments to open more 'reserve' stores. For example, Starbucks Korea has opened 26 'reserve' stores so far this year, which outnumbered 10 in 2017 and 5 in 2016. Marketers point out that there is increased attention to specialty coffee in Korea partly due to Blue Bottle's scheduled market entry. Blue Bottle, a leading specialty café chain in the U.S., is currently working on its market entry project that will open its first store in Seoul early next year. But there is skepticism about the specialty coffee market potential at the same time. About 27 billion cups of coffee are consumed in Korea each year, half of which are instant mixes and other types of processed products. Specialty coffee products are estimated to take less than 10 percent of total coffee consumption in Korea currently. It is a big question in the industry if Blue Bottle's entry will lead to a significant expansion of specialty coffee consumption in Korea.

The U.S. Government Bans Market Distribution of Romaine for Potential Food Poisoning E-Coli Contamination

<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20181121078600009?input=1195m>

Summary: The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) announced a market distribution ban on romaine on November 20 for potential contamination by food poisoning e-coli bacteria. CDC reported that 32 food poisoning patients related to romaine were reported in 11 states in the U.S. since October 8. CDC pointed out that all romaine currently in the market should be discarded. Korean government (Ministry of Food and Drug Safety) announced that no American romaine has been imported into Korea this year so there is no public food safety issue from the U.S. case.

Shinsegae Food to Launch ‘Care Food’ Business ... Signs Partnership with Japanese Functional Ingredient Suppliers

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018112237791>

Summary: Shinsegae Food Co., a leading food processor in Korea under the umbrella of Shinsegae Group, reported that it signed a partnership MOU with Nutra Japan and Mithui Trading Japan to launch ‘care food’ business. Under the partnership, Shinsegae Food will introduce a variety of care food products targeted to consumers with various nutritional or health concerns. Jutra Japan is the leading supplier for key ingredients for care food in Japan. The partnership includes Mithui Trading Japan who will manage shipping and logistics between Nutra Japan and Shinsegae Food.

ROK Survey Confirms Increased Heavy Drinking among Female Population

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181112/92827613/1>

Summary: According to THE ‘National Health & Nutrition Survey Report 2018’ released by the Korean government, 39 percent of Korean adults enjoyed heavy drinking (defined as an occasion where 7 glasses of alcoholic beverages or more are consumed by a male, or 5 glasses or more by a female) at least once a month. In particular, the survey indicated increased heavy drinking among the female adults as the percentage of female who enjoy heavy drinking at least once a month increased from 22 percent in 2013 to 25 percent in 2018.

EMART to Launch No Brand Stores in Philippines

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018111911491>

Summary: EMART, the leading hypermarket retail store chain in Korea, announced on November 19 that its ‘No Brand’ store will soon enter the Philippines market under a franchise agreement with Robinson’s Retail, a major outlet in the Philippines. Robinson’s Retail is reportedly planning to open 50 No Brand stores throughout the Philippines by 2020. No Brand store is a unique retail outlet that offers private label products only. EMART currently operates 180 No Brand stores in Korea.

The information in this report was compiled by the [Agricultural Trade Office \(ATO\)](#) at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea. The press summaries contained herein do NOT reflect USDA, the U.S. Embassy, or other U.S. government agency official policy or view point. U.S. food exporters can learn more about market opportunities in South Korea by reviewing ATO Seoul’s [Exporter Guide](#) and other reports available at www.fas.usda.gov by clicking on “attaché reports.