



# 8 culinary solutions

# Trend Update

## March 2026

## Industry Update

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The Food Industry is in cautious expansion but under pressure. Restaurant supply is still growing overall (~858k active units) even as permanent closures outpaced new openings in the latest month; chains show fewer openings while independents account for most closures. Operators report generally positive near-term sentiment. Most describe last month as profitable or breaking even and a majority expect traffic and sales to hold steady or improve next month, yet key cost pressures persist. Food and labor costs, plus hiring/retention, top operators' concerns and are driving a mix of margin strategies: price increases, value-driven promotions/LTOs, menu simplification, operational-hours adjustments, and greater sourcing/technology adoption.

## Behavior Shifts

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Meal patterns are becoming more fragmented, with increased snacking, late-night eating, and meal skipping—especially among younger consumers—while off-premise and delivery remain key channels. Combined with strong price sensitivity and saving behaviors, this compresses traditional dayparts and pushes operators toward convenient, flexible, value-focused menu and service strategies.

## Flavors of March

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- 1) Fresh spring greens** - Pea shoot salad with goat cheese, toasted walnuts, and white balsamic vinaigrette..
- 2) Bright citrus-** Blood orange and shaved fennel salad with olive oil and mint.
- 3) Herbs & aromatics** - Herb-crusted roasted lamb rack with parsley and chive gremolata.

## Fable Foods

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Fable Food Co is a mushroom-forward food company focused on sustainable, whole-food protein alternatives. Founded by culinary and mycology experts including Michael Fox and Jim Fuller, the brand positions mushrooms as a flavorful, planet-friendly substitute for conventional meat. Their product process uses shiitake stems (upcycled byproduct) that are sun-dried, rehydrated, shredded and mixed with a short list of natural ingredients to create a meat-like, center-of-plate morsel. Offerings target both home cooks and foodservice operators. Their versatile mushroom-based proteins and recipe support aim at delivering convenient, tasty, value-driven menu solutions while reducing environmental impact.

Fable Foods Recipe

# FABLE FOODS

## SHIITAKE RAGU

Slowly simmered to perfection with flavors even nonna would approve

**Serves:** 10 People

**Prep Time:** 15 Minutes

**Cook Time:** 2 Hours

### INGREDIENTS

- 2.2lb (1kg) bag of Fable Pulled Shiitake Mushrooms, thawed and cut into halves
- 4 tbsp cooking oil
- 3 large brown onions, diced
- 10-12 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 cups balsamic vinegar
- 4 tbsp sugar
- 4 standard jars of tomato sauce (~6lb)
- 4 sprigs fresh basil
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 sprigs fresh oregano
- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 lbs tagliatelle
- Salt & pepper, to taste



### DIRECTIONS

#### • Cooking

Heat olive oil in a heavy bottomed pot over high heat. Brown Fable pieces for 4-5 mins, then remove and set aside. In the same pot, add onion and garlic and cook over medium heat for 5-8 mins until softened and browned.

Add balsamic vinegar and sugar and retain at medium heat until liquid is mostly evaporated (about 5 mins). When balsamic vinegar is mostly evaporated, add passata, basil, oregano, thyme and rosemary. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 1.5-2 hours, stirring occasionally.

When sauce has developed a darker color and richer taste, remove the lid, add salt and pepper to your taste then stir in the Fable. Reheat over medium heat for 5-10 mins.

#### • Plating

Serve Fable Ragù on top of cooked pasta and fresh basil. Voila!