



2. SUGAR 'N' SPICE

Chocolate and vanilla are so last century. To satisfy our love of sugar and our lust for adventure, dessert-makers are increasingly mixing sweets with flavors more often found in the main course. Los Angeles's Sona restaurant infuses ice cream with cloves, while RM Seafood in Las Vegas zips up the treat with black pepper. Sample that sweet-spicy taste at home, too: Il Laboratorio del Gelato's peppy gelati (e.g., tarragon with pink pepper) can be ordered at www.laboratoriodelgelato.com. Get Vosges Haut Chocolat's truffles with curry and paprika at www.vosgeschocolate.com, and Woodhouse Chocolate's Quatre Épices bonbons (nutmeg, cinnamon) at www.woodhousechocolate.com.



3. PAD THAI: THE NEXT SPAGHETTI

On a mission to rule the global foodscape, the Thai government has been exporting chefs and heavily promoting its cuisine. The result: more than 3,000 Thai restaurants across the United States, an increase of about 120 percent since 2003. With that boom—and a new preponderance in grocers' freezers (even Lean Cuisine offers it!)—Thai food has entered the mainstream. Christine Bruhn, Ph.D., of the Institute of Food Technologists, credits the cuisine's variety of vegetables, flavors, and non-fried options. In today's trans fat-phobic world, she says, "what could be more appealing?"



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1 OUT OF 5 RESTAURANT MEALS IS PURCHASED FROM A CAR
INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS

NO. 1 BREAKFAST ITEM: COFFEE
INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS

IN 2005, COOKIES ACCOUNTED FOR 48 PERCENT OF THE MONEY SPENT ON MASS-MARKET SWEET BAKED GOODS
PACKAGED FACTS/MARKETRESEARCH.COM



MARCH 10, 2006

4. THE BUZZ ON HONEY

With sugar getting a bad rap, Americans have rediscovered the sweetness of honey. No longer the domain of the plastic squeeze bear, honey offers a lesson in botany and geography. Stonewall Kitchen produces Maine Blueberry Honey, for instance; and this year, Sting's wife, Trudie Styler, will market Il Palagio honey from the nectar of plants grown on the couple's Tuscan estate. We're even eating more honey-sweetened packaged goods. Must be that back-to-nature allure. >

