



Flavor Innovation / May 2022

Flavor innovation is a constant consideration for the Food and Drink industry:

What is the next big flavor?



What are consumers going to like?



However, flavor innovation must be approached from a broad prospective.

The understanding of consumer need states can lead to interesting, exciting and unique launches that can celebrate new flavors on their own merit or in combination with other important product attributes: health, indulgence, a broad range of sensory qualities and even their sustainability credentials.

TASTE IS KING

50%

of US consumers claim that taste is their primary driver when deciding what to eat



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Source: Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD)





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Trending US Menu Flavors/Ingredients

Flavor and ingredient trend: watermelon, chili flakes, and florals

Watermelon-flavored beverage innovation is booming in both the foodservice and retail space: watermelon as a beverage flavor has grown 43% in menu mentions from Q3 2018-Q3 2021, and 18% in retail beverage launches from 2018-2021.



Rind Coco-Melon Blend Skin-On Superfruit Snack comprises chewy slices of dried watermelon, cantaloupe and organic coconut



Dalston's Fizzy Elderflower Beverage is naturally flavored with British elderflower extract.

When it comes to alcoholic beverages, **46% of consumers prefer citrus flavors and 16% prefer floral**. Lavender (61%) and Hibiscus (14%) are among the beverage flavors that have grown the most from Q2 2018-21.

Floral syrups and bitters are rising in menu incidences and are especially well suited to lend complexity and uniqueness to cocktails.



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Summary of the big themes

Better-for-you



Flavors and ingredients that can be associated with wellness are highly sought after and can help consumers achieve their all-encompassing health and wellbeing goals.

Pleasure and escapism



Brands have the opportunity to explore bold and sophisticated flavor innovations that can help boost the mood and offer moments of pleasure and escapism.

Intensity – engaging all the senses



Consumers are increasingly looking for more immersive brand experiences. Manufacturers can achieve this through experimentation with intense and unexpected flavors, and also by utilizing texture, color and aroma to create multisensory experiences.

The comfort of the familiar



Flavor familiarity, authenticity and nostalgic attributes can create strong appeal and offer comfort and reassurance. However, brands can consider stretching established and traditional flavors with a twist.

The challenge of sustainability



Concerns about sustainability and the environmental impact of the food and drink industry have never been more high profile. This should encourage brands to act fast and utilize various sustainability practices to offer tasty, high quality and healthier food and drink products.



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Better-for-you



A broad range of functional benefit claims can influence consumer choice, from short-term impacts such as hydration and energy boost, to longer-term factors such as anti-ageing and beauty enhancing properties.

Flavorsome and functional products for relaxation and sleep- Some ingredients that can offer relaxation and sleep aid properties can also change/enhance a products' flavor – added flavors and infusions can enhance taste appeal



Lavender is said to be used to aid digestion and calm stress



Healthy and flavorsome foods can support the immune system- 86% of US consumers agree that eating healthy is important for a strong immune system

Patented probiotic is said to help support immune health and bring a little "happy" to the gut.

Although not new on the flavor scene, **citrus flavors are experiencing high interest.** Lemons, blood oranges and grapefruit are increasingly featured in new *food* and drink products with the immunity-boosting functional claim.



A classic lemon bar with a tangy cranberry curd and sweetened orange peel filling



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Pleasure and escapism



Restrictions imposed by the pandemic have reduced consumers' ability to travel, eat out and socialize, forcing them to spend more time at home. This has had a tremendous impact on mental wellbeing, stress levels and overall satisfaction with life. The appeal of new flavors can drive interest and engagement



France- contains 9% European refinement milk fat

INDULGE

41%

of US consumers have been eating indulgent foods regularly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (vs 34% prior)



This product is said to offer a premium twist with delectably sweet coconut flakes sourced exclusively from **the Philippines**



Mexico- Filled with strawberry chunks and crafted with the finest horchata recipe



India- This onion chutney product is described as sweet and savory.



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Intensity – engaging all the senses



Opportunities exist to offer consumers more complex product experiences. Focus on flavor, texture, aroma and color in food and drink can all deliver more memorable and exciting experiences for consumers



Textures, similarly to aromas, can alter and enhance consumer experience. Textures that are beyond 'category norms' can offer advantageous positioning for brands versus their competition.

This premium product is USDA Organic certified, and is sticky, tangy, delicious and full of flavor.

Multisensory product attributes, such as colors, textures and aroma, can enhance a product's taste and flavor, thus amplifying consumers' experience and connection with brands.



Consumers are becoming more health-minded, they are increasingly looking for more natural product formulations, meaning that **vibrant colors should preferably come from natural sources like fruit and vegetables.**

This plant-based product is said to contain organic fruits and veggies in every bite and is made with organic wholegrains for a soft-baked snack to fuel the day



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The comfort of the familiar



Nostalgic attributes have strong purchasing pull during uncertain times. During uncertain and difficult times, nostalgia garners a strong pull as a food and drink attribute as it helps to engage consumers on an emotional level and provides them with a feeling of certainty and comfort.

Nostalgia can offer a strong marketing pull and create opportunities to revive forgotten products, flavors and ingredients. However, to widen the opportunity, such products need to resonate with consumers both old and young.



Retails in a limited edition 6-oz. pack



Locally relevant flavors have gained more consumer attention since the start of COVID-19. Local pride and a desire to support their community prompts consumers to celebrate flavors and ingredients originating closer to home.

Comprises three favorite Cheerios flavors for one great tasting cereal

Consumers can feel nostalgic for an era that they haven't experienced, and therefore brands can evoke emotions and the authenticity of that era to form a connection with new consumers.



Relaunched with a new formulation, featuring a new great taste, and in a redesigned pack



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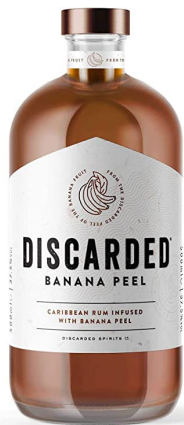


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The challenge of sustainability



Concerns about sustainability and the environmental impact of the food and drink industry have never been more high profile. This should encourage brands to act fast and utilize various sustainability practices to offer tasty, high quality and healthy(er) food and drink products.



Mintel's consumer research illustrates that a significant number of consumers in many markets think that **upcycled ingredients used in food products can have a positive impact on the environment.**

Made from banana peels that would have been thrown away by a flavor house. The skins are reused by the distillery to add flavor notes of toffee and fruit to its Caribbean rum



Bears the Rainforest Alliance logo



Featuring the FSC Recycled, Clif Bar Family Foundation and Quality Assurance International Certified Organic logo

Consumers agree that buying seasonal produce is a good way to reduce environmental impact. Brands can utilize this in order to boost their ethical profile.



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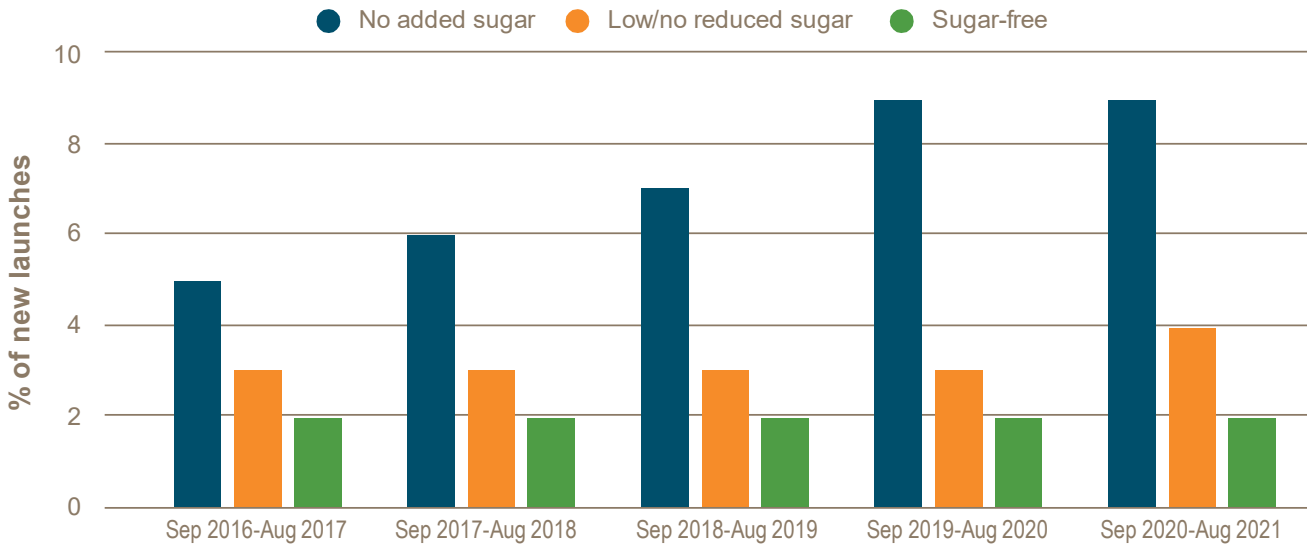


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New Concepts- Reduced Sugar

Widespread concerns about sugar prompt sweet spread brands to expand their reduced-sugar ranges and offer appealing products to health-minded consumers. Sweet spreads can give consumers more intense and memorable sensory experiences by utilizing a variety of ingredients to boost their textural profiles.

Global: new sweet spread launches with reduced-sugar claims*, 2016-21



*reduced-sugar claims: sugar-free, no added sugar, low/reduced sugar Source: Mintel GNPD, Sep 2016-Aug 2021



The Jam Stand: This low sugar and all natural product is slow cooked in small batches to preserve the sweet taste of summer



Heidi's: Contains 25% less sugar than regular jam



Organic Food Incubator: Features "Low Sugar" label on front label



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New Concepts- Salad as a Snack

Salads positioned as snacks can meet these consumers' desires for snacks that make them feel that they are taking care of their physical and emotional health.

Mintel recommends

Promote snack positioning

Encourage snacking on salads to amplify sales in a category that is already of interest to consumers. Retail salads include a wealth of usage suggestions on pack, from topping with protein to serving alongside specific entrées. What's missing is a snack positioning.

Tap into the need for healthy snacks

Thanks to the pandemic, consumers are looking for ways to easily boost the healthfulness of their food and drink. Positioning salads as a snack can provide consumers with another healthy option for snacking and build on established habits around snacking on veggies.

Look to European snack salads

Most salads do not include snack positioning, but some European markets are an exception that can serve as guidance for the rest of the world. "Snack salads" have proliferated in Germany and have spread into other European markets. This growth can inspire salad makers in other global markets.



Lunds & Byerlys PearGorg Salad



It comprises broccoli stalk, crisp diced red apples, green leaf lettuce, savoy and red cabbage, carrots, warmly spiced fall inspired crouton crumbles, sharp cheddar cheese, and green onion with a sweet and savory maple dijon vinaigrette



The product comprises an organic spring mix, cranberries, feta cheese, walnuts, almonds and raspberry vinaigrette.



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