



MASHUP MANIA trending in snacks

The boundaries of snack flavor trends are expanding as consumers seek new experiences

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Product developers are having to go to great lengths to stand out in the snack segment. Attracting consumer attention and converting it into purchases often requires bringing exotic or unusual flavor options to market. As the snack category becomes more competitive consumers are being enticed to explore the wild side of flavor development.

Two out of three U.S. consumers “love to discover new flavors,” according to Innova Market Insights’ 2018 Consumer

Survey. Adventurous, daring and re-imagined flavors are emerging to attract consumers who enjoy an element of the unexpected on their palates.

“Mashup mania, the combining of known food ingredients with something new and different, is definitely trending,” said Annie Best, market research manager for Dawn Foods’ North American division, Jackson, Miss. “Consumers want to be more adventurous but like to see those flavors paired with something they are comfortable with.”

Examples of mashup flavors Dawn Foods has developed include a crunchy stout donut featuring a stout flavor, chocolate and pretzels as a topping. Another is a sundae donut with icing, nuts, sprinkles and a cherry on top.

“These are examples of using flavors to bring something different and not typical to donuts,” Ms. Best said.

Globalization also is sparking the curiosity of consumers to discover new food and beverages. Additional research from Innova Market Insights indicates 3 in 10 U.S. consumers “love to discover flavors of other cultures.”

International flavors Ms. Best sees trending in the sweet goods category include matcha, churro and mochi.

“We’ve done a matcha donut and a churro donut,” she said. “Dulce de leche has also grown double digits in the last four years.”

Food and flavor trends are traveling rapidly in today’s connected world. Ethnic flavors continue to proliferate, with 65% growth in food and beverage launches, according to Innova Market Insights. Mediterranean and Far Eastern flavors are seeing the biggest growth in launch activity, with meat, fish and eggs and sauces

Consumers like to see new flavors paired with product formats with which they are familiar.



DAWN FOODS

and seasonings the leading categories.

Middle Eastern flavors are also on the rise. Toum, a Lebanese condiment containing garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and salt, is “coming on strong,” said Nancy Kruse, president of The Kruse Co., during a presentation at the National Restaurant Association’s annual trade show, held May 18-21 in Chicago. Zhoug, a blend of hot pepper, garlic and cilantro, and za’atar, a combination of green herbs, sesame and olive oil, also are gaining momentum on mainstream menus.

People now travel the world, are connected online, and are becoming increasingly familiar with other food cultures, flavors and experiences. To drive deeper connections with the adventurous consumer, Innova Market Insights recommends companies satisfy consumer curiosity not only through exotic world flavors, but also new food experiences and telling the story behind the product.

Ms. Best sees this trend arising particularly among millennial and Gen Z consumers.

“Think about all of the food shows and all of the food bloggers,” she said. “Sources like Pinterest are also great sources of inspiration. These sources are

Toum is a Lebanese condiment featuring garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and salt.



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driving a desire to explore and experience flavors and foods from around the world.”

Ms. Best added that she has seen Indian flavors migrating into more foods.

“Outside of the bakery, curry has grown as far as (market) penetration in the past few years,” she said.

Beverage flavors bubble in snacks

Cocktails, coffee and cola are trending tastes in confections and snacks launching this year.

“We’re seeing a lot of products that are incorporating different drink flavors,” said Carly Schildhaus, public affairs manager for the National Confectioners Association, Washington.

Soda is showing up in several new candies. American Licorice Co., La Porte, Ind., introduced Sour Punch Bites featuring cherry, lime and cola flavors that may be mixed and matched to create new combinations. The company also introduced Red Vines root beer and orange cream licorice bites. An orange soda flavor is incorporated



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in new Sour Patch Kids and Swedish Fish chewy candies that debuted from Mondelez International, Inc., Deerfield, Ill.

Other innovations at the Sweets & Snacks show, held May 21-23 in Chicago, offered new ways to consume coffee. From the creator of Dippin' Dots, 40 Below Joe, Carbondale, Ill., included frozen beads of coffee and dairy-free creamer in a range of flavors, including french vanilla, hazelnut, salted caramel, mocha and house blend. Tierra Nueva Fine Cocoa, Miami, debuted Nudge Coffee Butter, a spread made entirely from Italian roast coffee beans.

Tea flavors are brewing in such products as layered matcha cream wafer cookies and a chai chocolate bar.

From Kopper's Chocolate, Jersey City, N.J., On the Rocks Chocolate cordials contain a liquid center inspired by libations such as vodka and tequila. Wrapped in dark chocolate, the alcohol-free bites are available in Moscow mule, cold-brew coffee, barrel-aged bourbon and strawberry margarita varieties.

Brewhouse Legends from Mount Franklin Foods, L.L.C., El Paso, Texas, offered a range of snack nut mixes inspired by craft beer and flavored with hops. Unique Pretzel Bakery, Inc., Reading, Pa., offered

Sour Punch Bites from the American Licorice Co. contain cherry, lime and cola flavors that may be mixed and matched to create new combinations.



Original Sourdough Craft Beer Pretzel Rings made with malted barley and hops.

Attributes that add to flavor

Attributes that enhance snack flavors include freshness, premiumization and local, said Greg May, business development manager for Welch's Global Ingredients Group, Concord, Mass., a business unit of Welch's.

"Consumers are seeking freshness, premiumization and even personalization

in snacks," he said. "People want to pamper themselves, and snacks are a great way to do that. It's a low-level commitment that can be a high-end experience for \$5."

How a consumer defines freshness in a snack depends on the application, Mr. May said.

"It can depend on where in the store you find the snack," he said. "Those in the center of the store are not perceived as fresh as those sold on the perimeter. Texture is also key. In a muffin, for example, texture is certainly key. Is it moist? Does it have a vibrant flavor?"

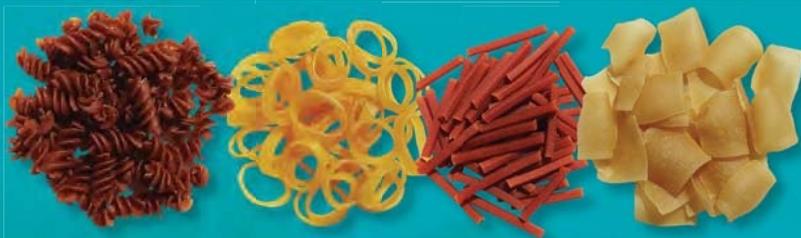
JoLynne Wightman, principal scientist for Welch's Global Ingredients Group, added that the Food and Drug Administration's pending added sugar regulations will challenge product developers in some categories.

"This is going to hit the snacking category in 2020," she said. "There are companies that are in formulation mode to decrease added sugars, but (the product) still needs to taste good. From our perspective, grapes are a good alternative in some applications. They can deliver the functionality and taste required." **FBN**

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