

MINTEL

2026 GLOBAL FOOD AND DRINK PREDICTIONS

From This Year's Signals
To Tomorrow's Trends



INTRODUCTION

Strengthen the resolve
to endure adversity now
and in the years ahead

Mintel's 2026 Global Food & Drink Predictions were developed with a view to how empathetic brands can help consumers who feel like they are only surviving, rather than thriving. The polycrisis, a term for a series of consecutive, interlinked shocks or disasters, of the last five years has left consumers and companies alike in need of support to feel prepared, flexible, and even creative in the face of obstacles.

Being resilient is a lasting lesson from COVID-19, but Mintel's global food and drink analysts predict perseverance will emerge as a motto for 2026.



Brands will build sustained relationships with consumers by demonstrating how they are persevering through the global issues that are also complicating consumers' daily lives, such as climate change, supply chain disruptions and the impacts of chronic health conditions.

With solutions designed to encourage persistence, consumers will feel more empowered to endure the daily challenges from "what's for dinner?" to "will drinking this help my future self?"

66%

of German consumers would like to improve their ability to cope with living in times of constant uncertainty.

Source: Mintel, March 2024



**MOST
INNOVATIVE**

Don't Just Launch it. Celebrate it.

Mintel Most Innovative awards recognise the best new consumer products across food, drink, beauty, household and beyond. If your launch has made people stop, look, taste, or try, this is your moment to shine.

READY TO SHINE?

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01



Consumers will move on from specific goals of “maxxing,” or the viral advice to consume high amounts of protein or fiber each day, to adopt inclusive diets that celebrate the functional benefits of consuming a diverse variety of ingredients.

02



Food and drink that is rooted in trusted and practical traditions of the past will reduce consumers’ feelings of vulnerability and lack of control.

03



Multisensory food and drink formulations will mature from whimsical novelties to more practical and purposeful formulations that provide memorable experiences while also answering the specific sensory needs of underserved consumers.



“MAXXING” OUT, DIVERSITY IN

Consumers will move on from specific goals of “maxxing,” or the viral advice to consume high amounts of protein or fiber each day, to adopt inclusive diets that celebrate the functional benefits of consuming a diverse variety of ingredients.

In a time when there’s an abundance of instantly available health advice, protein and fiber are cutting through the clutter in 2026 and going mainstream as easy to understand, accessible and essential nutrients.

After becoming integral for many consumers in Europe and the Americas, priorities for protein are rising in markets in Asia Pacific. Meanwhile, the naturally fiber-rich cuisines within the Asia Pacific region hold lessons for consumers in Europe and the Americas who are starting to focus on fiber.

EVOLUTION OF THE PREDICTION

This is the latest evolution in dietary preferences tracked by Mintel. Mintel's 2016 Global Food & Drink Trend **From the Inside-Out** highlighted the emergence of a holistic approach to health and wellness in which consumers paid attention to how their diets made them look and feel.

Not long after, consumers began to consider the long-term implications of their diets as considerations about healthy aging emerged, as outlined by Mintel's 2019 Global Food & Drink Trend **Through the Ages**.

As the post-pandemic cost-of-living crisis set in, Mintel's 2023 Global Food & Drink Trend **Savvy Sustenance** recommended that the intersection between health and value would be pivotal as more consumers needed affordable sources of nutrition.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2030

By 2030, consumers will have felt the health benefits of consuming sufficient protein and fiber, and priorities will evolve to improving their dietary diversity. Health-conscious consumers will strive to consume as many different ingredients as they can each week.

The cultural principle of DEI, or diversity, equity and inclusion, will be applied to nutrition, leading to a desire for DELts that celebrate a wide range of cultural ingredients and reduce the reliance on singular foods, ingredients or crops. Consumers in the West will reject the “comfort” of traditional meals built around a protein, a vegetable and a starch in favor of building diverse meals that boast a variety of ingredients, such as lentils, seaweed and native grains.

Consumers in 2030 will seek out a variety of ingredients and celebrate the multitude of ways to combine them. Just like hitting shuffle on their digital music libraries, health-focused consumers will use AI to “shuffle” their weekly diets to ensure they are diverse, include a range of ingredients and inspire excitement with new combinations. AI also will encourage trial of new foods with “if you like this, then you’ll like that” recommendations of fruits, vegetables, grains, seeds, spices or proteins that are new, but familiar.



71%

of US consumers who eat lunch say “allows for variety,” such as different flavors, is an important factor when choosing food for lunch.

Source: Mintel, November 2024



THE ROADMAP FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Parents will prioritize digestive health

In 2030, parents will be looking to set their children up with the right nutrients not only for ideal growth and development, but with the foundation of a healthy gut microbiome that could prepare them to be more resilient in the future.

Baby food and drink brands will educate on the right types of food to feed the microbiome and innovate products that supply beneficial bacteria. For example, Vietnam's Vinamilk Optimum Colos Stage 1 Infant Formula has ingredients inspired by breast milk that promote healthy intestinal microflora.

Parents will feel they are giving their children an edge in fighting against disease with a microbiome that is optimally prepared for future resilience.

Fiber will become our nutritional armor

In 2030, fiber will not only be used to improve gut health, it will also evolve into a nutritional defense against the rising risks microplastics pose to humans.

Already, consumers are realizing that they are regularly ingesting microplastics, which can have potential health consequences such as inflammatory bowel or cardiovascular diseases. The omnipresent nature of microplastics in packaging, clothes, furniture and cooking utensils (to name a few) makes microplastics almost impossible for consumers to avoid.

With emerging evidence that fiber can potentially alleviate the impact of microplastics on health, fiber will increasingly be positioned as the nutritional armor people need to mitigate the dangers of our convenience-focused lifestyles.

Percent of consumers from select European markets who agree with the statement, "Concerns about water quality (eg microplastics in the ocean) have caused me to cut back on the amount of fish/shellfish I eat," 2024

ITALY

52%

SPAIN

50%

GERMANY

44%

FRANCE

45%

POLAND

48%

Amp up variety with precision nutrition boosts

Based on the success of seed cycling companies like beeya and Zoe's Daily 30+ gut sprinkle, consumers will be able to buy precision nutrition boosts. The customized combinations of seeds, herbs and spices are based on each user's DNA, epigenetics (how lifestyle, health conditions and medications shape unique gene expressions) and metagenomics (the study of all of the genes in the community around us).

Using AI, these inputs will be run through an open-source system supported by big food companies that have committed their social responsibility funds to empower consumers to make incrementally sound improvements to their diets.

Consumers will be able to order these sprinkles and add them to their meals the way salt and pepper is added now, but with the bonuses of texture and nutrition.



Mintel Spark imagines a precision nutrition boost seed sprinkle mix

* This is NOT a real product – it has been generated by Mintel's AI-powered concept generator to inspire innovation; generated product images may include example text and as such may contain misspellings or grammatical errors because the image has not been manually manipulated post-generation.

Source: Mintel Spark

QUESTIONS BRANDS SHOULD BE ASKING

As consumers shift away from rigid nutritional goals toward more inclusive, diverse diets, food and drink brands have an opportunity to rethink how they innovate. The focus is moving from maximization to balance and from single-function ingredients to holistic, culturally rooted formulations.

The shift toward inclusive, functionally diverse diets is more than a passing trend it's a sign of changing consumer values. Brands that innovate with nuance, cultural relevance and foresight will be better placed to meet the needs of consumers.

01

How can we develop our core product lines to reflect the consumer demand for diverse ingredients, while still delivering functional benefits?

02

Which traditional or culturally rooted formulations could be reimaged to meet modern wellness needs?

03

Which of our competitors is already entering this space? And does the consumer demand outstrip the product supply?

04

What are the emerging ingredient trends to help us lead the next evolution in dietary preferences?

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white sleeveless top and dark trousers, is shopping in a grocery store. She is pushing a black shopping basket and reaching for a tomato in the produce section. The background shows shelves stocked with various products.

SIGNALS TO WATCH NOW

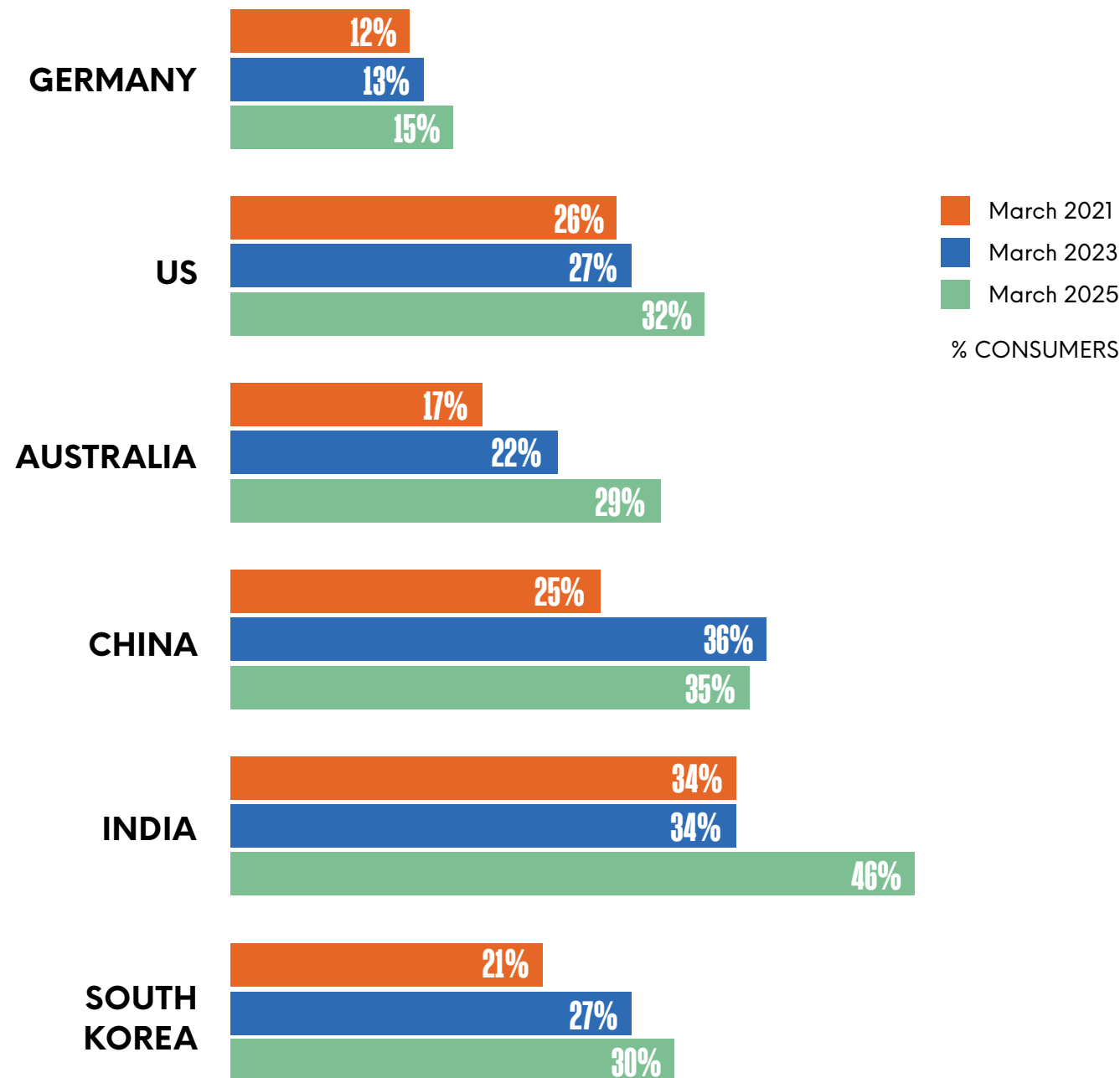
Opportunities for protein and fiber are in different positions around the world

Brands can look for inspiration and education as consumer priorities for protein move from West to East, and options for fiber-rich diets move from East to West.

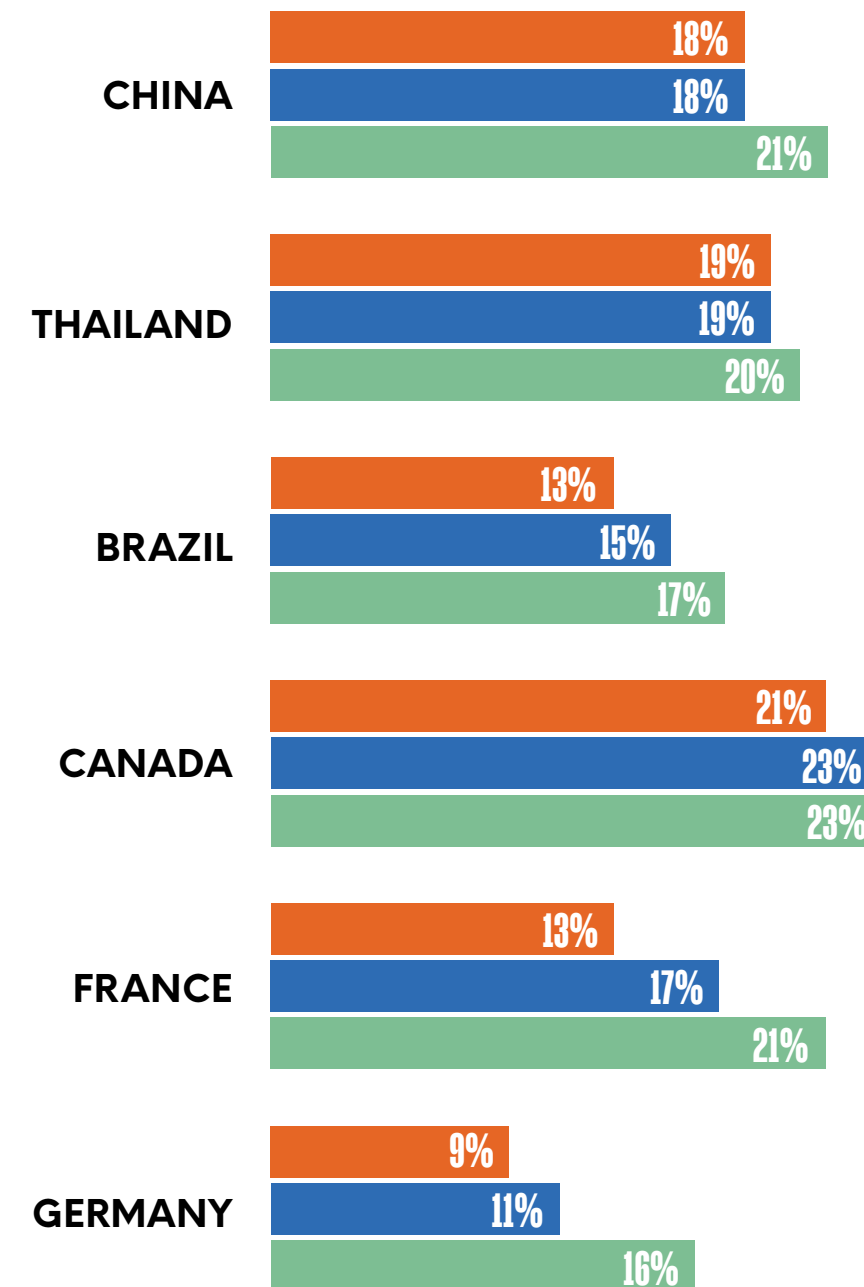
Interest in high protein claims is growing regionally, but has particularly taken off in APAC

Fiber-rich diets are common in some APAC markets, but interest in fiber is only emerging in the West

Select global markets: importance of high protein claims when shopping for food, 2021-25



Select global markets: importance of high fiber claims when shopping for food, 2021-25



Base: Germany, Brazil, France: 1,000 internet users aged 16+ in each time period; US, Australia, China, India, South Korea, Thailand Canada: 1,000 internet users aged 18+ in each market in each time period
Source: Mintel, March 2021, March 2023, March 2025



Black Swan Data
predicts more diverse
protein sources

Black Swan Data’s predictive social intelligence finds that US consumers want protein sources that deliver extra nutritional benefits. Alternative sources, such as fungal proteins and microalgae, are recognized by consumers and valued for their nutrient density and holistic health benefits.

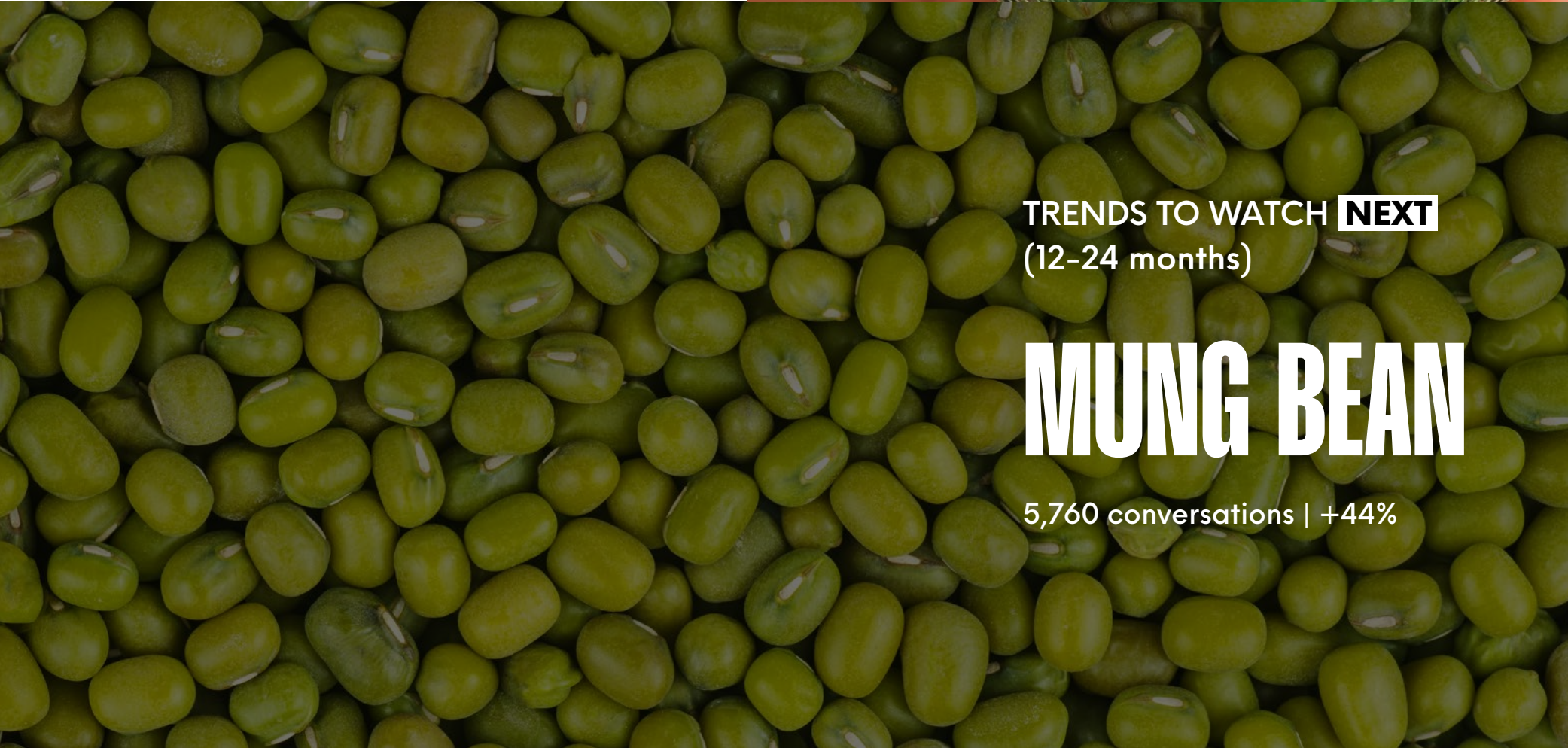
Source: Black Swan Data, USA Snacking July 2023-July 2025



TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

CHLORELLA

Mentioned in 1,048 online conversations |
Online conversation growth: +2% YoY



TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

MUNG BEAN

5,760 conversations | +44%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

HEMP SEEDS

16,949 conversations | +16%

Shift perceptions that protein is for bodybuilders and fiber is for seniors

Protein and fiber-rich products will need to be developed with efficacy, affordability and, especially for fiber, a “cool” factor in mind.

Efficacy: emphasizing absorbability

Oikos Cafe Latte Flavor Protein Drink has 18g of highly absorbable protein. Danone is emphasizing the product's convenience and high absorption rate, claiming that “protein is meaningless if you can't absorb it” (Japan).



Source: Mintel GNPD

Affordability: Private label 'top up' bar

Eldorado Nut Bar with Coconut & Roasted Nuts is a private label bar made with peanuts, almonds, hazelnuts and coconut. A 100g bar sells for €1.20 and has 18g of protein and 23g of fiber. It is said to offer “energy fast” (Norway).



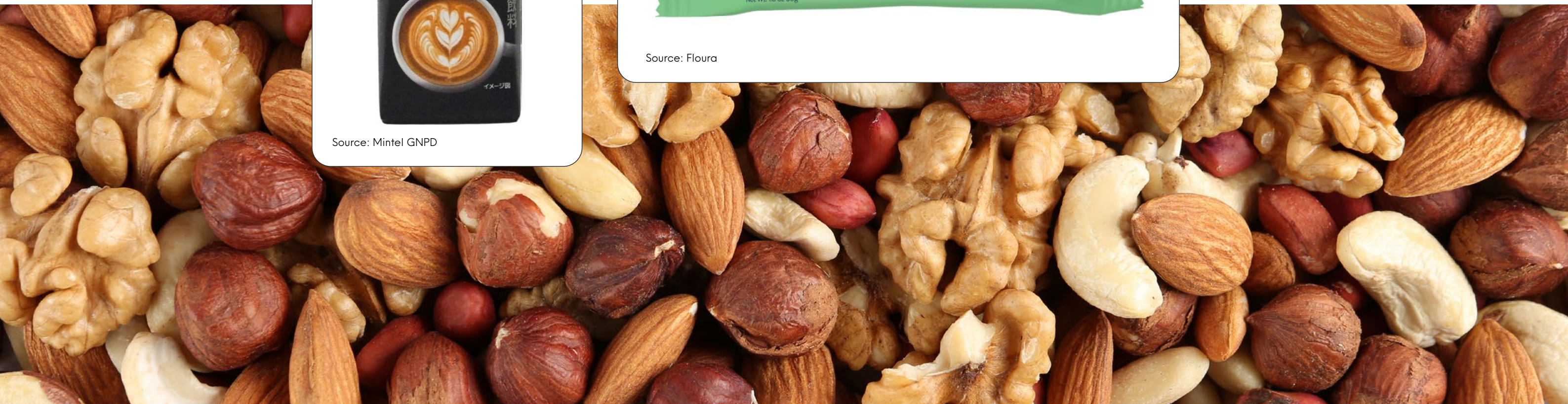
Source: Mintel GNPD



Source: Floura

'Cool' factor: Not your grandparents' fiber

Floura Blueberry Matcha Fruit Crush Bar is part of a line of fiber-rich snack bars developed by the founder of trendy ice cream brand Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams. Each 50g bar contains 13g of diverse fiber from 12 whole plants (Canada, US).





Black Swan Data predicts fiber will get indulgent

The functional snacks space in the US is dominated by protein – particularly highly indulgent protein bars. But trends related to gut health and mood are growing in relevance, according to Black Swan Data’s predictive social intelligence.

Consumers are looking for tasty snacks that improve the gut microbiome, reduce bloating and provide a mental boost. And being tasty is key. Protein bars can be decadent. Gut-friendly snacks (like gummies) are less so.

Consumers want “good for you” fiber, probiotic and adaptogenic snacks that look and taste like “bad for you” snacks.

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

**REDUCES
BLOATING**

1,440 conversations | +4%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

FIBER-RICH

37,091 conversations | +9%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

**GUT-BRAIN
AXIS**

1,260 conversations | +71%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

**IMPROVES
MOOD**

53,544 conversations | +30%





RETRO REJUVENATION

Food and drink that is rooted in trusted and practical traditions of the past will reduce consumers' feelings of vulnerability and lack of control.

For consumers in 2026, nostalgia for "the past" does not mean rewinding to a specific year or era. Rather, consumers are seeking refuge from a volatile and artificially intelligent world in an idealized and romanticized view that life in the past was simpler.

Amid the polycrisis of recent years, consumers have gravitated to ancient medicines and "grandma hobbies" for stress relief, mindfulness and a "pressure-free way to achieve fulfillment." This solace is especially sought by Millennials ages 28-45* who are seeking a higher purpose in the "extended middle" decades of life, as explored in Mintel's 2026 Global Consumer Prediction The New Young.

* Millennials were born between 1980-1996 in the US and Canada, 1981-1996 in Germany, UK and Japan and 1982-1998 in Brazil

EVOLUTION OF THE PREDICTION

The past has a perennial pull for consumers. Mintel's 2017 Global Food & Drink Trend **In Tradition We Trust** pinpointed the safety consumers feel in nostalgia, "ancient" claims and brands that are anchored in local traditions.

Released in 2019, Mintel's 2030 Global Food & Drink Trend **High-Tech Harvests** forecast that consumers would gain a new appreciation for agriculture and the work it takes to bring ingredients to market. This is coming to fruition as consumers in 2026 are motivated to buy local, traditional ingredients.

Growing attention on origin also was pivotal to Mintel's 2025 Global Food & Drink Trend **Chain Reaction** and its recommendation that brands help consumers accept and trust the alternate origins, ingredients and flavors that are necessary in a world under pressure.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2030

The shocks and disasters that consumers will have survived by 2030 will inspire them to prepare themselves and their pantries to be able to endure whatever surprise is next. These surprises can run the gamut from familiar to severe including feeling low in energy after another sleepless night, the arrival of an unannounced vegan guest for dinner or an encroaching natural disaster.

Brands that ground themselves in heritage ingredients and traditional medicines will benefit from the trust consumers place in history. These brands will be regarded and respected as cultural custodians that combine delicious taste with long histories of functional benefits or feature the sustainability advantages of circular traditions.

In addition, a newfound respect for resourcefulness will develop by 2030 and will inspire a fresh look at cans, pouches, freeze-dried, frozen and other long-life product formats. Retailers will invest in center aisles that improve “dwell time” and inspire discoveries of a new generation of versatile, innovative gourmet ambient brands like Bold Beans in the UK or Fishwife in the US.



35%

of Japanese consumers would like to stock up on products that can be used both in daily life and during disasters.

Source: Mintel, March 2024



THE ROADMAP FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Seasonal eating and natural preservation reframe sustainability

By 2030, ancestral food practices like seasonal eating, fermentation and natural preservation will evolve from niche interests into mainstream strategies for resilience. While these traditions have long been celebrated by enthusiasts, rising climate disruptions, food cost volatility and growing interest in sustainability will drive broader adoption.

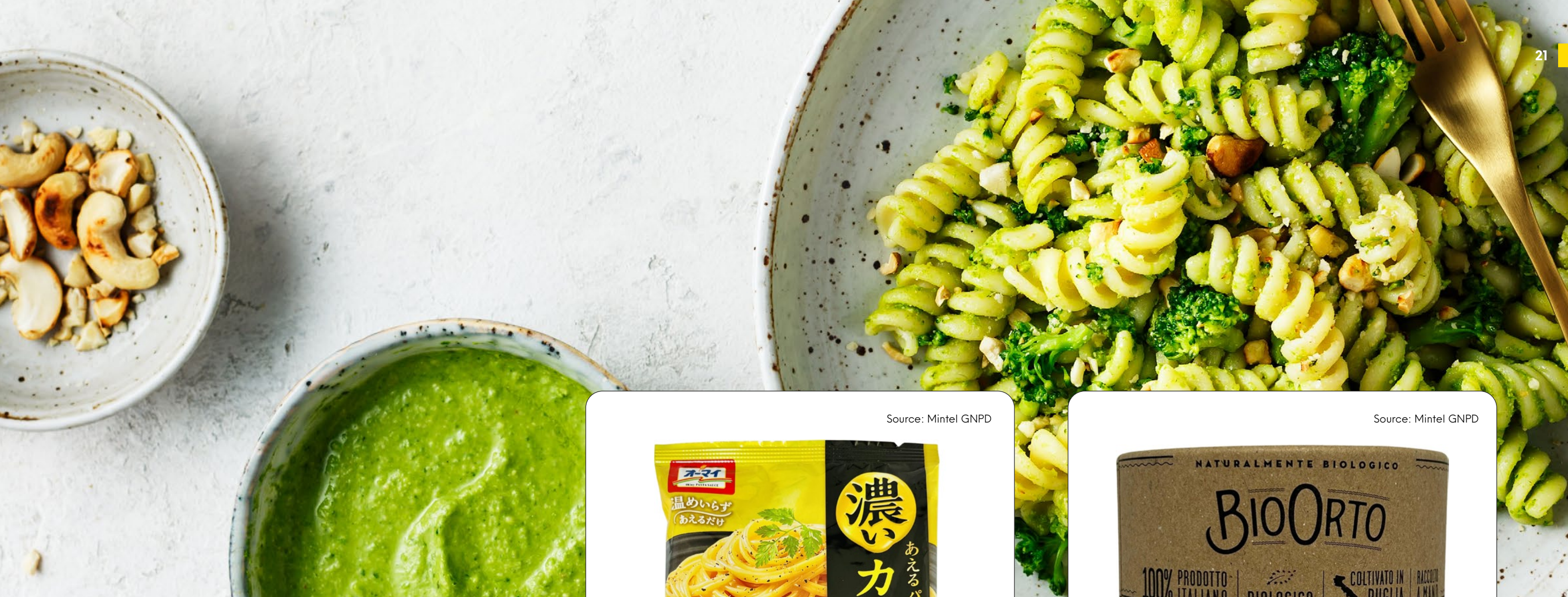
Brands will revive techniques like pickling, drying and fermenting—not just as eco-conscious choices, but as culturally rooted solutions that reduce waste, extend shelf life and support gut health.

Everyday staples like preserved vegetables, seasonal grains and fermented snacks will be reframed as smart, sustainable choices. This shift will especially resonate in price-sensitive markets, where resilience is not just a value, but a necessity.

28%

of Japanese consumers would be motivated to buy food and drink that is fermented. Interest rises above 40% for women aged 40+.

Source: Mintel, February 2024



Open the recipe archive to find alternatives for ingredients in shortage

By 2030, the pasta sauce aisle will look less red. As the price and availability of tomatoes continue to pose challenges, pasta sauce brands will be forced to innovate, focusing on driving volume through non-tomato-based sauces with increasingly exciting flavors.

Launches of cream sauces, cheese sauces, pesto, and other bases (eg capsicum, pumpkin) will add flavor innovation and variety, while circumventing tomatoes.

Source: Mintel GNPD



Nippon Oh'My Rich Carbonara Pasta Sauce (Japan)

Source: Mintel GNPD



BioOrto Organic Broccoli Pesto with Anchovies (Italy)

‘Upcycled’ will be re-branded as ‘resourceful’

Consumers’ respect for the past will instill a value on being resourceful. This respect for making the most out of our resources will refresh upcycling as genuinely innovative thanks to products that offer new experiences.

‘Beyond’ berries

Farmer Bob’s Beyond Berries are made with a purée of berries and dates that are frozen into the shape of individual berries for smoothies, baking or snacking. It was one of a few upcycled innovations at Natural Products Expo West 2025 (US).



Source: Farmerbob



Source: Mintel GNPD

‘Ancestral’ blend beef

Force of Nature Ancestral Blend Grass-Fed Beef was “developed to conveniently incorporate the nourishing recipes of organ meats into a modern diet” (US). Offal will help processed meat brands offer more affordable options that make meat go further.

Hydration in the desert

Ival Still Water is fluoridated desalinated water sold in glass bottles (Jordan). Ival is imported from Saudi Arabia, which is the world’s biggest producer of desalinated water. Saudi Arabia will host the FIFA World Cup 2034, introducing millions of football fans to desalinated water.



Source: Mintel GNPD

QUESTIONS BRANDS SHOULD BE ASKING

Brands have an opportunity to reframe nostalgia as a strategic tool as consumers opt for the comfort of tradition. The challenge is to make heritage feel relevant not as an escape, but as a foundation for modern resilience and well-being.

Retro Rejuvenation is about using the past to build trust and emotional depth in the present. Brands that translate tradition into modern value will be better placed to connect with consumers who are searching for stability.

01

How can we position traditional ingredients, techniques and product lines in a way that feels purposeful and future-facing, not just sentimental?

02

Which aspects of our brand identity could be strengthened by aligning with consumers' desire for simplicity, authenticity and emotional security?

03

Are we communicating the functional benefits of nostalgia, such as resilience, community and wellness, in a way that feels credible and motivating?

04

How can we evolve our messaging to connect with consumers in the "New Young" generation who are seeking deeper meaning and fulfillment?

SIGNALS TO WATCH NOW

Capitalize on rising interest in traditional ingredients in APAC

Brands can leverage the long-standing cultural credibility and trust that traditional medicines enjoy and explore functional claims via ingredients such as ginseng, turmeric and ammomum villosum.



34%

of Thai consumers are interested in consuming more food or drink to support brain health made with Thai herbs.

58%

of Australian consumers are interested in incorporating more natural functional ingredients* into their diets.



65%

of Chinese adults have tried cooking herbal/plant-based ingredients with nourishing function* and will try them again.

* eg turmeric, chaga mushroom, * eg lotus seed soup, red bean barley soup
Source: Mintel, March 2025, January 2025, January 2024

Traditional indigenous ingredients have growth opportunities in the West

In food production, one person's disaster becomes another's opportunity, and the volatility of geopolitics and climate change will only amplify this. For example, when US tariffs pushed up tea prices, demand for yaupon, North America's only native caffeinated plant, rocketed. Bryon White, co-founder and CEO of Yaupon Brothers American Tea Co, told Mintel:

"The fact that yaupon is native, resilient, and tariff-free has resonated with buyers looking for supply chain stability and product differentiation. We're fielding more inquiries from brands exploring functional ingredients for clean-label energy and hydration products, especially those aiming to reduce sugar and artificial caffeine sources."

In terms of demand, White expects a steady uptick "...especially as more consumers seek out North American-grown alternatives and brands continue to lean into sustainability and provenance."



Yaupon Bros. celebrates the American-grown selling point of its tea



Black Swan Data predicts emerging interest in heritage drinks

Is sotol the next tequila?

Sotol is beginning to trend among Gen Z drinkers in the UK who are increasingly drawn to spirits with authentic roots and cultural significance, according to Black Swan Data’s predictive social intelligence.

Unlike many mainstream options, sotol traces its origins to the indigenous peoples of the Chihuahuan Desert and is crafted using more sustainable harvesting methods than agave-based spirits.

For Gen Z, drinking isn’t just about flavor – it’s about connection, place, and the meaningful stories behind each sip.

Intentional and international starts to the day

Interest in global teas and coffees is on the rise, particularly in traditional sources and brewing methods. Arabic and Vietnamese coffee, along with Karak tea, are gaining popularity in the UK.

These beverages evoke a sense of artisanal craftsmanship and heritage, offering a taste of “the old way of doing things”. Consumers are seeking more than just a quick caffeine fix, they want a meaningful, intentional start to their day.

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

KARAK CHAI

Mentioned in 469 online
conversations | Online
conversation growth: +16% YoY

Source: Black Swan Data, UK Non-Alcoholic
Beverages, July 2023- July 2025

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

**VIETNAMESE
COFFEE**

65 conversations | +5%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

SOTOL

134 conversations | +58%

Source: Black Swan Data, UK Total Alcohol, February 2023-Febrary 2025

Brands will bring the past into today with modern reinventions

More brands will take advantage of the attention gained by disruptors in canned goods, recipes made with historic ingredients and revivals of ancient recipes that are diversifying and modernizing traditional staples to suit all tastes and budgets.

Reviving traditional spirits for a modern audience

Little & Green Sneaky Orchard Irish Cocktail contains the traditional Irish spirit poitín. The brand hopes the RTD cocktail format will make poitín “proudly play its part in real, contemporary Irish culture. Again” (Ireland).



Source: Mintel GNPD



Source: Mintel GNPD

‘Cans are magic’

Heyday Canning Co calls out its convenience, sustainability, minimal processing and lack of plastic on its modern canned products like Golden Butternut Lentil Stew (US).

AI unlocks ancient recipe that is reborn for today

The AI-driven discovery in July 2025 of garum, a fermented fish sauce dating back to Roman times, revives an “old” answer to the current demand for umami flavors. Garum is among the gourmet fermented ingredients from Noma Projects.



Source: Noma Projects



INTENTIONALLY SENSORY

Multisensory food and drink formulations will mature from whimsical novelties to more practical and purposeful formulations that provide memorable experiences while also answering the specific sensory needs of underserved consumers.

Whether it's "dirty sodas" or Dubai chocolate, multisensory innovations have become synonymous in recent years with playfulness, novelty and viral sensations. Going forward, brands will be more intentional with their use of color, texture or aroma to create food and drink that stimulates the senses and reinvigorates experiential eating and brand positioning.

Innovations that engage several senses will serve as antidotes to increasingly virtual, repetitive and isolated daily lives. In the coming years, multisensory inspiration also will come from empathetic explorations of how to formulate for the unique sensory needs of underserved consumer groups, such as the elderly, neurodiverse individuals or GLP-1 medication users.

EVOLUTION OF THE PREDICTION

In 2018, Mintel's Global Food & Drink Trend **New Sensations** identified texture as the latest tool to engage the senses and deliver experiences worth sharing on social media. This has proven to be true with innovations over the years from nitrogen-infused drinks to extra-crunchy snacks.

Multisensory formulations will heighten the emotional reactions consumers have to food and drink. This builds on a prediction from 2021 that more people will learn how diets impact their mental and emotional health, as outlined in the Global Food & Drink Trend **Feed The Mind**.

When it comes to multisensory inspiration, there's a whole universe to learn from to create new multisensory experiences. For example, Mintel's 2023 Global Food & Drink Trend **Cosmic Comforts** directed brands to consider how space will inspire escapist innovations in flavor, color and texture.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2030

By 2030, sensory features beyond taste will evolve from being performative and whimsical elements in food and drink to elements used in more practical and pragmatic ways.

Innovative and evidence-based uses of texture, aroma or appearance will create exquisitely appetizing experiences that are inclusive, but also enticing to mainstream consumers. As competition intensifies in the battle for sensory differentiation, the industry will cater to the specific sensory needs of people who have special, but often overlooked needs, such as:

- The aging population: The world's growing elderly population will require inclusive products with softer textures, smaller portions and easy-to-use packaging.
- Neurodiverse people: Inclusive product development will create innovations for people with autism and other neurodivergences who have sensitivities or negative reactions to certain textures, smells or visuals.
- GLP-1 medication users: Multisensory innovations will take cues from fine dining where smaller portions often play with color, texture, aroma and presentation to provide satisfaction in smaller servings.



Seoul Asan Medical Center Geriatrics x Greeting Soft Protein Tender Handmade Hamburg Steak is designed for elderly consumers and has 19g of protein (South Korea)



THE ROADMAP FOR WHAT'S NEXT

“Comfort food” will evolve into “food therapy”

By 2030, consumers will crave small, but meaningful ways to feel grounded, comforted and emotionally supported through food and drink. Inspired by traditional rituals like tea ceremonies and the growing interest in sensory well-being, brands will explore ways to engage taste, texture, aroma and sound to support emotional balance.

While fully immersive AR/VR dining will remain niche, more accessible formats like curated snack kits, calming teas or texture-rich comfort foods will become part of everyday wellness routines.

In high-pressure markets like Japan and South Korea, where solo living and mental health concerns are rising, “food therapy” will be less about spectacle and more about subtle, repeatable moments of care, especially for Gen Z and Millennials. Think crunchy snacks that relieve stress, soothing flavors that aid sleep or packaging that evokes calm through scent or design.

43%

of South Koreans who bought crisps, nuts, popcorn or meat snacks bought the snacks to boost their mood.

Source: Mintel, January 2025

Sensory innovation will heighten new social occasions

Consumers (particularly Gen Z) will continue to reinvent old social occasions such as late-night clubbing and celebrations centered around alcohol. Opportunities will emerge for food and drink brands to use multisensory elements such as aroma, audio or video to modernize consumption occasions that were iconic for previous generations.

For example, “soft clubbing,” or morning DJ dance parties, translate an iconic social occasion that would previously have lasted into the early hours of the next day and be fueled by alcohol into daytime parties in cafés focused around coffee and tea.

Brands have an opportunity not just to reimagine traditional food and drink, but also to reimagine the consumption occasions where they can be applied, providing a whole new way to remain relevant to Generation Z and Generation Alpha.



Maple Social Club in Australia hosts daytime dance parties with DJs and lattes

Prana Organic Oat & Chia Strawberry Shortcake Mix has a unique texture and can be layered to create a multisensory treat (US)



Source: Mintel GNPD

Healthy foods will be messy, chaotic and fun

Healthy food and drink will cease to be stale, sterile and dry. Instead, wellness items will be reinvented as messy, chaotic and fun. Building on the growing appreciation for fiber, consumers will layer healthy and crunchy, soft, sticky, sweet, tart or unctuous ingredients together to make wellness treats that are fit for viral reaction videos.

By 2030, expect to see more:

- Layered beverages, cheese teas and parfaits
- Whipped everything
- Drizzles
- Seeds
- Popped beans, legumes or rice
- Pani puri, or thin, spherical filled snacks, filled with all kinds of liquids, beans or crunchy add-ins

QUESTIONS BRANDS SHOULD BE ASKING

Deeper emotional connections with food and drink are becoming more intentional and inclusive. Brands have an opportunity to understand how it makes consumers feel and why that matters.

Understanding the sensory expectations of consumers, from texture to aroma to emotional payoff, will be key to creating products that resonate. Brands have the opportunity to build lasting emotional connections by responding to these sensory needs.

01

Which consumer groups have unmet sensory needs, and how can we better understand their emotional and functional drivers?

02

How are consumers expressing their sensory preferences and frustrations across social media, and what signals should we be listening for?

03

Which sensory experiences should we try and own? Which one, or combinations, have the most positive impacts in shaping consumer intent?

04

How can we use behavioral and sentiment analysis to identify the emotional impact of multisensory products and experiences?

SIGNALS TO WATCH NOW



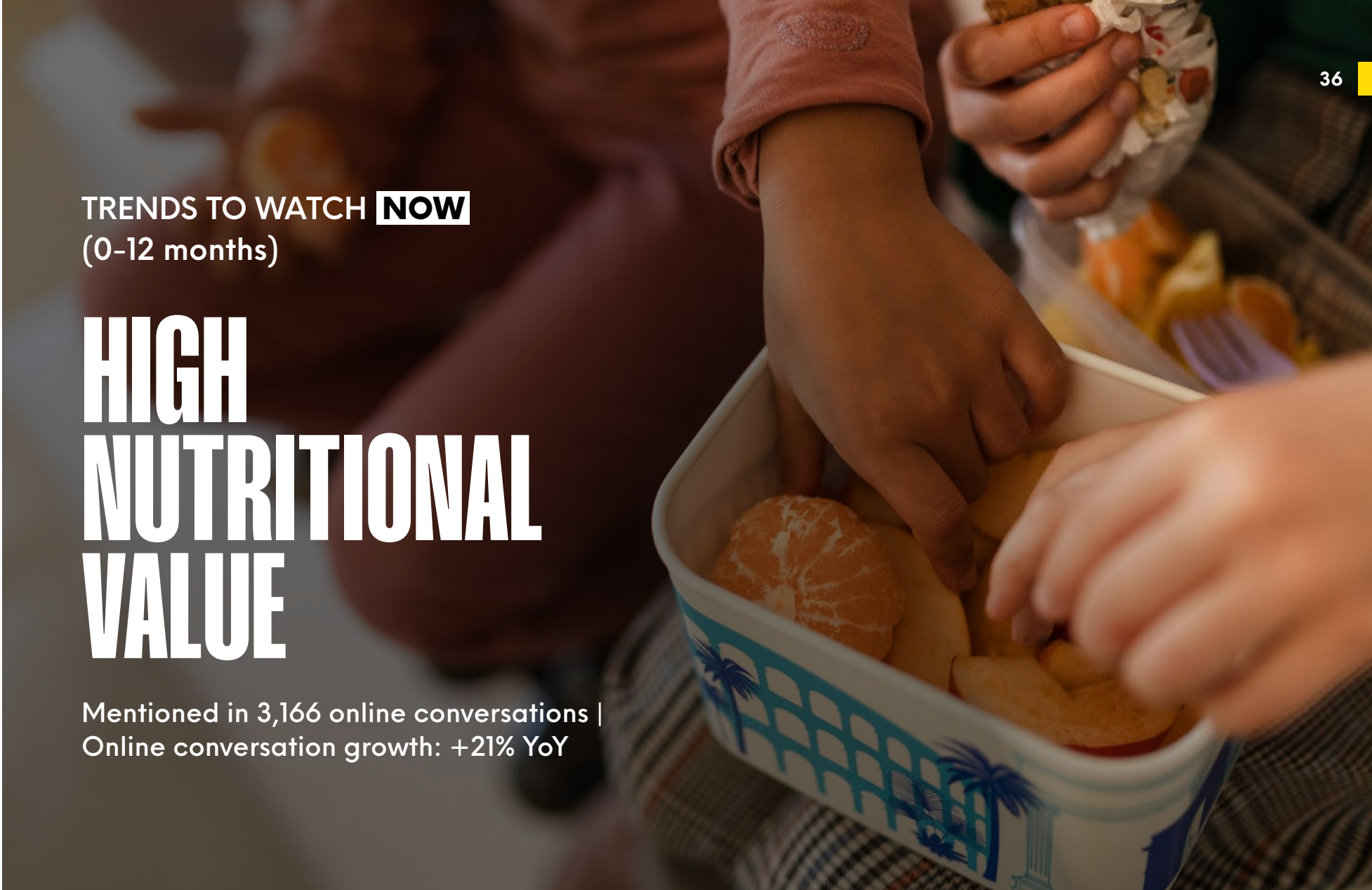


Black Swan Data predicts a new direction for children’s food and drink

Children have different tastebuds and sensory needs than adults. Black Swan Data’s predictive social intelligence reveals that kids crave crunch, color, fun and familiar tastes. Parents want fewer artificials and added nutrition. It’s a challenge for parents (and the brands trying to serve them).

They predict the next generation of “family meal products” will spotlight real vegetables with recognizable names to bring color, texture and familiarity to meals. There are opportunities to employ sauces and dips to sneak in unfamiliar foods that deliver the wider health benefits that parents desire.

Source: Black Swan Data, Canada Meals July 2025



TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

**HIGH
NUTRITIONAL
VALUE**

Mentioned in 3,166 online conversations |
Online conversation growth: +21% YoY



TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

**NATURAL
INGREDIENTS**

2,332 conversations | +28%



TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

**CHILDHOOD
NUTRITION**

324 conversations | +41%



Follow APAC's lead on mood-boosting multisensory beverage innovations

In China, 79% of sparkling drink consumers agree the sound of bubbles popping in sparkling drinks relaxes them. Asia, overall, is seeing beverages offer interactive mood boosts.

Fruit.B's soda cans contain a real fruit slice that floats to the top when the can is opened and the released aroma is further accentuated by a wider rimmed can.

In Thailand, Est Cola's Rise Up campaign saw limited-edition cans with words of encouragement printed upside down to inspire consumers.

Source: Mintel GNPD



Maison Perrier Chic Rosellini Beverage has “refreshing bursting bubbles” (Singapore)

Source: Mintel GNPD



Est Cola instructs users to turn its cans upside down to see messages encouraging them to “rise up” (Thailand)

Look to beauty to find new ways
to change moods with fragrances

More multisensory experiences also will emerge in beauty and personal care, according to Mintel’s 2026 Beauty & Personal Care (BPC) Prediction Sensorial Synergy.

BPC will use neuroscience to prove the ways scent amplifies mood benefits. Likewise, food and drink brands can use fragrance to strengthen the mood benefits of a product.

From Poland, Bewa’s non-alcoholic Hugo Club Drink claims to have “a refreshing aroma of black elderberry [that] will awaken your senses, add energy and fill you with optimism.”

Select global markets: any agree with the statement,
“The smell of certain food/drinks can help boost my mood,” 2024

SOUTH AFRICA & INDONESIA

58%

CANADA

40%

SWEDEN

47%

MEXICO

49%



Black Swan Data predicts an opportunity for emotional snacking for GLP-1 users

GLP-1 users are packing in more nutrients with fewer calories, but it comes at an emotional cost: the trade-off of indulgent flavors and satisfying textures.

Nutrient-dense snacks, while healthier, often feel too clinical and lack the pleasure associated with typical snacks. For most consumers, snacking is an emotional experience.

Black Swan Data reports GLP-1 users in Australia feel disconnected and less joyful about the snacks they now consume. This shift has led to low moods and a sense of anhedonia, a phenomenon some are calling “Ozempic personality”.

Source: Black Swan Data, Australia Snacking, July 2023–July 2025

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

INDULGENT

9,062 conversations | +33%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

CRUNCHY

28,152 conversations | +57%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NOW**
(0-12 months)

TEXTURE SATISFACTION

820 conversations | +5%

TRENDS TO WATCH **NEXT**
(12-24 months)

GOOEY

4,711 conversations | +37%

KEY TAKEAWAYS AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO 2030



“MAXXING” OUT, DIVERSITY IN

Consumers will be hungry to expand their diets beyond just the benefits of protein and fiber. The cultural principle of DEI, or diversity, equity and inclusion, will be applied to nutrition, leading to a desire for DELTs that defy the “comfort” of eating the same foods.



RETRO REJUVENATION

Brands will be seen as cultural custodians that incorporate, preserve or modernize traditional wisdom with innovations that satisfy consumers’ needs to feel more emotionally and culturally connected to their food and surroundings.



INTENTIONALLY SENSORY

Sensory features beyond taste will evolve from being a performative and whimsical element in food and drink to something more practical and pragmatic. Creative, yet evidence-based, use of texture, aroma and appearance will be central to creating innovations that offer inclusive experiences for underserved consumers.

YOU'VE READ THE PREDICTIONS WHAT'S NEXT?

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Black Swan Data's trend intelligence uses AI to analyze millions of consumer posts across TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, and more. Their platform continuously monitors over 500k real-time topics influencing consumer behavior, ranking them by maturity and predicted growth potential. It helps brands identify emerging trends and prioritize which to innovate against, now and next.

