



CAPITALIZE ON CONVENIENCE:

For Food & Beverage, it's Go Time

The products and brands that win tomorrow will be the ones that fit within today's time-pressed consumer lifestyle while helping them meet their goals. Taste is the #1 driver for consumer purchase – but convenience, wellness, and new experiences are also in the mix. Let's explore growth, launches and flavor in the space – all with an eye on how you can capitalize on what's coming next.

HEALTHIER, BETTER, AND FASTER THAN EVER

For consumers, just because a product may be readily available and easy to use – it shouldn't be any less enjoyable, or less healthy. Convenience, by definition, involves simplifying work or adding to one's comfort. From the perspective of those who produce foods and beverages, convenience encompasses the traditional notions of time savings and easily accessible items.

For example, today's stressed-out, digitally connected consumers are looking for solutions that either allow them to enjoy the meal preparation experience or to take out all or much of the work for them. They want to be able to easily find and enjoy the flavors and formats that interest them, including intriguing, new, and often globally inspired ingredients and packages.

“Manufacturers, grocery stores and meal kit providers are all willing to play the role of sous chef as today's consumers try to eat healthier in less time.”
-Food Dive



WHERE TO?

If convenience is about time, it's also about place...

- The workday lunch hour has given way to walk-and-talk meetings or grab-and-go bites and sips.
- Many fast-casual restaurants offer online ordering, in-store kiosks and an array of menu choices designed to meet different interests and eating plans.
- Grocery stores are more things to all shoppers, with grab-and-go areas, grocerants, click-and-collect and delivery service.
- Delivery services, whether independent or associated with a retailer or restaurant, continue to evolve and reflect modern takes on convenience.
- Even convenience stores are getting, well, more convenient, as more consumers express interest in packaged meals and delivery service offered by c-stores.



“The meal delivery services that succeed will be ones that are rooted in traditional consumer behavior, have a unique flavor or nutrition perspective, and offer convenience at an affordable price point.”

-Mintel



BEYOND THE CLICK:

E-commerce is a thread connecting convenience across these channels, but so is the changing nature of eating, which involves more snacking and ready-to-eat and ready-to-assemble meals.

EASY DOES IT: A LOOK AT CONVENIENT PRODUCTS

The old supply and demand rules hold true in this area: from 2015 to 2018, there has been a 26% increase in new products with convenience claims sold in North America. That's double the growth of new products with convenience claims in the global market (at 13 percent.) Convenience is part and parcel of changing eating habits among consumers, particularly those in North America.

- The "snackification" of modern diets is reflected in convenient and often single-serve package formats.
- The fusion of DIY prep and prepared foods is evident in the array of meal kits now available to buy or order.
- Ongoing interest in plant-based eating and better-for-you foods is underscored in the number of convenience-oriented packaged products in these categories, from single serve probiotic yogurts to heat-and-eat plant-based burgers.



"Today's convenience food and beverage meets a common theme: Helping the strapped-for-time consumer be able to get healthier, fresher and more appreciated food on the table quickly. "

-Food Dive



ONE AND DONE

Many products with convenience claims make prep and consumption easier and quicker for the consumer, across all eating occasions.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE:



Ore-Ida Just Crack an Egg: Prepped ingredients allow users to make a scramble using just one egg in the provided microwavable cup. Meeting demand for different flavor options, this product is available in Denver Scramble, All American Scramble, Ultimate Scramble and Rustic Scramble varieties.



Marie Callender's Tender Ginger Beef & Broccoli Bowl: Delivering Asian flavors that are increasingly popular, this microwaveable meal is the 2019 version of the TV dinner in convenience, flavor, clean-label claims (no preservatives, artificial flavors or colors) and format.



Benjamin's Kitchen Roast Veggie Lasagne: In addition to being a convenient heat-and-eat dinner, this lasagna – made with roasted red peppers and aubergine in a slow cooked tomato ragu, layered with green lentil pasta sheets and topped with a smooth cashew béchamel sauce – comes in plant-based packaging.

THAT SYNCING FEELING

Convenient prepared foods often reflect other macro trends happening in food and beverage – both in flavor, product format and packaging. Looking at launches with convenience positioning, the fastest growing flavors span the spectrum both globally and in North America. While flavors like quinoa and kebab reflect the prominence of culinary-influenced convenience – flavors like cookie dough and toffee showcase where snack and bakery flavors are growing.

There was
26% growth
in “convenient” product
launches in North
America, 2015 to 2018.

PRODUCTS WITH CONVENIENCE POSITIONING JAN 2017- AUG 2019

TOP CATEGORIES FOR CONVENIENT PRODUCTS – GLOBAL

- Meals and meal centers
- Processed fish, meat and egg products
- Snacks
- Bakery
- Sauces and seasonings

TOP CATEGORIES FOR CONVENIENT PRODUCTS – NORTH AMERICA

- Meals & meal centers
- Processed fish, meat and egg products
- Snacks
- Bakery
- Fruit & vegetables

TOP GROWING CLAIMS - GLOBAL

- Biodegradable
- Breath-freshening
- Vegan/animal-free
- Functional
- Ethical/charity

TOP GROWING CLAIMS – NORTH AMERICA

- Functional
- Low/no/reduced
glycemic
- Low/no/reduced carb
- Ethical
- Vegan/animal free

FASTEST-GROWING FLAVORS - GLOBAL

- Seaweed
- Tempura
- Bakmi Goreng (noodle dish)
- Cookie dough
- Basil seed
- Kebab

FASTEST-GROWING FLAVORS - NORTH AMERICA

- Quinoa
- Mint
- Sugar
- Toffee
- Beer
- Mandarin/tangerine

GET READY, GET EATING

Ready meals are a true form of convenience worldwide. China is the largest market for ready meals by volume, followed by the United States and the United Kingdom.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE:



Ka-Me Easy Asian Meal Kits: It's global, it's flavorful, it's convenient and this line of meals includes a Sweet Chili Mango with Nori Seaweed Noodle kit that comes in a microwaveable, reusable, recyclable and BPA-free container.



Health-Ade Passionfruit-Tangerine Kombucha: Consumers can drink to their health in a convenient way, with a trending flavor, thanks to this handy bottled kombucha product that is certified organic, non-GMO, gluten-free, vegan, raw and kosher.



Firehouse #10 Chili from the Women's Bean Project: Dried bean soup mixes are convenient for meals and this one also exemplifies trending global interest in ethical claims. The Women's Bean Project mixes include six soups and chili, including Firehouse #10 Chili that comes with a custom spice packet, light red kidney beans, pinto beans and red chili beans and that can be made easily on a stove top, slow cooker or Instant Pot.

WHAT'S NEXT IN CONVENIENCE



“Convenience food will only continue to grow. What is likely to change are the types of help consumers are looking for when they go to the store.”

-Food Dive



The convergence of other trends like health and wellness and the anytime/anywhere nature of food purchases will propel convenience to even newer forms and flavors. Could a marinated cactus salad in a grab-and-go bag be around the corner? Or maybe a compostable container of a protein-alternative kebob, delivered to one's workspace by drone?

Then again, people may feel like cooking in their own kitchen, using a recipe for zucchini noodles with ginger-garlic shrimp provided by an online platform that also sent a shopping list to their phone or delivery service.

Time will tell, even as time seemingly moves faster than ever. However the next phase of convenience plays out, it's wise to remember that taste is still the #1 driver for most consumers.



“Product development for the next generation of convenience food/drink will cater to healthy eating priorities, the quest for ‘foodie-inspired’ flavors, and an interest in personalization.”

-Mintel





THE TAKEAWAYS

Consumers want it all. Indulgence *and* wellness. Clean label *and* great tasting. Convenience *and* worthy of sharing socially. The brands of the future will be the ones that balance the ask – helping today’s shopper’s meet their goals and fit it into a busy day. There is opportunity, too, in making the next innovative product that changes the entire equation. With grocery delivery, ecommerce and snackification across every segment – one thing is clear. The world of consumers is, in fact, a world of convenience. Prime your team and your brand to at least consider consumer convenience in every new product.

YOU DESERVE MORE. LET’S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let FONA’s market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your “what’s next.” Our technical flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend. Let’s mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we’re here for you — every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at 630.578.8600 to request a flavor sample or chat us up at www.fona.com/contact-fona/

SOURCES

- Mintel
- Iconoculture
- Purchase Intelligence
- Food Dive
- Mintel GNPD
- Infegy
- Grocery Dive