



FLAVOR COMBINATIONS: Faithful Classics and New Innovations

Maple pecan oatmeal to spicy buffalo latte's, our last flavor combinations report dove into consumers' all-time (and even unexpected) favorites. Consumers' worlds have changed a lot since then, and while some are in search for familiarity, others are in search for adventurous flavors and dishes in light of COVID-19. Whether bold and daring or faithful classics, we're finding that there is in fact opportunity in both spaces. From strawberry-kiwi hard seltzers to lobster ice cream, we're exploring what flavor combinations and product launches are trending in the food and beverage space.

FLAVOR COMBINATION CONSIDERATIONS

According to Mintel, 58% of U.S. consumers agree that taste is one of the top three important factors when purchasing food/drink, higher than all other factors. And in uncertain times during the COVID-19, consumers have found reassurance in familiar flavors. At the same time though, many consumers are open to more adventurous flavor combinations as they search for flavor experiences and fun during stay-at-home orders, travel restrictions and abrupt changes to their daily lives.

- In the U.S. 50% of dessert/candy consumers claim that when indulging, they mostly stick to flavors they know they'll like
- In Canada 30% of snack eaters consider 'familiar flavors' to be one of the main reasons for their choice of snack

With taste as the priority, there can be opportunity and success for product developers in either the familiar or adventurous or by combining a familiar and adventurous flavor. Let's take a look at some successful flavor combinations we're spotting.



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-MINTEL

TOPPING THE CHARTS



Cross-category, top flavor combinations have remained relatively similar to our last report in 2019. From savory and salty to refreshing and sweet, we're taking a look at top flavors both globally and in North America from 2018-2020.

70%

of consumers are now experimenting with new food concepts and unique combinations according to one Innova Market Insights survey.

-FOOD DIVE

TOP FLAVOR COMBINATIONS:

Global, Jan 2018-Oct 2020

- Roasted/Toasted & Salt/Salted
- Tomato & Basil
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Chocolate & Hazelnut
- Lemon & Lime
- Chocolate & Brownie
- Mango & Passionfruit/Maracuja
- Tomato & Ketchup
- Vanilla/Vanilla Bourbon/Vanilla Madagascar & Chocolate
- Sour Cream & Onion

TOP FLAVORS BY NUMBER OF RELEASES:

Global, Fall 2020

- Roasted/Toasted & Salt/Salted
- Tomato & Basil
- Lemon & Lime
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Garlic & Herbs/Herbal
- Peanut Butter & Chocolate
- Pumpkin/Squash & Spicy/Spicy
- Fruit & Punch
- Chocolate & Peanut Butter
- Salt (Sea) Fleur de Sel & Caramel/Caramelised

NORTH AMERICA IRIS TOP SELLERS

From sweet to spicy, salty and more, top sellers in North America scaled a range of flavor profiles and food and beverage segments.



TOP SEASONAL SELLERS-IRIS

- Flamin' Hot Limón Flavored Tortilla Chips
- Strawberry Cheesecake Low-Fat Greek Yogurt
- Fudge Brownie Chocolate Candies
- Lime & Jalapeño Flavored Potato Chips
- Hard Seltzer Variety Pack with Antioxidant Vitamin C
- Oreo Caramel Coconut Chocolate Sandwich Cookie
- Magnum Sea Salt Caramel Ice Cream
- Cheddar Sour Cream & Onion Flavored Cheesy Baked Snacks
- Coca-Cola Orange Vanilla Flavored Soft Drink
- Lime + Watermelon Sparkling Water



“Flavor is generally the single most important factor in consumers’ food and drink choices and three-quarters of consumers say that they “love to discover new flavors,” so it is no wonder that innovators continue to play around with taste profiles in order to deliver novelty and to satisfy increasingly discerning taste buds.”

-INNOVA MARKET INSIGHTS



A LOOK AT SEASONAL & LTOS



Since our last report, seasonal flavors and limited time offerings have continued to shine, often intriguing consumers even more than traditional offerings. Their limited time nature and adventurous flavor pairings promote

consumer excitement and trial. And with promising seasonal flavor classics like pumpkin-spice and salted caramel, product developers can fall back on what's tried and true or have the opportunity to experiment with more unique combinations that will excite their consumers.

TOP FLAVORS IN SEASONAL & LTO: Global, Jan 2018-Oct 2020

- Pumpkin/Squash & Spice/Spicy
- Maple/Maple (Syrup) & Pecan
- Salt (Sea) Fleur de Sel & Caramel/Caramelised
- Caramel/Caramelised & Coffee (Macchiato)
- Chocolate & Cream/Crème/Whipped

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



NATURAL BLISS MINT TRUFFLE FLAVORED COFFEE CREAMER is available for the Winter season and is made with real milk, cream and cane sugar. The product features a natural mint and chocolate truffle flavor.

39% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



SPRITE WINTER SPICED CRANBERRY LEMON-LIME FLAVORED SODA was released for Christmas 2019. The product is caffeine-free and made with 100% spiced cranberry and lemon-lime natural flavors.

54% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



MILANO CARAMEL MACCHIATO DISTINCTIVE COOKIES contain rich dark chocolate and the flavor of caramel macchiato between two cookies.

57% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

“Patrons often return to order an LTO again (39%); 37% of them bring friends along, and 28% spread the word. Another 18% post details on social media.”

-NESTLE PROFESSIONAL, 2017

THE UNIQUE & BOLD

Although consumers continue to love the classics, bold flavor offerings serve as an avenue for fun and experimentation. We've spotted a few recent menu mentions and products of note that have pushed flavor boundaries.



HAWAIIAN PIZZA ICE CREAM SANDWICH:

Taking inspiration from Hawaiian Pizza, Los Angeles restaurant collaborated to create a Hawaiian Pizza Ice Cream Sandwich. The sandwich features a pineapple ice cream accented with flecks of spam between two white chocolate macadamia nut cookies.

Source: Lavu

Photo Source: Instagram - Coolhaus



LOBSTER ICE CREAM:

Ben and Bill's Chocolate Emporium in Bar Harbor, Maine creates a Lobster Ice Cream by folding lobster into an ice cream treat with a butter base for a buttery seafood treat.

Photo Source: Instagram - boss.eats



SALTED CARAMEL CHIPS:

Lays Salted Caramel Chips go the sweet and salty flavor combination route. Social media is showing differing opinions in their responses. According to Mashed.com some users commented on the new flavor saying "need neeeeed these" and "I'm putting these on top of ice cream," while one other from @FoodieWithTheBeast said "Awesome find but that's just nasty lol"

Source: Mashed.com

Photo Source: Instagram- junkfoodonthego

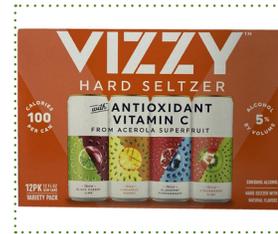
CATEGORY SPOTLIGHT - ALCOHOL

There has been a continued increase in seltzer introductions this year as well as other alcoholic beverage offerings such as take-home kits trending during the COVID-19 pandemic. New offerings have featured a variety of flavors combinations from refreshing and sweet to floral and herbal.

“Although there are some barriers to flavor exploration, nearly a quarter of all consumers expressed future interest in most emerging flavors suggesting that consumers are open to experiment in this category. Fruit flavors continue to resonate well, but floral and herbal flavors still garner significant interest and would work as a great complement to an existing primary flavor. Combination flavors like elderflower lemonade, chili lime or strawberry hibiscus can deliver fresh and new flavor, while still remaining anchored in a familiar base”

-MINTEL

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



VIZZY HARD SELTZER VARIETY PACK is made with natural flavors and antioxidant vitamin C from acerola superfruit. Flavors include Black Cherry Lime, Pineapple Mango, Blueberry Pomegranate and Strawberry Kiwi.

28% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



WILD BASIN BOOZY SPARKLING WATER MIX PACK features classic lime, cucumber peach, melon basil and lemon agave hibiscus flavor varieties. The product does not contain artificial ingredients and is naturally flavored.

42% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



VAMPIRO FIZZY GRAPEFRUIT COCKTAIL WITH CITRUS & SPICE is described as an authentic Mexican cocktail that includes hints of grapefruit, lime, spices, fizzy mineral water and 100% agave wine.

27% of consumers in our panel responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



WILLIE'S SUPERBREW SPARKLING PEAR & CINNAMON HARD SELTZER is said to be the first warming hard seltzer. The product features real pear, cinnamon and vanilla.

32% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

CATEGORY SPOTLIGHT - ICE CREAM

With more time spent at home and levels of stress on the rise due to the pandemic, consumers are in search for comfort. Indulgence through ice cream and sweet treats has provided ways for consumers to experience both approachable and bold and unique flavor combos at home.

CONSUMER PREFERENCES:

- Older consumers show interest in conventional flavors like combination and fruit flavors
- Consumers aged 25-44 prefer spice, beverage and international-inspired flavors.
- Consumers under 25 show interest in unique and adult-friendly snack and alcoholic beverage-inspired flavors. - Mintel

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“Flavor is the name of the game when it comes to frozen treats, and over half of consumers are interested in a combination of flavors, suggesting opportunities for new exciting flavor combinations.”

-MINTEL

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PRODUCTS OF NOTE



BEN & JERRY'S NETFLIX & CHILL'D ICE CREAM features peanut butter ice cream with sweet and salty pretzel swirls and fudge brownies.

54% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



OUTSHINE ANTIOXIDANTS RASPBERRY FRUIT ICE BARS ½ DIPPED IN DARK CHOCOLATE are made with real fruit and fruit juice dipped in 70% cacao dark chocolate and are a good source of antioxidants vitamin C and E.

47% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



OUTSHINE MANGO FRUIT ICE BARS DIPPED IN TAJÍN CHILI LIME SEASONING are made with real fruit and fruit juice and are a good source of vitamin C.

45% of consumers responded that they likely would buy this product.



SERENDIPITY SALTY CARAMEL PRETZEL ICE CREAM is described as vanilla ice cream with chocolaty covered pretzel bits and salty caramel swirl.

53% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product

FLAVOR COLLABORATIONS

Name brands are teaming up to create flavorful combinations that consumers will be excited to try. By collaborating with food and drink brands, product developers have the opportunity to deliver personalized and exciting flavor profiles.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



COFFEE-MATE SNICKERS COFFEE CREAMER is described as a match made in peanut caramel chocolate coffee heaven made with natural and artificial flavor.

40% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



CHEETOS MAC 'N CHEESE FLAMIN' HOT FLAVOR PASTA retails in a 2.11-oz. microwaveable cup. The cheesy and spicy product features pasta noodles with a seasoning pouch included.

42% of consumers responded that they likely would buy this product.



FROSTED FLAKES & FOOT LOOPS SWEETENED CEREAL is a sweet and fruity limited edition product that is twice as tasty as it combines two cereals in one box.

41% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



“We know how much people enjoy experimenting with new and exciting KitKat flavours and the KitKat Chocolatory offers a whole new, premium KitKat experience as well as the chance to create your very own personalized break and have it delivered right to your door.”

-MINTEL



THE TAKEAWAYS

58% of US consumers agree that taste is one of the top three important factors when purchasing food/drink. So, no matter how out-there or eye-catching or nostalgic the flavor combinations may be, first and foremost, consumers search for great taste. And with room for opportunity in this space for both the wild and wacky and the tried-and-true combinations, you might need help finding out what's right for your product and brand. Let us help you find your "what's next?".

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](tel:630.578.8600) to request a flavor sample or chat us up at www.fona.com/contact-fona/

SOURCES

- Mintel GNPD
- Mintel
- Mashed.com
- Nestle.co
- Innova Market Insights
- Dutch Bros Coffee
- Instagram

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