



## SEASONAL FLAVORS TRENDS OF WINTER

Spanning from December to March, winter encompasses notable holidays in the food and beverage space including Christmas, New Year's, and Valentine's Day celebrations. And with continued interest in comfort and indulgence foods while consumers spend time at home, there's much opportunity in LTO and seasonal treats that expand upon well-known and loved seasonal flavors. From charcuterie houses to apple pie Kit Kats, let's take a look at winter's seasonal flavors and trends and see how they can help inspire your next innovation.

# TOP WINTER FLAVORS



We took a deep dive into this season's top flavors and spotted many classics and some notable growing flavors. Below are winter's top flavors in seasonal and limited edition launches this year.

## TOP FLAVORS IN SEASONAL/LTO PRODUCTS:

Global Introductions, Dec. 2020-Mar. 2021

- Chocolate
- Strawberry
- Gingerbread
- Hazelnut
- Caramel/Caramelized
- Milk
- Almond
- Vanilla/Vanilla Bourbon/Vanilla Madagascar
- Orange/Sweet Orange
- Fruit

## TOP FLAVORS IN SEASONAL/LTO PRODUCTS:

North America Introductions, Dec. 2020-Mar. 2021

- Peppermint
- Gingerbread
- Chocolate
- Berry
- Sugar
- Caramel/Caramelized
- Pumpkin/Squash & Spice/Spicy
- Vanilla/Vanilla Bourbon/Vanilla Madagascar
- Nonpareils/Sprinkles/Hundreds & Thousands

## FASTEST GROWING FLAVORS

Global Introductions, Q4 2020 vs. Q4 2019

- Apple (Green) +400%
- Bergamot +400%
- Acai +400%
- Gin & Tonic/Gin and Tonic/G&T +333%
- Carrot +300%
- Hibiscus/Roselle +300%

## FASTEST GROWING FLAVORS

North America Introductions, Q4 2020 vs. Q4 2019

- Hazelnut +300%
- Nonpareils/Sprinkles/Hundreds & Thousands +300%
- Red Velvet +200%
- Egg Nog +200%
- Praline (Nut Filling) +200%
- Almond Butter +100%

**“(Seasonal flavors) bring a sensation of comfort along with tastes consumers know and trust. Seasonal flavors create the urge to try and buy new products. They also help consumers to feel the warmth of these popular periods of the year.”**

**-FOOD INGREDIENTS FIRST**



# A TIME FOR CELEBRATION



Spanning multiple holidays - Christmas, New Years, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day – just to name a few, this year's winter introductions brought back feelings of nostalgia and celebration. Below are some notable winter themed products in the food and beverage space.

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**BUD LIGHT UGLY SWEATER SELTZER VARIETY PACK** was released for Christmas 2020 and includes the following flavors: cranberry, apple crisp, ginger snap and peppermint pattie.

**25%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**HERSHEY'S MINI KISSES MINUTE MUG CAKE MIX** was released for Valentine's Day 2021 and features a chocolate cake dry mix with milk chocolate chips that can be cooked in less than a minute.

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



**MARKET PANTRY CHOCOLATE & WHITE MINI CUPCAKES** have been repackaged for St. Patrick Day 2020. They feature green and white icing with a chocolate cupcake.

**48%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**HERSHEY'S BUILD-A-SNOWMAN COOKIES 'N' CRÈME CHOCOLATE** features cookies 'n' crème chocolate to "break, build and play" with for the holiday season. The chocolate also comes in a Santa edition.

**50%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

**"December holidays in particular are times when consumers say they traditionally like to 'celebrate the holiday to the fullest.' This year, that definitely includes planning, shopping for, preparing and enjoying special foods as they are central to our cultural celebrations."**

**-FOOD BUSINESS NEWS**

# FLAVORS FOR INNOVATION

## WHITE CHOCOLATE & APPLE

White chocolate and Apple are two flavors that each have interest garnering by consumers. In fact, globally, Apple (Green) shows growth of over 400% for Q4 2020 vs. Q4 2019. White chocolate on the other has made its way onto beverage menus as well as into other indulgent products. Instagram also shows 2.6 million posts with the hashtag #whitechocolate . Both have been introduced in combination with other flavors such as mocha and sugar cookie, showing innovation opportunity in flavor pairings for product developers.



## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**KIT KAT APPLE PIE FLAVORED CANDY BAR** is described as crisp wafers in an apple pie flavored white creme. The product is limited edition.

**48%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**BAILEYS APPLE PIE IRISH CREAM LIQUEUR** is a limited-edition product said to be infused with the delicious taste of Irish cream liqueur and the taste of homemade apple pie and vanilla ice cream. | China



**GHIRARDELLI WHITE CHOCOLATE SUGAR COOKIE SQUARES** are limited edition chocolates featuring a combination of rich white chocolate with cookie bits and festive sprinkles.

**44%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**STARBUCKS TOASTED WHITE CHOCOLATE MOCHA** features festive flavors of caramelized white chocolate mocha sauce, espresso and steamed milk topped with whipped cream, sugar sparkles and crispy white pearls.

Photo Source: Starbucks

# SAVORY SIGHTINGS

Winter introductions might be heavy on sweet treats, but in the savory space, we also spotted innovative products in snacks, meats and cheeses, from chili flavored chips to cheese advent calendars.



## CHARCUTERIE CELEBRATIONS

As the charcuterie board trend continued into winter, consumers got creative with how they were snacking. Charcuterie 'chalets' or charcuterie houses took a new twist on the classic gingerbread house. Instead of gingerbread, meats, cheeses and crackers became the structure for a fun innovative snack that trended on social media.

Photo Source: Vermontcreamery Instagram

**"With consumers seeking familiar seasoned snacks, turkey, ham, and a variety of hard and soft cheese style flavors will continue to be perennial. Classic favorites in combination with other well-known tastes such as stuffing, sweet or spicy glazes, cranberry, chutney and herbs,"**

-FOOD INGREDIENTS FIRST

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**LAY'S GAME DAY CHILI FLAVOR POTATO CHIPS** are available for a limited time. The product is described as a hearty and crispy chip in a 7.75 oz pack.

**56%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**ILCHESTER CHEESE ADVENT CALENDAR** contains Jarlsberg smoked flavored cheese, Ilchester red Leichesther cheese, Ilchester Wensleydale cheese with cranberries, Ilchester cheddar cheese and Applewood cheese.

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



**BOURSIN FIG & BALSAMIC GOURNAY CHEESE** is a limited-edition product described as mouthwatering, creamy, yet crumbly blend of real cheese and savory ingredients.

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



**GREAT TO GO HOLIDAY TURKEY SANDWICH** is a limited-edition product for the Christmas season. The ready-to-eat sandwich features stuffing bread and cranberry sauce.

**37%** of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# THE TAKEAWAYS

Winter introductions commonly lean on nostalgia, comfort and indulgence for inspiration, and this year's winter LTOs and seasonal introductions were no exception. Though many consumers look to familiar flavors for comfort during the pandemic, LTOs and seasonal offerings provide an opportunity for developers to add unique twists to flavor classics. Opportunity in this space will continue into the spring and summer seasons, especially with more refreshing and fruity flavors popping up. So, is there an opportunity to expand the horizons of seasonal flavor in your product development?



## SOURCES

- Mintel
- Mintel GNPD
- Food Business News
- Food Ingredients First
- Starbucks

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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.

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