

# TASTE EXPERIENCES

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPACE

### 2023 TREND REPORT BITE

While taste will always be top of mind when it comes to dining, there are still plenty of other senses and emotions to engage through food and beverage. Consumers are expanding their palates and seeking out brands that give them unique experiences that range from butter boards and fondue to building community and jumping into the metaverse. Want to give your consumers an experience they'll never forget?

Check out these suggestions for how to take your brand to the next level.

*Innovation Themes:*

*Keeping it Communal • Be Flexible • Gamification & Experiential Rewards*



*Brands have lots of room to experiment and play with consumers' expectations and senses. Whether you're turning a familiar flavor on its head, taking someone back to their childhood or to the future with gamified offerings, there are infinite ways to engage the senses in unique ways.*

# Keeping it Communal

Maybe it's a response to spending so much time social distancing throughout the pandemic, but shared food experiences are taking off like never before. Let's take a look at what's grabbing consumers' attention.

## ■ KBBQ

Korean BBQ is made with marinated meats and vegetables sliced into ready-to-eat pieces and grilled on a communal table grill. One study found a **72% increase in Korean BBQ market penetration** between 2017 and 2020, while gochujang, the spicy, fermented condiment widely used in Korean cooking, was up 117% on menus between 2018 and 2022.

## ■ HOT POT

Already wildly popular in China, several chains have been popping up across the U.S. Diners add custom ingredients to a communal bowl of broth to make their own meal. Home cooks can make their own version of the meal with either a countertop hot pot or in an Instant Pot.

## ■ ETHIOPIAN

Ethiopian food is often vegetarian and served family-style with traditional spongy bread that doubles as a plate. Statista reports that Ethiopian food revenue is expected to show an **annual growth rate (CAGR 2023-2027) of 27.67%**

## ■ BUTTER BOARDS

The TikTok trend of spreading butter and accompaniments across a serving platter so people can dip in crackers, bread and vegetables was a viral sensation. The hashtag **#ButterBoard was viewed more than 116.4 million times** in September and October of last year, while the hashtag #Butter was searched more than 9.4 billion times on TikTok. The trend is easy to customize for other spreads like hummus or Nutella.

*Check out our Flavor Forecast 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition trend on Full Flavored Fats for more on the butter trend!*

## ■ FONDUE

According to Bon Appétit magazine, fondue is back! First popularized in the 1970s, the melty, cheesy sensation is going strong again. The Melting Pot, a North American restaurant chain with dozens of locations, has been seeing strong growth over the last few years, reporting that in Q1 of 2022, **"23 restaurants [were] up 38% over 2019."**

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**SIDE PROJECT BERBERE BEEF JERKY** features a special spice flavor with a citrusy and sweet heat, made exclusively by Ethiopian-owned Workinesh Spice Blends. It retails in a 2 oz pack for \$5.99.



**MURRAY'S CHEESE FONDUE MIX** is a combination of Swiss cheeses with white wine and brandy that makes it easy for home cooks to simply heat and enjoy.



**WHOLESOME PANTRY ORGANIC KOREAN BBQ POPCORN** is now available. The kosher-certified product is described as tangy, spicy, sweet and sophisticated, with unique complex flavors of Korean barbecue in every handful.

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

# Be Flexible

While not everyone wants to go full vegan, a growing number of people want to try out plant-based foods that are just as satisfying and delicious as their meaty counterparts. The flexitarian experience helps people eat more sustainably without compromising on taste, as well as letting vegans and vegetarians experience some of the flavors they've been craving.

With increased interest from consumers, new technologies for application and flavor are providing innovation opportunity in this space. For example, precision fermentation, a new process for producing animal-free whey protein, is becoming more widespread within the industry.

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**BRAVE ROBOT PB 'N FUDGE ANIMAL-FREE ICE CREAM** is described as vanilla with peanut butter swirl and fudge ripples. The manufacturer claims to use a clever new approach to making something delicious with less impact on the climate, using less land, energy and water. Made using Perfect Day precision fermentation.

35% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**OUTSTANDING TEXAS BBQ PIG OUT CRUNCHIES** are vegan, addictively delicious and highly nutritious. They're made from plant-based ingredients and have 7g protein per serving.



**IMPOSSIBLE HOMESTYLE MEATBALLS** are made from plants, contain no animal product, and have 12g of protein per serving. The production process uses less water, less greenhouse gas emissions, and less land compared to animal-based meatballs.

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



**52% OF GLOBAL CONSUMERS**  
now consider themselves  
flexitarians

**VEGAN**  
is the second-most searched  
term for snacks

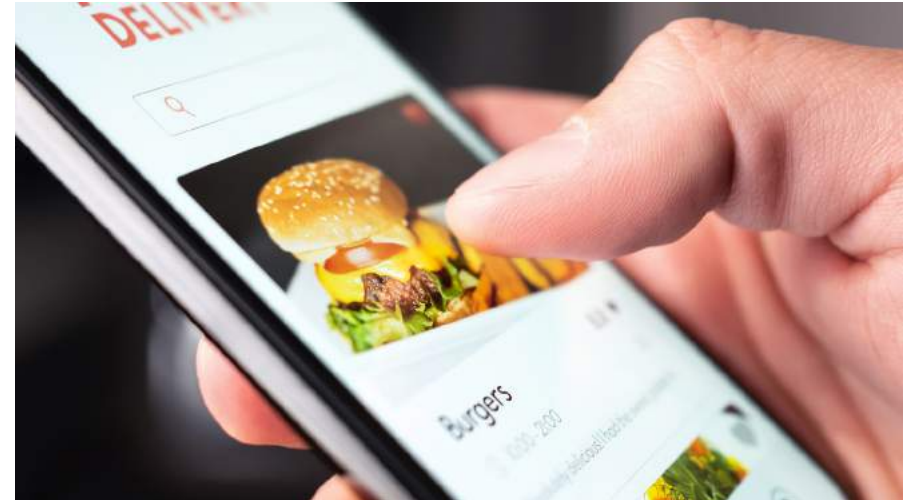
**MEAT ALTERNATIVE DEMAND**  
jumped 11% between 2020 and  
2021

**ALTERNATIVE DAIRY,  
MEAT AND SEAFOOD**  
product interest increased  
262% between 2016 and 2022

# Gamification and Experiential Rewards

Brands, especially in the dining space, are increasingly relying on experiences to draw consumers into their rewards programs, rather than offering discounts or coupons. Whether those are virtual or IRL, it seems to be working.

Let's see how you can find inspiration in the product space.



## EXPERIENTIAL REWARD STRATEGIES

Reward strategies like **giving consumers a quest or challenge** makes their experience with your brand interactive and deepens their sense of connection.

**Scottish beer company BrewDog** increased customers' purchase frequency by 400% by offering rewards based on customers' actions, like offsetting carbon emissions through their online purchases.

## SURPRISE AND DELIGHT

Who doesn't love a good surprise? Plenty of brands offer a **predictable reward** on consumers' birthdays, but Chipotle just upped the ante with its "Freepotle" program. Members will receive up to 10 "free food drops" throughout the year. Guac for everyone!

## GIVE SOME TO GET SOME

Offering buyers a bonus for **referring a friend** can not only expand your customer pool, but it also demonstrates that people love your product.

**Non-alcoholic spirit company Monday** gives a \$10 coupon to both you and the friend you refer when they make their first purchase.

## GET META

As more of our real lives get tangled up with our digital ones, brands are coming along for the ride by incorporating the **metaverse and virtual rewards** into their loyalty programs.

**Starbucks' new Odyssey program** is based in Web3 and offers loyal customers "immersive coffee experiences that [customers] cannot get anywhere else" like virtual classes and exclusive merch.



# THE TAKEAWAYS

Today's shoppers want an experience just as good as the taste! Right now, consumers are eager to share unique flavor experiences — that might look like gathering around the fondue pot, or it could be an omnivore and a vegan enjoying the same delicious bowl of ice cream. It might even mean branching out and connecting with others in the metaverse. But however you do it, consumers will love doing it together. Developers can find success in providing offerings that first and foremost taste great, but also satisfy consumers' search for a memorable experience that helps them connect with friends, family and even your brand.



## SOURCES

- Tyson
- NRN
- Statista
- Tasting Table
- Yahoo
- Bon Appetit
- Melting Pot
- Mintel
- Mintel GNPD
- Murray's Cheese
- Food Beverage Insider
- Nielsen IQ
- Antavo
- Smile.io
- The Verge
- Foodsided

## 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 McCormick Flavor Solutions 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, seasoning 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.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you — every step of the way.

Contact your sales representative or chat us up at [www.mccormickflavor.com/en-us/contact-us](http://www.mccormickflavor.com/en-us/contact-us)



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