

## WARMING UP WITH SWEET BROWN FLAVORS

Lisa Bird, Senior Principal Scientist

**Sweater season ushers in a host of welcoming flavors as consumers cozy up to comfort foods and drinks. Food and beverage developers can generate excitement with offerings that are on par with a favorite flannel or a whiff of crisp air.**

Both sentimental and sensorial, Limited Time Offerings (LTOs) with a seasonal profile remain popular. According to our 2023 Seasonal Survey, an overwhelming 93% of consumers find food and beverages with seasonal flavors comforting and nostalgic. As the calendar flips over into the year's final months, a large segment of the population is here for it: 42% of consumers cite winter as the season that excites them the most, up +24% from prior year.



The unsung hero of seasonal favorites are sweet brown flavors which are both satisfying and versatile. What, exactly, are sweet brown flavors and how can they deepen taste experiences – and, along with it, customer interest and loyalty? Lisa Bird, Senior Principal Scientist breaks it down.



### Q. How would you define sweet brown as a flavor?

A. The term “sweet brown” is often found in recipes and cookbooks. As the name suggests, brown spices like cinnamon, clove and nutmeg come to mind. Such warming spices are popular in baked goods and other sweet foods, particularly those that are common in fall and winter. Beyond spices, other brown-hued flavors like chocolate, coffee, maple, nuts, and honey are linked to this profile.

On another level, sweet brown flavors are commonly associated with the cooking and baking process, based on what's known as the Maillard reaction. Think of the taste of comforts like brown butter, caramelized sugar, toasted bread, fried dough, and baked cinnamon roll.



### Q. How can I use sweet brown flavors to create an appealing seasonal launch?

A. Cool weather season is a fitting, opportunistic time for these kinds of LTOs because it's the time of the year for feel-good fare. The nostalgia factor is real, too: it's how the smell of a pie baking in the oven or the bite of a family recipe at Thanksgiving takes you back in time.

Sweet brown profiles can be an attribute – and a selling point – in many kinds of products. For a food or beverage producer, the key is to identify the feeling and taste experience you want to create. What appeals to your brand target? What warm-and-fuzzy memory do you want to trigger – gingerbread baking, a sip of hot chocolate, or another sweet food memory?

## VOICE OF THE EXPERT:

# WARMING UP WITH SWEET BROWN FLAVORS

Lisa Bird, Senior Principal Scientist

### What are the benefits of using a reaction flavor to achieve sweet brown flavor?

Reaction flavors allow you to deliver 'cooked in the kitchen' flavor in your applications, including comforting sweet brown characteristics.

Inspired by cooking techniques, reaction flavors can lend an extra dimension to any application. I work with reactors that may seem intimidating, but they are essentially just big pressure cookers. By controlling the time, temperature, and pressure of our reactors, we can create naturally delicious reaction flavors that occur in cooking.

While these reaction flavors and accompanying notes provide the right seasonal touch, they have other benefits as well. For example, reaction flavors lend a toasted or baked flavor without extra baking time that might otherwise be required. Reaction flavors can also meet labeling requirements and align with IOFI guidelines for natural.

### How can I achieve a signature sweet brown profile?

Reaction flavors adds taste complexity for a differentiated and more "ownable" brand experience. If a competitor were to analyze your product in a gas chromatograph, they may find a myriad of peaks, making it very difficult to determine your formulation. If you're looking for a signature flavor for your brand, reaction flavors may be a great place to start.

“ Foods with sweet brown flavors are like a little reward. They are a treat when you eat them. ”

-Lisa



## Sweet Brown Favorites

*Here are a few of Lisa's favorite sweet brown flavors perfect for your sweet seasonal innovation.*

### Toffee

This sumptuous sweet, buttery brown flavor offers a confection taste with a satisfying sweet and salty profile. Dessert ideas abound, including limited time holiday favorites like cakes, cookies, and more.

### Toasted Coconut

Comfort food meets the tropics in this flavor that brings to mind coconut cookies or a coconut cream pie topping. Perfect for applications like bars, bakery bites, and smoothies. Don't forget ice cream!

### Baked Sweet Spice

"This reminds me of my grandma's spice cake," says Lisa of the formulation that contains cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. This flavor works especially well in bakery applications and evokes the flavors of fall.

Ready to deliver real sweet brown flavor into your innovation?

Reach out to discuss or request a flavor sample.

Click to connect | 630-578-8600

