

# Trending Flavors and Ingredients in Desserts and Confections - US - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the dessert and confections market.
- Consumer experience and interest in familiar and trending dessert and confection flavors.
- The biggest dessert and confection product development opportunities now and in the future.
- Preferred textures by dessert and confection type.
- Attitudes and behaviors toward dessert and confection flavors.

Consumers are calling for renovations in the desserts and confections aisle after a year of turning to indulgent and familiar foods for comfort. Brands in this category have an opportunity to meet consumer aspirations to make healthier lifestyle choices, and sugar is the first place to start: 41% of consumers would like to see more desserts and confections that are naturally sweetened (eg honey, fruit). High levels of refined sugar and artificial substitutes are likely to continue falling out of favor with consumers who are looking for more natural swaps.

While dessert and confection sales soared during the pandemic, Mintel predicts sales gains to begin leveling off as consumers return to foodservice establishments for indulgent foods. In addition, while convenience was not as much of a factor during 2020, an emphasis on portability and convenience will return.

Brands and operators have an opportunity to highlight the *experience* of desserts and confections through flavor innovation, which can take multiple shapes: co-branding and category blurring creates novelty and playfulness, and emerging flavors with roots in international cuisine will add a sense of exploration and adventure. Innovation in the category has blurred the lines between categories through combination flavors and products leveraging the foundations of classic treats. Nearly half of all consumers like desserts and



"The desserts and confections market performed well during the pandemic as consumers leaned into indulgence for comfort, but consumers are aspiring to make improvements to their health and diets. Brands are in a position to align dessert and confection innovation to meet these aspirations."

- Alyssa Hangartner, Flavor and Ingredient Trends Analyst

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confections that remind them of their childhood, and these flavors are showing up in new products and in new ways.

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- **Lighter textures can add a health halo to desserts and confections**

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