

Trending Flavors and Ingredients in Protein - US - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumers and flavors and ingredients in proteins
- Attitudes about value added proteins
- Most consumed flavor families with proteins
- Consumer experience and interest in emerging flavors with proteins

While sales of proteins rose across most protein types, the impact of the pandemic and its lingering circumstances have been disproportionate in "normalization" reflecting a trifecta of altered routines, rising prices and need for convenience. Proteins with strong ties to convenience and value have sustained elevated sales into 2021, while others with ties to indulgence and dining out have slightly slowed.

For many, cooking fatigue has set in, and brands stand to benefit from the convenience that value-added proteins provide. Still, many consumers are also eager to dine out. And just as the extreme limitations and the ripple effects of the pandemic altered consumer and brand behavior, brands will have to adapt to navigate the loosening of those limitations.

Going forward, rising protein prices may push consumers back to at-home consumption of all protein types. Despite the added cost, value-added options can help consumers find the middle ground between the allure of dining out and beating cooking burnout. Simplifying the shopping, meal planning and cooking experience even just a little while supporting interest in economical cuisine and flavor exploration can come from both protein innovation and pairings.

Millennial consumers are a step ahead of their older and younger counterparts in trial and interest in the next generation of flavor trends where global and regional influence, bold flavors and heat are common themes. But don't count



"Proteins are center of the plate influencers: their flavors drive the side dishes paired around them for nearly half of consumers. And while many agree that flavor in value-added meats is worth the extra cost, the majority of consumers do not."

– Mimi Bonnett, Senior Director – US Reports

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older adults out, especially with simpler, more familiar or easier-to-find flavor profiles like coconut, turmeric, hot honey and Korean BBQ.

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