

Trending Flavors and Ingredients in Desserts and Confections - US - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Consumer experience and interest in familiar brands and nostalgic tastes, as well as trending dessert and confection flavors in product launches and as menu items.
- Consumer associations with premium desserts and insights into what motivates them to try new flavors.
- Significant dessert and confection product development and marketing opportunities.
- Preferred textures by dessert and confection type.
- Attitudes and behaviors towards both primary and secondary dessert and confection flavors.

Consumers are eating less dessert at home, thanks to a combination of increased away-from-home dining and an increased interest in healthier, functional foods. While nostalgic, childhood desserts and trusted, familiar brands are still popular with consumers, energizing the dessert and confections category will require integrating more innovation. Opportunities lie in a dual approach: First, nurturing the allegiance of Gen X and older, who still enjoy traditional ice creams, pies and pastries; second, rolling out more expansive flavors, layered textures, international ingredients and functional desserts to appeal to Gen Z and Millennials. The latter often head larger households and, as parents, seek desserts for pleasure, indulgence and energy, as well as in relation to community, connection and celebration. Connecting flavors and formats to experiential pleasures and personal identity, and using social media, packaging and promotion, can also help engage consumers.

Inflation and other broad economic, environmental and wellness concerns are becoming critical factors shaping the dessert and confection landscape, both at home and away from home. Wider ingredient sourcing and sustainability are likely to become more key considerations, closely connected to a sense of how desserts can bring pleasure while also supporting holistic wellbeing.



“Trust, familiarity and nostalgia which anchored strong sales in 2020 are still key assets to dessert and confection manufacturers, as desserts benefit from powerful sensorial associations as well as cultural ones. However, consumers are also looking for more flavor innovation, healthfulness, functionality and value from desserts and confections.”

– Michele Scott, Associate Director of Food and Drink

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