

A DELICIOUS DIVE INTO INDULGENCE

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD
AND BEVERAGE SPACE

TREND REPORT BITE



Indulgence isn't just a passing craving, it's a lifestyle. From unwinding at the end of a long day to simply treating oneself, there are many reasons consumers choose to indulge. From a decadent chocolate cookie to a creamy coffee drink, an indulgence takes many forms and is often tied to personal sentiments. Whether to satisfy a sweet craving, relive a nostalgic memory, or embark on a new flavor adventure, flavor is key to making every indulgence truly enjoyable.

INDULGENT THEMES TO EXPLORE:

- Comforting Flavor Comebacks
- Sweets & Seasonal
- Sip to Bite Flavor
- Goopy Delights



58%

of consumers are consuming indulgences
four times per week or more.

McCormick Flavor Solutions U.S. Indulgence Survey, 2025

Comforting Flavor Comebacks

Tried and true indulgences never go out of style. A wave of classic indulgent sweets is making a comeback, celebrating beloved flavors that reflect comforting moments or take consumers back to their younger years. In fact, 40% of consumers selected 'classic indulgences' as the best description of indulgence, which is up 16% since 2021.¹ Consider reviving nostalgic flavor favorites like brownie, chocolate chip cookie, peanut butter, strawberry cream, and candy flavors.

64% of consumer always or often prefer indulgences considered nostalgic.¹



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WANDERLUST CREAMERY has a signature flavor called Abuelita Malted Crunch, which is “inspired by their SoCal childhoods.” It’s made with malted milk, Mexican stone-ground chocolate with cinnamon and chili, Belgian dark chocolate freckles, and crunchy malted milk balls.



FAT & WEIRD COOKIE is known for its indulgent stuffed cookies, featuring rich, gooey centers. The Cookie Terrestrial takes inspiration from the childhood snack cake Cosmic Brownie, with a cookies and cream base, gummy worm core, and sprinkles.

Sweet & Seasonal

Seasonal and limited-edition flavors have shifted from “nice-to-have” to “must-have” as consumers now expect them. 74% of consumers claim to be interested or extremely interested in food and beverage products with seasonal or limited-edition flavors.² Launches tied to a time of year or event aren’t just a fleeting indulgence—they’re an opportunity to excite and attract consumers. Developers can rely on flavors to immerse their brand users in the magic of the seasons—from the carefree sweetness of spring to the festive cheer of holiday spices.

89% of consumers agree “I find food and beverage products with seasonal flavors exciting because I can’t always get this flavor.”²



TREND SPOTTED

MCCONNELL'S debuted a LTO fall flavor called Apple Cider & Cranberry Jam that featured crisp sparkling apple cider, and ribbons of homemade tart cranberry jam.



SLIM CHICKENS launched an OREO® Red Velvet Milkshake which blends OREO® cookies & Red Velvet flavors into one smooth, delicious hand-spun treat. LTO Feb 2025

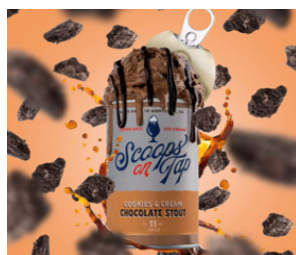
Sip to Bite Flavor

The sensory and ritualistic appeal of beverages is driving brands to take inspiration from the world of alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks. Beverage-inspired flavors are satisfying cravings beyond the bar or café as the definition of indulgence continues to evolve. Combine sweet flavors with profiles like tea, coffee, and liqueur to deliver a truly exciting culinary adventure. Or replicate the taste and even texture of popular decadent drinks like espresso martini, chocolate stout and boba tea (with real boba!) in new applications.

33% of global consumers view beverages as their go-to indulgence between meals, which has led to a flavor revolution.³



TREND SPOTTED



SCOOPS ON TAP (Southern, CA) infuses their ice cream with an array of locally brewed craft beers. Cookies & Cream Chocolate Stout features dark chocolate, a fudge ripple, and crushed chocolate crème cookies combined with a chocolate stout.



FLOURA launched a Vanilla Rooibos Fruit Crush Bar with fragrant vanilla bean and red apples, with enchanting notes of red rooibos tea. U.S., Jan 2025

Goopy Delights

A holistic approach to indulging has resulted in greater attention paid to the full sensory experience, including mouthfeel and texture. According to Innova Market Research⁴, consumers relate different textures with different emotional responses when eating and drinking. Creamy, smooth, and soft textures are favored when consumers want to feel indulged, comforted, or relaxed. There is an opportunity to introduce products with silky or even “goopy” textures reminiscent of desserts (think s’mores, moist cake, or melted caramel).

“Infusing texture into flavor experiences builds a robust and differentiated formula and can help appeal to variety and texture-seeking younger consumers.” Mintel⁵



TREND SPOTTED



BUILT PUFF BARS feature a soft, gooey center, similar to a marshmallow, created by a blend of whey protein isolate, glycerin, and tapioca syrup, which help create its gooey texture. It's then coated in a delicious chocolatey shell for a satisfying



FULFIL Chocolate Peanut Caramel Flavor Protein Bites combine rich chocolate, crunchy peanuts and gooey caramel into perfectly poppable pieces.

THE TAKEAWAYS

An indulgence is meant to bring joy and comfort; therefore, there are many possibilities for sweet food and drinks to fulfill this need. Fortunately, this creates endless opportunities for selecting a flavor profile when developing an indulgent product. Today's consumers love products that blend nostalgia and adventure, making flavors that reinvent classics with modern fusions a favorable choice. Spark interest and craveability with novel flavor combinations that incorporate familiar favorites, including 'once a year' seasonal profiles. Infusing popular and decadent drink flavors into applications caters to the growing demand for immersive taste experiences. Also, deliver a satisfying multisensory experience by blending flavors with complementary smooth or soft textures associated with indulgence.

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 [click here](#) to chat us up.



BLACK CARDAMOM ICE CREAM WITH SALTED CARAMEL VARIEGATE

For a sweet, salty, and slightly smoky indulgence, Tara Overland, Scientist II, developed a frozen dessert featuring a Black Cardamom flavor. Cousin to the more familiar green cardamom, black cardamom takes on a distinct smokiness as the pods are dried. Used most often in savory dishes, there's a place for it in ice cream as its rich, smoky flavor balances the creamy mouthfeel. A salt replacer keeps sodium low in the salted caramel variegate, which also helps this ice cream walk the line between savory and sweet.



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