

FLAVOR LIFECYCLES – US – 2024

Flavor lifecycles are changing as consumers explore more in their kitchens, look to more casual occasions for trial and are influenced and inspired by social media.



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Flavor Lifecycles - US - 2024

This report looks at the following areas:

- New flavor information sources
- New flavor trial locations
- Change in flavor trial and reasons for change
- Flavor attitudes and behaviors
- Interest in flavor trial by occasion
- Flavor innovation and launches in CPG and foodservice

Overview

More consumers have increased flavor trial in the past year than decreased, led by the 50% of Gen Z consumers who are doing so. While a shift away from dining out has deterred some consumers from flavor trial, most have remained steady, looking to trusted brands and retailers to bring flavor exploration home and into their own kitchens. Following this casualization trend, when consumers are looking to find flavor AFH, fast food occasions are becoming more prevalent (particularly among younger consumers), rivaling sit down restaurants.

While in-store shopping is still the top resource for flavor discovery, social media predictably enhances how consumers learn about flavors and in turn where they seek them out, necessitating a multi-channel approach. With so many information sources, flavor lifecycles are dynamic and have endless opportunities for reinvention through surprising formats, pairings and moving beyond the sense of taste into color and texture.



Flavor lifecycles are changing as consumers explore more in their kitchens, look to more casual occasions for trial and are influenced and inspired by social media.

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Report Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Opportunities

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Consumer fast facts

New flavor information sources

- In-person is still the preferred discovery method...
 - Graph 1: new flavor information sources, 2023
- ...but big flavor seekers look online
 - Graph 2: new flavor information sources, by interest in trying new flavors, 2023
- Partnerships across channels will land the broadest reach
- Flavor seeking Millennials discover everywhere they shop
 - Graph 3: new flavor information sources, by generation, 2023

New flavor trial locations

- Flavor trial shifts to more-casual occasions
 - Graph 4: new flavor trial locations, 2023
- Over half of Gen Z consumers try new flavors at fast food restaurants
 - Graph 5: new flavor trial locations, by generation, 2023
- Flavor info sources and trial locations are synergistic

Change in flavor trial

- One-third of consumers are trying more flavors than last year...
- ...and Gen Z is leading the pack

Reasons for trying more flavors

- Consumers are bringing home the flavor
 - Graph 6: reasons for trying more flavors, 2023
- Social media can connect engaged consumers to IRL experiences
 - Graph 7: reasons for trying more flavors, by interest in trying new flavors, 2023

Reasons for trying fewer flavors

- Economic concerns top flavor trial barriers

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- Graph 8: reasons for trying fewer flavors, 2023

Flavor attitudes and behaviors

- Make sure consumers have the option to try something new
 - Graph 9: flavor attitudes and behaviors, 2023
- Connect more deeply with Millennials through health
 - Graph 10: flavor attitudes and behaviors, by generation, 2023

Experience and interest in flavor trial by occasion

- Sweet and spicy are better together
 - Graph 11: experience and interest in flavor trial by occasion, 2023
- Asian flavors prove mainstream as they enter consumers' kitchens
 - Graph 12: experience and interest in flavor trial by occasion, 2023
- Snacking occasions can reinvigorate cooking staples
 - Graph 13: experience and interest in flavor trial by occasion, 2023
- Fruity and floral flavors are ripe for versatile occasions
 - Graph 14: experience and interest in flavor trial by occasion, 2023

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

Launch activity and innovation in CPG

- Caramelized onion is coming to dinner
- Caramelized onion in CPG
- Sea salt makes waves in indulgent categories
- Sea salt in CPG
- Herbs make their way from food to beverage
- Basil in CPG

Launch activity and innovation in foodservice

- Emerging flavors and ingredients see impressive growth on menus
- Lavender brightens up the menu
- Emerging Asian flavors move toward mainstream
- Maple helps sweeten the deal

Marketing and advertising

- LTOs heat up with hot honey
- Chili crunch brings restaurant flavors home

THE MARKET

- Market context

State of the market

- Flavor trial has remained steady but slightly more polarized
 - Graph 15: interest in trying new flavors, 2020-23
- Recreational occasions support new flavor trial
 - Graph 16: preferred foods for new flavor trial
- Social media connects flavor connoisseurs and small businesses

Market drivers

- Grocery budgets are flexible for nearly half of consumers
 - Graph 17: grocery budget adherence, 2023
- Consumers are cutting back the most away-from-home...
- ...but discretionary spending still favors dining out
 - Graph 18: additional discretionary spending priorities, 2023

APPENDIX

- Consumer research methodology
- Generations
- Abbreviations and terms
- Flavourscape AI data

Disclaimer

This is marketing intelligence published by Mintel. The consumer research exclusively commissioned by Mintel was conducted by Kantar Profiles ([See Research Methodology for more information](#)).

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