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Report Name: Top 10 US Food Trends in 2023

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Report Highlights:

U.S. consumers are health-conscious budgeteers who are attracted to convenience, innovations, brand collaborations, and customization in their food and beverages. Their behaviors have changed gradually due to concern for their health and the environment. In the past few months, concerns surrounding inflation and rising food prices have impacted consumers' decisions and buying patterns. This report lists the top 10 food trends in the US to showcase its current industry and market climate. Since the US is a trendsetter in consumer goods and culinary evolution, especially to Asia-Pacific countries, these trends provide an insight into what consumers from other parts of the world might be interested in in the future.

Market Background

The U.S. economy's road to recovery after the COVID pandemic was disrupted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which raised supply chain challenges that caused high commodity prices. Cost of living grew as the inflation rate rose, which resulted in lower-skilled worker shortage and an increase in nominal wage. Large enterprises such as Microsoft and Amazon are downsizing to ease upward pressure on wages. With unemployment and stimulus checks spent and student loan payments resumed, retail spending, housing and automotive purchases declined as consumers grew cautious. Based on these conditions, when it comes to food and beverages, U.S. consumers are health-conscious budgeteers who are attracted to convenience, innovations, brand collaborations, and customization.

U.S. Economic Outlook			
Year	2020	2021	2022
Population (million)	331.26	332.31	333.53
GDP (billion)	21,060	23,320	25,460
GDP per capita	63,580	70,160	76,350
Real GDP growth	-2.8%	5.9%	2.1%
Inflation rate	1.3%	4.7%	8%

Source: [International Monetary Fund](#)

Top 10 U.S. Food Trends

1. Wellness Eating



Post-COVID consumers are proactively looking for foods that are good for their health. Low sugar, low fat, low carb, low sodium, organic, and non-GMO products are taking over half the shelves. The demand for plant-based options, such as lentil chips, pistachio milk, and vegan crabcake, has increased quickly.

Buffalo Style Chickenless Wings: emphasis on plant-based, vegan, protein and calorie content

Functional snacks and beverages labeled as immunity and energy boosters with antioxidant and vitamin-rich ingredients are getting more popular every day. Among Gen Z and millennial consumers, brain health is a buzz word. They look for products that contain magnesium, tryptophan, and L-theanine to improve quality of sleep and ease anxiety.

Dark Chocolate Bites: emphasis on non-GMO, L-theanine, magnesium, and protein content to promote brain health



2. Sustainability



Sustainable consumers are climate activists that consciously choose food that has minimal impacts on the environment. Local and seasonal products are favored in order to reduce carbon footprint. Restaurants and bars are choosing ingredients from urban agricultural initiatives or small-batch farms and applying them with zero-waste cooking methods. For retail products, consumers are attracted to labels with sustainability claims, such as using upcycled ingredients.

Avocado Drinks: emphasis on using avocado seeds and antioxidant content

3. Innovation

According to the “Snacking Motivations and Attitudes” report conducted by Mintel, a global market research company, 95 percent of the adults in the US snack at least once a day, while 70 percent snack two or more times. This upward trend is believed to begin when the mass shifted to work from home. When snacking under the pressure of inflation, rather than a new brand of barbeque flavored chips, consumers are more willing to reach for new products with innovation that feature new flavors and textures.

CinnaFuego Toast Crunch: an exciting twist on the sweet flavor



New products aimed to spark curiosity include Frito-Lay’s Lay’s Layers, a brand-new structure of layered potato bite that’s puffed up to create amazing crunch, and Minute Maid’s Aguas Fresca, a refreshing drink that came out with a new pineapple horchata flavor. Exotic tastes, contrasting fusions, and unique twists are gaining traction in the snack business.

Lay’s Layers: brand-new shape of potato “chips”

4. Convenience

Convenience is a megatrend that's leading the food industry to develop products that deliver instant gratification while requiring minimal effort. Ready-to-eat meals are popular, as well as cooking and baking kits that come with measured ingredients. Frozen food made to be air fried is on the rise — #airfryerrecipes had over 1.9 billion views on TikTok in 2022. In addition, increasing population of small families and on-the-go consumption habits are pushing companies to create single serving sizes instead of bulk quantities to better fit changing consumer lifestyle.



“Everything but the Bagel” Lox: no need to buy other seasoning

5. Gourmet Indulgence at Home



Consumers are cutting back on high-end restaurant outings and looking for ways to mix in some gourmet tastes to the everyday dinner table. According to Specialty Food Association, 75 percent of U.S. consumers are specialty food users who are looking for that culinary upgrade. This can be observed from meal kit company Blue Apron having a premium menu that includes dishes like Duck a l'Orange. In retail aisles, truffle, caviar, artisan cheeses, black garlic, and figs are some of the gourmet flavors that are drawing people's attention.

Organic White Truffle Potato Chips

6. Cultural Curiosity

In this digital world where people are constantly exposed to the latest flavors around the world, it is not a surprise they want to expand their palates culturally. According to the National Restaurant Association, Asian, South American, and Caribbean are some of the fastest growing flavors in the US. Consumers are actively looking at different Sriracha variations, ube (Filipino purple sweet potato) desserts, mofongo (Puerto Rican dish), and empanadas.



Ube Mini Pies

7. Alcohol-free Drinks



According to the market research company NielsenIQ, the U.S. spiritless drink market grew more than 20 percent in 2022. In addition to [news articles](#) on the topic, many U.S. celebrities are speaking out about their sobriety, and some of them even launched their alcohol-free beer and cocktail. "[Mocktail](#)" bars are popping up left and right to cater to the sober-curious. Health-conscious consumers may be drawn to non-alcohol drinks for other reasons as well, including the calorie count. Alcohol-free wine are ten calories a glass while regular wines pack more than a hundred calories per glass, for instance.

Mingle Mocktails: alcohol-free cosmos, margaritas, bellinis, mojitos, mimosas, and Moscow mules. Emphasis on only 60 calories per can

8. Communal Eating

People are embracing the idea of get-togethers in the post-COVID environment. Creative variations of the traditional charcuterie boards have been popular — the hashtag "[butterboard](#)" garnered more than 422 million views on social media in 2022. Similar concepts include tapas, sushi platters, and vegan mezze platters.



Chocolate Board: trended during Valentine's Day

9. Brand Crossovers



Crossovers and collaborations are a marketing strategy that catches consumers' eyes. Fusions of unexpected flavor profiles to create novelty is a surefire way to be trending in social media. These crossovers are not meant to last long; rather, their purposes are to generate hype and create headlines so consumers would be intrigued to make purchase decisions.

Ritz x Oreo Collaboration

10. Alternative Sweeteners

As consumers make concerted effort to reduce sugar intake, food and beverage manufacturers are responding to the growing demand for low and sugar-free products. Options with natural sweeteners such as stevia, erythritol, and allulose are favored over ones with artificial sweeteners. For plant-based alternatives, agave, maple sugar, coconut sugar, date pastes, and monk fruit are some of the most popular choices.

Lily's Gummy Bears: emphasis on no sugar added and keto friendly. Lists allulose as one of the main ingredients



Summary

2023 is a year of new opportunities for the food industry. New plant-based protein and functional foods are on the rise based on the perceived association between healthy eating and a strong immune system. Demand for products that are sourced, processed, and packaged in sustainable ways continue to increase. Convenient options such as meal kits and ready-to-drink mixes will remain popular. In the current inflationary climate, consumers are replacing dining out with bringing culinary elements into their home. They are willing to pay premium to try gourmet and exotic products as well as exciting collaborations.

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