



# WHERE'S THE FUN?

## 2019 • TREND INSIGHT REPORT

Exciting, tasty, and fun- consumers want it all, and maybe they just *can* have it. We're researching where we see "fun" in flavor, and how it can serve as a path to creating attention-grabbing products and menu items. More than 1,121 product introductions in the last five years featured "fun" positioning. From products and experiences that bring consumers back to the good old days to new innovations and trends that bring a breath of fresh air, let's find the fun in flavor, and see where it can help meet your product development needs.

# FUN FOR EVERYONE

---

Though the younger consumer may traditionally be more inclined to more out there and adventurous products that make for fun, older generations should not be excluded as a promising audience. Product introductions and menu items with “fun” features, flavors, packaging and more may help to gain consumers’ attention and differentiate from other products on the market.

According to Mintel, what’s important to consumers today are experiences, nostalgia, excitement and of course - taste. Fun food and beverage products and experiences that are “Instagram worthy” could also help facilitate consumer interest. In fact, 27% of US consumers report using social media as a tool to learn about brands and products.



“27% of US consumers report using social media to learn about brands and products.”  
-Mintel

“According to scientists, adulthood doesn’t start until we reach our 30s and consumer behavior is reflecting this.”

-Mintel

# FUN FOR EVERYONE, continued

We conducted a search on products featuring “fun” in their product title or description.



## FASTEST GROWING FLAVORS Q3 2018-Q3 2019

- Chocolate
- Salt/Salted
- Peanut/Groundnut
- Milk
- Apple
- Sea (Salt) Fleur de Sel

## TOP CATEGORIES 2014-2019

- Snacks
- Bakery
- Sugar & Gum Confectionery
- Desserts & Ice Cream
- Chocolate Confectionery

# EMBRACE THE TREND

Pumpkin spice to zombies and unicorns, relevant trends in product launches and menu items can be a rewarding way to feature the fun. While some trends emerge and intrigue due to seasonal changes, others (like the recent unicorn craze) may stick with consumers simply for an exciting change of pace, giving a unique opportunity for product developers. Love it or hate it, these trends have proved staying power with consumers. In fact, the hate seemingly brings just as much buzz as the love for these trends.

“Nearly two-thirds of Americans have purchased some type of seasonal food or drink in the past year”  
-Mintel

## SEASONAL FUN



## Products of Note:

**ZOMBIE SKITTLES:** With Halloween just behind us, Skittles embraced the season with fruity flavors such as petrifying citrus punch, mummified melon, chilling black cherry, blood red berry and boogeyman blackberry. The trick – consumers don't know which flavor has the taste Skittles compares to “rotten zombie.”

- 45% of consumers responded they likely or definitely would buy this product



**PUMPKIN SPICE:** It's almost impossible to not think of pumpkin spice when thinking of fall trends and fun flavors. Pumpkin spice flavored lattes, spam, and dog treats - the trend reaches just about all food and beverage segments imaginable.

**STARBUCKS RTD PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE** is described as a spicy and sweet fall favorite that features cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves mixed with espresso and creamy milk. The RTD drink brings the classic flavor to consumers at home.

- 32% of consumers responded they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# EMBRACE THE TREND, continued

The unicorn trend isn't over just yet. Social media posts reveal a 69% increase in the last two years.

- Infegy Atlas

## UNICORN CRAZE



## Products of Note:



**SWISS MISS UNICORN HOT COCOA:** Swiss Miss released a trendy hot cocoa mix with unicorn marshmallows that are brightly colored. The brand also released a pumpkin spice flavor.

Photo Source: Food Dive



**LOHILO UNICORN TEARS FUNCTIONAL DRINK:** The brand Lohilo released a fruity functional drink called "Unicorn Tears" featuring unicorn inspired packaging. Unicorn Tears Super Fruit Functional Drink contains 105mg caffeine, 5000mg collagen, hyaluronic acid, vitamin C and zinc. It claims to boost the day and beauty.

# MAKE IT A MYSTERY



## Attraction to the Unknown:

The concept of the unknown can be an intriguing factor for consumers who search for adventure and excitement. Brands have jumped on board to the idea, marketing their products with a level of mystery. Some even up the fun with challenges and prizes for consumers who guess the correct flavor. Mystery flavors may be a great opportunity to gain traction through consumer interest on social media.

A social listening search for “mystery flavor” showed a **136%** increase in the past year with **77%** positivity and **55,954** social posts.

– Infegy Atlas

## Products of Note:



**NABISCO OREO MYSTERY FLAVOR COOKIES:** In September, Oreo relaunched their Mystery Flavored Oreo Cookies. Consumers can enter for the chance to win \$50,000 if they guess the correct mystery flavor.

- 70% of consumers surveyed that they likely or definitely would buy this product.
- Consumers perceived this product as being very fun and an indulgent treat as well as receiving a high rating of 85% when it comes to fun.



**ICE MYSTERY FLAVORED SPARKLING WATER:** Ice’s Mystery Flavored Sparkling Water features a mystery flavor and includes a “What the Flavor” sweepstakes to win a cruise. The product is sugar-free, low calorie, and contains antioxidants.

- 46% of consumers surveyed responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**PRINGLES MYSTERY FLAVORED POTATO CHIPS** challenged consumers to guess their potato chip flavor for a chance to win \$10,000. The chips were sold exclusively in Walgreens stores across the nation for a limited time.

- 37% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product.

# ADD THE FUN, WITH OR WITHOUT ALCOHOL



Alcohol-free products and experiences are becoming increasingly popular which has led to much innovation in products and offerings that focus on fun *without* the buzz. With or without alcohol in the mix, there is now a greater emphasis on creating a memorable consumer experience.

## Non-Alcoholic Bars:

Sans Bar in Austin, Texas provides an alcohol-free experience, proving that life can be fun without alcohol. The sober bar offers live music, an upscale environment to relax in and most importantly, flavorful mocktails and non-alcoholic drinks.

## Cocktails and Dancing:

Even for consumers who do drink alcohol, their focus has shifted to activities and experiences. For \$15 per class, London's Frame Studio held dance classes for a limited time only that offered attendees a Bacardi cocktail after each class. The class hoped to promote health and wellness benefits of alcohol rather than partying and served as a way to sample products.

"21% of drinkers have reduced their alcohol consumption in the past year, some reasons include health improvement and money savings"  
– Mintel

"This isn't to say that there is widespread abandonment of alcohol – or substances in general – but fluctuating consumer tastes are calling for more dynamic experiences."  
– Mintel

# IT'S ALL ABOUT EXPERIENCE

At FONA, we believe one key theme of fun in food & beverage is providing a memorable experience or an experience inspired product. Non-alcoholic bars or cocktails and dancing are great examples to start. We've noted a few more experience inspired product and dining examples below.

## Products and Dining Examples:



**OREO STATE FAIR COOKIES:** Featuring a crispy outside and warm and creamy inside, Oreos State Fair cookies give the experience of state fair deep fried oreos at home.

- 56% of consumers responded that they likely or definitely would buy this product



**UNCLE JULIO'S CHOCOLATE PINATA:** Uncle Julio's Chocolate Pinata is filled with fresh fruit and handmade churros. Customers can take a swing and smash the pinata to release the tasty treats inside.

Photo Source: Dallas Eater



**SUGAR FACTORY:** Known for their celebrity endorsed couture pops, restaurants, and retail locations, the Sugar Factory offers a unique experience primed for celebration. From their signature goblet drinks to chocolate martinis and rainbow sliders, the factory offers a variety of fun products and menu items for consumers.



# BRING BACK THE NOSTALGIA

Similar to experiences, consumers are drawn to products and dining options that evoke feelings, memories, and nostalgia. Whether bringing back an old launch or reinventing a product, product developers can connect with consumers by reminding them of the “good old days”.

“Consumers were willing to pay more when they’re nostalgic because it provides an immediate sense of happiness and comfort — a fact that companies have latched on to.”  
– Journal of Consumer Research; Food Dive



“Consumers can even feel nostalgic for an era they have not experienced. Companies can tap a “typical characteristic” of an era to evoke certain emotions in the consumer, resulting in “beautiful and warm feelings”  
– Journal of Consumer Research; Food Dive

# BRING BACK THE NOSTALGIA, continued

## New Takes on Old Releases:



**LUCKY CHARMS MARSHMALLOWS:** Lucky Charms got more Magically Delicious with their marshmallow-only launch. Rather than the crunchy texture of the famous cereal, the release offers the colorful treat in an original fluffy marshmallow format.

Photo Source: Kraft Heinz



**CHEEZ POWDER:** After 12 years off the market, Planters brought back their famous Cheez Balls in 2017 and reinvented the classic product by creating a Cheez Powder. Fans of the classic taste could get their hands on the product by entering in Planters' contest and saying what they would top with the product.

## Product and Flavor Inspired Throwbacks:



**SATURDAY MORNING IPA:** Smartmouth brewing company in Virginia launched Saturday Morning, a marshmallow flavored IPA inspired by Lucky-Charms marshmallows. The 6.6% ABV IPA is brewed with toasted marshmallows, featuring cereal and fruity notes that the company claims makes it "magically ridiculous".

Photo Source: Delish.com



**KOIOS FIT SODA:** Blending nostalgic flavors with health & wellness, Koios Fit Soda offers throwback flavors such as Root Beer Vanilla Float and Orange Creamsicle. The product is infused with BCAAs and electrolytes, has 0 sugar, and promotes physical well-being.

Photo Source: drinks-insight-network.com

# THE TAKEAWAYS

If there's anything we've learned from recent research, it's that fun comes in many forms. From mystery flavors to nostalgic tastes and one-of-a-kind experiences, fun might mean something different to each consumer. Luckily, this brings opportunity to develop unique creations and exciting innovations for consumers that can bring you major wins. So how can we help you implement the fun in flavor in your next opportunity?

## SOURCES

- Mintel
- Today.com
- Smartmouth Brewing
- Delish
- Food Dive
- Drink-insight-network
- Infegy Atlas
- GNPD
- Kraft Heinz
- Dallas Eater



## 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 FONA's 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 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. Let's mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you — every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at [630.578.8600](tel:630.578.8600) to request a flavor sample or [chat us up at www.fona.com/contact-fona/](https://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)