



Plant-Based Trends: PART 2, INDULGENCE

As it turns out, you can have your plant-based cake and eat, too. In our last [plant-based report](#), we zeroed in on wellness trends. In this report, we'll talk about plant-based influence on indulgence. Even before the crisis of COVID-19, health and wellness was ingrained in consumer behavior. Looking at it through the plant-based lens, wellness focus is influencing indulgence and self-care trends in interesting ways. As consumers embrace more plant-based foods for health and sustainability reasons, they are also seeking products that satisfy their cravings. Plant-based foods with permissible indulgence fill a need across many eating occasions, from breakfast sandwiches to premium dinners to desserts including, yes, cake. The variety of plant-based ingredients and accompanying flavors for these kinds of products is ramping up at a time when people are cooking more at home and seeking comfort that doesn't compromise wellness. Read on to learn more about the growing bounty of indulgent plant-based foods and beverages.

HEALTHY GROWTH



“Plant-based menu dishes are going beyond quinoa and kale to include craveable flavors and decadent preparation methods.”

-Intel



Even before the recent health crisis disrupted the marketplace and rapidly impacted consumer behavior, eating better was a priority for most people. A food and beverage survey from L.E.K. Consulting found that 93% of consumers want to eat healthy at least some of the time and 63% are striving to eat healthy most or even all of the time.

The popularity of plant-based eating, often associated with improved health and wellness, mirrors the increase in health-oriented lifestyles.

- 51% of consumers report that they are adding plant-based products to their diet.
- 34% of consumers say they consume plant-based protein daily.



Source: 2019 Food and Health Survey, International Food Information Council

THE COVID EFFECT

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the parallel emphasis on health and plant-based eating. While it might seem that stuck-at-home, worried consumers might find solace in traditionally indulgent foods like ice cream, candy or chips, recent market data found that sales of plant-based meats spiked **264%** while sales of dessert platters, donuts and cupcakes marked big declines during the nine week period ending on May 2.



“COVID-19 has caused consumers huge anxiety in 2020. Hence consumers want foods to improve their mood... Meals and sauces brands can use plant-based foods to offer a ‘dirty vegan’ experience to consumers who seek more modern permissible indulgence.”

-Mintel



FLAVOR FUSIONS

Many plants, on their own, are rather humble and not as inherently indulgent as, say, a well-marbled steak. Other plant-based ingredients aren't palatable without some help from flavors that mask "off" flavors.

What makes a plant-based food indulgent? Often, it's flavor, married with texture and a format that provides an enjoyable experience that either mimics another non-plant food or makes a plant-centric dish stand out on its own.

Many flavors convey richness, like chocolate, caramel, vanilla and other sweet flavors, or cheesy or buttery savory flavors. Spices and seasonings also lend sensory interest that turns dull or ordinary plant-based ingredients into a crave-worthy carriers of flavor.



HARVESTING NEW PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS

With more people interested in plant-based foods for the foreseeable future – if not permanently -- it stands to reason that they don't just want to eat alt-meat burgers every day or quaff plant-protein shakes in place of a meal. As with all other food and beverage categories, taste and variety are important for products that fall under this plant-based permissible indulgence umbrella. It's a good thing that there are many varieties of plant-based ingredients and complementary flavors, since many of them will be put to new and different use in recipes and formulations.

GREENER PASTURES

- Launches of cakes, pastries and sweet goods with a vegan claim have risen by 53% over the last three years. -Mintel
- Pizza with cauliflower crust was named the most popular food in 2019 by Grubhub.
- 51% of U.S. consumers choose a mix of healthy and indulgent options when dining out. -Mintel



“What hasn't changed is consumers' delight in products that are indulgent and delicious – with quality ingredients supplanting processed, nutritionally empty ones,”

-L.E.K CONSULTING



THE NON-MEAT OF THE MATTER

This summer, the thrill of the grill meets the thrill of the till.

A good old-fashioned hankering for a burger or hot dog with all the trimmings doesn't apply to just beef, pork or other animal-based proteins. Plant-based meat alternative patties, sausages and dogs can be tossed on the grill or cooked up in a pan and served with a variety of accompaniments, like vegan cheeses and plant-based condiments. From gourmet alt-burgers to inventive plant-based sausages to seafood-inspired substitutes, there are more plant-based solutions that provide indulgence with unique blend of ingredients.

- 28% of all consumers say they are actively trying to reduce animal protein in their diets and 32% say they are likely to eliminate some or all meat and poultry from their diets over the next year. - The Food Institute
- The plant-based meat category is worth \$939 million. - Good Food Institute

The key to acceptance and success in the alt-meat category is not surprising: taste is a make-or-break proposition.

- 54% of U.S. consumers agree meat alternatives should closely mimic the taste of meat - Mintel
- Of the 50% or so of people who have tried plant-based meat alternatives, 53% say that they enjoyed the product because of the taste, while 35% said they appreciated the meat-like texture. - IFIC



DAIRY DOPPELGANGERS

If meat alternatives started with veggie burgers, the dairy alternative market took off with milks made from plants. Those milks are closing in on mainstream status right now and are especially popular with younger consumers. On the indulgent end of the market, more plant-based alternatives for classically rich dairy products are emerging.

THE SCOOP ON PLANT-BASED DESSERTS

One dairy product synonymous with indulgence is getting some competition from plant-based up-and-comers. Plant-based frozen desserts that appeal to ice cream lovers represent a hotbed of product development, with opportunities for a host of flavors, flavor combinations and mix-in ingredients. Coconut and oat impart creaminess, while flavors are added to enhance the ice cream-like taste.

In addition to hard pack frozen desserts that resemble ice cream in look and taste, the novelty factor of the plant-based desserts is also influencing the frozen novelty category, with bars and bite-sized frozen treats.

- Dollar sales of plant-based ice cream and frozen novelties grew 6% in the past year and 34% over the past two years. – Good Food Institute
- Sales of dairy-free ice cream are expected to top \$1 billion worldwide by 2025 - Global Market Insights

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



OATLY! ORIGINAL VANILLA NON-DAIRY FROZEN DESSERT is kosher-certified and 100% vegan, free from dairy, nuts, gluten and GMO and sold in a one-pint recyclable package.

30% of consumers likely or definitely would buy this product.



RIPPLE COOKIES & CREME PLANT-BASED FROZEN DESSERT is a decadent 100% vegan frozen dessert with chunks of crunchy chocolate cookie pieces embedded in plant-based ice cream, available in a one-pint recyclable pack.

31% of consumers likely or definitely would buy this product.



MAGNUM NON-DAIRY ALMOND FROZEN DESSERT BARS are novelties made with plant-based ingredients and dipped in a coating made with Belgian sweet chocolate and almonds.

TOP THIS

Add-ons, like condiments, sauces and dressings, have long been a way to lend an extra layer of satisfying flavor. But as more people watch their health and try to cut down on calorie- or fat-laden accompaniments, they are embracing the next best thing in plant-based versions of these items.



“This new crop of sauces is drawing on more natural, recognizable fruit and vegetable ingredients like potatoes, carrots, and tomatoes. These products may appeal to the third of consumers who say they are looking to avoid artificial ingredients but who are otherwise not necessarily looking to adhere to a vegan or vegetarian diet.”

-MINTEL



PRODUCTS OF NOTE



CHOSEN FOODS AVOCADO OIL MAYO is free from egg, dairy, gluten and GMOs and is described as a deliciously creamy plant-based spread perfect for sandwiches, pasta salads, creamy dips and dressings.

21% of consumers would likely or definitely buy this product.



GOOD FOODS SPICY QUESO STYLE DIP WITH CASHEWS is free from preservatives, added sugar, artificial ingredients, gluten and dairy and sold in an 8-oz. container.

33% of consumers would likely or definitely buy this product



MOTHER RAW ORGANIC CAESAR DRESSING & MARINADE is vegan and kosher-certified, made with cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil and free from GMOs, gluten, nuts, soy, canola, artificial colors, flavors and preservatives.

THE ROOT OF SNACK ATTACKS



One could argue that many traditional snacks already fit the plant-based bill, given that chips are made from potatoes and other salty snacks are derived from corn. The logic that a brownie isn't that bad for you, considering that chocolate is technically from the carob bean, also has been used to jokingly justify indulging in those types of sweet treats.

Of course, classic snacks still have their place as occasional and much-enjoyed indulgence. But increasingly, the snack category includes an array of other types of plant-based items that lend positive nutritional benefits.

- 36% of those who consume salty snacks would eat versions that contain vegetables.
- Women and "stress snackers" are particularly strong audiences for plant-based salty snacks, since they are looking to reduce their guilt of indulgence. - Mintel

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



BIENA VEGAN RANCH CHICKPEA PUFFS contain 6 grams of plant protein per bag and are billed as free from grain, gluten and GMO with 30% fewer carbs than leading natural puffed snack per serving.

26% of consumers would likely or definitely buy this product



THREE FARMERS GARLIC & HERB CRUNCHY LITTLE LENTILS are roasted pulse snacks with 7 grams of plant based protein and free from nuts, peanuts, gluten and GMOs.

CHEERS TO PLANT-BASED DRINKS



Another form of indulgence comes in the beverage sector. Beyond-plant based milks, plenty of other drinks are enjoyed as a not-guilty pleasure, including juices, smoothies and shakes as well as mocktails and cocktails.

- The COVID-19 outbreak has led to an increased success in functional smoothies and juices - Mintel
- Juices with vegetables are experiencing high growth: juices with spinach are growing 56% and juices with beets are growing 41% percent. - Mintel
- The plant-based movement will lead to more vegetable infusions in drinks and flavors like celery root for future cocktail innovations. - Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants

THE TAKEAWAYS

Good-for-you plant-based foods encompass a variety of products that are good for satisfying people's penchant for an enjoyable eating experience. As the COVID-19 era continues into an uncertain future, reaching for comfort while also being mindful of health and wellness is a behavior that's likely to continue. With taste as the top decision factor in plant-based foods – which can be complex with different notes – flavor is pivotal in the promise of permissible 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 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/](http://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)

SOURCES

- Acosta
- FMI, The Food Marketing Institute
- Forbes
- Global Market Insights
- Good Food Institute
- GrubHub
- International Food Information Council
- Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants
- L.E.K. Consulting
- Mintel
- Nielsen
- Plant Based Foods Association

REQUEST YOUR
FREE
FLAVOR SAMPLE HERE

