

# HOSTING SEASON

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPACE

### TREND REPORT BITE

For many consumers, the early fall and winter months revolve around gatherings with friends and family as they share some of their most loved food and beverages. Many of these are centered around comforting savory or indulgent flavor profiles consumers crave even more during the colder months. Outside of traditional holiday celebrations, consumers today are leaning into making celebrations and traditions of their own, from Friendsgiving to Sunday football snacking, themed parties and more. We're taking a look at the key trends, flavors and products that are standing out for consumers this "hosting season" to see where you can find inspiration for your brand.

#### KEY THEMES

Friendsgiving

Football Season Snacking

Traditional Holiday Celebrations

Make it a Theme



**“Though inflation continues to influence shopping habits as we head into the 2024 holiday season, there’s a clear trend toward food-centric, experiential celebrations, suggesting a meaningful evolution in how consumers approach the holidays.”**

*Food Industry Executive*

# Friendsgiving

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, consumers are also planning Friendsgiving gatherings with their closest friends. This celebration offers the flexibility to embrace a more relaxed, potluck-style meal or keep things traditional with classic Thanksgiving dishes. Last November, U.S. Google searches reflected this enthusiasm, with “Friendsgiving appetizers” receiving the greatest search volume, followed by terms like “Friendsgiving cocktails,” “Friendsgiving sides,” and “Friendsgiving main dishes.”

## FLAVOR INSPIRATION FROM OUR EXPERTS

- Pumpkin Cheesecake
- Apple Cranberry Stuffing
- Pumpkin Chai
- Spiced Pear Vanilla
- Caramel Apple
- Spiced Pear Vanilla
- Maple Bourbon
- Maple Brown Sugar
- Cornbread Stuffing



## PRODUCT OF NOTE

### JENI'S FRIENDSGIVING COLLECTION

Jeni's is hoping pumpkin pie can take the backseat and ice cream can become the star dessert with their Friendsgiving Collection. The brand says, “Friendsgiving is like Thanksgiving with no rules,” and is featuring nine flavors such as Bay Leaf Cheesecake, Pumpkin Seed & Rye Cookie and Sweet Potato Marshmallow Praline to switch things up.



**46% OF 13-39-YEAR-OLDS**

are planning to host a holiday gathering / party this year.

Y Pulse

# Football Season Snacking

What's fall without Sunday football snacking? While not a national holiday, Sunday football prompts consumers to get together and munch on their favorite small bites. Jalapeno poppers to buffalo chicken dip, smash burgers and tacos, the snacking options are endless for a cozy weekend game. Developers can find opportunity in inspiring consumers' next appetizer to bring to their watch party.

## FLAVOR INSPIRATION FROM OUR EXPERTS

- Nacho Cheese
- Ham and Cheese
- Parmesan Garlic
- Fried Dill Pickle
- Beer Mimosa
- Pizza and Ranch
- Honey Barbeque
- Chili Cheese
- Buffalo Chicken



## PRODUCTS OF NOTE

### AUNTIE ANNE'S NFL COLLABORATION

Auntie Anne's teamed up with Atlanta Falcons running back Bijan Robinson who co-founded the Bijan Mustardson brand. Fans can elevate their watch parties by ordering dip cups at select Auntie Anne's through November 30th.



## WING, DIP, CHIP, & SNACK

were a few flavors or menu items consumers looked forward to having during the Superbowl/March Madness.

Datassential

# Traditional Holiday Celebrations

Most consumers say they are planning to celebrate the upcoming holidays — including Thanksgiving (89%), Christmas (91%), and New Year’s (69%) — while focusing more on family, friends, and food. Holiday themed products, new takes on nostalgic holiday flavors, and limited-edition offerings can be opportunistic for developers. Consumers are committed to creating meaningful holiday experiences, while also considering multiple brands and taking advantage of promotional events to cut costs where they can.

## FLAVOR INSPIRATION FROM OUR EXPERTS

- White Cranberry Mimosa
- Peppermint Mocha
- Orange Cranberry Punch
- Chipotle Bloody Mary
- Gingerbread Egg Nog
- Bourbon Pecan



## PRODUCTS OF NOTE

EDIBLE ARCHITECTURE CHARCUTERIE CHALET KIT is a different take on a gingerbread house, made from items found on charcuterie and cheese boards. The kit includes items such as Savory Cracker Walls, Busseto Sliced Salami Shingles, Grated Parmesan Snow, Fruit and Nut Ornaments and more to decorate.



“When it comes to gifts...food and beverage gifts are rising in popularity, with a share of 16%. More than 6 in 10 consumers (63%) plan to buy food and beverage gifts this year, up nine percentage points from last year.”

Food Industry Executive

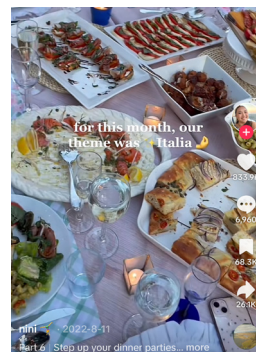
# Make it a Theme

Today’s consumers, especially younger generations like Gen Z, are making gatherings their own by adding trendy and creative themes. On social media we can see anything can be a theme – Coastal, Garden Party, Spanish Summer, Cheeseburgers and Champagne, Greek Feast and more. Brands can engage on social media with these consumers, drawing inspiration from party themes and the flavors they use in dishes for future innovations.

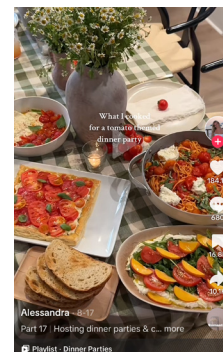
“For more food-focused entertaining, searches for “dinner party” have increased over 6000% [since summer 2023], as people are embracing more intimate time with family and friends at home.”

- Pinterest Newsroom

## TRENDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA



ITALIA THEMED DINNER PARTY  
TikTok @yummeroni



TOMATO THEMED DINNER PARTY  
TikTok @alessandrabrntsema



POT LUCK PARTY  
TikTok @amy.lien

# THE TAKEAWAYS

Hosting season presents a unique opportunity for brands in the food and beverage space to connect with consumers in meaningful ways. From Friendsgiving gatherings and football watch parties to themed celebrations and more, each event is a chance to bring people together over food and drink. By tapping into trending flavors, exploring new product formats, and drawing inspiration from consumer-driven themes, brands can create memorable experiences that resonate during this season. As consumers seek more personalized and exciting hosting options, developers should collaborate with their flavor partner to ensure they meet consumer flavor expectations and elevate these celebrations.

## 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 chat us up at [www.mccormickfona.com/contact-mccormick-flavor-solutions](http://www.mccormickfona.com/contact-mccormick-flavor-solutions)



### INSPIRATION FROM OUR CHEFS: LEFTOVER TURKEY TACO CRESCENT RING

Transform leftover turkey into a tasty dish with ingredients including McCormick® Original Taco Seasoning Mix, corn and cheese. Spoon mixture into a ring of refrigerated crescent dinner rolls and bake until bubbly. This dish is great for many fall hosting events such as football watch parties and Friendsgiving.

Hosting soon? [Check out the recipe here.](#)



Request Your  
**FREE**  
Flavor Sample Here