

SEASONAL FLAVOR LOOKBACK: TRENDS OF WINTER

Spanning from December to mid-March, the winter season is filled with indulgent tastes and nostalgic and holiday inspired flavors consumers look forward to each year. Each winter, consumers await innovative seasonal and limited-edition products that feature exciting new flavors, formats and collaborations. While sweet treats in chocolate confectionery, bakery and sugar & gum confectionery dominated this season, product developers can find opportunity in the seasonal and LTO space cross-category.

From winter's sweet treats to strawberry on the rise and seasonal celebrations, let's take a look back at the trending seasonal products and flavors for winter, and see where you can find inspiration for your brand.



62% OF CONSUMERS

are interested in purchasing limited-edition retail items or restaurant specials/LTOS in the winter.

- DATASSENTIAL



Below were the top flavors in seasonal and limited-edition launches this past winter.

TOP FLAVORS IN SEASONAL/LTO PRODUCTS:

North America Introductions, Dec. 2024- March. 2025

■ Strawberry	■ Sugar
■ Chocolate	■ Orange/Sweet Orange
■ Cherry	■ Raspberry
■ Peppermint	■ Sugar (Icing/Frost/Glaze)
■ Gingerbread	■ Caramel/Caramelised

GROWING FLAVORS IN SEASONAL/LTO PRODUCTS:

Global Introductions, Q3 2023 vs. Q3 2024

■ Strawberry	+1050%
■ Apple (Green).....	+700%
■ Lemon.....	+600%
■ Sour	+400%
■ Honey	+400%

Sources: Mintel GNPD

KEY TRENDS:

Sweet Treats

Strawberry

Seasonal Celebrations



NOTABLE PRODUCT INTRODUCTIONS:

- Market District Reuben Mini Pockets
- Heavenly Hunks Drizzle Blueberry Lemon Gluten-Free Bites
- Harry Potter Butterbeer Goldfish
- Kraft Everything Bagel Flavored Mac & Cheese
- Poppi Cream Soda
- Dove Dark Chocolate Holiday Mint
- Delight Love is Blind Chocolate Covered Strawberry Coffee Creamer



FLAVORS ON THE MENU

918 launched menu items & LTO's in Winter 2025 – DATASSENTIAL, US CHAINS

- Sonic Strawberry Shortcake Snowball Slush Float
- Dairy Queen Mint Oreo Blizzard Treat
- Taco Bell Chicken Cheesy Dipping Burrito



CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY, BAKERY, AND SUGAR & GUM CONFECTIONERY

ranked highest for top North America categories with winter seasonal and limited-edition offerings

- MINTEL GNPD

SWEET TREATS

From chocolate strawberry to gingerbread, developers can find inspiration from sweet flavor profiles spanning chocolate confectionery, bakery, and sugar and gum confectionery introductions. This season was all about the sweet and indulgent consumers love, as well as more unique twists on these flavors.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



PILLSBURY RED VELVET OREO COOKIE DOUGH is limited-edition and ready to eat or bake. It features red velvet cookie dough with oreo pieces.



KELLOG'S EGGO SPICY MAPLE FLAVOR BELGIAN-STYLE STREET WAFFLES are naturally flavored with other flavors and feature brioche-inspired dough, crunchy pearl sugar and real butter.

Sources: Mintel GNPD

STRAWBERRY

This season, strawberry soared in retail and dining. The flavor has shown massive global growth as well as being noted as a top flavor in new product introductions this season. Datassential also predicts strawberry to have 7% predicted 4-year growth on menus.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



V8 PLUS ENERGY SUMMERTIME STRAWBERRY ENERGY DRINK is a limited-edition product with 1 combined serving of veggies and fruit.



PORTILLO'S CHOCOLATE COVERED STRAWBERRY SHAKE features ice cream spun with chocolate frosting and strawberry sauce.

1,050% GLOBAL GROWTH
Q3 2023 vs. Q3 2024

89% OF CONSUMERS
love or like strawberry

Sources: Mintel GNPD, Portillo's, Datassential

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

A time for gathering and celebration, the winter season covers many holidays that can inspire developers. Find opportunity by leaning into nostalgic flavors that provide a sense of comfort for consumers during the holiday season.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



WILLIAMS SONOMA SWEET SHOPPE SHAMROCK GUMMIES were available for St. Patrick's Day 2025 and are naturally flavored.



BLUE BUNNY CANDY CANE CRUNCH MINI BARS FROZEN DAIRY DESSERT features peppermint frozen dairy dessert with other natural flavors dipped in a whipped cream flavored coating and peppermint candy pieces.

Sources: Mintel GNPD

84% OF CONSUMERS

purchase food and beverage products with seasonal flavors for special occasions like celebrations.

- MCCORMICK 2025 SEASONAL FLAVORS SURVEY

THE TAKEAWAYS

The winter season is all about indulgence, celebrating with family and friends and this season, sweet and fruity strawberry! Our research shows that consumers generally find high desirability in seasonal and limited edition products. **89% agree they "find food and beverage with seasonal flavors exciting because I can't always get that flavor."**

There's lots of room for innovation in this space. Our experts are here to help.

Looking for flavor inspiration for your next seasonal or limited-edition product development? Reach out to us for more information. Let's get started!

Sources: McCormick Flavor Solutions 2025 Seasonal Survey



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