

2025 Food Trends

Prepared by
quench®



Trends vs. Fads

Fads are fueled by hype, viral moments, or short-term consumer obsessions. Fads are shallow, easy to replicate, and leave no real impact on consumer behavior or brand growth.

Trends, however, are rooted in research and anchored in shifting consumer attitudes. They endure, evolve, and build momentum.

In modern marketing, trends are a secret weapon, providing a foundation for campaigns that resonate deeply and support long-term brand growth. By identifying true trends, we help marketers craft strategies that connect with audiences today and keep them engaged tomorrow.

In this presentation, we've identified **fourteen trends that fall roughly into three broad categories.**



Head

Rational Appeal

Heart

Emotive Triggers

Body

Physical Benefits

Head

Rational Appeal

Transparency (Purposeful Packaging • Refilleries)
The Personalized Plate
Second Chance Foods

Heart

Emotive Triggers

Snackification • Culinary Passports
The Mini Revolution • Sweet Heat
Branded Fusions • Experiential Dining

Body

Physical Benefits

Gut Health • Appetite Adjustment
Dream State • Smart Sips • Mindful Mixology



Head

Rational Appeal

Consumer Insight:

Today's savvy consumer wants to understand their food's journey, lifestyle solutions, value-based products and memorable experiences.

Macro Trend:

Transparency, convenience and value.

Transparency

Consumers want to see and understand a brand's environmental impact, sourcing and processing.

Consumers demand greater transparency and sustainability in the sourcing of ingredients with a focus on locally available, organic and ethically produced foods.

Ready-to-eat meals will prioritize minimal processing and clean-label ingredients.



Purposeful Packaging

Brands will seek packaging innovations such as:

- Biodegradable materials
- Dissolvable packaging
- Edible packaging
- Smart technologies
- Minimalistic designs

Search volume for “sustainable packaging” is up **nearly 81%** in the past five years.



Refilleries: A Sustainable Solution to the Growing Food Packaging Crisis

It's a staggering statistic: nearly one-third of all municipal solid waste* comes from food packaging.

Refilleries are gaining national momentum, where customers bring their own containers to refill with everything from dry food staples to personal care and cleaning products.

*US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



The Personalized Plate

Smart tools, meal kits, and tracking apps empower consumers to design meals that meet their unique wellness needs.

Convenience Through Customization

People are embracing more personalized nutrition, tailoring their meals not just for taste, but for their unique dietary needs and lifestyle preferences.

- Personalized Nutrition Services
- Meal Kits and Subscription Services
- DNA- and Microbiome-Based Supplements and Meals
- Build-Your-Own-Style Quick-Service Restaurants (QSR)
- Tracking Apps



Second Chance Foods

New brands are born from
upcycling food waste.

Turning Waste Into Taste

By utilizing leftover ingredients, byproducts, and food scraps, companies are creating nutritious, high-quality products while addressing one of the most pressing issues in global food systems.





Heart

Emotional Drivers

Consumer Insight:

Today's consumer, particularly Gen Z, is looking for adventure. Social media broadens exposure to new flavors, global influence, and Instagram-worthy moments.

Macro Trend:

Food as an experience.

Snackification

From new flavors to mindful eating practices, snacking is being redefined.

Snacks Are No Longer **Secondary**

In fact, half of all eating occasions among Gen Z and Millennials are quick, convenient bites rather than traditional full meals.

- **Adventurous Eating:** New flavors, new brands
- **Mindfulness:** Eating with intention
- **Portion Control:** Moderate indulgences
- **Energy Boost:** A quick pick-me-up
- **Lifestyle:** On-the-go convenience



Culinary Passports

Millennials and Gen Z seek bold global flavors inspired by travel and culture.

**1**

Middle Eastern and North African Flavors

Key Flavors: Sumac, za'atar, harissa, turmeric, pomegranate, rosewater, tahini, and preserved lemon.

2

Southeast Asian and Indian Flavors

Key Flavors: Kaffir lime, galangal, tamarind, lemongrass, curry leaves, coconut milk, curry pastes, and spicy chilies (e.g., bird's eye chili, serrano).

**3****Latin American and Caribbean Flavors**

Key Flavors: Aji amarillo, tamarind, hibiscus, lime, chipotle, annatto, and Mexican chili blends (e.g., ancho, guajillo).

4**West African Flavors**

Key Flavors: Peanuts, palm oil, fermented locust beans (iru), berbere spice blend, yaji seasoning, and Scotch bonnet peppers.

5**Japanese and Korean Flavors**

Key Flavors: Miso, yuzu, ponzu, wasabi, soy sauce, sesame oil, gochujang, and kimchi.

**6**

Flavors from the Mediterranean Basin

Key Flavors: Olive oil, sumac, citrus, garlic, za'atar, saffron, and pomegranate.

7

Tropical and Exotic Fruits

Key Flavors: Jackfruit, dragon fruit, passion fruit, rambutan, tamarillo, and baobab.

8

Fermented and Pickled Flavors

Key Flavors: Kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, kombucha, tempeh, and pickled vegetables (e.g., pickled radishes, pickled onions).

The Mini Revolution

Beloved products go bite-sized, blending convenience, adaptability, and indulgence for today's busy mindful consumers.

Good Things Come In **Small Packages**

Miniature versions of popular snacks, drinks, and even meals offer convenience, portion control, and consumer curiosity.

- Appeal to younger demographics
- Promise of portion control
- Convenience
- Trial opportunities
- More shelf visibility



Sweet Heat

To the delight of adventurous palates, **swicy** blends sweetness with bold, fiery spice in drinks, snacks, and desserts.

Swicy: The Sweet Heat

The demand for bolder flavors is especially prevalent among Millennials and Gen Z, who challenge traditional flavor profiles and seek out daring combinations.

Whether it's spicy lemonade, hot honey, or sriracha-infused desserts, brands are turning up the heat and pairing it with sweetness in unexpected — and irresistibly delicious — ways.

Informed by this trend, quench's long-time client, and beloved chip brand, Herr's, introduced a Honey Sriracha flavor to their Kettle chip variety.



Branded Fusions

Brands are blending flavors,
products, and partnerships to
create buzzworthy collaborations.

Mashups aren't just a fun way to get people talking — they're the strategic move.

- Social media virality
- Appeal for younger audiences
- Brand awareness
- Reflection of cultural trends
- Exclusivity and urgency



Beauty and Food: A Delicious Collaboration

Food brands are increasingly looking to the beauty industry as a way to expand their reach, while beauty brands are capitalizing on the allure of food-inspired products to attract a broader audience.



Experiential Dining

Food isn't just for eating any more.
It's for memory-making,
experience-forming, and fun.

Immersive Food Experiences

Experiences are anything from "pop-up" dinners in unique venues, to multi-sensory meals where guests interact with their environment, to celebrity chef collaborations that turn a simple meal into a performance.

71% of Gen Z and 68% of Millennials plan to dine out more in 2025



Most popular kinds of dining experiences:

- Tasting menus (38%)
- Dinner and a show (34%)
- Bottomless brunch (29%)
- Special deals/promotional offers (28%)
- Themed dining experiences (16%)

OpenTable Consumer Research: An online survey was conducted by PureSpectrum among 1503 US consumers

Immersive Food Experiences

Technology-Driven Sensations:

- **Augmented Reality (AR) Dining:** Imagine pointing your phone at a dish and seeing its origin story unfold, or watching virtual flames dance around a dessert. AR overlays digital elements, enhancing storytelling and creating interactive experiences.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) Gastronomy:** Put on a headset and be transported to a Tuscan vineyard while savoring a pasta dish, or dive into the depths of the ocean while enjoying a seafood feast. VR creates entirely immersive environments that complement and enhance the dining experience.
- **Personalized Sensory Experiences:** Imagine a restaurant that adjusts the lighting, music, and even scents to match your mood or the flavor profile of your meal. AI and sensor technology will enable personalized dining experiences that cater to individual preferences.



Each glass of Lynchburg Lemonade came with a QR code that, when scanned, triggered an AR experience





Body

Physical Benefits

Gut Health

The new core of wellness, connecting digestion to energy, immunity, and even mental clarity.

Consumer Insight:

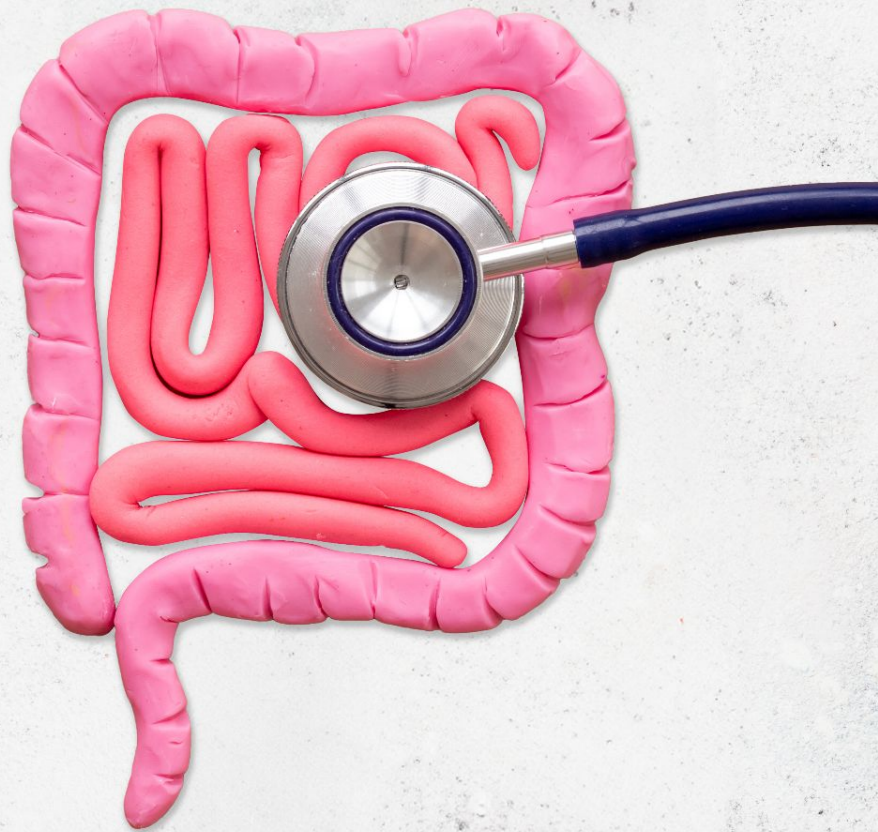
While many fads have come and gone since COVID, one has become undeniably permanent — greater awareness of and focus on health. Today's consumers are driven by proactive health.

Macro Trend:

A redefinition of healthy.

Gut health is the foundation of **overall wellness**.

- Brain health
- Sleep quality
- Mood regulation
- Skin and hair health
- Even chronic disease prevention



The Next Generation of Gut Health Advocates

43%

of Gen Z consumers in the U.S. consider gut health an essential part of their wellness routine.*

Nearly
40%

of Gen Z are now searching for probiotic-rich foods, prebiotic supplements, and fermented options.

*Mintel

Unexpected Gut Health Products

Probiotics and prebiotics are now showing up in a variety of snack foods and beverages, ranging from chips and popcorn to fruit snacks, coffee, soda and even ice cream.



Appetite Adjustment

GLP-1 users are transforming consumption.

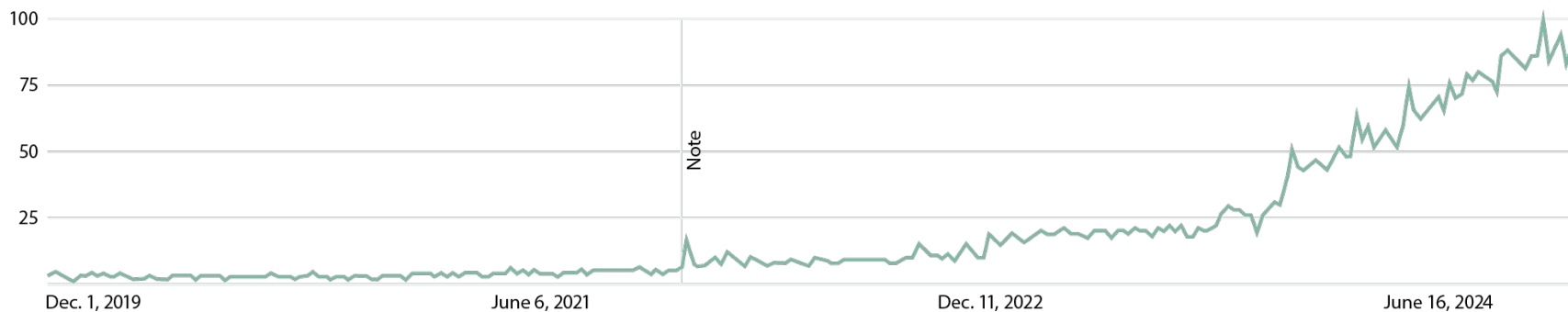
The GLP-1 Revolution

24 million people will be using GLP-1 drugs by 2035.

These drugs **reduce appetite and calorie consumption by 20-30%** fewer calories each day.

The industry anticipates declines of up to 3% in sales of less healthy foods like candy, baked goods, salty snacks, sugary drinks and alcohol.

Search volume of "GLP-1" over the last five years



The Rise of **Weight-Loss-Friendly Foods**

Consumers are seeking alternatives to traditional high-calorie snacks and meals, such as:

- Low-sugar and no-sugar beverages
- Protein shakes
- Meal replacement options
- Alcohol-free drinks



Protein-Focused Foods: A Necessity for Muscle Maintenance

Since protein is critical in weight loss, expect more protein-forward foods in the market, with simple but effective packaging updates that telegraph their benefits.



Dream State

Sleep takes the spotlight, with consumers exploring diets, habits, and even travel to achieve more restorative rest.



62%

of Gen Z actively seeks ways to improve their rest, with sleep aids, relaxation techniques, or lifestyle changes.

Products like magnesium-enriched bars and sleep-enhancing chocolates are emerging as the next big thing in functional foods.

Smart Sips

From stress relief to brain power,
drinks now provide holistic health
perks beyond hydration.

Consumers Seek **Wellness in Every Sip**

From **energy** to **hydration**, and from **immunity** to **mental wellness**, what you drink can support your health journey.

62%

of shoppers prioritize low sugar when choosing functional beverages.

Hartman Group

54%

Increase in sales of functional beverages in the last four years.

NielsenIQ

A Drink for Every Function

- **Energy Drinks:** Boosting mental and physical energy, with adaptogens, nootropics or with ingredients like caffeine and taurine.
- **Sports Drinks:** Electrolyte-rich options designed to replenish and hydrate after intense physical activity.
- **Sports Protein and Meal Replacement Drinks:** Offering a balanced combination of proteins, carbs, and fats for muscle recovery or meal substitution.



A Drink for Every Function

- **Yogurt Beverages:** Probiotic-rich drinks that support gut health.
- **Dairy Alternative Beverages:** Plant-based milks (almond, oat, soy, etc.) providing dairy-free options with added nutrients.
- **Juices:** Often fortified with vitamins, antioxidants, or adaptogens.



A Drink for Every Function

- **Waters (including Plant-Based Waters):** Infused waters that may include nutrients or functional ingredients like electrolytes or CBD.
- **Carbonates:** Functional sodas and sparkling drinks with added benefits.
- **Teas:** Herbal, green, or fermented teas known for their mood-boosting and antioxidant properties.



Mindful Mixology

Beverages that offer all the vibes
but none of alcohol's aftermath.

The Rise of Mindful Drinking

People are increasingly enjoying the growing selection of **non-alcoholic** and **enhanced beverages**.

20%

Less alcohol is consumed by Gen Z than Millennials*

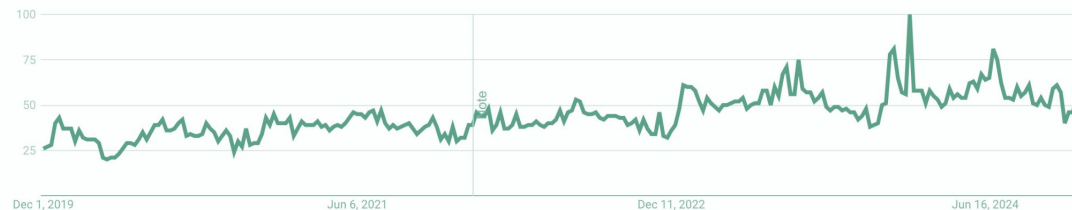
*World Finance Report



The Rise of Mindful Drinking

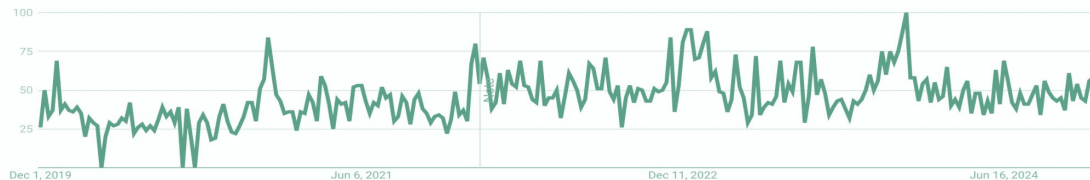
Search volume of
non-alcoholic beer
over the last five years

Interest over time ?



Search volume of
non-alcoholic
cocktails over the
last five years

Interest over time ?



An Alternate Buzz

Gen Z and **Millennials** are increasingly turning to beverages with a more **functional twist**, particularly **cannabis-infused drinks**. These products, which often contain **THC**, may also include **caffeine**, **alcohol**, or other active ingredients designed to enhance mood, reduce stress, or aid with sleep.



Altered States

Search volume of THC drinks over the last five years



Celebs Have Embraced the Non-alcoholic Drink Trend and **Launched Their Own Brands**



Tom Holland releases Bero



Katy Perry is cofounder of De Soi



Blake Lively is founder of Betty Buzz

Summary



Head

Consumers want to know where their food comes from and which foods are best for them as individuals.



Heart

Consumers want novelty, memorable experiences, and adventurous flavors.



Body

Consumers want better gut and sleep health. They're turning to functional beverages without alcohol.

Cheers!

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