



TOP 10 2024 FLAVOR TRENDS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

With the new year right around the corner it's time for our trend predictions you don't want to miss out on. We are counting down our Top 10 2024 Trends that will take you through the world of functional beverages, marketing, flavor and more. Touching on trends like iced coffee or teas, brand personalization, cognitive health, and sugar reduction show us a glimpse of what next year holds for functional beverages and marketing. Also, included are trends such as mocktail bars, sustainability, the cannabis craze, indulgent treats, unique flavors, and functional hydration. Our forecast for 2024 is packed full of new and exciting ways to enjoy our favorite products.



Ice Cold Energy

Starting off, our first trend is all about cold coffee. This is leading to becoming one of the top 2024 flavor trends. Caffeine is the most popular stimulant in the world. Consumed mainly through coffee, teas, and energy drinks, "more than 80% of adults regularly consume caffeine" in North America (CAMH Caffeine Report). But a new trend is emerging where consumers are opting for their simulants served on the rocks. Now more than ever consumers are going for iced cold brews over hot brews, even during the winter months. This rising trend is the result of three main factors:

1. Must Go Faster

Whether they are consciously aware of it or not, consumers gravitate towards convenience and efficiency, with Gen Z being the biggest culprit. You might be wondering; how can a coffee order be any more efficient than it already is? We can preorder our drinks through apps and have it ready for us before we even walk through the door. Or brew our own hot coffee in a matter of minutes. While this is true, what is the first thing you do when accepting your piping hot cup of coffee or tea? You wait. Unless you want a burnt tongue, you will wait for it to cool before drinking. Iced coffee, on the other hand, is ready to go, ready to drink, ready to enjoy. Now that's efficient (Iced Coffee: A look into Gen Z's Addiction).

2. Cold vs. Hot Brew: Yes, there is a Difference.

Not all coffees are created equal, and there actually is a difference between the two brewing processes. A hot brew is made in a matter of minutes by boiling water and brewing the coffee beans or tea leaves. Cold brew is made by soaking the beans or leaves in cold water for 24 hours. The need for efficiency still exists and explains why so many consumers are flocking to their local coffee shops for cold brews as opposed to making them from home. Why soak your own cold brew when you can order it?

These two brewing methods alter, not just the length of time, but also the taste. Cold brew has a lower acidity level, which can help those who experience heartburn. Hot brew can offer a fuller, richer, and more bitter flavor profile. Cold brew is less bitter and smoother, which makes it the perfect base for adding all our favorite syrups and creamers.

3. The final reason for iced coffee and tea becoming so popular coincides with our next 2024 trend...

Make it Personal.

In an interview with The New York Times last year, Howard Schultz, Starbucks founder and interim chief executive, reported that cold beverages "accounted for 75% of its beverage sales in the quarter". This large percentage is largely thanks to Gen Z who like "to customize and make the drink their own, and then post pictures on social media" (Starbucks Reports Record Revenue, Driven Mostly by Gen Z's Love of Iced Drinks).

While you can customize hot drinks, it's not as aesthetically pleasing when snapping pics because the cups are opaque. You can't see the colors of your personalized drink. Or the way the creams and syrups mix as they sink through the ice. We've all seen a picture of a cup of hot coffee, but we haven't seen your personal concoction in a clear tall glass. Now that is something special.



The 2024 flavor trends of personalization doesn't stop at iced drinks. Everywhere you look from music apps like Spotify, offering personalized mix tapes based on your music taste, to Bitmoji on smartphones, brands have been trying to personalize their consumer's experience for years. Coca-Cola famously launched its "Share a Coke" campaign back in 2011 where they replaced the traditional Coke label with a person's name. Countless examples exist of brands creating personalized experiences and consumers are eating it up. With the rise of social media and the importance of individuality, personalization is becoming more and more lucrative to product marketing. According to Salesforce, "57% of online buyers are happy to exchange personal data in return for personalized offers or discounts. While a similar majority of 58% say personalized experiences are important why buying from a company".

A recent avenue to personalize products is hyperlocal sourcing. Most common in restaurants, hyperlocal means there is a strong focus on sourcing materials and ingredients from local farms and suppliers. Breweries are famous for offering a local beer made for and by the host city. It can add a fun personal touch to those who live in the city and want to enjoy what the local food scene has to offer.



Occasional Delights

It's no secret that the financial situation of consumers is changing, and thus, so are their spending habits. CNBC and Morning Consult conducted a study that found "92% of Americans are pulling back on spending" and are reallocating their budgets to the bare necessities. Even "cutting back on essential items, like groceries, utilities, and gas". What does this mean? Occasional delights, treating yourself, splurging on the seldom treat is becoming more common.

"Individuals are freeing up resources to treat themselves to luxurious experiences or high-end products that provide a temporary respite from their financial concerns."

(From 'Must-Have' to 'Indulgence' to 'Just No' - The Changing Customer Behavior of 2023)

Figuring out how to use the indulgence mindset of customers to your advantage is the challenge for 2024 flavor trends. Here are a few ways to make it so when a consumer indulges in the occasional treat, they're sure to pick yours.

1. Personalization

As discussed previously, making your brand personal to the customer is a great way to have them come back for more.

2. Identify the Emotion

Figure out why your customers are buying a product, and what emotion leads them to do it. Emphasize the enjoyment of splurging and how much fun it can be to treat yourself. You can focus on the stability of your product, showcasing that no matter how hard times get, consumers can always rely on their favorite treat.

3. Focus on Utility

More and more customers are looking for products that can do it all. They want a cognitive health beverage that can help them sleep, remain focused throughout the day, taste good, and so on. Instead of buying four products that can do one thing, your customers want an all-in-one. Showcasing how your product can help them with several things in their life, and we can help you make it taste amazing.

4. Limited Time Only

Occasional indulgences lend themselves to limited-edition products. Look at the massive success of pumpkin spice lattes. Starbucks has created a product line of seasonal offerings with everyone eagerly awaiting the fall season. PepsiCo has a slew of limited-time products that are there to entice the infrequent buyer, like Pepsi Salted Caramel soda. Offering limited-time flavors can create newfound excitement for your product and help justify the occasional splurge.

Cognitive Health: 2024 Flavor Waves

While the 2024 flavor trends of reimagining iced drinks and hyper-personalization are rising, simultaneously, consumers are looking to improve their cognitive health through beverages more than any other consumption category. A reported 50% of consumers are turning to functional and fortified drinks to boost their health, and reducing caffeine is the first line of defense when it comes to taking care of cognitive health. It might seem counterintuitive to reduce caffeine, which is known for prolonging fatigue, enhancing intellectual performance, and elevating mood. All of which are desired for improving cognitive health. However, the perceived negative effects of too much caffeine are encouraging consumers to search out reduced caffeine beverages and caffeine alternatives.

FMCG Gurus Health and Wellness Study – April 2023

Consumers want the best of both worlds to improve their cognitive health. Creating products that offer the focus and productivity caffeine provides, while avoiding the side effects of anxiety, reduced fine motor coordination, and impaired sleep, will be a challenge in 2024. So, let's walk through some solutions to creating the perfect cognitive health beverage that will have your customers loving the taste and functionality. Bonus points if it's served on ice.



Over 58% of consumers are most concerned about their mental wellbeing and are actively seeking out ways to "improve their health even if not suffering from health conditions" (FMCG Gurus Health and Wellness Study – April 2023). Try utilizing these tips to create your next cognitive health product.

1. Low Caffeine Alternatives:

According to Mintel, "focus and productivity are the latest mental and emotional well-being functionalities that consumers are seeking" (Mintel's 2021 Global Food and Drink Trend 'Feed the Mind'). Finding a low-caffeine alternative that offers sustained energy without over-caffeination can be achieved by using ingredients such as:

- **Laurina Coffee Beans:** a drought-resistant coffee variant with a naturally lower caffeine content (about 1/3 to 1/2 the caffeine in standard varieties).
- **Yacon:** contains 30% less caffeine than coffee and contains theophylline and theobromine.
- **Guayusa "Super leaf":** contains similar amounts of caffeine to coffee but is slow releasing which means it lasts for hours longer and avoids the spike and crash typical of coffee.

2. Adaptogens, Nootropics, and Plants:

To avoid the dreaded caffeine crash, but maintain sustained focus and energy, other plants can offer a great solution. Adaptogens, nootropics, botanicals, legumes, vegetables, or fungi can all offer nutritional and cognitive benefits to functional beverages. Try including some of the following in your next product:

- **Pinto Beans:** a good source of magnesium which is known to reduce stress and fatigue.
- **Mushroom Blends:** a caffeine-free, energy alternative with naturally occurring vitamins and minerals (see our other article on functional mushrooms).
- **Botanicals and Nerves:** ingredients like ashwagandha, holy basil, and Schisandra help with lowering blood pressure, reducing emotional and environmental stressors, and offer calming benefits. In addition, nerves such as lavender, hops, and passionflower are calming botanicals to help with relaxation.

Sugar Reduction

Reducing caffeine isn't the only thing consumers are looking to lessen in their beverage of choice. Consuming less sugar is becoming more important to consumers, more so than low fat, salts, or calories. Lowering sugar intake is shaping up to be one of the most healthy 2024 flavor trends. Reports show that 63% of consumers looking to improve their diet choose to reduce their sugar intake. In contrast, only 43% of consumers choose to reduce salt intake, and 22% choose to reduce fat intake, showing that sugar reduction is a higher concern.

FMCG Gurus Active Nutrition Survey – August 2023

It's clear that consumers are looking for lower sugar products, and doing so is the easy part. What's difficult is that 74% of consumers rank taste and flavors as more important characteristics when choosing what food and drink to buy as opposed to the 69% of consumers who prioritize healthy and nutritious options. Essentially, "consumers want products that taste good and are deemed affordable, which will be especially important in a recessionary environment. After that, ingredients used in formulation play a significant role in shaping purchasing behavior".

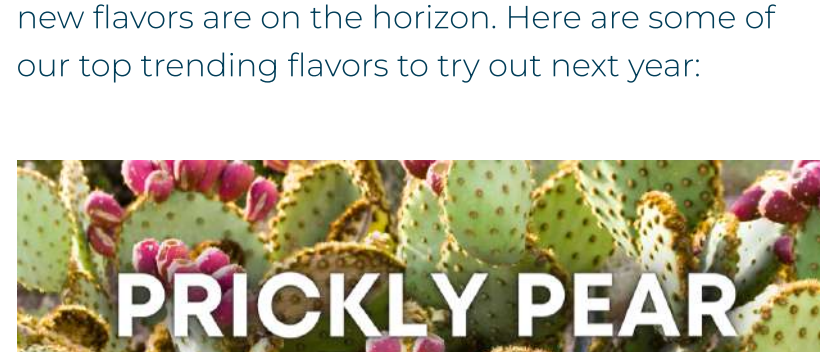
FMCG Gurus Clean Label Trends in North America – July 2023

Of course, there are simple options for reducing sugar, like using sucralose. At nearly 500 times sweeter than sugar, it's easy to make something taste good with something so sweet. However, 83% of consumers want to see the label claim of "100% natural" on their products. Rendering sucralose unusable. Here are other alternatives to creating a reduced sugar product, while still being able to claim that it's all natural.

- Agave
- Juices and Concentrates
- Stevia
- Honey
- Monk Fruit Extract
- Coconut Sugar
- Date Sugar
- Fruit Puree

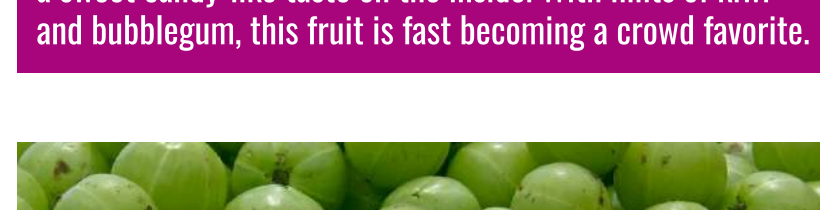
Unique Tastes: 2024 Taste Developments

Limited edition products are the perfect tasting grounds for experimenting with exciting new flavors. The market has been saturated with classic flavors like orange, raspberry, blue raspberry, fruit punch, vanillas, and chocolates for decades, but new flavors are on the horizon. Here are some of our top trending flavors to try out next year:



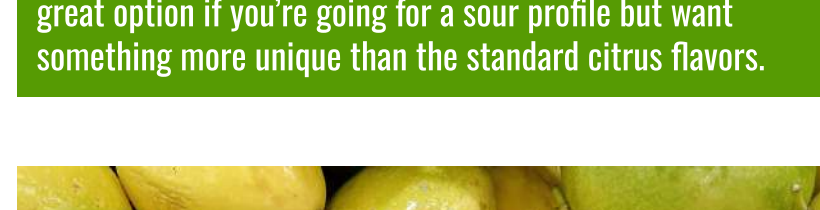
PRICKLY PEAR

A fun tropical fruit with an intimidating prickly outside, but a sweet candy-like taste on the inside. With hints of kiwi and bubblegum, this fruit is fast becoming a crowd favorite.



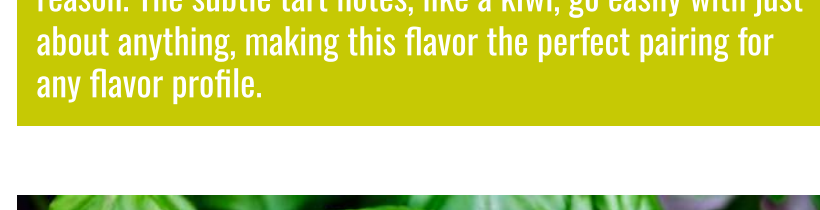
GOOSEBERRY

This fruit is like eating a grape, only tarter. It tastes very much like a lemon, with subtle sweet afternotes. It's a great option if you're going for a sour profile but want something more unique than the standard citrus flavors.



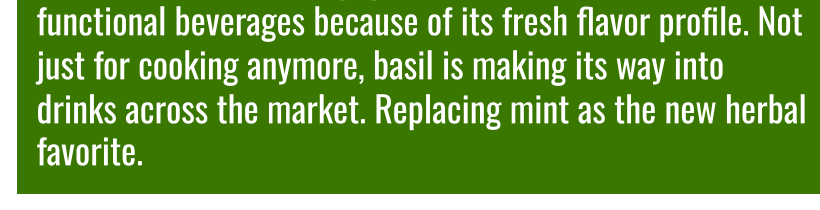
PASSION FRUIT

This flavor is becoming more common place and for good reason. The subtle tart notes, like a kiwi, go easily with just about anything, making this flavor the perfect pairing for any flavor profile.



BASIL

This is one of the most popular herbal flavors to use in functional beverages because of its fresh flavor profile. Not just for cooking anymore, basil is making its way into drinks across the market. Replacing mint as the new herbal favorite.



YUZU

Not ready to give up that citrus flavor? Try using yuzu in your next product. It has a bright, tart taste like a grapefruit or mandarin orange.



ELDERFLOWER

This is a fresh, floral ingredient with undertones of lychee and pear. It's less overpowering than rose, which can be a polarizing botanical, and more versatile when paired with other ingredients.

Getting creative with new flavors is a fun way to maintain customer interest, and capitalize on 2024 flavor trends. Often pairing a unique and trending flavor with a classic can help mitigate the risk customers may face when deciding whether to buy. For example, pairing a prickly pear flavor with a lime still feels new, but the lime adds a sense of security.

Flavor Technology



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Becoming Sustainable: 2024 Flavor Evolutions

Our next trend is about reducing waste, adopting sustainable working processes, and incorporating recycled materials through every step of production. From the packaging to the ingredients used, consumers are incredibly conscious of the environmental impact a product can have on their community. Some ways to become more sustainable, and environmentally conscious include:

- Reducing waste
- Cutting pollution and emissions
- Minimizing impact on the environment
- Improving employee safety and health
- Lowering energy and water consumption
- Advancing diversity in hiring
- Promoting a greater range of healthy products

The Key Factors Driving and Hampering F&B Sustainability

Consumers are credited, in large part, to the importance of this trend. People want to feel good about what they buy, not just from a health perspective, but from a global one as well. The ability to offer ethical and sustainable products will be the difference that gets your product from store shelves to consumer's hands. Whether that means rethinking packaging and switching from single-use plastic to glass, or reducing food waste by utilizing and selling byproducts are all ways to become more sustainable and capitalize on 2024 flavor trends.

Cannabis

Who doesn't love a relaxing night with friends? A trending new way to host parties is with cannabis-infused seltzers. Like mocktails, these tend to be alcohol-free, but with a new twist. Brands are delving into a new niche market by incorporating either CBD, THC, Delta-8, or a combination of the three into their ready-to-drink beverages. It's a new form of 2024 flavor trends. They're a nice way to have an energizing social experience without the use of smoking or alcohol, while also feeling a sense of relaxation and ease.

Some brands utilizing cannabis in their products include:

- Wunder
- Mad Lily Spritzer
- ALT
- Cann
- Rebel Coast
- S'Shots
- Pabst Labs
- Artet



Cannabis is a bitter and astringent flavor experience. A way to work with those two tastes and create a satisfying beverage is by pairing mildly bitter flavors with this ingredient to help create a more natural-tasting product. Flavors such as ginger or blood orange. Another way to flavor this ingredient is by using citrus that can help counteract the stringency.

Popular flavor combinations we see being paired with cannabis-infused beverages are:

- Lemon Ginger
- Blood Orange Cardamom
- Ginger Pear
- Raspberry Hibiscus
- Lemon Lavender
- Grapefruit Rosemary

It is important to note, the use of cannabis is not legal in every state. Be sure to consult your state's laws before embarking on this trend.

