

MINTEL IDENTIFIES TOP GLOBAL FOOD AND DRINK TRENDS FOR 2016

Looking ahead to 2016, Mintel's Global Food and Drink Analyst Jenny Zegler discusses the top food and drink trends set to impact global markets, including implications for both consumers and brands in the year ahead.

ALTERNATIVES EVERYWHERE

Veggie burgers and non-dairy milks have escaped the realm of substitutes primarily for people with dietary concerns and followers of vegetarian diets. Instead, the growing ranks of novel protein sources and potential replacements appeal to the everyday consumer, foreshadowing a profoundly changed marketplace in which what was formerly 'alternative' could take over the mainstream.

ARTIFICIAL: PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1

Consumer demands for natural and 'less processed' food and drink are forcing companies to remove artificial ingredients. Products that have yet to do so, will face scrutiny - or worse - from consumers who are looking for natural formulations with recognisable ingredients".

ECO IS THE NEW REALITY

Drought, worries about food waste and other natural phenomena not only affect the worldwide food and drink supply, but influence preparation and production. In 2016, sustainability evolves from being good for the bottom line to being a necessary part of new product development for the common good.

FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

As the adage goes with beauty, 'It's what's on the inside that counts'. Consumers are recognising that diets can connect with the way they look and feel. This places new emphasis on packaged products that are formulated to help people's physical appearance as well as their personal wellness, creating a market for products enhanced with everything from collagen to probiotics.

FOR EVERY BODY

For many, fitness is simply about becoming more active. The rising promotion of athletic programmes that encourage consumers to get and stay active showcases a parallel need for food and drink that helps consumers get acquainted with sports nutrition. This creates an opportunity for communication and product ranges that progress alongside people's activity levels and goals.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

Consumers have been romanced by product origin, ingredients or inspiration stories. With similar claims made by legitimately hand-crafted as well as mass-produced products, this proliferation - and occasional propagation - will find consumers and regulators alike seeking products with verified claims.

E-REVOLUTION: FROM CARTS TO CLICKS

Online shopping, apps and delivery services are transforming consumers' access to deals, niche offerings and even full meals. While the internet has not yet vastly changed the landscape of grocery shopping, innovations encourage consumers to think outside traditional physical retailers.

DIET BY DNA

Interest in natural and 'getting back to basics' has boosted ancient grains and superfoods, fostering a principle that age-old staples are better than today's manufactured options. Interest in historical ingredients suggests that consumers could make efforts to unlock the keys to their personal physiology and design diets by connecting with their own ancestry or genetic make-up.

GOOD ENOUGH TO TWEET

The rise of food-centric media has sparked new interest in cooking, not only for the sake of nourishment, but for the purposes of sharing one's creations via social media. This finds people taking divergent paths: some hope to become well-rounded enough to compete on popular television programmes, while others privately cultivate specialties ranging from cupcakes to curries. Either way, people are cooking to share with friends and social media followers.

TABLE FOR ONE

Across age groups, more consumers are living in single-person households or occasionally eating meals alone. These meals for one require right-sized products and packaging as well as promotions that further erode any stigma of dining solo.

FAT SHEDS STIGMA

Consumers' negative stereotype that any and all fat content is evil has begun to diminish. The awareness of the many sources of good and bad fats is ushering in a paradigm shift in which fat content is not the first and foremost consideration - and barrier - in the search for healthy products.

EAT WITH YOUR EYES

Flavour has long been the core of innovation, but more visual and share-focused societies call for innovation that is boldly coloured and artfully constructed. Finding inspiration in global foodservice offerings, brands can experiment with vibrant colours and novel shapes to make packaged products worthy of consumer praise and social media posts.

Jenny Zegler, Global Food and Drink Analyst at Mintel, said: "These trends explore how consumers' evolving priorities, opportunities from advancements in functional formulation and the almost inescapable reach of technology will affect food and drink in the coming year. Consumers are not the only influencers, as shifting economics, natural phenomena and social media are shaping what, how, where and with whom consumers are choosing to eat and drink".

The trends will play out differently across the world based upon a variety of factors, including cultural norms, regional availability and societal needs. In some cases, established trends from one area are migrating to new regions, while a few emerging trends have the potential to disrupt the worldwide landscape.

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