



2026 FLAVOR TRENDS

How global influence, fruit-forward balance, newstalgia, and function are shaping what's next in flavor.



Flavor is becoming more intentional across foodservice. As expectations evolve, operators are moving beyond single-note profiles to create more distinctive, menu-ready beverages. Our trendologist* connects data and foodservice signals to uncover the flavors shaping what's next.

FOUR MACRO TRENDS ARE SHAPING THIS SHIFT:



GLOBAL

Globally inspired flavors continue to gain traction as consumers seek new ways to explore familiar formats. These profiles balance discovery with approachability, often introducing subtle savory, toasted, or umami elements.



FRUIT-FORWARD

Bright, expressive fruit flavors are driving refreshment and broad appeal. Citrus, tropical, and tart profiles create balance while supporting lighter, more approachable beverage applications.



NEWSTALGIA

Nostalgia is being reimagined through bold color, indulgent flavor, and playful formats. Familiar profiles are evolving into more experiential, visually engaging applications that resonate across generations.



FLAVOR + FUNCTION

Functional ingredients deliver targeted benefits while also contributing to flavor. Botanical, floral, and spice-driven profiles help bridge wellness and taste, supporting better-for-you products that drive repeat purchase.

*Trend expert who translates data, market signals, and emerging trends into insights that inform beverage innovation.

AWAY-FROM-HOME

Across foodservice, beverages are becoming more experience-driven, with flavor playing a central role in how menus stand out. Operators are moving beyond traditional profiles, layering global, fruit-forward, nostalgic, and functional flavors to fuel LTO pipelines and create visually engaging drinks designed for discovery.



Vibrant Trendologist:

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Foodservice



MACRO TREND
Global**TAJÍN**

Tajín delivers a tangy, salty, and mildly spicy profile that adds contrast and complexity to beverages. Its momentum is strong, **with +196.4% 4-year growth on menus¹**, reflecting increasing demand for bold, layered flavor experiences.

HORCHATA

Horchata delivers creamy, cinnamon-vanilla notes with soft, nutty sweetness, creating an approachable global flavor in beverages. Its presence is expanding in foodservice, with **+16% projected 4-year growth** and a "Gaining Fast" heat score¹, signaling rising familiarity and adoption.

**TRES LECHES**

Tres leches brings a rich, silky, caramelized milk profile that translates indulgent dessert flavors into beverages. Its appeal continues to grow, with **+19.8% projected 4-year growth across all menus and 42% of consumers loving or liking the flavor¹**, reinforcing its role in indulgent drink innovation.

**TRENDOLOGIST PICK****YUZU**

Yuzu brings vibrant citrus flavor with subtle sweetness and aromatic complexity, offering a more elevated alternative to traditional citrus. Its momentum continues to build in beverage menus, with **+32% projected 4-year growth¹**.

Yuzu brings a bright, distinctive citrus that elevates everyday beverage formats.



**Yuzu Honey
Green Tea
Refresher**

Sources: ¹Datassential

MACRO TREND

Fruit-Forward



APPLE

Apple delivers a versatile flavor profile, ranging from sweet and honey-like to sharp and tart, making it adaptable across beverage formats. Its presence remains strong on menus, with **+67% projected 4-year growth overall** and continued expansion in QSR and fast casual beverages¹.

PRICKLY PEAR

Prickly pear offers a mild, subtly sweet and refreshing profile, supporting lighter, more approachable beverages. Its momentum is building, with **+73% 4-year growth** and a **+20% projected growth¹**.



Sources: ¹Datassential

BLACK CURRANT

Also trending
in food &
beverage
ingredient
solutions

Black currant brings deep, tart, wine-like flavor that adds contrast and complexity to fruit-forward beverages. While still emerging, only **17% of U.S. consumers have tried and liked it¹**, signaling opportunity for discovery-driven drink innovation.



TRENOLOGIST PICK

DRAGON FRUIT

Dragon fruit delivers mild sweetness with a refreshing, slightly tart profile, supporting vibrant, fruit-forward beverages. Growth remains strong across beverage menus, with **+190% 4-year growth** and **+97% projected growth¹**.

Dragon fruit brings bold color and refreshing flavor that help beverages stand out on menu.



Dragon Fruit
Coconut
Refresher

MACRO TREND

Newstalgia

BIRTHDAY CAKE

Birthday cake brings rich vanilla, buttery cake, and icing notes, carrying dessert-inspired indulgence into beverages. Its growth remains strong, with **+31.9% projected 4-year growth, reinforcing continued demand for nostalgic flavors¹**. These profiles create high-impact, indulgent drink experiences that resonate across generations.

ORANGE CITRUS

Orange citrus delivers a bold, nostalgic profile defined by sharp, citrusy tartness balanced with intense sweetness, inspired by classic juice and childhood beverage formats. This aligns with broader consumer behavior, with over **70% of consumers enjoying products that evoke memories of their past, such as childhood experiences¹**.



Sources: ¹Datassential

FROSTED COOKIE

Frosted cookie delivers soft, buttery sweetness with a sugar cookie base and vanilla icing, extending nostalgic snack flavors into beverage formats. Growth continues to accelerate, with **+60% 4-year growth overall¹**. Its familiarity helps drive trial while supporting more indulgent menu offerings.

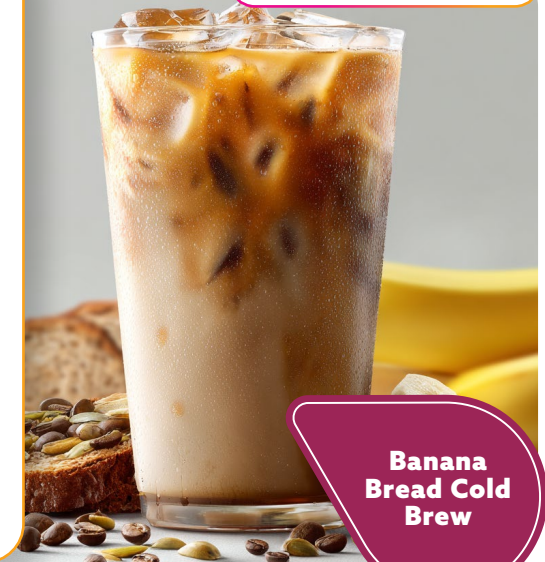


TRENOLOGIST PICK

BANANA BREAD

Banana bread delivers a sweet, comforting profile with notes of caramelized banana, vanilla, and spice, translating familiar bakery flavors into beverage formats. Its momentum continues to build, with **+194% 4-year growth for banana as a flavor¹**. This growth reflects increasing demand for cross-category indulgence in coffee and specialty drinks.

Banana bread brings bakery-inspired indulgence into beverages, helping drinks stand out through familiar flavor in a new format.



Banana
Bread Cold
Brew

MACRO TREND

Flavor +
Function

MUSHROOM

Mushroom ingredients bring earthy depth while supporting focus and clarity, expanding beyond traditional functional formats into beverages. Growth remains strong, with **+99.8% 4-year growth and +69.6% projected growth¹**. They reflect rising demand for sustained energy and cognitive support in drinkable formats.

LAVENDER

Lavender delivers soft floral notes known to be calming and relaxing, adding a sensory layer to functional beverages. Its presence continues to grow, with **+34.2% 4-year growth and +30% projected growth¹**. It aligns with increasing demand for stress relief and mood-focused drink experiences.



Sources: ¹Datassential

TART CHERRY

Tart cherry delivers a bold, tangy profile with natural associations to recovery and hydration, supporting functional positioning in beverages. Interest is building, with **27% of consumers having tried and liked the flavor¹**, signaling opportunity for benefit-driven drink innovation.



TRENDOLOGIST PICK

BUTTERFLY PEA
FLOWER

Butterfly pea flower delivers a mild, earthy profile with benefits that support cognitive function and skin and hair health, bringing visual impact to functional beverages. Its growth continues to accelerate, with **+143.9% 4-year growth¹**. Its visual appeal enhances the overall drink experience while signaling function in a more engaging way.

Butterfly pea flower combines visual impact with functional cues, helping beverages stand out while enhancing the overall drink experience.



Butterfly
Pea Citrus
Refresher

POWERING EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES THROUGH FLAVOR

Flavor is what brings menus to life. It defines the guest experience, drives repeat orders, and helps brands stand out in a crowded landscape.

At Vibrant Beverage™, flavor is the thread that brings our ingredient systems together, uniting taste, function, and performance into solutions designed for the pace and demands of foodservice. It is how we deliver on our promise of Purely Better™.

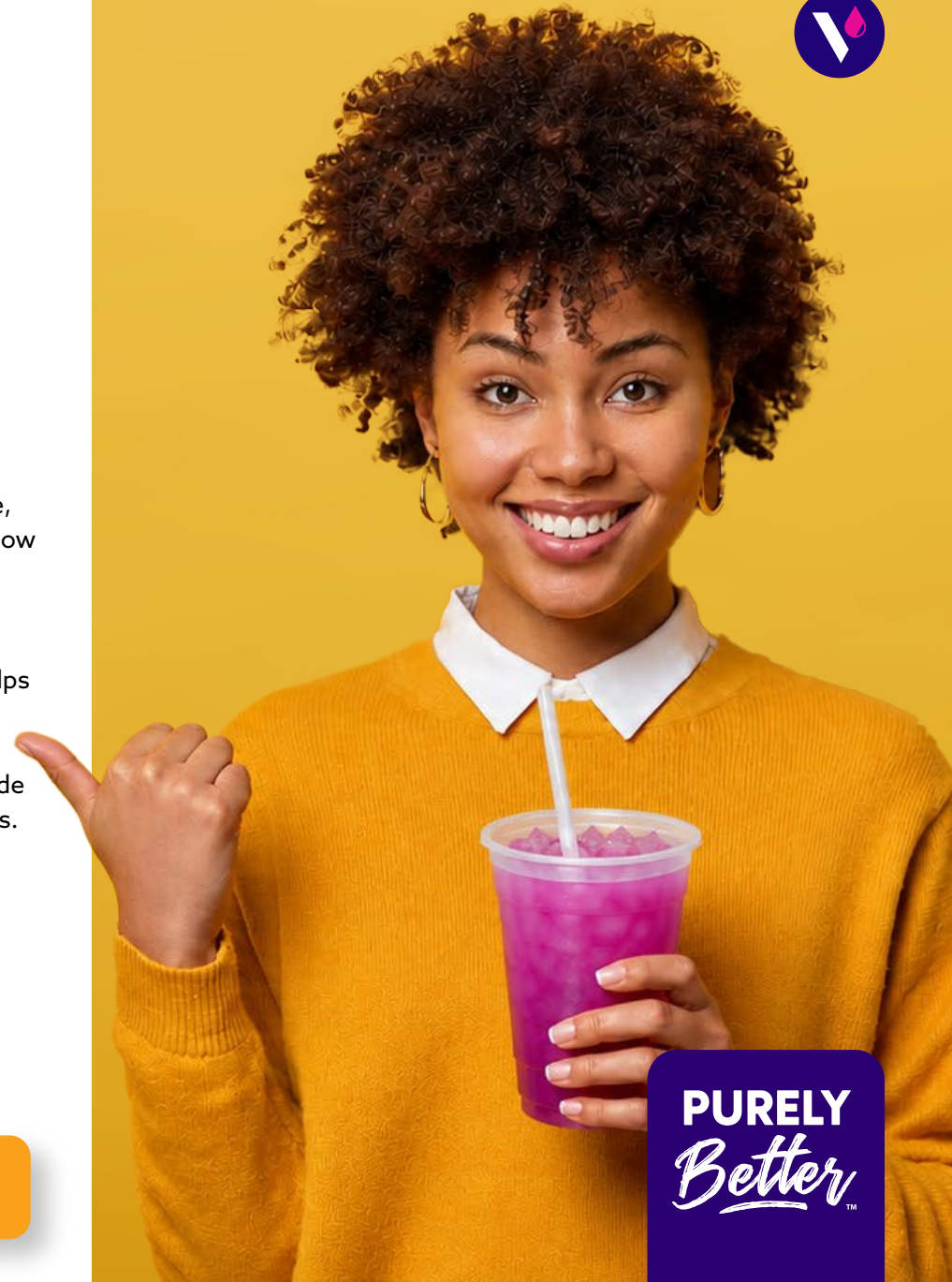
Looking ahead is essential. Our team of *Trendologists* connects emerging signals to future opportunities, translating cultural shifts and operator needs into actionable flavor direction that helps shape what's next on the menu.

Our certified flavor chemists and product developers bring those insights to life, working side by side with partners to create scalable, easy-to-execute solutions across beverages and menu applications.

What We Deliver

- Trend-driven flavor insights
- Custom natural flavor systems
- Rapid prototyping and hands-on technical collaboration
- End-to-end formulation and operator rollout support

Your menu deserves flavors as distinctive as your brand. We help make them real.



PURELY
Better™