



2021

Global Food  
and Drink  
Trends

The now, next, and  
future of the global  
food and drink industry



# Editors' Note:

The events of 2020 caused a fundamental reset in human behaviour. Recognising this transformation, the 2021 Global Food and Drink Trends are inspired by recent shifts in consumer purchases and attitudes across industries. Through collaboration with consumer analysts and insights from Mintel Trends, a global team of food and drink experts have identified new opportunities in line with three of the Mintel Trend Drivers\*: Wellbeing, Value, and Identity.



**In 2021 and beyond, food and drink companies will create mental and emotional wellbeing solutions, deliver on new value needs, and use brands to celebrate people's identities.**



These trends identify opportunities for food, drink, and foodservice industries worldwide to act upon starting in the next 12 months. Recognising the fast pace of change today, the trends also make recommendations for actions to take as these predictions unfold throughout the next decade. The future-looking timeline intersects with Mintel's previously published 2030 Global Food and Drink Trends. COVID-19 accelerated elements of each of the three 2030 trends and is causing some to evolve in new ways over the next 12 months ('now'), 18–24 months ('next'), and five years+ ('future').

\* Mintel Trend Drivers track seven fundamental themes that influence consumer choice: Wellbeing, Surroundings, Technology, Rights, Value, Experiences, and Identity.



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# Contents

2



## Feed The Mind

Innovative food and drink formulations will offer solutions for mental and emotional wellbeing that will create a new foundation for healthy eating.

## Quality Redefined

Brands will be challenged to respond to new definitions of trust, quality, and 'essential'.

10



17



## United By Food

Food and drink brands can balance a person's need to feel unique and special with the desire to be part of communities of like-minded individuals.

### WELLBEING

The Mintel Trend Driver Wellbeing tracks the ways in which consumers seek physical and mental wellness and is undoubtedly a consideration for food, drink, and foodservice decisions. Yet, food and drink continue to gain new collaborators (and competitors) as people adopt holistic definitions of health that transcend categories.

### VALUE

A stocked pantry provided an important sense of security during 2020. The continuous shifts in lifestyles and budgets as markets recover will cause consumers to reassess how their food, drink, and foodservice purchases offer tangible, measurable benefits, as encompassed by the Mintel Trend Driver Value.

### IDENTITY

The Mintel Trend Driver Identity covers the ways in which consumers understand and express themselves and their place in society. Food and drink can seize the opportunity to serve as indicators of passions and personalities at a time when there are restrictions on some identity markers, such as certain jobs, hobbies, or events.




A woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink sweater, is seated at a white table in a bright, modern setting. She is focused on eating from a clear glass rectangular container filled with quinoa and fresh blueberries. She holds a silver fork in her right hand. On the table, there is also a glass of vibrant green smoothie and a silver laptop. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a similar environment. The overall mood is calm and health-conscious.

WELLBEING

# Feed The Mind

Innovative food and drink formulations will offer solutions for mental and emotional wellbeing that will create a new foundation for healthy eating.





The pandemic has made consumers recognise that wellbeing is a vital concern. The already rising attention on mental and emotional health has been multiplied by the pandemic and its far-reaching impacts. In the coming years, consumers will be looking for more products and services that offer mental and emotional health benefits.

Functional formulations and emotionally engaging multisensory products will help food, drink, and foodservice brands command a larger share among a myriad of mental and emotional health options. Mintel predicts that innovative food and drink formulations will help people learn how diet can impact mental and emotional health, which will lead to new interest in psychology-based approaches to healthy eating.

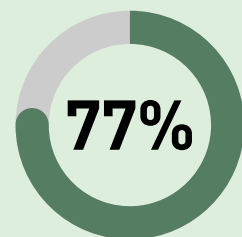


# What's happening now

## Offer moments of respite through product rituals

The need for calm and control can be answered by rituals for preparation, presentation, or consumption. New formats of coffee in Asia are making preparation into a moment to savour. In China, 77% of adults agree having a sense of ritual in daily life helps lift mood. US premium chocolate brand Vosges offers five 'Ritual' sets that pair specific types of chocolate with crystals and herbs for 'Joy', 'Prosperity', and more.

IN CHINA



of adults agree having a sense of ritual in daily life helps lift mood.

Source: Mintel Reports China, Managing Emotional Wellbeing, 2020



Premium chocolate brand Vosges' Ritual Collection for Prosperity (US).  
Source: vosgeschocolate.com



Mr & Mrs Bean 100% Arabica Colombia Drip Bag Coffee (Hong Kong).  
Source: Mintel GNPD



## Use functional ingredients to address mental and emotional health needs

Consumers will be looking for more functional food and drink that claim to help people focus, relax, and relieve (or ideally prevent) emotional health concerns.



**Soda to 'supercharge your brain cells'**  
KOIOS nootropic drinks are described as 'products that use natural ingredients, backed by science'. They feature a range of nootropic ingredients such as lion's mane mushroom, coconut MCT oil, and L-theanine (US).  
Source: @koiosbeveragecorp via Instagram



**Versatile functional seasoning**  
Gewürzmühle Brecht Inner Calm Relaxing Seasoning Mix contains Ceylon cinnamon, cocoa, and ashwagandha. The calming blend can be added to porridge, desserts, yoghurt, or juice.  
Source: Mintel GNPD



**Functional focus formula**  
Lizi's Super Muesli Focus Hazelnut, Pecan & Maca Cereal is a source of vitamin B6, which is said to help support normal psychological function, and zinc for normal cognitive function, boosting brains and keeping minds sharp (UK).  
Source: Mintel GNPD

# What's next

## Formulations will enhance stress relief activities

In the coming years, multisensory and functional formulations will be created to enhance stress relief activities, such as watching TV, gaming, or meditating. Certain sensory elements such as scent, as well as functional ingredients, will be used to add an 'in real life' experience to virtual events. Innovative concepts include energising snacks to consume while playing an action-packed video game or calming scented drinks paired with a meditation tutorial.



E3 Brain Sports Drink is designed by and for gamers (Japan).  
Source: Mintel GNPD



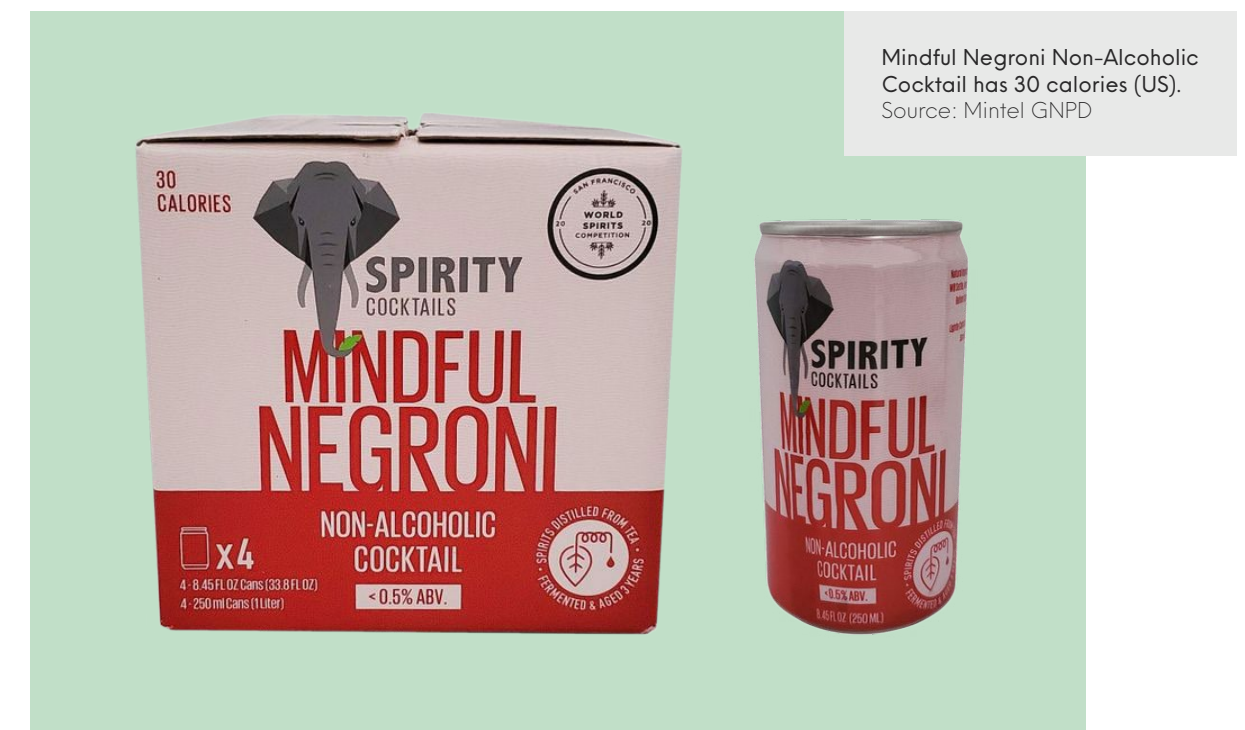
Hey Tea and bedding brand MANITO's tea-scented gift set (China).  
Source: cmovip.com

## Mental and emotional health awareness will raise interest in mindful and intuitive eating

As the singular focus of avoiding COVID-19 fades, people will make more serious commitments to reduce the health risks associated with unhealthy eating. Malnutrition has been reported to increase the severity of COVID-19 cases and might also impact the efficacy of a vaccine. Recent diet trends have favoured fewer rules, which will increase the adoption of mindful or intuitive eating. Both concepts teach people to pay more attention to what they consume and how it makes

them feel, which builds nicely upon the rising awareness of mental and emotional health.

In the coming years, more brands will position themselves as mindful choices, for example, by facilitating reduction in alcohol consumption. Brands will also highlight nutrient density, a key concept of intuitive eating that focuses on food with a high ratio of beneficial nutrients compared to the number of calories.



Mindful Negroni Non-Alcoholic Cocktail has 30 calories (US).  
Source: Mintel GNPD

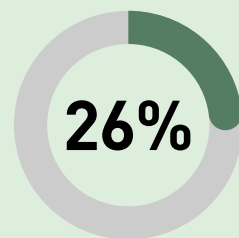


## Future forecast

### Technology will provide more proof and will be used to incentivise healthy habits

The widespread need for mental and emotional health solutions will lead to a boom of functional formulations across markets. Consumers will come to expect validation that mental and emotional health ingredients, doses, or formulations will be effective, especially after buying products that did not work as advertised. Companies can share endorsements from health experts or the results of scientific research on pack and via QR codes. Consumers also will be able to

personally monitor efficacy through wearable devices that track biological activity, as predicted by the 2030 Global Food and Drink Trend Smart Diets. Meanwhile, health companies and public health officials will find potential in apps and wearable devices as tools to incentivise healthy eating. Organisations will encourage people to use technology and/or psychology to reduce their risks of diet-related health conditions.



of UK consumers disagree that food or drinks that claim specific benefits usually deliver on what they promise.

Source: Mintel Global Consumer, Food and Drink, 2020







## 3 key opportunities

### Offer moments of comfort and support

Food and drink brands can offer stressed consumers escape, peace, and other emotional connections through product rituals. In the next 12 months, functional food and drink that offer mental and emotional health benefits will expand to new categories and occasions.

### Enhance experiences and encourage healthy eating

Multisensory and functional formulations will be created to complement or enhance stress relief activities, such as energising snacks to eat while gaming or calming drinks for meditation. As more people adopt psychological approaches to healthy eating, 'mindful' and 'nutrient dense' will become buzzwords.

### Provide proof and sync with technology

Consumers will come to expect validation that mental and emotional health formulations will work as advertised. Companies can share proof from health experts or results from scientific research. Consumers and public health entities will use technology to track, validate, and incentivise healthy eating.



The Mintel logo is displayed in a yellow speech bubble. The background of the top left section features a glass of red juice, a beetroot, and pomegranate seeds on a light-colored surface.

**MINTEL**

# Mintel Food & Drink

Expert-led, premium intelligence solution for the industry.

## Continuous, forward-looking intelligence

- Across 35+ food and drink categories
- Product innovation across 86 markets
- Consumer insights covering 35 markets

## Global analysts

Direct access to experts in science, retail, category, packaging, ingredients, and trends

## Technical foresight

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- Packaging
- Flavours
- Ingredients
- Patents
- Regulation and labelling
- Textures and formats

## You also get access to:

### Mintel Reports:

In-depth reports covering food and drink categories across nine markets.

### Mintel Trends:

Macro trends backed by 300 observations a month and consumer data across 35 markets.

### Mintel GNPD:

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### Mintel Market Sizes:

Per capita spend for 60 consumer goods categories across 34 markets.

### Mintel Menu Insights:

Food trends from 8,000+ menus across 1,500 outlets every quarter in the US.

### Helping you make better decisions faster with:

- Insights and analytics
- Expert recommendations
- Robust predictions

A collection of fresh produce including carrots, an orange slice, banana slices, a pear, a kiwi, and spinach leaves is arranged on a light surface. A glass of green juice is also visible.

Find out more: [mintel.com/mfd](https://www.mintel.com/mfd)



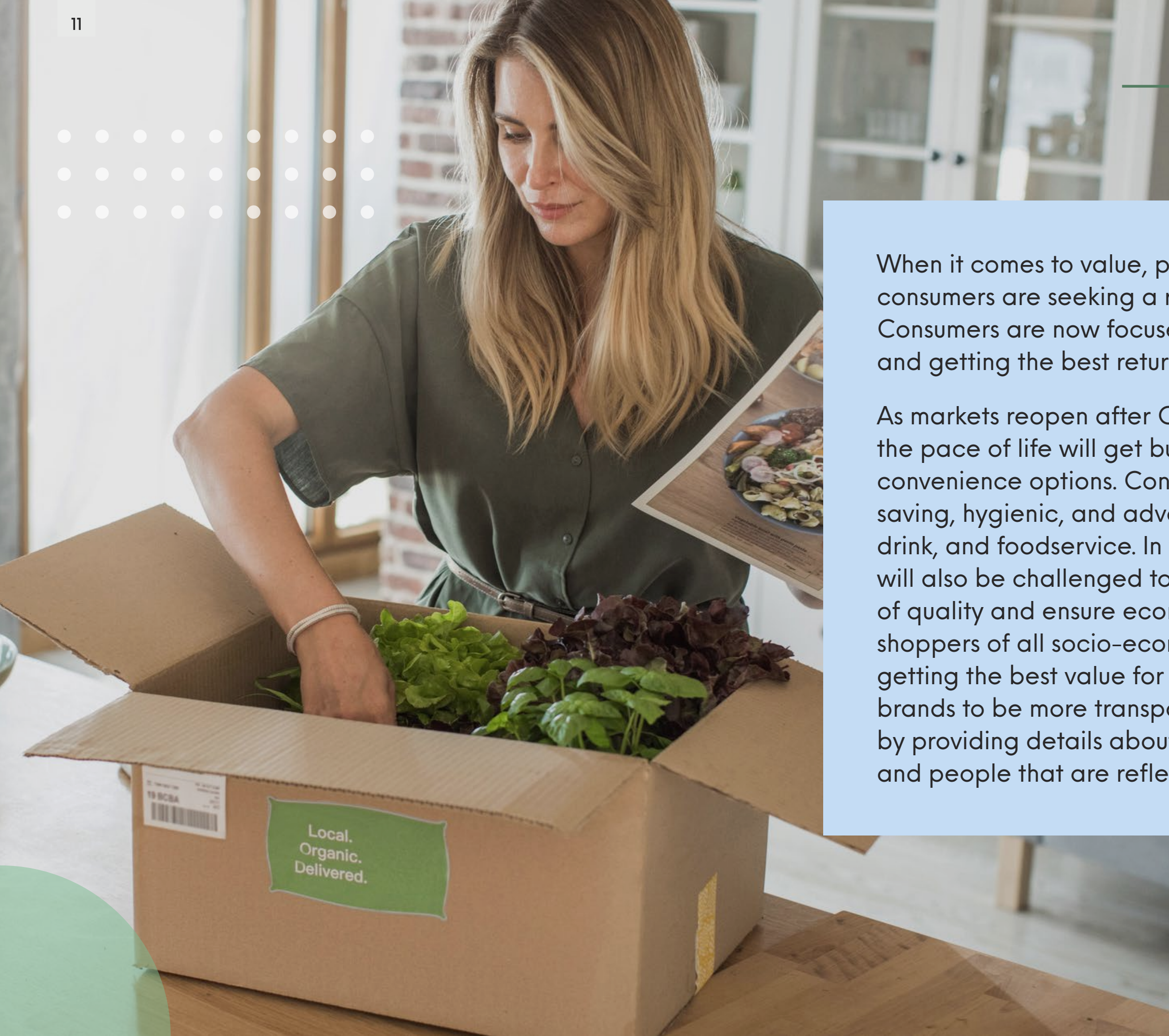
VALUE

# Quality Redefined

Brands will be challenged to respond to new definitions of trust, quality, and 'essential'.

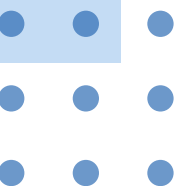






When it comes to value, pandemic-shocked consumers are seeking a return to what is essential. Consumers are now focused on minimal consumption and getting the best returns from their purchases.

As markets reopen after COVID-19 restrictions, the pace of life will get busier—requiring more convenience options. Consumers will expect time-saving, hygienic, and adventurous convenience food, drink, and foodservice. In the next few years, brands will also be challenged to respond to new definitions of quality and ensure ecommerce is accessible to shoppers of all socio-economic levels. The focus on getting the best value for one's money will motivate brands to be more transparent about product price by providing details about the ingredients, processes, and people that are reflected in a product's price.





# What's happening now

## Deliver flavour and quality regardless of budget

Consumers will look for foodservice-inspired options for quick meals as well as approachable upmarket solutions for special 'hometainment' occasions.



### Affordable chef's meal

Seven & i Premium Soupleless Spicy Noodles are made under the supervision of Makoto Shirane, the head chef of popular Tokyo noodle restaurant Moko Tanmen Nakamoto. This product costs ¥321 (US\$3) per pack (Japan). Source: Mintel GNPD



### Quality at a budget-friendly price

White & Blue Classic Whisky claims to derive its luxurious expression of style and smoothness from the malt and oak barrels that deliver a highly unique experience with velvety smooth and rich texture for INR810 (US\$11) (India). Source: Mintel GNPD



### Bring world flavours home

Atlas Masterclass is a delivery service that allows people to 'travel the world from home' through weekly destination-themed meal kits (AU\$79-\$149/US\$57-\$108). Kits come with video tutorials from Chef Charlie Carrington (Australia). Source: @atlasmasterclass via Instagram



# What's next

## Consumers' ethical expectations will fuel 'value with values'

People tend to focus on their own needs during recessions, but COVID-19 has also exposed the need to support fellow humans. Brands and retailers have an opportunity to launch appropriately priced products with ethical or environmental claims, or 'value with values' products.

One important commitment will be to create affordable nutrition products that expand access to healthy food. 'Value with values' also allows for moderate price increases if they are accompanied by explanations of how price relates to quality, safety, or CSR. Brands, retailers, and foodservice operations can follow the model of French brand C'est qui le patron?!, which gives consumers input into product characteristics and price. Its milk costs an extra €0.30 for French origin, farmer welfare, and other claims.

**IL EST ARRIVÉ !**

**DÉMARCHE RESPONSABLE**

**ÉQUITABLE POUR LES PRODUCTEURS**

**VACHES AU PÂTURAGE > À 3 MOIS**

**FOURRAGES LOCAUX**

**FRANÇAIS**

**VACHES NOURRIES SANS OGM < 0,9 %**

**CE LAIT RÉMUNÈRE AU JUSTE PRIX SON PRODUCTEUR**

**C'est qui le patron?!**

**LA MARQUE DU CONSOMMATEUR**

**FAIT PAR NOUS LES CONSOMMATEURS !**

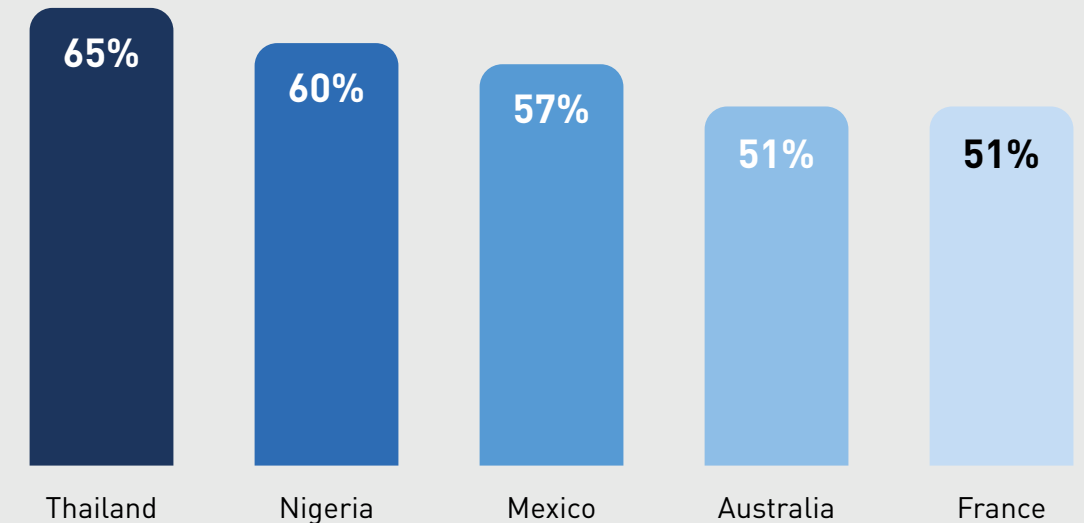
[www.lamarqueduconsommateur.com](http://www.lamarqueduconsommateur.com)

**OÙ LE TROUVER ?**

Auchan, Carrefour, Carrefour marché, Cora, E.Leclerc, Lidl, Monoprix, Houra, Colruyt, Casino, Géant Casino, Intermarché, Aurore, Casino, Géant Casino

Food brand C'est qui le patron?! was created to enable consumers to shape the key characteristics of products as well as the price (France).  
Source: [lamarqueduconsommateur.com](http://lamarqueduconsommateur.com)

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS HEALTHY EATING AND SUSTAINABILITY: 'HEALTHY FOOD IS TOO EXPENSIVE TO BUY ON A REGULAR BASIS.' (JULY 2020)



Base: Thailand, Nigeria, Mexico, and Australia: 1,000 internet users aged 18+ per market; France: 1,000 internet users aged 16+  
Source: Mintel Global Consumer, Food and Drink, 2020



## Evolve contactless expectations at retail to include experiential services

Among the lasting lessons from COVID-19 will be a universal expectation of hygiene and safety, especially at retail and foodservice. Consumers will want contactless innovations, including hands-free smart shopping trolleys and

packaging that limits direct contact with hands during consumption. As markets recover, consumers will be open to experiential convenience in the form of online or offline grocery shopping that informs and entertains.



7Fresh offers hands-free smart cart (China).  
Source: retail-innovation.com



Chocolate brand Dengo launched a live stream store project (Brazil).  
Source: blog.dengo.com



# Future forecast

## Invest in seamless retail and equitable access to healthy food

Retailers around the world will take inspiration from China's popular frictionless 'new retail' formats. Store designs will reflect retailers such as Hema that engage in-person shoppers with fresh food while also efficiently servicing online orders.

In addition, expanded use of blockchain and other tracking technologies will allow brands to actually show consumers the various elements that make up the price of a product via data, photos, or videos.

Future-focused companies will help expand the global availability of affordable sustainable nutrition products. Emerging markets will see more innovations such as Nestlé's Cerevita Instant Porridge, which is available in southeast Africa. The porridge is made with wholegrain cereals and fortified with key nutrients.

Vertical farms and other new forms of agriculture will also be used to expand access to fresh food, as predicted by the 2030 Food and Drink Trend High-tech Harvests.



Hema is Alibaba's offline retail store where customers use an app to scan products, get information, and pay for their groceries (China).  
Source: Qilai Shen | Bloomberg | Getty Images



Cerevita Instant Sour Porridge from Nestlé is an affordable nutritious solution made with wholegrain cereals and fortified with key micronutrients (southeast Africa).  
Source: Mintel GNPD





## 3 key opportunities

### Find new advantages in home-based lifestyles

Many people will continue to work, relax, and entertain at home in the next 12 months. Brands and retailers can shake up home routines with budget-friendly inspiration and adventurous flavours. A range of solutions will be needed to help offset indulgence with health while fulfilling the duelling needs of time-savings and creativity.

### Revive and reinvigorate old priorities

As markets recover, consumers will demand responsible business practices and experiential stores that incorporate lessons from the pandemic. Consumers will expect community to be a focal point for CSR. The pandemic will also leave a lasting legacy for safety and hygiene at retail and foodservice.

### Invest in a seamless and equitable future

Advancements in technology will drive the global expansion of seamless online and offline retail and transparent reporting of product prices. Meanwhile, future-focused companies will fuel equitable access to healthy food by expanding the global availability of affordable, sustainable nutrition and investing in high-tech agriculture.



A man with a beard and a woman are sitting at an outdoor dining table, smiling and clapping. The table has a burger, a drink, and some food. The background is a brick wall with greenery. The image is overlaid with a large orange circle on the left and a blue circle on the top left. There are also some white dots on the right side of the image.

IDENTITY

# United By Food

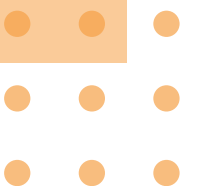
Food and drink brands can balance a person's need to feel unique and special with the desire to be part of communities of like-minded individuals.





Consumers' understanding of community has been strengthened by COVID-19. Recognising the importance of connection and support, consumers will organise in like-minded communities for socialisation and camaraderie.

Food, drink, and foodservice brands can take advantage of their positions as common interests and passions to which consumers can tie their identities. Brands will then be able to actively bring individual fans together in online communities or organise in-person gatherings. Bound by the brand(s) they have in common, communities will expand people's social circles and introduce collective ways to make a difference.





# What's happening now

## Empower personal expression through passion for food and drink

Food and drink has become a safe form of escapism during COVID-19. In the next 12 months, food, drink, and foodservice companies will encourage people to use their brands to express themselves and to reconnect with their pre-pandemic identities. Food, drink, and foodservice brands will launch more interactive products and recipes that encourage the use of food and drink as creative outlets. Products and services also will

help people revive their pre-pandemic lifestyles and interests such as travelling, dining out, and attending sporting events.

In addition, consumers will be encouraged to use food and drink to express their moods, opinions, or passions. Sharing social media posts will help consumers express their personalities in times of limited social interactions, while also linking them to a wider community of online brand fans.

Single Dog Crisps corners China's market for unmarried snackers (China).  
Source: zhuanlan.zhihu.com



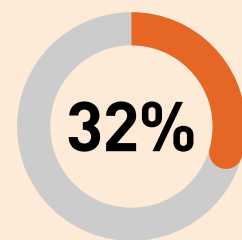


# What's next

## Establish communities where consumers can form new connections

Consumers will be looking for ways to create authentic connections with other people who share their values. Inspiration can be found in sports, apparel, and other industries that host events or create communities where fans can celebrate their passion with other people. Food, drink, and foodservice brands can create online and physical spaces that bring consumers together.

Online hubs can offer ecommerce as well as networks that introduce brand fans to one another. The makers of the kitchen appliance Instant Pot provide a template for how to create online communities of super users who share recipes and tips independent of the brand. Many consumers will also be craving opportunities to socialise away from screens. Food, drink, and foodservice brands can create places where consumers can (safely) come together in person and form meaningful connections.

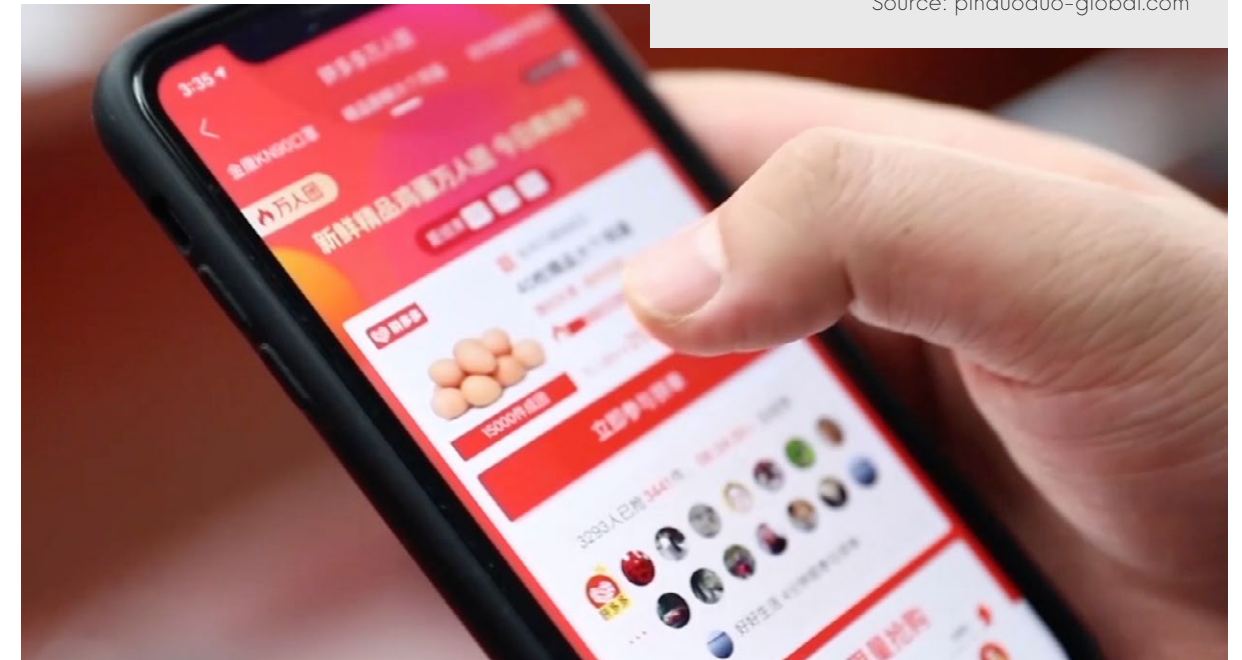


32% of Brazilian social media users have interacted with a brand's content online, going up to 38% for Gen Zs (b. 1999-present).

Source: Mintel Reports Brazil, Social Media Overview, 2019

Instant Pot has invested in creating a global community, making the decision to connect fans through conversations instead of marketing to them (Canada). Source: Instant Pot

Pinduoduo has created a social shopping experience online and accelerated the transition of commerce from offline to online (China). Source: pinduoduo-global.com



## Social commerce will be a new way to capitalise on community

Interactive ecommerce offers new ways to bring people together. Food and drink brands can adopt social commerce models, in which the online shopping experience is shared with fellow shoppers and friends.

This model has been successful in China, as shown by social buying app Pinduoduo. The app aims to replicate the shared experience of shopping in person with friends. Pinduoduo invites users to share deals from a

range of CPG categories with their friends. A lower price is activated only when a specific number of people are interested in purchasing the product.

In the coming years, brands and restaurants can expand the online social model and host in-person events where a select group of fans are invited to pick-up limited-edition online purchases or experience a menu together.



# Future forecast

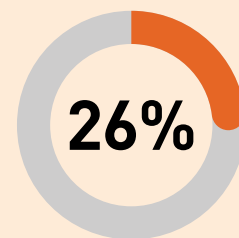
## Organise brand communities to make a difference

In the future, companies will have the opportunity to give their communities of fans actionable ways to give back. Consumers see companies as having the potential to make a difference in the world, as observed by the 2030 Food and Drink Trend Change, Incorporated. Yet few people believe they personally can create change.

Brands can use their resources, reputation, and reach to help consumers take action on important causes locally. During COVID-19 lockdowns, Walmart partnered with

Nextdoor to launch the 'Neighbors Helping Neighbors' programme, which connects US shoppers with people nearby who need assistance shopping or collecting items.

While local is a focus now, brands can help revive the attention on global issues. Brands can donate a proportion of the profits from the sale of certain charitable products to provide a meal to a family in need or fund farms that are converting to sustainable practices in the product's country of origin.



of US consumers see themselves as making a difference and just 16% think they have the ability to change the world.

Source: Mintel Reports US, American Lifestyles, 2019



Walmart and Nextdoor announced in April 2020 the launch of the 'Neighbors Helping Neighbors' programme, an effort to make it easier for neighbours across the country to help one another during the COVID-19 pandemic (US).  
Source: [corporate.walmart.com](https://corporate.walmart.com)



## 3 key opportunities

### Celebrate individuals' unique passions

Food, drink, and foodservice brands will support and connect with people who are using food and drink to express facets of their personalities and to find new hobbies. The next 12 months will be the pivotal time to solidify food and drink as a key part of one's identity following the rise in food as a creative outlet in 2020.

### Create communities around common interests

Food, drink, and foodservice brands will create communities of brand fans that provide consumers with new ways to socialise and meet new people. Whether online or in person, companies can connect individual consumers around their passions and create forums for meaningful, engaged interactions.

### Mobilise consumers to do good

Food, drink, and foodservice brands can act as facilitators that help consumers become part of the change they want to see in the world. Brands will draw on their resources and reach to organise consumers to take action in local and global communities.



As the experts in what consumers want and why, Mintel is best suited to accurately predict the future of consumer behaviour and what that means for companies and brands in the food, drink, and foodservice industries.

While thorough, the research and expertise shared here are not exhaustive. If you're curious about what consumers will want over the next 12 months to five years and how your business should plan for the future, we have the answers.

If you're a Mintel client, log in to your account for the full insight and analysis on our 2021 Global Food and Drink Trends, including what brands must consider when thinking strategically over the next few years.

If you're not a Mintel client, please visit [mintel.com](https://www.mintel.com) and get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

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