

SIGEP
VISION

REINVENTING
INDULGENCE:
CHOCOLATE
CONFECTIONERY
TRENDS

ORGANIZED BY

ITALIAN EXHIBITION GROUP
Providing the future

Introduction

A global outlook on chocolate trends

In a rapidly evolving landscape, **chocolate confectionery is undergoing a significant transformation**. Traditionally rooted in retail and impulse consumption, chocolate is now being reimagined as a **versatile**, experience-driven product that can **enhance customer engagement** across cafés, restaurant chains, bakeries, and coffee shops.

This whitepaper explores how chocolate innovation is influencing global foodservice formats, with a focus on the emerging trends, region-specific data and consumer behaviours that are reshaping the category.

By drawing **insights** from the latest Mintel reports (*The Future of Chocolate Confectionery: 2025* and *A Year of Innovation in Chocolate Confectionery, 2025*), as well as **real-life examples** of innovation from foodservice operators, this document aims to help industry professionals identify new growth opportunities and stay ahead of consumer expectations.

From maximalist textures and **seasonal storytelling to sugar reduction**, sustainable packaging and functional chocolate blends, operators can now offer chocolate that speaks to **indulgence, health, and experience**: all in one bite.





MARKET OVERVIEW

1 Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA)

In **EMEA**, innovation in chocolate confectionery is increasingly driven by **seasonal launches** and the rising popularity of **nut butter-based fillings**. These trends reflect both the consumer desire for indulgent experiences and a growing **appetite for novelty in taste and texture**.

37%

of chocolate consumers in Italy say they have eaten seasonal chocolate in the past three months

52%

of chocolate consumers in Poland say a unique flavour would prompt them to try a new chocolate

This region also shows an **appetite for creative reinterpretations of chocolate**, as demonstrated by the viral success of the **“Dubai-style” chocolate**, which blends traditional Middle Eastern ingredients with modern aesthetics.

Costa Coffee UK

In March 2025, Costa Coffee UK introduced the **Chocolate and Pistachio Cookie Sandwich**, featuring rich **dark chocolate cookies** filled with creamy **pistachio frosting** and topped with pistachio nuts. This launch capitalized on the ongoing pistachio flavor trend in sweet bakery items.



Ph: <https://qsrmedia.com/>

1 Asia-Pacific (APAC)

The APAC region shows growing **sensitivity to environmental impact** and health concerns, reflected in **packaging innovations** and early interest in low- and no-sugar chocolate. Though still niche, these attributes are starting to shape product launches.

42%

of Japanese consumers want brands to use environmentally friendly packaging

38%

of Indian consumers say they would feel less guilty about eating chocolate if it had less sugar

In response to these trends, foodservice establishments are introducing chocolate products that align with health and sustainability values. For example, some cafes and restaurants are offering desserts made with reduced sugar content and utilizing eco-friendly packaging materials.

Starbucks Korea

Nel 2024, Starbucks Korea ha lanciato l'iniziativa Star★Light per incentivare l'uso di tazze riutilizzabili. I clienti che portano la propria tazza accumulano "Eco Stamps" digitali, convertibili in NFT esclusivi realizzati con artisti locali. Il progetto unisce sostenibilità e innovazione digitale, offrendo un'esperienza coinvolgente e responsabile.



Ph: Starbucks Stories

1 Americas

Across the Americas, **chocolate plays a central role in seasonal moments** and emotional indulgence, with increasing consumer interest in **functional blends** and the inclusion of **nuts** seen as both **tasty and health-positive**.

58%

of US adults say they have purchased holiday-themed chocolate

33%

of Brazilian consumers consider chocolate with nuts to be a healthier option


Furthermore, the rise of "**snackification**" has led to an increase in chocolate-based snacks in coffee shops and quick-service restaurants. **Circana's** 2024 data indicates a **significant uptick in consumer preference for snackable chocolate items*** that offer both convenience and a sense of indulgence.

Dunkin' USA

During the 2024 holiday season, Dunkin' USA launched the **Holiday Cookie Signature Latte**, featuring **rich espresso** blended with whole milk, notes of buttery cookie, and toasted **almond**. The beverage was finished with whipped cream, **caramel** drizzle, and cookie butter crumbles. This **indulgent yet nostalgic drink** resonated with consumers seeking comfort and familiarity during the **festive period**.



Ph: Dunkin' USA



FUTURE OUTLOOK

2 Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA)

Over the next two years, **the chocolate confectionery market in EMEA is set to evolve in the direction of elevated indulgence**, driven by a consumer **appetite for multi-sensory experiences**, layered textures, and visually stimulating formats.

This trend reflects a broader shift towards **"maximalist"** chocolate, where more is more: more flavour, more crunch, more surprise.

One of the defining trends for the region is the popularity of duo and trio flavour formats, particularly in bar chocolates. Consumers are increasingly drawn to **contrast**, both in **taste** and **texture**, and brands are responding with combinations that mix smooth and crunchy elements, sweet and salty, or fruity and nutty notes.



61%

of German consumers say they like chocolate bars with two or more flavours

47%

German consumers state that unique flavours encourage them to try new chocolate products

The EMEA market is also likely to see a **continuation of seasonal and limited-edition launches**, which play into the consumer desire for treats that are both indulgent and exclusive. As **premiumisation rises**, we may see more **collaborations with chefs and artisanal chocolatiers**, alongside packaging that enhances the emotional and giftable nature of the product.

Looking ahead, innovation in EMEA will not only focus on what's inside the bar, but also how it feels, sounds and looks when consumed.

2 Asia-Pacific (APAC)

In the coming two years, the APAC region is expected to be a growth engine for chocolate confectionery, driven by the **intersection of wellness, sustainability, and technological innovation**.

One of the most prominent trends is the rising demand for **reduced-sugar chocolate**. While still a small portion of total launches in the region, interest is growing rapidly, especially in urban and younger consumer segments.

New formulations using natural sweeteners like **dates, monk fruit and stevia** are gaining traction, as are innovative techniques such as **enzymatic sugar reduction** and **fermentation-based sweetness**. This health-conscious shift is not limited to sugar content. There is increasing interest in functional chocolate, especially those that promote mood enhancement, energy, or immunity support.

38%

of Indian consumers say they would feel less guilty about eating chocolate if it had less sugar

40%

of Thai consumers believe multi-sensorial food and drink can help improve their mood

At the same time, **eco-friendly packaging** is gaining ground, with brands in Japan and Korea adopting recyclable and plant-based materials, and Southeast Asian startups exploring compostable wraps.

Meanwhile, **hybrid chocolate formats** are emerging, blending categories like tea or coffee, often using regional flavours such as yuzu, miso and black sesame to appeal to local tastes.



2 Americas

Over the next two years, the chocolate confectionery landscape in the Americas will be shaped by the **pursuit of healthier indulgence**, **functional benefits**, and the desire for products that deliver more than just flavour.

While **seasonal** and emotional connections to chocolate **remain strong**, innovation is increasingly moving toward **purpose-driven indulgence**, particularly in the United States and Brazil.

This is fuelling the rise of **functional chocolate**, especially products that incorporate adaptogens (like reishi and ashwagandha), antioxidants, nootropics, and even **collagen**. Chocolate is an ideal format for these ingredients, as it delivers both taste and therapeutic perception.



43%

of US chocolate consumers say they purchase chocolate with less sugar

56%

of US consumers aged 55+ are interested in food and drink that supports longevity

Looking ahead to 2027, chocolate in the Americas will increasingly serve dual functions: as a **mood enhancer and a wellness carrier**.

The winners will be those brands and foodservice operators that successfully **blend indulgence with science-backed benefits**, creating chocolate experiences that satisfy both emotional and physical well-being.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hand holding a white piping bag, applying frosting to a cake. The cake is covered in white frosting and has several decorative swirls of frosting on top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus pinkish-red color.

CONCLUSIONS

DO

DONT'S

EMEA

Invest in multi-sensory, layered formats

Use seasonal and limited editions to drive engagement

Leverage visual storytelling

Avoid overly minimal or flat product concepts

Don't ignore flavour innovation

Don't treat packaging as secondary

APAC

Develop better-for-you chocolate options

Prioritize sustainable packaging and ethical sourcing

Experiment with regional flavours and hybrid formats

Don't rely solely on Western-style flavours

Don't underestimate younger consumers

Avoid one-size-fits-all formats

AMERICAS

Tap into functional positioning

Integrate nuts and real ingredients

Use seasonality to build traffic and loyalty

Don't dismiss sugar concerns

Avoid generic messaging

Don't neglect snack formats



We hope this whitepaper has provided valuable insights and inspiration for your business in the evolving foodservice world.

To explore these trends firsthand and connect with industry leaders, we warmly invite you to join us at SIGEP 2026.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience cutting-edge innovations, attend expert-led workshops, and network with professionals from around the globe. Mark your calendar and be part of the future of the sweet and coffee foodservice industry.

[DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE TICKET](#)

ABOUT MINTEL:

Mintel Marketing Intelligence agency based in London and specialised in the analysis of global trends in consumer behaviour.

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Follow SIGEP Vision

SIGEP Vision represents a vital opportunity to explore the trends shaping the future of foodservice. Both a concept and a physical space, SIGEP Vision unfolds through a rich program of initiatives, offering attendees a unique perspective on the future of the industry as a whole.

Through collaboration with research institutes, SIGEP Vision acts as a true global observatory of the out-of-home market, disseminating trends and updated data throughout the year. SIGEP thus asserts itself as a unique crossroads of know-how, technologies, and innovation.

What happens here gives birth to the winning concepts of tomorrow. Follow SIGEP Vision and stay ahead of the industry.

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