



# 2025 Food & Beverage Industry Outlook

Chocobakery,  
Snacking,  
Infant Nutrition  
and More





# ‘Chocobakery’ Craze

Interest in chocolate + bakery is growing, with consumers seeking the best of both.

What does this mean for brands like yours? You have the opportunity to elevate your current product line or create something new altogether, and the possibilities are endless.





Take a glance at “Favorite Day,” the Target brand that highlights seasonal occasions to create excitement in their product offerings, with **a wide variety of chocolatey baked treats**.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, consumers want more convenience in their indulgences, opting for smaller hand-held and on-the-go sweet treats like cake pops.<sup>2</sup>

### Bite-Worthy Tip

Capture success with the latest trend—**newstalgia**<sup>3,4</sup>—by delivering a classic dessert consumers already know and love, but select premium ingredients that give it an unexpected twist.

### P.S. It’s REALLY happening...

Over the last few years, major acquisitions in the bakery, confectionery and snacking spaces showcase how the trend is coming to shelves near you.



# Snacking *Smarter*

Beyond Chocobakery, ‘newstalgia’ has begun to inspire snacking formats. Because who can resist a snack with emotional resonance?

With 22% of consumers snacking three or more times a day, and 63% at least ‘somewhat agreeing’ that **a few snacks can be more satisfying than a meal**,<sup>5</sup> snacks that fit seamlessly into consumers’ days will easily become their go-to choices.







To make this a reality, consumers want ***new and unique***.<sup>3,4</sup>

- Ingredients
- Formats
- Comfort

## Bite-and-Sip-Worthy Tips

Join the rise in personalized nutrition, which continues to push Better-For-You (BFY) innovation forward.

By blending newness with traditional comfort foods, there's never been a better time to capture consumers' brand loyalty.

The journey to BFY stems from consumers' desire to use the foods they eat and beverages they drink to power their lives. Whether fuel for workouts, legit nutrition between meals or a small taste of indulgence with flavors,<sup>6</sup> they're looking to optimize their routines and personal health.

In fact, 53% of consumers believe BFY chocolate or candy exists<sup>7</sup> with 41% of U.S. consumers in the West saying nutritional content is a key attribute of a good snack.<sup>6</sup>



## **Better Beverage Nutrition = Filling the Gaps**

**43%** of consumers turn to nutrition drinks for ***added nutrition*** and to stand in for meals<sup>8</sup>

**74%** say processed products like nutrition drinks are ***health tools***<sup>8</sup>



# A Look into Infant Nutrition

As consumers increasingly embrace BFY foods and drinks for themselves, this focus on health-conscious choices naturally extends to the nutrition of their families, particularly when it comes to infants.

Just as adults are prioritizing clean labels, functional ingredients and better ingredients in their own diets, parents are seeking the same high standards for their babies.





Consumers shopping for infants want to see nutrient-specific messaging on products displaying how nutrients provide benefits.

This helps them quickly synthesize how your product is superior to other options on the shelf, allowing for a smoother selection.<sup>9</sup>

**58%**  
of consumers prioritize  
**“*vitamins/minerals*”**  
in drinks for babies and  
toddlers<sup>9</sup>

**38%**  
say **“*functional benefits*”** (e.g.  
supporting  
cognitive  
development,  
gut health) are  
the priority<sup>9</sup>



## Catering to Dietary Needs

An AAK study interviewing 725 consumers in the U.S. has shown that mothers chose the following motivations as the most important when shopping for infant nutrition products:<sup>10</sup>

1. Support child's growth and development
2. Improve and strengthen brain development
3. Support child's immune defenses
4. Fight infections, viruses and diseases
5. Support development of strong bones

### The top sustainability claims:<sup>10</sup>

✓ Made with real ingredients

✓ All Natural / 100% Natural



# The World Craves *Better* Sustainability

Sustainability is no longer a niche concern, with consumers seeking sustainable food and beverage options that help maintain our resilient resources for generations to come.







It's no surprise that in this clean and conscious movement, 82% are interested in information regarding a brand's practices and commitments to people and the planet.<sup>11</sup> **They're leaning on businesses to lead the way, expecting:**<sup>12</sup>

- Cleaner Labels
- 100% Traceable Options
- Deforestation-free Proof
- Sustainable Packaging and More

Consumers want it all—clean labeling and brand transparency, responsible and sustainable sourcing, 100% traceable, deforestation free, sustainable packaging and so much more.<sup>12</sup> 82% are interested in information regarding a brand's practices and commitments to people and the planet.<sup>11</sup>

But even beyond that, sustainable brands must meet other core needs, including taste, cost, health and convenience.



In fact, 81% of consumers selected ***taste*** as the **top factor** that's important when selecting food and drink.<sup>11</sup>

### Bite-Conscious Tip

Sustainability has made headlines for years, with consumer demand for eco-conscious products increasing.

It's critical for companies to transparently communicate their sustainability efforts throughout the entire value chain.



### Heightened Eco-Consciousness

#### About 8 in 10

consumers report that they ***choose products with sustainability claims*** over others at least some of the time<sup>13</sup>

Over one third say they do so ***most or all the time***<sup>13</sup>



# From Trends to Co-Development

AAK is a global leader in supplying specialty vegetable fats and oils. With one of the industry's broadest selections of plant-based fats and oils, AAK's commitment to Making Better Happen™ means helping you **co-develop the on-trend, nutritional and sustainable products** that appeal to consumers who are hungry for better.

## Applications:

- Bakery
- Chocolate & Confectionery
- Plant-based Alternatives
- Special Nutrition
- Candle Wax





# The AAK House of Sustainability





- <sup>1</sup> Mintel. Bakery – US – 2024.
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.bakemag.com/articles/17852-daily-delights-trends-in-baking>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2023/11/29/How-newstalgia-blends-comfort-and-novelty-in-the-snack-category#>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.supermarketperimeter.com/articles/10658-newstalgia-among-top-instore-bakery-trends>
- <sup>5</sup> State of Treating NCA 2024
- <sup>6</sup> Kantar Profiles/Mintel, May 2023
- <sup>7</sup> Mintel. Snacking Motivations & Attitudes – US – 2024
- <sup>8</sup> Mintel. Nutrition Drinks. U.S. 2024.
- <sup>9</sup> Mintel. Baby Food and Drinks. U.S. 2024.
- <sup>10</sup> Internal AAK Study. (Nutrition with a Purpose PPT)
- <sup>11</sup> State of Treating NCA 2024
- <sup>12</sup> AAK USA Consumer Research on Chocolate Motivations, N=250, Oct 2023
- <sup>13</sup> Mintel. Sustainability in Food and Drink. U.S. 2024.



Let's co-develop, together.

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