

# UNEXPECTED DELIGHTS

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD  
AND BEVERAGE SPACE

2023 TREND REPORT BITE



## UNEXPECTED DELIGHTS

Consumers continue to lean into sweet treats and desserts for comfort during stressful times, but they are also becoming increasingly aware of the need to reduce sugar content. Better-for-you indulgent treats are tempering their sugar content with earthy alternatives, and classic desserts are introducing savory and tangy profiles to experiment with new flavors that surprise and delight.

*Innovation Themes:*

*Savory Dessert • Low Sugar, High Expectations  
Sweet Potato Surprise • Subtle Indulgences*



92%

*of consumers agree that it is  
“good for one’s mental health  
to indulge from time to time”.*

*Source: Mintel*

*“Total sugar is the top  
consideration for consumers  
who read nutrition labels.”*

*Source: Mintel*

## Savory Desserts

Classic comfort foods, like desserts and pastries, are pulling in tangy flavors from condiments as well as salty, cheesy, and garlicky flavors reminiscent of savory meals. While some of these flavor swaps carry a bit of a shock value, they combine in an artful way that adds nuance for a tasty, but unexpected experience.

### PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**JENI'S ICE CREAM EVERYTHING BAGEL** is a playful update on the popular breakfast flavor combination.

Ingredients: Buttery streusel, onions, garlic, subtly sweet cream cheese



**KOSTERINA APPLE CIDER BALSAMIC VINEGAR** combines apples and a hint of cinnamon. Use as a tang in a favorite cocktail or as a light, citrusy touch for pie filling.

## Low Sugar, High Expectations

Consumers are looking to make more conscious decisions about what they eat and how that affects their overall health, while still being able to indulge. Leaning into ingredients with natural sugars like cascara, monk fruit, and agave has become a popular way to create a sweet treat with less sugar overall.

### PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**DEUX ENHANCED COOKIE DOUGH**

Feature popular cookie flavors made with lower sugar ingredients, such as coconut sugar.

Ingredients: Oats, nut butter, vanilla, maple syrup, and coconut sugar



**BON DÉVIL** is pure pleasure without the guilt. These plant-based and coconut-based desserts help cut down on calories and excess sugar.

Flavors: Chocolate, Vanilla, and Salted Caramel Choc Ganache

## Sweet Potato Surprise

Sweet potatoes are the new pumpkin, and they are evolving beyond fries and pies into a certified staple in their own right within the world of indulgent treats. Their rich flavor and light sweetness is versatile enough to be incorporated into everything from donuts to ice cream. The rich flavor and light sweetness of sweet potato paired with brown sugar, caramel, cinnamon, and crunchy caramelized accents has potential for a variety of applications.

### PRODUCTS OF NOTE



PICARONES (PERUVIAN DONUT) ARE FEATURED AT TOP CHEF'S STEPHANIE IZARD'S CHICAGO RESTAURANT, CABRA Donuts are made from sweet potato and squash, and served with spiced gastrique—a sweet and sour sauce and caramelized puffed rice.



TARGET'S GOOD & GATHER BRAND HAS A SWEET POTATO CRUST BBQ CHICKEN FROZEN PIZZA—a tasty, gluten-free pizza crust option.

## Subtle Indulgences

Ingredients, like figs, dates, and tahini, are becoming increasingly popular with brands for their ability to provide a light sweetness with depth of flavor to everything from desserts to pizza. Flavors that combine earthy sweetness with herbal and savory notes delivers subtle indulgence.

### PRODUCTS OF NOTE



#### JUST DATE CHOCOLATE DATE TAHINI

Ingredients: Sweet medjool date syrup, roasted tahini, cacao, salt

*"The [global date syrup market](#) is estimated to reach \$514.3 million by 2028, registering a [CAGR of 4.2%](#) from 2021 to 2028."*

*Allied Market Research*



#### BANG BANG PIE (CHICAGO) GOAT CHEESE CHEESECAKE

Ingredients: Sweet and tangy goat cheese, honey-fig thyme compote

# THE TAKEAWAYS

Enable consumers to revel in sweet treats and desserts for comfort during stressful times while helping them to temper their sugar intake with earthy alternatives. Introduce savory and tangy profiles to classic desserts for elements of surprise and delight.

- Pull in tangy flavors from condiments as well as salty, cheesy, and garlicky flavors reminiscent of savory meals for classic comfort desserts and pastries.
- Help consumers achieve health goals with natural sugars that contribute to overall health, while still being indulgent.
- Surprise combinations (ex. date + tahini), plus unique flavors and textures from everyday ingredients like sweet potatoes, add a pleasant and delightful indulgence and depth of flavor.



## SOURCES

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- Allied Market Research
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- kosterina.com
- eatdeux.com
- bon-devil.com
- mlchicagosocial.com
- target.com
- eatsoco.com
- bangbangpie.com

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