

Seasonal Flavor Lookback: Trends of Summer

Spanning from June to September, the summer season is filled with seasonal inspired flavors and tastes consumers look forward to each year. From summer's retro revivals to pickle features and pumpkin spice early launches, let's take a look back at the trending seasonal products and flavors from summer, and see where you can find inspiration for your brand.

Top Flavors in Seasonal/LTO Products

MINTEL NORTH AMERICA INTRODUCTIONS, June '26 - Sept '26

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|--|---|
|  Pumpkin Spice |  Lemon |
|  Chocolate |  Dill & Pickle/Pickled |
|  Blueberry |  Strawberry |
|  S'mores |  Candy Corn |
|  Vanilla |  Fruit |
|  Caramel (Salted) |  Watermelon |
|  Berry |  Orange/Sweet Orange |

41% of consumers associate the summer season with special flavors/dishes/ beverages/ limited-time offers (LTOs) from restaurants

- Datassential

1,740

seasonal menu items
and LTOs launched in
summer 2026

- Datassential



Top Categories

Bakery, Snacks, Sugar & Gum Confectionery ranked highest for top North America categories with summer seasonal and limited-edition offering

- Mintel

Trends of Interest

Retro Revivals

Pumpkin Spice Early Launches

Pops of Pickle

Retro Revival

This summer, consumers embraced nostalgia through classic flavors like s'mores, renewed interest in frozen yogurt, and revived product offerings. Blink report notes trends “drawing across more eras than ever before.”



Starbucks Unicorn Frappuccino

returned for one weekend only this August after it's original 2017 launch.

- Starbucks



Strawberry Upside Down Cake

was a top performing pin under “summer desserts” on Pinterest

- McCormick
Recipe Insights

Pumpkin Spice Early Launches

Consumers are enjoying pumpkin spice season earlier and earlier each year. We spotted pumpkin spice launches cross-category late this summer. While other fall favorites like apple varieties make their mark, pumpkin spice continues to stake it's claim even in later summer months.



Pumpkin Spice Protein Khoud

features 7g protein per serving with warm fall spice notes with a sweet, creamy finish.

- Mintel

“As these flavors now mark the end of summer, iced and frozen iterations of pumpkin spice beverages and chai are often popping up.”

- Datassential

Pops of Pickle

Pickle went beyond being a classic grilling season topping this summer. From dill pickle flavored beverages to chips, cheeses and more, we continued to see this now ubiquitous flavor in unique and innovative launches this summer.



Bush's Best Dill Pickle Flavored Baked Beans

have a tangy sauce with a punch of dill pickle flavor.

- Mintel



Frito's Flavor Twists Spicy Dill Pickle

offer tangy pickle flavor with a punch of heat.

- All Recipes,
Walmart

A Word from Our Expert

PAMELA OSCARSON, SENIOR MANAGER, CONSUMER & MARKET INSIGHTS



“Summer flavors capture the season's refreshing spirit, from juicy, in-season fruits like watermelon, strawberry and citrus to indulgent and nostalgic favorites like s'mores. Outside of these trends, we also spotted patriotic flavors for America's 250th birthday with celebratory birthday cake profiles and vibrant red, white and blue packaging inspiring star-spangled celebrations.”

Looking for inspiration for your next seasonal or limited edition product development? Let's get started.

