

# Unidad de Vigilancia de Mercados

Departamento de Internacionalización. Instituto de Fomento de la Región de Murcia (mayo 2026)

## Food and Drink Predictions: APAC, 2026



# Mintel's 2026 Global Food & Drink Predictions

## "Maxxing" Out, Diversity In

Consumers will move on from 'maxxing' single nutrients towards balanced diets that celebrate variety, cultural nourishment and holistic wellbeing. This means re-embracing traditional eating patterns that blend nutrients, taste and familiarity. Diversity itself is emerging as the region's new benchmark of wellbeing.

## Retro Rejuvenation

Food and drink that is rooted in trusted and practical traditions of the past will reduce consumers' feelings of vulnerability, helping them regain a sense of stability and control. Expect a revival in traditional ingredients and formats, like canned and ambient goods, and the introduction of modern reinterpretations of fermented and medicinal recipes.

## Intentionally Sensory

Multisensory food and drink formulations will mature from whimsical novelties into more-practical and -purposeful formulations that provide memorable experiences while answering the specific sensory needs of underserved consumers.

## 2026 APAC Food & Drink Predictions: perseverance, diversity and connection

The ongoing [polycrisis](#), a term for a series of consecutive, interlinked shocks and disruptions, has made **perseverance** the new aspiration. Impacted by climate shocks, cost-of-living pressures and ageing populations, people are redefining perseverance as the achievement of emotional, nutritional and cultural balance.

While Western markets talk about optimisation, APAC consumers value calm and connection, finding comfort in familiar food rituals while embracing innovation that strengthens daily wellbeing.

The region's diversity is its strength, from [Japan's](#) precision food innovation and [South Korea's](#) gut-brain wellness culture to [India's](#) evolving thali traditions and Australia's multicultural diets. The opportunity for brands is to modernise these roots through credible science, sensory storytelling and sustainability.

APAC's superpower lies in blending tradition and technology, combining ancestral wisdom and science-led innovation to sustain both health and happiness.



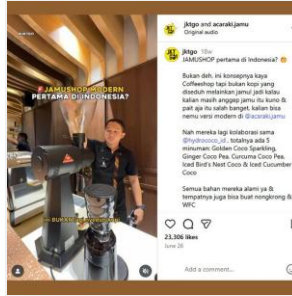
# Perseverance, diversity and connection in action

From shared meals to modern innovations, APAC consumers demonstrate perseverance through everyday food and drink choices that bring comfort, balance and connection.



## Shared plates, shared strength

Family and community meals remain emotional anchors, from [hawker centres](#) and tiffin-sharing to family bento boxes, fostering belonging, continuity and perseverance. [Singapore's](#) Heritage Hawker Programme celebrates intergenerational chefs passing down traditional dishes.



## Tradition reimaged

Brands are reimaging heritage cuisines, from Indonesia's Jamu cafés to [India's Millet Year innovations](#), showing how cultural wisdom continues to guide health and resilience. [Acaraki](#), a modern Jamu café in Indonesia, bridges ancestral remedies with minimalist café culture for today's wellness consumers.



## Science meets soul

Emerging food-tech innovations blend functionality with empathy, from Japan's protein drinks for seniors to Korea's probiotic yogurts designed to balance consumers' moods and improve their sleep. [Hy Shwim Sleep Care Drinking Yogurt](#), for instance, combines ashwagandha with five patented probiotics to support relaxation and emotional wellbeing.

## Seize the opportunity to strengthen consumers' resolve, helping them endure adversity now and in the years ahead

IN JAPAN,

**85%**

of [consumers](#) value keeping a regular daily rhythm, showing their need for stability and coping mechanisms during uncertain times

Across APAC, consumers are not simply weathering uncertainty, they are persevering. For consumers facing climate disruptions in Southeast Asia, cost-of-living pressures in Australia or an ageing society in Japan, food and drink have become anchors of stability that help them regain balance and self-trust.

Mintel's regional insights show that brands demonstrating empathy, practicality and cultural authenticity earn stronger loyalty. Consumers seek proof that what they buy today will strengthen their future selves, whether through better nutrition, immunity or emotional comfort.

By designing food and drink products that encourage perseverance, companies can help people feel empowered rather than overwhelmed. The opportunity for APAC brands is to translate perseverance into tangible rituals, offering everything from nutrient-dense staples and affordable functional drinks to sensory experiences that restore calm and connection.

*Base: Japan: 2,000 internet users aged 18+*

*Source: Mintel, November 2023*

## "MAXXING" OUT, DIVERSITY IN

Globally, consumers will move on from 'maxxing' specific goals or taking the viral advice to consume high amounts of protein or fibre each day to adopt inclusive diets that celebrate the functional benefits of consuming a diverse variety of ingredients.

Across APAC, consumers are moving beyond single-nutrient goals like boosting their protein or fibre intake towards achieving balance, variety and inclusion. Traditional eating patterns across Asia already embody this mindset, blending taste, texture and nutrition in ways that feel both functional and familiar. Diversity itself is emerging as the region's new benchmark of wellbeing.

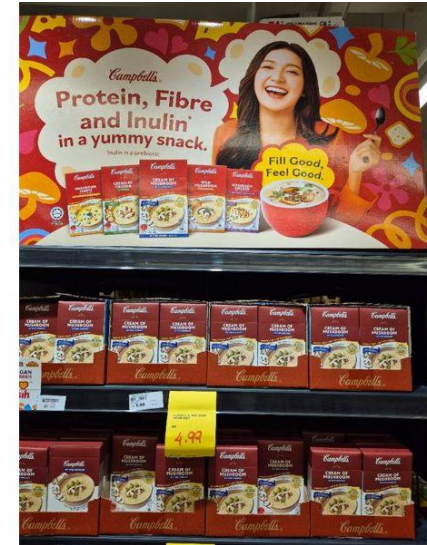
## Reframing nutrition through balance and inclusion

Across APAC, consumers are moving away from the idea that better nutrition means pushing one nutrient to the extreme. Instead of chasing ever-higher protein or fibre, the focus is shifting toward balance, bringing different nutrients together in foods people already eat every day.

Eating habits across the region continue to blend tradition with modern health needs. Consumers are looking for products that support energy, digestion, and long-term wellbeing, without the pressure of strict diets, tracking apps, or over-engineered claims.

[Campbell's Malaysia](#) is a good example of this shift. Rather than jumping on another “high protein” message, the brand has refreshed its instant soup range to highlight the inclusion of protein, fibre, and inulin together. It reframes a familiar comfort food as a more rounded, everyday nutrition option, showing how diversity can exist within a single product through balance, not excess.

For brands, this points to a clear opportunity: upgrade familiar formats like soups, staples, snacks, and drinks by layering nutrients that work together.



The [new Campbell's Soup](#) highlights protein, inulin and fibre (Malaysia)

## Protein and fibre with added purpose



[Quaker Quality Protein Black Sesame Soy Milk](#) can 'replenish energy for a whole day of vitality' (Taiwan, China)

Globally, protein and fibre will remain key anchors, but their power now lies in **combination and purpose**. In APAC, these nutrients are being re-imagined within local formats and flavour systems that reflect both science and sensibility.

Products like Taiwan's Quaker Black Sesame Soy Milk or [Meiji Savas Mix Berry Yogurt with Milk Protein](#) highlight how daily beverages are evolving into sources of sustained energy and strength rather than acting as performance fuel.

In Thailand, [Cocofiber](#) represents this new generation of purposeful innovation, turning coconut by-products into a high-fibre powder that enhances the texture of fried foods while improving their nutritional value. This demonstrates how indulgence and function can coexist in upcycled, locally relevant ingredients.

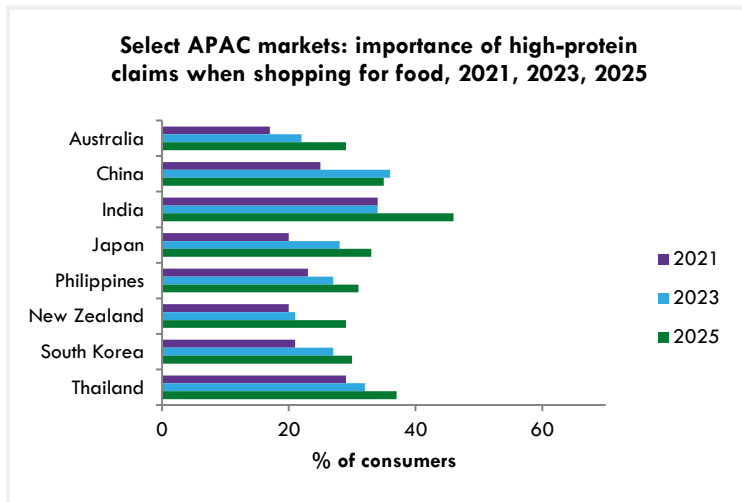
By 2030, 'maxxing out' will no longer mean excess; it will mean **integration**, bringing together diverse nutrients, everyday rituals and cultural relevance in one inclusive vision of health.

## **Predictions for 2026-30**

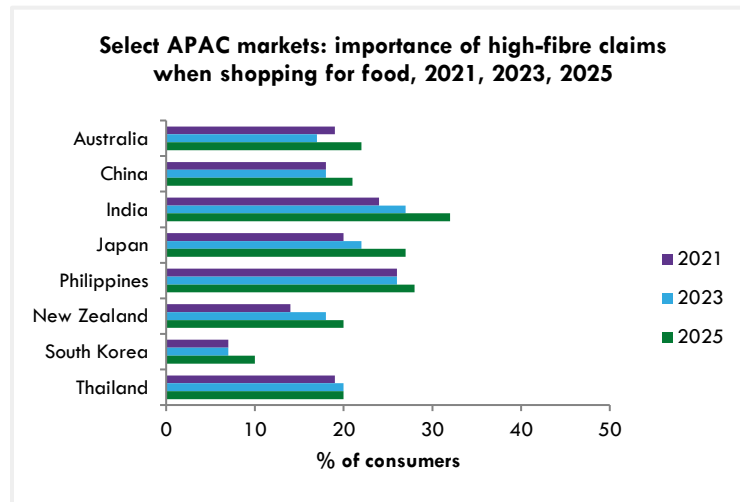
Between 2026 and 2030, APAC consumers will redefine what it means to 'max out', shifting from excess to balanced nourishment. Protein, fibre and heritage staples will evolve into multi-nutrient foods and functional systems that align with diverse needs, lifestyles and occasions.

## Leverage protein and fibre to support everyday balance across APAC

Protein and fibre claims are evolving from functional claims to everyday wellbeing cues. APAC consumers seek focus, energy and balance beyond strength or digestion, driving demand for multi-nutrient foods that support both body and mind.



Protein remains a key health signal in China, India and Thailand, tied to energy and performance; in mature markets like Australia and Japan, slower growth signals an opportunity to reframe protein around holistic wellbeing



Interest in fibre is growing in India, Japan and the Philippines, driven by digestive and metabolic health trends, while stable markets like Australia and South Korea offer potential to reframe fibre as part of daily wellness

**Base:** Australia, China, India, Japan, Philippines, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand: 1,000 internet users aged 18+ in each market in each time period

**Source:** Mintel, [March 2021](#), [March 2023](#), [March 2025](#)

## Beverages will lead the proteinisation wave

The beverage sector will see the rise of the ['proteinisation'](#) trend, with protein added to a wide range of drinks, predicts Mintel's [Tan Heng Hong](#). Once limited to nutritional shakes, meal replacements and fitness drinks, high/added protein claims are gaining traction across a wider range of drinks. Ready-to-drink (RTD) coffee and flavoured water will lead, with [RTD tea](#) and [carbonated soft drinks](#) following.

This shift reflects consumers' growing demand for convenient, enjoyable protein sources, which includes fortified beverages. Taste remains key for wider adoption, with RTD coffee masking the flavour of protein and other subcategories using carbonation or texture for appeal.

As wellness priorities evolve, protein claims will become mainstream, appearing alongside benefits like gut health and immunity. In Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia, RTD drinks with new 'protein-plus' formulas, combining protein with fibre, collagen or adaptogens, are turning functional drinks into new anchors of daily nutrition.

# Less than 1%

of water, carbonated soft drink and RTD coffee and tea [launches](#) in APAC featured high/added protein claims from September 2024-August 2025

## Black Swan Data predicts the rise of diverse protein sources

Black Swan Data's predictive social intelligence finds that US consumers want protein sources that deliver extra nutritional benefits. They recognise alternative protein sources and value them for their nutrient density and holistic health benefits, showing potential innovation cues for APAC.

TRENDS TO WATCH NOW

### Chlorella

Online conversations about *Chlorella* have grown 2% in the US; *Chlorella* was mentioned in 1,048 conversations from July 2023-July 2025

TRENDS TO WATCH NEXT

### Hemp seeds

Online conversations about hemp seeds have grown 16%; hemp seeds featured in 16,949 conversations from July 2023-July 2025

TRENDS TO WATCH NEXT

### Mung beans

Online conversations about mung beans have grown 44%; mung beans were mentioned in 5,760 conversations from July 2023-July 2025

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## Redefine protein and fibre for every lifestyles

Protein and fibre are evolving, going beyond supporting the needs of athletic or ageing consumers to support everyday wellbeing. Younger consumers seek protein for beauty and energy, while older consumers value fibre for comfort and longevity. Brands should combine efficacy, affordability and enjoyment to make these nutrients part of daily life.



### **Efficacy: emphasising absorbability**

[Oikos Café Latte Flavor Protein Drink](#) has 18g of [highly absorbable protein](#). Danone [emphasises the product's convenience and high absorption rate](#), claiming that 'protein is meaningless if you can't absorb it' (Japan).



### **Affordability: all-in-one nutrition made accessible**

[Bourbon Mitase Chocolate Flavour Nutrition Bar](#) offers 33 essential nutrients in an affordable, convenient format, providing balanced, complete nutrition for around €1 per 40g bar (Japan).



### **'Cool' factor: daily fibre and protein made playful**

[Chloe Chan / Dujosoo Crunchy Hazelnut Milk Flavour 8AM Oat Bar](#) is high in protein (25% NRV) and dietary fibre (6.3 g), offering satiety and weight management in a light, portable format. Lower in calories than a breakfast bun, it targets busy young professionals (China).

## Functional pairings: the rise of nutrient synergy



[The Protein Joint Immune Plus Care Protein Shake, Grain Flavour](#) provides 20g of whey protein; NAG for joint health; zinc for immunity; vitamin D and calcium for bone health; magnesium for energy; selenium as an antioxidant (South Korea)

Innovation will increasingly focus on harmony, pairing nutrients that complement one another to deliver complete, balanced benefits.

The future of fortification in APAC lies in collaboration, not isolation. Brands are moving from single-ingredient claims to multi-benefit blends that combine protein and fibre; collagen and vitamins; or probiotics and antioxidants, reflecting the fact that consumers now see different aspects of health as interconnected.

Consumers want products that support energy, digestion and mood all at once. In response, brands are designing multi-nutrient foods that make synergy the new normal, where balance and diversity redefine modern wellness.

- [87%](#) of Thai consumers agree that functional foods and drinks that combine multiple health benefits make it easier for them to maintain good health.
- [43%](#) of Chinese consumers are interested in nutritional products offering synergistic effects.

## Transform daily staples into next-generation nutrition

By 2030, innovation will turn its focus to everyday staples. In India, millet revival programmes are inspiring the reformulation of rice, noodles and flours with legume, millet or seed blends. In Japan, brands are reimagining comfort foods such as ramen and udon with multi-grain and fibre-rich flours.

In South Korea, [CJ CheilJedang's Hetbahn Rice Plan Brown Rice with Lentils](#) redefines a classic staple through a blend of lentils, oats and brown rice for higher protein and fibre content. The inclusion of resistant maltodextrin supports blood sugar management, showing how staples can evolve from basic sources of fuel into functional wellbeing solutions.

Meanwhile, in China, [Hema \(Freshippo\)](#) embraces 'synergistic nourishment' with its Daily Multi-Grain and Vegetable Mixed Rice, featuring 36 natural ingredients – a vibrant example of inclusive and diverse nutrition in action.

NUTRITION FROM DAILY FOOD AND  
DRINK

**53%**

of [Japanese consumers](#) agree that  
necessary nutrients should mainly come  
from their daily diets

*Base: Japan: 2,000 internet users aged 18+*

*Source: Mintel, September 2024*

## Tailor nutrient outreach to demographics in need

As consumers face diverse nutritional gaps – whether linked to children's growth, women's hormonal balance or healthy ageing – brands are rethinking how protein and fibre can address lifelong needs, rather than lifestage-specific needs.

### DIVERSITY IN KIDS' DIETS

65%

of [Indonesian parents](#) prioritise age-appropriate nutrition in kids' food and drink, focusing on balanced protein and fibre diversity

### PROTEIN FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

76%

of [Australian women aged 35-54](#) agree people need more protein in their diets as they age, vs 65% of Australians overall

### VITALITY FOR PEOPLE AGED 55+

84%

of [Chinese adults aged 40-65](#) agree that in the context of delayed retirement, more attention needs to be paid to maintaining physical strength/fitness

Base: Indonesia: 566 internet users aged 18+ who are parents of children under 18; Australia: 1,000 internet users aged 18+; China: 2,000 internet users aged 40-65

Source: Mintel, March 2024, January 2025, December 2024

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## From local heroes to global tables



[Plant-based Indonesian Rendang Curry](#) by Green Rebel Foods (Indonesia)

By 2030, the region's nutrition story will celebrate what's local, diverse and culturally rooted. Across APAC, indigenous grains and pulses, from India's barnyard millet to Southeast Asia's mung bean, are being rediscovered as everyday nutrient boosters, shifting focus from global superfoods to homegrown heroes.

Indonesia's Green Rebel Foods leads this shift with plant-based meats tailored to Asian tastes, like beefless rendang and chicken slices for rice dishes. Its 2025 convenience store launch shows how familiar flavours can take plant-based eating mainstream.

APAC's multicultural mix – spanning everything from Australia's fusion cafés serving kimchi toasties and ube desserts to Malaysia's plant-based hawker foods – also redefines balance and diversity at mealtimes. *"Maxxing" Out, Diversity In* goes beyond ingredients; it's about connection. Nutrition is now tied to identity, belonging and everyday wellbeing

## **Predictions for 2030 and beyond**

## 2030 prediction: variety will be a key goal for healthy eating

By 2030, consumers across Asia-Pacific will seek greater variety – not just in taste, but in nutrients, textures and meal formats. The region's diverse food cultures, from Japan's *ichiju-sansai* to Korea's *banchan* to Indonesia's *nasi campur*, already show that balance and variety are part of everyday eating.

In Australia, [27%](#) of consumers say variety (different flavours or textures) matters when choosing lunch, behind healthiness (55%) and satiety (46%). While consumers value variety, it remains a secondary concern, giving brands room to more strongly connect diversity with health and satisfaction.

Just as Western markets use AI to 'shuffle' meal diversity, APAC consumers will look to their culinary heritage, rotating lentils, rice and millet to sustain a sense of variety rooted in local flavours. As health and sustainability align, dietary diversity will emerge as a new marker of modern wellness.



Japan's *ichiju-sansai* (one soup, three dishes)

## Mintel analysts predict what's next

### Parents will prioritise digestive health

– Predicted by [Megan Stanton](#), inspired by Michelle Teodoro's [The Future of Baby Food & Milk](#)

### Fibre will become our nutritional armour

– Predicted by [Alice Pilkington](#) and [Benjamin Punchard](#)

### Amp up variety with precision nutrition boosts

– Predicted by [Melanie Bartelme](#) and [Stephanie Mattucci](#)

## Parents will prioritise digestive health



In 2030, parents will be looking to [set their children up](#) with the right nutrients – not only those for ideal growth and development, but also those that lay the foundation of a healthy gut microbiome, which could prepare them to be more resilient in the future.

### What this means for APAC

Baby food and drink brands will educate on the right types of food to feed the microbiome and innovate products that supply beneficial bacteria. [Vietnam's Vinamilk Optimum Colos Stage 1 Infant Formula](#) contains ingredients inspired by breast milk that promote healthy intestinal microflora.

Parents will feel they are giving their children an edge in fighting disease with a microbiome optimally prepared for future resilience.

– Predicted by [Megan Stanton](#), inspired by Michelle Teodoro's [The Future of Baby Food & Milk](#)

## Fibre will become our nutritional armour

In 2030, fibre will not only improve gut health, but will also evolve into a nutritional defence against the rising risks that microplastics pose to humans.

Consumers are increasingly aware that they [regularly ingest microplastics](#) through everyday sources like packaging, utensils, clothing and air, raising concerns about [intestinal inflammation](#) and [cardiovascular risks](#).

Emerging evidence suggests [fibre can help reduce the health impact of microplastics](#), positioning it as the nutritional armour consumers need to counter the pressures of modern living.

### What this means for APAC

The growing awareness of the gut-brain and gut-skin connections fuels demand for natural fibre in snacks, drinks and fortified staples. As consumers prioritise both prevention and balance, fibre is being redefined as an everyday tool for holistic health protection.

– Predicted by [Alice Pilkington](#) and [Benjamin Punchard](#)

*Base: Thailand: 1,500 internet users aged 18+*

*Source: Mintel, March 2025*

IN THAILAND,

# 88%

of [adults](#) say they have heard of dietary fibre and consider it beneficial for gut health; [71%](#) of adults plan to increase their fibre intake over the next five years to ensure a long and healthy life

## Amp up variety with precision nutrition boosts



Drawing on insights from this piece and Mintel's full library, Mintel Spark imagines a precision nutrition boost seed sprinkle mix

*\* this is NOT a real product – it has been generated by Mintel's AI-powered concept generator to inspire innovation; generated product images may include example text and as such may contain misspellings or grammatical errors because the image has not been manually manipulated post-generation*

Source: [Mintel Spark](#)

Based on the success of seed cycling companies like [beeya](#) and [Zoe's Daily 30+ gut sprinkle](#), consumers will be able to buy precision nutrition boosts. These customised combinations of seeds, herbs and spices are based on each user's DNA, epigenetics (how lifestyle, health conditions and medications shape unique gene expressions) and metagenomics (the study of all the genes in the community around us).

### What this means for APAC

This approach is emerging via functional powders, sachets and VMS that blend traditional herbs with modern nutrition. Brands are linking personalisation with familiar systems like TCM and Ayurveda, making daily wellness more accessible. As AI-driven, open-source nutrition platforms evolve, brands will be able to craft meals that are both nutrient-optimised and diverse in taste and texture.

– Predicted by [Melanie Bartelme](#) and [Stephanie Mattucci](#)

**How this Prediction has evolved**

## Previous Mintel Trends that paved the way for this Prediction

**2016**

### **From the Inside-Out**

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A holistic approach to health emerged in 2016 as more consumers began to recognize the ways their diets influenced how they look and feel. Mintel advised brands to share how they benefit physical appearance as well as emotional wellbeing.

**2019**

### **Through the Ages**

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In 2019, wellness goals progressed from the short- to the long-term with emerging interest in healthy ageing. Mintel predicted that healthy ageing formulations would appeal beyond ages 55+ and to anyone who wanted to be proactive about their health.

**2023**

### **Savvy Sustenance**

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As cost-of-living rose in 2023 in many markets, the intersection between health and value became pivotal for shoppers. Mintel forecast that nutritious brands should focus on affordable pricing to stand out as good value for money.

**2030**

### **Smart Diets**

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Released in 2019, the 2030 Global Food & Drink Trend Smart Diets predicted consumers would be able to tailor their diets to get cognitive benefits for now and later. More studies about the gut-brain axis will increase consumers' commitments to fiber.

# RETRO REJUVENATION

By [Alice Pilkington](#) and [Alex Beckett](#)

Globally, food and drink that is rooted in trusted and practical traditions of the past will reduce consumers' feelings of vulnerability and offer them a sense of control.

In APAC, this reflects a return to and revival of heritage wisdom through modern formats, science and storytelling.

## As Confucius said, 'study the past if you want to define the future'

'Looking back' is less about nostalgia and more about renewal. Across APAC, consumers are turning to [ancient medicines](#), such as herbal remedies and fermentation, and 'grandma' hobbies, like gardening and mindful cooking, in search of [stress relief and a pressure-free path to fulfilment](#). This pursuit of balance is strongest among [Millennials](#) (b. 1981-96 in Japan) seeking renewed purpose in midlife, as noted in Mintel's *Global Consumer Prediction: The New Young*.

Younger generations modernise heritage through small-batch innovation and design-led storytelling. Japan's [Morinaga Amazake Drink](#) revives traditional rice fermentation in a microwaveable format, Indonesia's [Herbilogy](#) reimagines jamu as beauty and immunity sachets, and South Korea's [KGC's Good Base](#) blends *hanbang* herbs into beauty drinks for Gen Zs (b. 1997-2010).

By 2030, 'retro' in APAC will embody cultural resilience, proving that the wisdom of the past still shapes modern wellbeing.



South Korea's Halmaennial\* trend bridges nostalgia and novelty, appealing to both older and younger generations

\* 'Halmaennial' is a term blending 'Halmae' (grandma) and 'Millennial'

## Predictions for 2026-30

Ancient systems like Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Kampo and jamu will increasingly merge with modern science, data and digital storytelling, transforming traditional wisdom into 'functional heritage' that resonates with a new generation.

In [Indonesia and the Philippines](#), for example, 82% of consumers say their heritage, culture and history play a key role in shaping who they are, reflecting how cultural pride is driving renewed interest in ancestral wellness practices across the region.

## Tradition as the new technology of perseverance

HERITAGE MEETS SCIENCE

31%

of [Chinese consumers](#) who purchase supplements prefer products with elements of TCM, especially when made more effective through fermentation or advanced absorption technologies

Tradition is being reframed as a foundation for modern perseverance. Ancestral ingredients like ginseng, turmeric and medicinal mushrooms are increasingly validated through science, fermentation and data transparency. Brands are leveraging AI and biotechnology to enhance efficacy, optimise absorption and turn heritage remedies into credible wellness solutions.

In [China](#), brands are modernising ingredients such as ginseng and reishi through fermentation, strengthening scientific credibility and consumer trust. New tech-powered [herbal pastes](#) blend reishi, sour jujube seed, donkey gelatin, poria and ginseng to boost immunity, reduce stress and improve sleep. Similarly, [SKIGIN Asini Colla Peptide Red Ginseng Beverage](#) fuses tradition with innovation, combining ginsenosides, goji berry, saffron, collagen and microencapsulated ginger oil to deliver modern, proof-based vitality.

*Base: China: 2,853 internet users aged 18-59 who have purchased health supplements from cross-border or domestic channels in the last 12 months*

*Source: Mintel, May 2024*

## Interest in traditional ingredients surges in APAC

Brands can leverage the long-standing cultural credibility and trust that traditional medicines enjoy and explore functional claims via ingredients such as ginseng, turmeric and [Amomum villosum](#).

34%

of [Thai consumers](#) are interested in consuming more food or drink to support brain health made with Thai herbs

58%

of [Australian consumers](#) are interested in incorporating more natural functional ingredients\* into their diets

65%

of [Chinese adults](#) have tried cooking herbal/plant-based ingredients with a nourishing function\*\* and will try them again

\* eg turmeric, chaga mushroom; \*\* eg lotus seed soup, red bean barley soup

Base: Thailand: 1,500 internet users aged 18+; Australia: 1,000 internet users aged 18+; China: 3,000 internet users aged 18-59

Source: Mintel, March 2025, January 2025, January 2024

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## Heritage ingredients cross borders within APAC

Heritage will go regional. Ingredients once rooted in local traditions are gaining new life across APAC cuisines and wellness formats. Kampo-inspired herbs from Japan, Ayurvedic botanicals from India and jamu spices from Indonesia are being reinterpreted in cross-cultural recipes, RTD beverages and functional snacks.

Innovation is accelerating as [turmeric-matcha lattes](#), [coconut coffee/matcha](#) and [pandan kombuchas](#) blend familiarity with discovery, reflecting consumers' growing appetite for holistic yet adventurous wellness.

The fusion of tradition and technology, combining fermentation with precision formulation, for example, is redefining how heritage travels across borders. As regional collaboration deepens, APAC is set to lead the global movement in functional heritage innovation, turning ancestral wisdom into modern sensorial experiences that embody the region's resilience and creativity.



[Matchazuki 3 in 1 Coconut Matcha Latte](#) (Thailand)

# Heritage drinks redefine functional indulgence in APAC

Heritage-inspired drinks are shifting: once largely homemade tonics, they're now part of café culture, turning ancestral remedies into everyday indulgences that blend culture, function and modern aesthetics.



## In Malaysia: 'Diagnose and Sip'

[Que Tang Yu Fang](#), a milk tea shop, lets each customer [scan their tongue and take their pulse](#) to get a drink matched to their health needs. The concept reflects how Malaysian Chinese consumers are embracing China's food-medicine homology (FMH) trend, with many shops run by Chinese owners familiar with TCM.



## In China: ancient soup revival

The Ancient Soup Revival trend on Xiaohongshu shows young consumers rediscovering yangsheng (traditional wellness) by modernising and sharing heritage soup recipes. Products like [Seven Fresh Vitality Old Pigeon Soup](#) make these nourishing traditions convenient and ready to eat.



## In Singapore: traditional aromatherapy inspiration

[Asmara's](#) soothing anti-stress drinks seek inspiration from traditional aromatherapy products, blending prebiotics for digestive health with calming functional herbs such as chamomile, lavender rose and ashwagandha to soothe emotions and alleviate stress (Singapore).

# Black Swan Data predicts emerging interest in heritage drinks

## Is sotol the next tequila?

*Sotol* is beginning to trend among Gen Z drinkers in the UK (b. 1997-2012) who are increasingly drawn to spirits with authentic roots and cultural significance, according to Black Swan Data's predictive social intelligence.

- **58% increase in conversations about Sotol in the UK from February 2023-February 2025**

Unlike many mainstream options, Sotol traces its origins to the indigenous peoples of the Chihuahuan Desert and is crafted using more-sustainable harvesting methods than agave-based spirits. For Gen Z, drinking isn't just about flavour – it's about connection, place and the meaningful stories behind each sip.

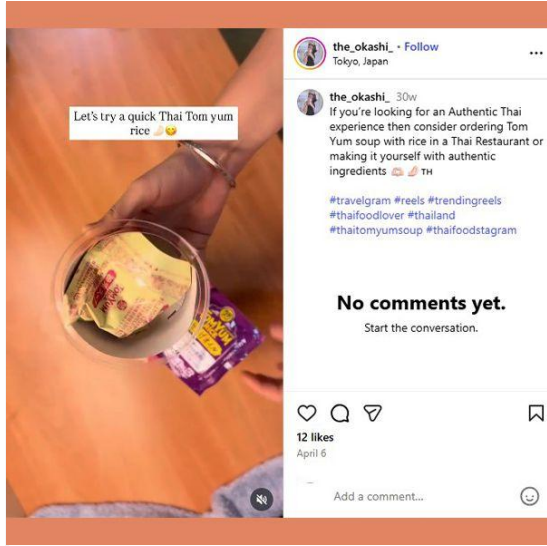
## Intentional and international starts to the day

Interest in global teas and coffees is on the rise, particularly interest in traditional sources and brewing methods. Arabic and Vietnamese coffee, along with Karak tea, are gaining popularity in the UK, according to Black Swan Data's predictive social intelligence.

- **16% increase in conversations about Karak chai in the UK from July 2023-July 2025**
- **5% rise in conversations about Vietnamese coffee**

These beverages evoke a sense of artisanal craftsmanship and heritage, offering a taste of 'the old way of doing things'. Consumers are seeking more than just a quick caffeine fix – they want a meaningful, intentional start to their day.

## Millennials will be a key demographic for 'convenient nostalgia'



[Nissin Kanzen Meshi Tom Yum Rice](#), a ready-meal delivering nutrient-dense convenience with heritage flavour

As the last non-digitally native generation, Millennials are bringing back 'grandma's kitchen' through convenience and storytelling. Brands are turning nostalgic comfort foods into functional staples, from China's [premium tinned soups](#) and [herbal RTE porridges](#) to Japan's Nissin Wellbeing Noodles, including the [Cup Noodles PRO](#) and [Kanzen Meshi](#) ranges, which balance 33 essential nutrients with great taste for modern lifestyles.

On social media, creators are reviving heritage cooking: [Dianxi Xiaoge](#) (China) shares rural recipes and ancestral techniques; [Abi Marquez](#), aka 'Lumpia Queen', (Philippines) reinterprets family dishes for modern kitchens; and [Iain Hewitson](#), aka 'Huey', (Australia/New Zealand) bridges generational wisdom with convenience. Viral Douyin/TikTok videos tagged '[老奶奶做菜](#)' ('[grandma cooking](#)') celebrate thrifty, soulful meals.

Convenient nostalgia is redefining what 'home-cooked' means; it's familiar, nourishing and ready for busy modern lives.

## Science is giving ancient traditions a modern edge

These advancements are transforming 'grandma's wisdom' into **science-backed, regulatory-ready nutrition**, proving that heritage can thrive in the era of data and innovation.



### Biotech precision in koji fermentation

[Marukome Plus Koji Rice Koji Milk](#) uses fermentation technology to craft a plant-based milk containing 60% koji amazake. It's less sweet, enriched with rice vitamin E and koji ergothioneine, and free from 28 allergens, positioning Marukome as a leader in fermented plant milk (Japan).



### Heritage fermentation meets local innovation

[Heal Probiotics Jakarta](#), a start-up producing probiotic fermented drinks (kombucha, kefir) using local Indonesian heritage ingredients and formats, representing the trend of native grains/fermentation going modern (Indonesia).



### AI-enabled ingredient verification

[Herbalogi SDN BHD](#) applies AI to validate and formulate herbal blends, using a database of 10,000 plants to ensure safety, efficacy and dosage accuracy. Its tech bridges the gap between traditional wisdom and scientific rigour, turning ancient remedies into evidence-based solutions (Malaysia).

## APAC will turn classics into the next 'prestige pantry' trend

Formats once seen as old-fashioned, from soups to porridges to tinned meals, are being reimagined as modern wellness staples. While heritage drinks revive rituals, these new pantry formats deliver nourishment and design-led convenience for busy, health-focused lives.

Inspired by US brand Heyday Canning Co.'s [Golden Butternut Lentil Stew](#), which brought warmth and credibility back to canned food with clean recipes and nostalgic storytelling, brands are redefining 'premium preservation', turning shelf-stable foods into smart, satisfying choices rather than shortcuts.

Singapore's Golden Days Signature Desserts' Hong Kong-Style Red Bean Soup is a ready-to-eat, microwaveable dessert that reflects APAC's move toward shelf-stable, culturally rooted comfort foods with a modern twist.

By 2030, APAC's 'prestige pantry' will span shelf-stable porridges, freeze-dried broths and RTE traditional desserts that merge heritage rituals with modern wellness, turning comfort foods into elevated, functional daily staples.



[Golden Days Signature Desserts Hong Kong Style Red Bean Soup](#) (Singapore)

## **Predictions for 2030 and beyond**

## 2030 prediction: consumers will learn lessons in perseverance from the past

**35%**

of [Japanese consumers](#) would like to stock up on products that can be used both in daily life and during disasters

By 2030, consumers across APAC will increasingly look to the past as a guide for resilience. The shocks and disruptions they've endured, from natural disasters to everyday stresses, will inspire them to prepare both themselves and their pantries to withstand whatever comes next. These surprises may range from a sleepless night to a sudden natural disaster, driving demand for foods that support and balance daily nourishment with emergency preparedness.

Brands that ground themselves in heritage ingredients, fermentation and traditional medicines will benefit from the trust consumers place in history. These brands will be regarded and respected as cultural custodians that combine delicious tastes with long histories of functional benefits or boast the sustainability advantages of circular traditions.

*Base: Japan: 2,000 internet users aged 18+*

*Source: Mintel, March 2024*

## 2030 prediction: the comfort of tradition will be nothing without the cut-through of digital



### Increase 'dwell time' with storytelling screens\*

Ambient aisles will see a revival in traffic and innovation. Drawing on insights from this piece and Mintel's full library, Mintel Spark has generated a communication idea: digital over-aisle screens will detail brands' sourcing and people stories to emotionally connect with shoppers and extend 'dwell time'.



### Digitally savvy elders will keep traditions alive

Marketers will invest in virtual cooking classes that are led by elders and reconnect young people with traditional recipes and authentic rituals. Amidst falling birth rates, this will serve as an alternative to passing down food traditions through families.



### Ancient ingredients require modern approval

Technology like AI will help food businesses secure regulatory approval for innovating with ancient ingredients by ensuring safety, compliance and credibility. Consumers like mystery but [regulators require transparency](#).

\* This is NOT a real scenario – it has been generated by Mintel's AI-powered concept generator to inspire innovation; generated product images may include example text and as such may contain misspellings or grammatical errors because the image has not been manually manipulated post-generation

## Mintel analysts predict what's next

**Seasonal eating and natural preservation  
reframe sustainability**

– Predicted by [Michelle Teodoro](#)

**Open the recipe archives to deal with  
shortages**

– Predicted by [Ayisha Koyenikan](#)

**'Upcycled' will be re-branded as  
'resourceful'**

– Predicted by [Alice Pilkington](#), [Stephanie Mattucci](#) and [Alex Beckett](#)

## Seasonal eating and natural preservation reframe sustainability

By 2030, ancestral food practices like seasonal eating, [fermentation](#) and [natural preservation](#) will evolve from niche interests into mainstream strategies for resilience. While enthusiasts have long celebrated these traditions, rising climate disruptions, food cost volatility and growing interest in sustainability will drive broader adoption.

Brands will revive techniques like pickling, drying and fermenting, not just as eco-conscious choices, but as culturally rooted solutions that reduce waste, extend shelf life and support gut health.

Everyday staples like preserved vegetables, seasonal grains and fermented snacks will be reframed as smart, sustainable staples, especially in price-sensitive markets where resilience is essential.

### What this means for APAC

The region's deep-rooted food preservation culture, as exemplified by kimchi and tempeh, positions APAC to lead in imagining sustainability through heritage. Expect innovation that merges traditional preservation with modern convenience and wellness.

– Predicted by [Michelle Teodoro](#)

*Base: Japan: 2,000 internet users aged 18+*

*Source: Mintel, February 2024*

# 28%

of [Japanese consumers](#) would be motivated to buy food and drink that is fermented; interest rises above 40% for women aged 40+

## Open the recipe archives to find alternatives for ingredients in shortage



[Nippon Oh'My Rich Carbonara Pasta Sauce](#) (Japan)

By 2030, the pasta sauce aisle will [look less red](#). As the price and availability of tomatoes continue to pose challenges, pasta sauce brands will be forced to innovate, focusing on driving volume through non-tomato-based sauces with increasingly exciting flavours.

Launches of cream sauces, cheese sauces, pesto and other bases (eg capsicum, pumpkin) will add flavour innovation and variety while circumventing tomatoes.

### What this means for APAC

As supply pressures reshape global food security and flavour systems, APAC brands will spotlight regional staples such as seaweed, fermented roots and [pandan](#). Expect a rise in sauces, condiments and even beverages built on these ingredients, transforming local abundance into symbols of climate resilience and modern versatility.

– Predicted by [Ayisha Koyenikan](#)

## 'Upcycled' will evolve into 'resourceful innovation'

Consumers will embrace resourcefulness as both a mindset and a marker of modern sustainability. Rather than viewing upcycling as a niche sustainability act, brands will position it as **resource-smart creativity**, creating new value from leftovers, by-products and surplus.

### What this means for APAC

This shift is already visible across APAC, in Japan's [soy pulp snacks](#), Thailand's [beverage fibre from fruit waste](#) and Australia's upcycled pineapple desserts, for example.

By 2030, 'resourceful innovation' will reflect a broader cultural return to thrift, preservation and respect for ingredients, echoing the long-standing Japanese principle of *mottainai* ('nothing wasted'). Heritage wisdom will meet circular creativity, reframing sustainability not as sacrifice but as ingenuity.



[Dole Crushed Pineapple in Syrup](#) 'use and upcycle the whole pineapple' (Australia)

**How this Prediction has evolved**

## Previous Mintel Trends that paved the way for this Prediction

**2017**

### **In Tradition We Trust**

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Consumers sought comfort in 2017 from modernized updates of age-old formulations, flavors and formats. Mintel forecast consumers would feel reassured by nostalgia, "ancient" claims and brands that anchored in local traditions.

**2021**

### **United By Food**

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Food and drink brands were recommended in 2021 to connect with consumers who were seeking personal expression and a sense of community. Mintel suggested that brands could help people celebrate their individual backgrounds and cultures.

**2025**

### **Chain Reaction**

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Consumers in 2025 needed to be open-minded about claims amid food supply disruptions. Mintel recommended brands help consumers stay resilient by accepting and trusting the new origins, ingredients and flavors in an adapting world.

**2030**

### **High-Tech Harvests**

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Released in 2019, the 2030 Global Food & Drink Trend High-Tech Harvests forecasted a newfound appreciation for agriculture and the work it takes to bring food to market. Current nostalgia for the past is inspiring respect for ingredients and origin.

# INTENTIONALLY SENSORY

By [Alex Beckett](#) and [Jenny Zegler](#)

Multisensory food and drink formulations will mature from whimsical novelties into more-practical and -purposeful creations that provide memorable experiences while answering specific sensory needs of underserved consumers.

In APAC, food has always been a sensory experience, from the sound of sizzling woks to the soothing aroma of tea. Brands are now drawing on these familiar cues to create moments of comfort, calm and connection.

## Multisensory's appeal will mature to offer playfulness with purpose



[Seoul Asan Medical Center Geriatrics](#) × [Greeting Soft Protein Tender Handmade Hamburg Steak](#) is designed for the elderly and has 19g of protein (South Korea)

Whether it's ['dirty sodas'](#) or [Dubai chocolate](#), multisensory innovations have become synonymous with playfulness, novelty and viral sensations in recent years. Going forward, brands will be more intentional with the use of colour, texture or aroma to stimulate the senses and reinvigorate experiential eating and brand positioning.

By 2030, sensory features beyond taste will evolve from performative and whimsical elements in food and drink into elements used in more-practical and -pragmatic ways.

Innovations that engage several senses will be particularly important as antidotes to increasingly virtual, repetitive and isolated daily lives, driving more brands to differentiate themselves with strategic uses of multisensory elements. By 2030, formulations will be tactical with use of colour, texture, shape and aroma to answer the needs of underserved segments of the population.

## **Predictions for 2026-30**

## Next-generation multisensory innovations will get creative to defy expectations

Food and drink with exciting multisensory features will continue to tantalise consumers in 2026. Having experienced Dubai chocolate, bubble tea and Doritos' self-proclaimed '[annoyingly crunchy chips](#)', consumers are eager for new texture innovation.

In Thailand, [27%](#) of consumers say unique textures (eg chewy, fizzy) influence them to try a new non-alcoholic beverage, while [41%](#) want drinks that challenge their senses through taste and aroma.

Across APAC, multisensory innovation is shifting away from novelty towards purposeful creativity. Thailand's [Dirty Coffee -86°C](#) contrasts hot espresso with a sub-zero glass, delivering aromatic intensity and an ice-cream-like finish.

By 2030, next-gen experiences will fuse texture, temperature and transformation to evoke joy, energy and emotional connection.



[Dirty Coffee -86°C](#) (Thailand)

## Black Swan Data predicts a new direction for children's food and drink

TRENDS TO WATCH NOW

### High nutritional value

has seen a 21% increase in mentions in social media conversations in Canada from July 2023-July 2025

Children have different tastebuds and sensory needs than adults. Kids crave crunch, colour, fun and familiar tastes; parents want fewer artificials and added nutrition. It's a challenge for parents – and the brands trying to serve them.

Black Swan Data's predictive social intelligence finds that attention in the industry and in the news on natural (or artificial) colours in food and drink has been reflected in 'colourful' appearing in 3,868 online conversations in Canada from July 2023-July 2025.

Black Swan Data predicts the next generation of 'family meal products' will spotlight real vegetables with recognisable names to bring colour, texture and familiarity to meals. There are opportunities to employ sauces and dips to sneak in unfamiliar foods that deliver the wider health benefits that parents desire.

Trends to watch next:

- Natural ingredients have seen a 28% increase in social media conversations in Canada.
- Childhood nutrition has seen a 41% increase in social media conversations.

## Follow APAC's lead on mood-boosting multisensory beverage innovations

In China, 79% of [sparkling drink consumers](#) agree the sound of bubbles popping in sparkling drinks relaxes them. Asia, overall, is seeing more beverages offering interactive mood boosts.

[Fruit.B](#)'s soda cans contain a real fruit slice that floats to the top when the can is opened, and the released aroma is further accentuated by a wider rimmed can.

In Thailand, Est Cola's [Rise Up](#) campaign saw limited-edition cans with words of encouragement printed upside down to inspire consumers.

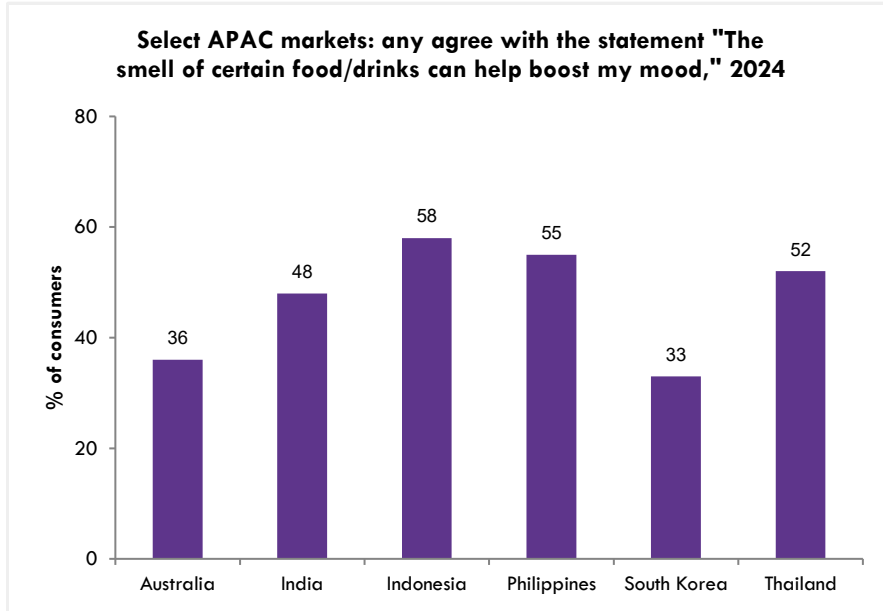


[Maison Perrier Chic Rosellini Beverage](#) has 'refreshing bursting bubbles' (Singapore)



[Est Cola](#): turning the can upside down reveals an inspiring message (Thailand)

## Look to beauty to find new ways to change moods with fragrances



More multisensory experiences will emerge in beauty and personal care (BPC), according to Mintel's 2026 Beauty & Personal Care Prediction [Sensorial Synergy](#). BPC will use functional fragrances and neuroscience to prove the ways scent amplifies mood.

In APAC, where food and drink overlap with wellness and ambience, brand innovation is leaning into aroma and flavour as mood cues. [Asahi's WILKINSON SOON](#) (Japan) uses a collar around the bottle neck that releases a lemon-lime aroma during consumption, helping reduce sugar intake while keeping flavour intensity. [Shiny Meadow's 2025 Spring Edition Fresh Milk](#) (China) features a cherry-blossom-scented bottle, with petals that emit fragrance when rubbed, turning packaging into an emotional touchpoint.

*Base: Australia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand: 1,000 internet users aged 18+ in each market*

Source: [Mintel, March 2024](#)

## Black Swan Data predicts an opportunity for emotional snacking for GLP-1 users

GLP-1 medication users are packing in more nutrients with fewer calories, but doing so comes at an emotional cost: the trade-off of indulgent flavours and satisfying textures.

Nutrient-dense snacks, while healthier, often feel too clinical and lack the pleasure associated with typical snacking. For many, snacking is an emotional experience, and GLP-1 users in Australia report feeling disconnected from and less joyful about the snacks they now consume, according to Black Swan Data's predictive social intelligence. This shift has led to low moods and a sense of anhedonia, a phenomenon some are calling 'Ozempic personality'.

Trends to watch now:

- Indulgent (9,062 conversations | +33% from July 2023-July 2025)

Trends to watch next:

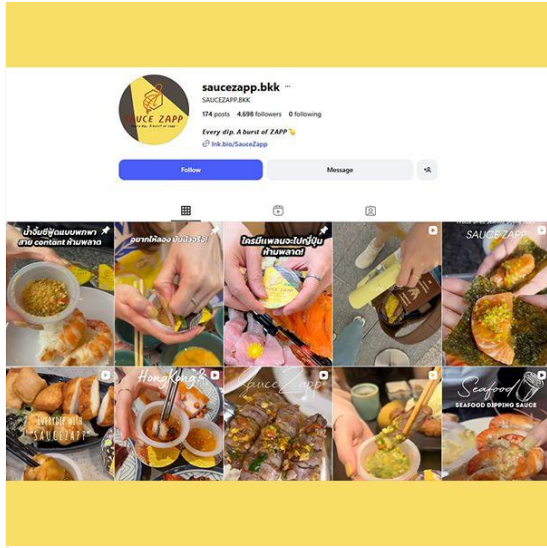
- Crunchy (28,152 conversations | +57%)
- Goey (4,711 conversations | +37%)

TRENDS TO WATCH NOW

### Texture satisfaction

has seen a 5% increase in social media conversations in Australia from July 2023-July 2025 and has been mentioned in 820 conversations over the same period

## Micro sensory moments redefine everyday pleasure



[Sauce Zapp](#) (Thailand)

Food and drink brands will lean into ultra-short, high-impact sensory experiences that fit into busy lives – think 10-20 second bites, snacks that crack or fizz, aroma bursts or temperature shifts.

In APAC, where on-the-go urban lifestyles meet ritual food moments, we'll see more micro sensory formats. For example, Thai brand [Sauce Zapp](#) offers a single-serve, freeze-dried, zesty sauce that can be rehydrated and added into meals to engage on sight, sound and taste. Just add water, hear the sizzle or feel the fizz and get a flavour snap.

By 2030, micro-rituals will evolve into everyday gestures of joy, designed to momentarily transform mood, spark connection or mark a mini-pause within a hectic day.

## **Predictions for 2030 and beyond**

## 2030 predictions: formulate with intention and inclusivity

### Multisensory UPFs will have to over-deliver

Ultra-processed foods can't just taste or look good, they must feel better too. As scrutiny around UPFs grows, multisensory design will shift its focus from indulgence to reassurance, using texture, aroma and interactivity to convey freshness and care.

[CP Meiji Clear Milk](#) (Thailand) caters to those sensitive to dairy texture, showing how sensory design can enhance enjoyment and accessibility.

### Welcome pets into festive celebrations

The ongoing humanisation trend in pet care will present an opportunity for multisensory pet treats for holidays and celebrations. From September 2020-August 2025, more than half of [global seasonal pet food launches](#) were for [Christmas](#). Mintel's [Kate Vlietstra](#) foresees more pet treats [for Eid or Diwali](#) with novel flavours, colours or shapes.

### Enhance interactivity in packaging

[Developments](#) in materials science, 3D/digital printing and eco-inspired cross-industry collaboration will make packaging more interactive.

Innovations like peelable layers in children's snacks, scent-enabled bottle reuse in beverages, embedded audio prompts and tactile designs [inspired by beauty brands](#) will be more common.

## 2030 prediction: brands will formulate for the unique multisensory needs of underserved audiences

### Generation Alpha (b. 2011 or later)

The natural and clean ingredient preferences of many parents (and regulators) will mean Generation Alpha, who will be as old as 19 in 2030, will be nostalgic for the muted colour schemes that are delivered by the growing use of natural colours.

### Neurodivergent people

People with autism and other [neurodivergences](#) may have sensitivities or negative reactions to certain textures, smells or visuals. Inclusive product development will create solutions for [neurodivergent people](#) that might also have mainstream appeal.

### Ageing population

The world's growing elderly population will require inclusive products offering [softer textures](#), smaller portions and easy-to-use packaging. Creative products that respect the dignity of older people will succeed.

### GLP-1 users

Multisensory innovations will help GLP-1 medication users reconnect with food and drink. Brands can take cues from [fine dining, where smaller portions](#) often play with colour, texture, aroma and presentation to provide satisfaction in smaller servings.

## 2030 prediction: catering to the specific sensory needs of underserved groups will bring commercial gains



### Sensory-friendly foodservice

Foodservice will increasingly cater to neurodiverse diners and [staff](#), as sensory-friendly design gains mainstream appeal. Low lighting, soft acoustics and [quiet zones](#) will define the new hospitality standard. Examples like [Singapore's Acoustics Coffee Bar](#) and [Tokyo's quiet cafés](#) show how inclusive spaces can offer both comfort and commercial value.



### Performance for older gamers

In Japan, [31%](#) of consumers aged 60+ play games. In the future, the needs of affluent seniors who love gaming will inspire snacks that are nutritious, boost alertness and have [smooth textures](#) and nostalgic flavours.



### Elevate the aroma of products

Food and drink brands will extend into edible mists, like [Haute Sauce's Edible Fragrances](#), or [aircare \(eg candles\)](#). Scented innovations will support [GLP-1 users](#) who are managing the interplay between hormones, brain chemistry and the senses.

## 2030 prediction: catering to the specific sensory needs of underserved groups will bring commercial gains



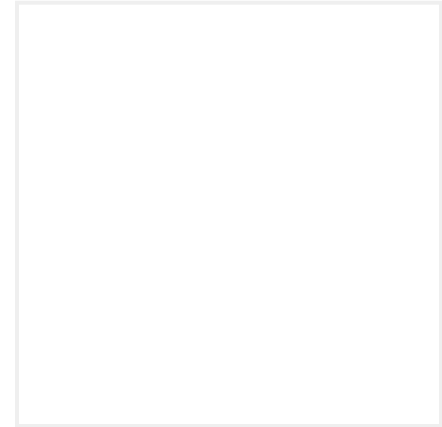
### Offer inclusive texture nutrition

[Mild Jelly](#) is designed for seniors and people with dry mouths or swallowing issues. Made with xylitol and rice-derived anthocyanins, it supports oral hydration and antibacterial care. Sold in soft, snackable sachets, it shows how sensory-friendly nutrition can bring comfort and dignity to ageing consumers (Thailand).



### Design for sensory and communication inclusivity

[CHAGEE's Signing Store](#) provides [a calm, low-noise space](#) where deaf and neurodiverse customers can communicate through visual menus and sign-language-trained staff. By prioritising sensory comfort and inclusivity, CHAGEE turns accessibility into both a social and business advantage (Singapore).

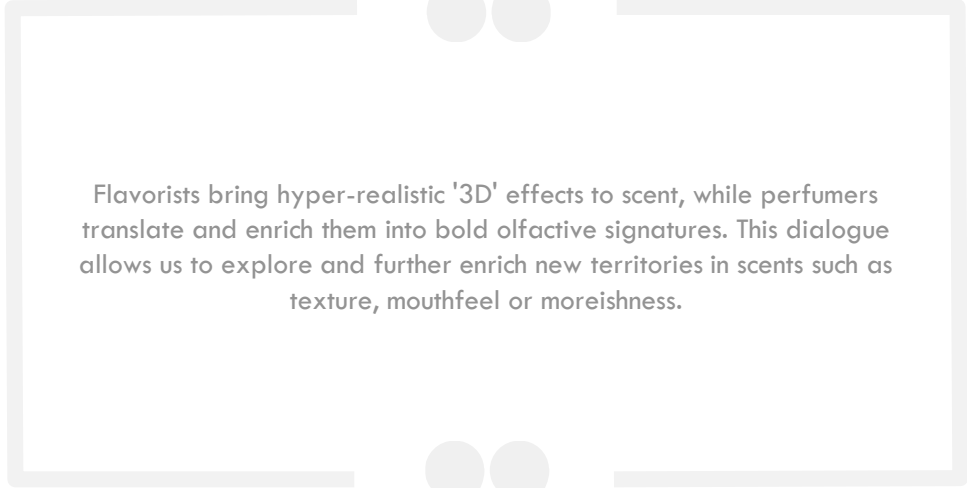


## 2030 prediction: the boundaries between beauty, aircare and food will blur

Studies confirm a connection between the sense of smell and insulin regulation, as highlighted in Mintel's [The Future of Fragrance: 2025](#).

The cross-industry collaboration between flavourists and perfumers will continue to identify new emotional, physical and visceral reactions in consumers. This builds on initiatives such as the 'Delight' programme from flavour and fragrance multinational Givaudan, explains Givaudan's Felipe Castro, Innovation Director Consumer Products, Fragrance & Beauty, Europe.

Companies will investigate the interplay between the senses of taste and smell to heighten the intensity of enjoyment and create fragrances that feel instinctive, deeply pleasurable and even more emotionally impactful.



Flavorists bring hyper-realistic '3D' effects to scent, while perfumers translate and enrich them into bold olfactive signatures. This dialogue allows us to explore and further enrich new territories in scents such as texture, mouthfeel or moreishness.

*Felipe Castro, Givaudan's Innovation Director Consumer Products, Fragrance & Beauty, Europe*

## Mintel analysts predict what's next

**'Comfort food' will evolve into 'food therapy'**

– Predicted by [Michelle Teodoro](#)

**Sensory will heighten new social occasions**

– Predicted by [Megan Stanton](#)

**Healthy foods will be messy, chaotic and fun**

– Predicted by [Melanie Bartelme](#)

## 'Comfort food' will evolve into 'food therapy'

43%

of [South Koreans who bought crisps, nuts, popcorn or meat snacks](#) in the three months to January 2025 bought them to boost their mood

By 2030, consumers will crave food and drink products that act as small but meaningful ways to help them feel grounded and emotionally supported. Inspired by traditional tea rituals and the growing interest in sensory wellbeing, brands will use taste, texture, aroma and sound to support emotional balance.

### What this means for APAC

In high-pressure markets like Japan and South Korea, where solo living and mental health concerns are rising, 'food therapy' will be less about spectacle and more about subtle, repeatable moments of care, especially for Gen Zs and Millennials. Think [crunchy snacks that relieve stress](#), soothing flavours that aid sleep, or packaging that evokes calm through scent or design.

While fully immersive AR/VR dining will remain niche, more-accessible formats like curated snack kits, calming teas or texture-rich comfort foods will become part of everyday wellness routines.

— Predicted by [Michelle Teodoro](#)

**Base:** South Korea: 902 internet users aged 18+ who have bought crisps/crisp-style snacks, nuts, popcorn or meat snacks in the three months to January 2025

**Source:** Mintel, January 2025

## Sensory innovation will heighten new social occasions

Consumers (particularly Gen Zs) will continue to reinvent old social occasions such as late-night clubbing or celebrations centred around alcohol. Opportunities will emerge for food and drink brands to use multisensory elements such as aroma, audio or visuals to modernise consumption occasions that were iconic for previous generations.

### What this means for APAC

'[Soft clubbing](#)' is now emerging, translating a common social occasion that would previously have lasted into the early hours of the next day and been fueled by alcohol into daytime parties in cafés focused around coffee and tea.

Brands have an opportunity not just to reimagine traditional food and drink items, but also to reimagine the consumption occasions where they can be applied, providing a whole new way to remain relevant to Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

– Predicted by [Megan Stanton](#)

[View Original Post](#)

Maple Social Club in Australia hosts daytime dance parties with DJs and lattes

Maple Social Club in Australia hosts daytime dance parties with DJs and lattes

## Healthy foods will be messy, chaotic and fun



[Daesang Chungjungone Coconut, Nut, Olive Oil and Seaweed Rice Crisps](#) (China)

Healthy food and drink will cease to be stale, sterile and dry. Instead, wellness items will be reinvented as messy, chaotic and fun. Building on the growing appreciation for fibre, consumers will layer healthy ingredients with crunchy, soft, sticky, sweet, tart or unctuous ones to make wellness treats that are fit for viral reaction videos.

### What this means for APAC

In APAC, the tension between clean-label and sensory indulgence will spark 'controlled chaos' foods, such as layered drinks and snacks, dual-texture desserts and colour-changing products. The Chinese start-up [True Plants](#), specialising in plant-based yogurt, has created layered yogurt drinks with fruit pulps that should be shaken well before consumption.

– Predicted by [Melanie Bartelme](#)

**How this Prediction has evolved**

## Previous Mintel Trends that paved the way for this Prediction

### 2016

#### Artificial: Public Enemy No. 1

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Consumer demands for natural and "less processed" food and drink began in 2016. Mintel recommended reformulating to be able to boast straightforward claims such as "nothing artificial."

### 2018

#### New Sensations

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Texture was forecast as the latest tool in 2018 to engage the senses and deliver experiences worth sharing on social media. Mintel predicted consumers would seek out chewy beverages, ultra-crunchy snacks or popping candy in treats.

### 2021

#### Feed The Mind

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Mintel forecast that starting in 2021 more people would learn how diets impact their mental and emotional health. Opportunity emerged for more functional and multisensory formulations to pair with stress relief activities like gaming or meditation.

### 2023

#### Cosmic Comforts

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In 2023, space was predicted to emerge as a source of optimism, innovation and connection and an escape from the chaos on Earth. Mintel recommended considering how space could inspire escapist innovations in flavor, color and texture.

## Key takeaways

### "Maxxing" Out, Diversity In

Consumers across APAC will expand their diets beyond protein- or fibre-centric goals to embrace balance, variety and nourishment. Diversity will emerge as a new marker of wellbeing as people rediscover the satisfaction, nutritional benefits and sustained energy that come from eating across a spectrum of ingredients.

### Retro Rejuvenation

Brands will be seen as cultural custodians that incorporate, preserve and modernise traditional wisdom with innovations that satisfy the consumer need to feel more emotionally and culturally connected to their food and their surroundings.

### Intentionally Sensory

Sensory features beyond taste will evolve from being a performative and whimsical element in food and drink to more practical and pragmatic. Creative yet evidence-based applications of texture, aroma and appearance will be central in innovations that offer inclusive experiences for underserved consumers.