

A Look at 2021 Food Trends – Part 1

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September 9, 2021

[Blog](#), [Foodservice Tips](#), [Industry News](#)

With the impact of COVID-19 infiltrating nearly every aspect of our daily lives last year, it's no surprise that the Pandemic's effect has spilled over into our relationship with food. Distinct trends – some continuations from 2020 and others new on the scene due to a year like none other – are evident in what, where, when, why and how we eat.

When announcing its Top Trends For 2021 last December, FMCG Gurus divided the needs and wants of consumers for the next 12 months into three main themes: Health and Wellness, Safety and Assurance, and Taste & Enjoyment.



Source: FMCG Gurus

“Health will be a major driver of consumer attitudes and innovation in the market over the next year. However, these concerns have intensified over the last 12 months as consumers have re-evaluated their diets and lifestyles and how vulnerable they are to illness. The implications of this will manifest in consumer attitudes in several ways.” (FMCG Gurus predicts top food and beverage trends for 2021.” (www.candyindustry.com/articles/89433-fmcg-gurus-predicts-top-food-and-beverage-trends-for-2021))

In Food Technology Magazine’s article, “The Top 10 Food Trends of 2021,” the top macro and longstanding trends that were identified for product developers to innovate around were:

Macro Trends

- Self-Care
- Disease Prevention
- Home-Centered Living
- Creative Ways of Celebrating Special Occasions

Longstanding Trends

- Indulgence
- Convenience
- Plant-Based Eating
- Health/Wellness

With so much of a focus on health necessitated because of COVID-19, it makes sense that consumers' attention would turn to their wellness and the major role food plays in it.

In its article, "Top Food Trend Projections for 2021," Kalsec explained, "The pandemic has 'fast-tracked' many consumers to take a higher interest in the nutrition of their food and the health benefits of ingredients and specific 'functional' foods. As consumers had more down time in 2020, we saw them use this time to understand what they eat."

ALMOST **1/3** OF CONSUMERS
ARE USING
functional food
AND *beverages*
DAILY
AS A RESULT OF
THE PANDEMIC

A stylized illustration of a bowl with a leaf inside, rendered in a golden-yellow color. The bowl is simple and rounded, and the leaf is positioned as if it's being served or is part of the contents.

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Source: Functional Food & Beverage and Supplements, Hartman Group, April 2020

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In Whysdom's 2021 Food Trends, functional foods and ingredients made the cut in the "What We're Paying Attention To" list, and "Increasing focus on immune-boosting foods, functional ingredients, and possible prevention through diet" was included as an "Emerging" trend.

WHYSDOM INFOGRAPHIC: 2021 FOOD TRENDS

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The *WHYSDOM* team is predicting what to watch for all things food-related in 2021. This report is part of the annual Food Trends Report in conjunction with *The Food Channel*®, and is now in its 32nd year. The following is a curated list of the many changes affecting the market, with predictions around what we could see in the future.

WHAT WE'RE PAYING ATTENTION TO:



The rise of COVID adaptations in the restaurant industry, including local food vouchers, increasing focus on value, and off-premise purchases.



The rise of minimalism to meet consumer demands around to-go options, particularly as it leads to innovation around streamlining the customer experience.



A growing definition and demand for local food as consumers brace for potential supply chain interruption and seek accessible fresh food.



The growth of home-based restaurants enabled by new legislation aimed at giving people greater access to starting their own business in food.



Functional foods and ingredients positioned as an opportunity to add more wellness habits into new routines.



Continued growth in plant-based foods that cater to accessibility, including the expansion of private-label and grocery-exclusive products.



The rebirth of comfort food in both new and familiar forms, as well as new messaging surrounding indulgence and comfort.

WHAT'S GETTING ATTENTION:



Online and offline social connection through food that aims to bridge communities through virtual parties and social dinners



More data-driven innovation from restaurants that aims to improve convenience, safe transactions, and overall customer experience



International comfort food coming into play as people explore new dishes while cooking at home



Return to seasonal eating as a cost-saving option and a way to find fresh ingredients closer to home

EMERGING:

1

New holiday food traditions giving way to more unique celebrations that explore less traditional flavors and textures

2

Plant-based convenience foods that offer healthy, hassle-free meals with familiar flavor combinations

3

Increasing focus on immune-boosting foods, functional ingredients, and possible prevention through diet



The *WHYSDOM* Platform, developed by *CultureWaves*®, combines device behavior with more than a dozen years of collected consumer behavior and organizes them through a proprietary process to help you understand your target's core motivators and needs, answering "why" and "what's next."

11/20

Source: WhySDom

At the top of Food Technology Magazine's Top Ten Food Trends of 2021 is "Rx Food." They cited that from May to October last year sales of foods and beverages that help control hypertension saw an 11% increase, weight control products increased 13% and products for diabetes care were up by 14%.

"Influenced by feelings of stress and anxiety, shifting priorities caused by the ongoing pandemic, and changes in social connectivity, consumers are taking a more holistic and proactive approach to health and wellness, according to a new report from ADM."

ADM shares top 5 food trends for 2021: 'It's going to be a year of innovation, marked by significant breakthroughs in nutrition'

27-Oct-2020 By Mary Ellen Shoup

Information provided by the World Food Innovation Awards Food Trends 2021 demonstrates consumers' focus shift to overall health and well-being because of COVID-19.



Source: World Food Innovation Awards

Food Technology Magazine explained how "increasingly consumers are seeking alternative food and beverage formulations that help them avoid unwanted ingredients and/or perceived allergens. They're tapping into specific diet plans in order to align their food and beverage choices with personal nutritional or ethical goals."

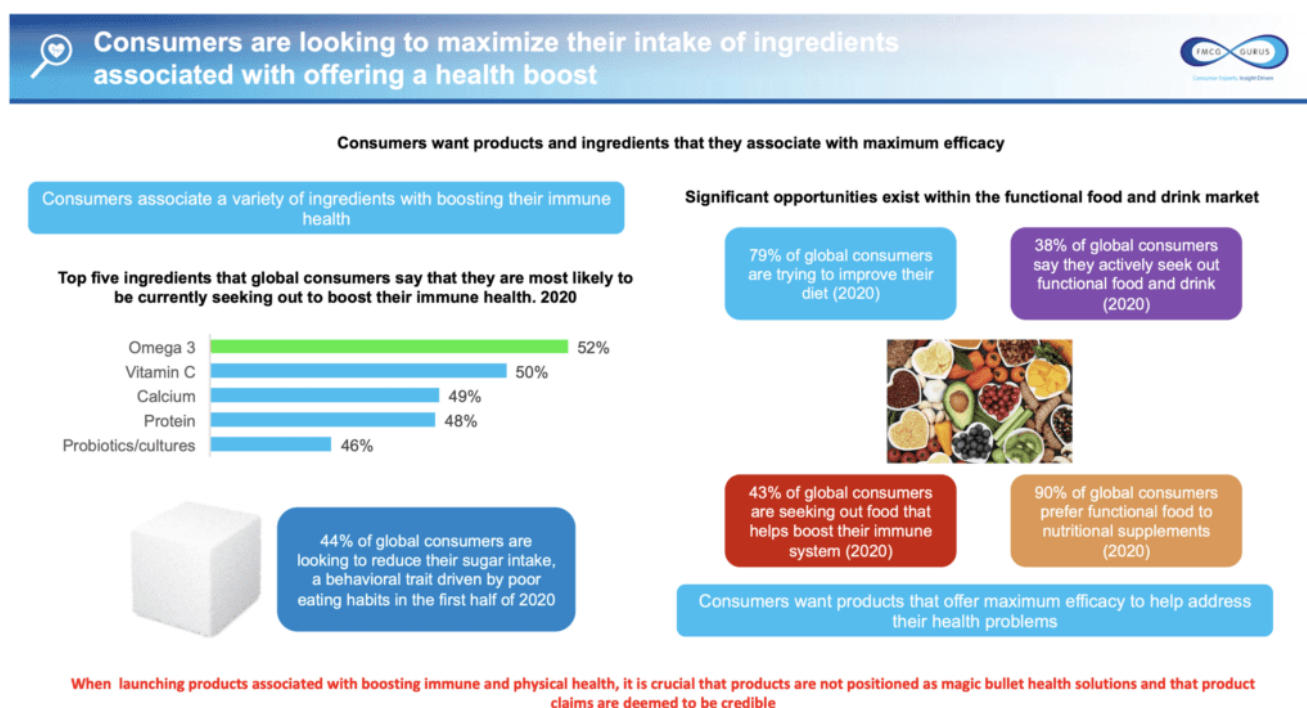
Check out our blog, "Big 9 Allergens and Risk – Do You Have a Plan?". There you'll find information on establishing an allergen plan along with misbranding and undeclared allergens. Download a handy free Big 9 Allergens Poster that's been updated with the allergen sesame.

Everyday Health lists a gluten free diet as still a popular 2021 choice in their article [“The Top 10 Healthy Food Trends to Expect in 2021.”](#) Citing the IFIC Survey, 6 percent of people said they were following a gluten free diet in 2020.

Find our [41 Cook’s Delight® bases that are gluten free](#) in our easy-to-use product menu that filters our products based on your specifications. Download a free PDF [Gluten Free Quick Guide Educational Poster](#) and learn more about how to [strengthen your staff’s awareness and knowledge base about gluten](#).

The Big Sugar Breakup

It appears consumers aren’t so sweet on sugar this year either. FMCU Gurus points out how 44 percent of us worldwide want to cut back on it.



[“Naturally Sweetened Foods About to Help Satisfy Cravings”](#) made the top ten 2021 health trends list with Everyday Health. In the article, Samantha Cassetty, a New York City-based registered dietitian and coauthor of Sugar Shock said, “Americans eat far too much sugar, so I’m always excited to see new products designed with lower amounts of unnecessary sugar. As people are getting savvier about added sugars and how a sugary diet can influence your risk of illnesses like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, memory problems and mood disorders, they’re seeking products that are using less sugar. I’ve seen cereals sweetened with dates and flavored yogurts that contain no or low amounts of added sugar, to name a few. I’m excited to see more of these enter the scene in 2021.”

Cassetty noted that the newly updated nutrition food label makes spotting added sugars easier. Check out our blog [“FDA Updates Nutrition Facts Panel”](#) about the changes including a free downloadable and customizable nutrition facts panel.

“Now that the food label has officially been updated, it’s easy to spot added sugars on the nutrition facts panel,” she said. “And there are about 50 types used by manufacturers to make food sweeter and more appealing. With the label updates, many products have either been reformulated or introduced with less added sugar than we’ve seen in the past. Keep in mind that even when a product has a reasonable amount of added sugar, you still need to check the ingredients to make sure it’s also made with mostly whole-food ingredients such as oats, nuts and seeds.”

Want to know more about just how much sugar we eat, what foods contain the most, the best way to reduce sugar and more? Check out our blog, [“Consumers Ranking Sugar as the #1 Health Consideration: This is Why.”](#)

Our new line of [Zero Sugar Bases](#) is available in chicken, beef and vegetable (both organic and conventional) varieties. They are gluten free with no MSG, no Big 9 Allergens and no trans fats. These clean label products conform to the guidelines of many popular zero sugar diets as well as KETO, vegan and low carb.

Fungi Are Still The Thing

Cozymeal has included herbs, roots and mushrooms in their article [“The Top 21 Food Trends of 2021”](#).

“There has always been an attention to vegetables in connection to healthy eating as bodies are in need of high nutrients. But ingredients such as herbs, roots and classic mushrooms will be taking the world by storm as a food trend in 2021. These earthy ingredients are all packed full of adaptogens and plenty of vitamins to start introducing more of these items into their everyday meals for happy health-conscious diets.”

Last December, Kroger called 2021 a “breakout year for mushrooms,” including “Mushroom Mania” in [“Kroger’s Top Seven Food Trend Predictions for 2021”](#). The retailer said in their press release, “The versatile vegetable is rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, and can easily elevate everyday recipes with its warm umami flavor. Consumers should expect to see mushrooms play a starring role in a variety of new products in 2021, including blended plant-based proteins, condiments, spices, seasonings and more.”

Margaret Malochleb, Associate Editor at [IFT \(Institute of Food Technologists\)](#) predicted: “Expect to see mushrooms of all types especially antioxidant-rich varieties like reishi, lion’s mane, chaga, and coryceps, to appear as hero ingredients in a growing assortment of foods, among them superfood coffees and chocolate. Both wild and domestic varieties are being

explored for their many health benefits, which include immune, energy, heart, and brain support. A staple in Eastern cultures, their popularity is on the rise among Western consumers interested in clean-label, plant-based solutions for common health concern.”.

In our blog, [“Make Room for Mushroom!”](#), you’ll find the health benefits of mushrooms, fun facts about the fungi as well as other helpful information such as how mushroom base, stock and broth is used.

Our [Cook’s Delight® Simply Mushroom Stock Concentrate](#) is a vegetarian soup base that provides concentrated mushroom flavor. The plant-based mushroom stock for cooking will extend your recipe’s flavor, provide a consistent and predictable flavor profile and meet the strictest criteria of No No Lists. Home users can purchase individual quantities of our most popular soup bases through [Cook’s Delight® Amazon Store](#).

Plant-Based Roots Run Deep

As explained by the [Good Food Institute](#), “plant-based products are a key driver of sales growth at grocery retailers nationwide, growing almost twice as fast as overall food sales. SPINS retail sales data released April 6, 2021, shows that grocery sales of plant-based foods that directly replace animal products have grown 27 percent in the past year to \$7 billion.”

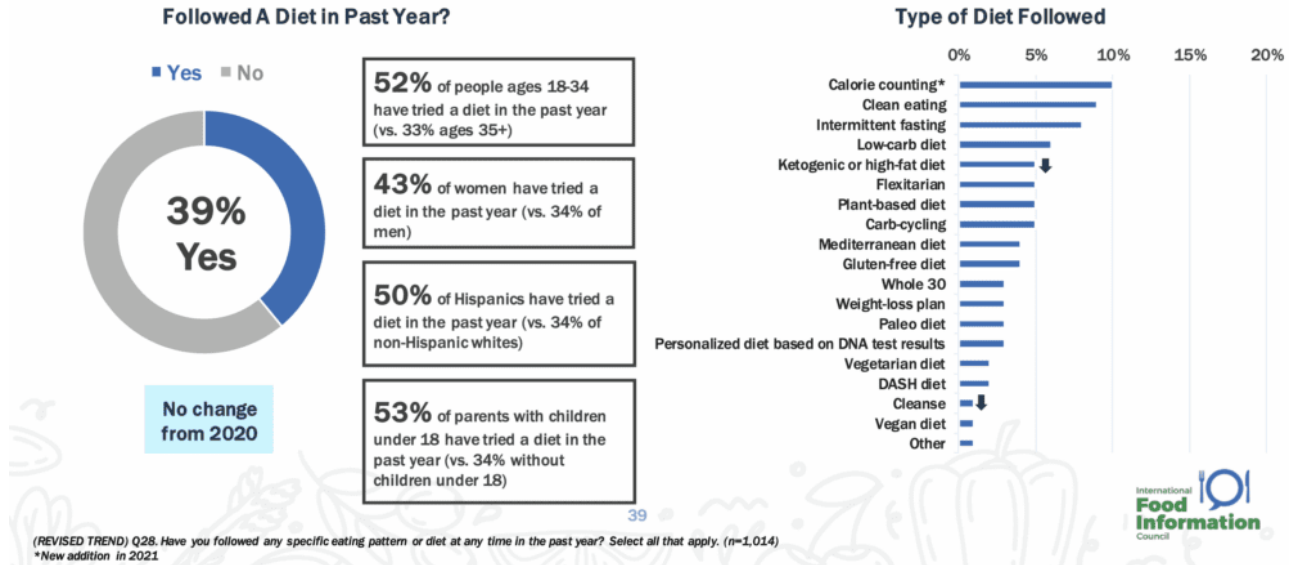
The article continues to reveal:

- Between 2020 and 2024, sales of alternate meats and poultry are expected to grow from \$1.3 billion to 2.0 billion. Beef, pork and chicken – in that order – will see the most growth.
- During the same time period, plant-based dairy sales will increase from \$4.3 billion to \$5.2 billion. The top categories include milk, ice cream, yogurt, creamers and cheese.
- 25% of adults eat plant-based meat or poultry – they are most popular with Millennials, Generation Z, upper income households, urbanites and consumers with kids at home.
- Consumers seeking out plant-based products also considered themselves foodies, 75% like to cook and 69% enjoy looking for new products to try out.

According to the 2020 International Food Information Council (IFIC) Food & Health Survey, ([International Food Information Council. 2021 Food & Health Survey. 19 May 2021.](#)) a higher percentage of responders reported following a plant-based diet above other popular diets including a gluten free diet, Paleo diet, DASH diet and others.

There has been no change in the number following a diet/eating pattern in the last year

Younger consumers, those with a college degree or more, women and parents are more likely to have tried a diet



“Veganism and Vegetarianism,” along with “Flexitarian Diets” made Cozymeal’s cut for their Top 21 Food Trends.

“While veganism and vegetarianism are hardly a “trend,” the influx of people joining the lifestyle is on the rise. Increasing concerns over mental and physical wellbeing, not to mention the environmental impact, has led to many to reconsider their meat-centered diets. Many are giving up animal products completely in efforts to live a healthier, more eco-friendly life.”

Flexitarian diets offer consumers an additional option with meat eaten infrequently or only on certain days of the week instead of on a regular basis.

Looking for more facts about plant-based diets? Don’t miss our blog, [“How Are Vegetable Base, Stock, Broths and Bouillon Made?”](#) Learn which vegetables make the cut, the basics of mirepoix, some surprising statistics about plant-based diets and the benefits of using a vegetable base instead of a stock, broth or bouillon.

Be on the lookout for “A Look at 2021 Food Trends – Part 2” for more information on just what’s hot and what’s not this year!