

AUTUMN & WINTER CHOCOLATE INSPIRATION



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A SEASON TO CREATE

Discover what’s shaping chocolate, pastry and desserts this autumn and winter.

Every season brings new inspiration. Familiar flavours return, unexpected combinations emerge, and chefs find fresh ways to turn ingredients into something extraordinary.

This autumn and winter, comfort meets creativity. Nostalgic favourites are being reinvented, roasted flavours bring new richness, and East Asian influences open up different ways to balance sweet and savoury. Bright fruits create contrast, while smaller formats prove that indulgence doesn’t have to come in large portions.

At Callebaut, we believe trends are just the starting point. What matters is what you create with them.

That’s why we’ve brought together five trends shaping the season, alongside three additional inspiration spotlights and 33 creations from Callebaut chefs. From bakery and pastry to desserts and confectionery, discover fresh perspectives, flavour combinations and techniques to inspire your next creation. Whether you’re developing a seasonal menu, refreshing your counter or creating something entirely new, this guide is here to help you turn inspiration into opportunity.

Explore the trends. Discover the possibilities. Make the season yours.

THIS SEASON'S TRENDS: AT A GLANCE

From comforting classics with a creative twist to bold flavour pairings and bite-sized indulgence, discover five trends inspiring chocolate, pastry and desserts this autumn and winter.

Explore what's shaping the season and find fresh ideas to make your own.

1/ FAMILIAR FAVOURITES, REIMAGINED

Comfort meets creativity as nostalgic desserts and much-loved classics return with unexpected flavours, textures and contemporary twists.

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2/ RICH, ROASTED & NUTTY

From hazelnut and pistachio to caramel and brown butter, discover the deep, toasted flavours bringing warmth and indulgence to the season.

SEE THE RECIPES

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3/ EAST ASIAN INFLUENCE

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4/ BRIGHTEN THE SEASON

Vibrant citrus, orchard fruits and tart berries cut through winter richness, bringing freshness, colour and contrast to chocolate creations.

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5/ SMALL TREATS, BIG INDULGENCE

Small in size, big on experience. Discover how concentrated flavour, contrasting textures and considered finishes make every bite count.

SEE THE RECIPES

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PG 15 → PECAN, CARAMEL & COOKIE CHOCOLATE BAR

A layered chocolate bar built around Silky Ghana milk chocolate.



PG 10 → RUBY RASPBERRY VELVET CAKE

A colourful reinterpretation of the classic velvet cake.

1/

FAMILIAR FAVOURITES, REIMAGINED

Comfort meets creativity



CHILDHOOD
FLAVOURS
OFFER WARMTH,
COMFORT AND
EMOTIONAL
CONNECTION.



When the temperature drops, familiarity has particular appeal. Classic desserts, nostalgic flavours and recognisable formats offer the comfort consumers are looking for; but familiar doesn't have to mean predictable.

Across bakery, pastry and desserts, old favourites are being rediscovered through new flavours, textures and formats. Brown butter brings extra depth. Hojicha gives traditional custard an unexpected roasted note. Familiar desserts are resized, reconstructed or crossed with another much-loved format. The result is food that feels reassuringly recognisable, yet exciting enough to discover again.

Winter's opportunity isn't necessarily to reinvent the classics. It's to find something new within them.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Nostalgia returns
Familiar desserts and childhood flavours offer warmth, comfort and emotional connection.

Classics get a contemporary twist
New flavours, formats, textures and techniques bring relevance to established favourites.

Familiarity lowers the barrier to discovery
Start with something people recognise, then introduce something they don't expect.

TREND OPPORTUNITY

Start with a favourite. Make it yours.
Look to the classics your customers already know and consider what one change could make them worth discovering again: a different chocolate profile, an unexpected centre, contrasting texture, new flavour pairing or contemporary presentation.

EXPLORE →

- Cheesecake
- Carrot cake
- Crème brûlée
- Tarte tatin
- Cookies
- Red velvet

VELVET BASQUE CHEESECAKE



by
CHANTAL MOLNAR,
SOUTH AFRICA

A contemporary chocolate interpretation of the much-loved Basque cheesecake, bringing an established favourite into the Callebaut world.

See the recipe

Why it fits the trend
Basque cheesecake has become a highly recognisable modern classic. Reinterpreting the familiar format through chocolate is exactly what **Familiar Favourites, Reimagined** is about: recognition first, discovery second.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut Velvet

Key flavours / textures:
Cheesecake · Chocolate · Creamy · Baked/caramelised



GOLD CARROT CAKE



by
CHANTAL MOLNAR,
SOUTH AFRICA

A new expression of carrot cake combining the familiar warmth of a much-loved bake with the distinctive caramel notes of Callebaut Gold.

Why it fits the trend
Carrot cake brings immediate familiarity and nostalgia, while Gold provides a contemporary chocolate twist. Carrot's natural sweetness also lends itself to warming spice and caramelised flavour directions. The Winter 2026 research identifies carrot as a versatile seasonal ingredient whose sweetness works across applications.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut Gold

Key flavours / textures:
Carrot · Caramel · Warming spice · Cake · Creamy



See the recipe

COOKIE PIZZA



by
PAUL YOCHUM,
UNITED STATES

Two familiar favourites collide in one playful creation: the comfort of a chocolate cookie reimagined in an instantly recognisable pizza format.



Why it fits the trend
This is perhaps the most literal expression of the trend: take formats consumers already understand and combine them in an unexpected way. The underlying research similarly identifies familiar formats being playfully taken in new directions.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut 70-30-38, Callebaut Gold

Key flavours / textures:
Chocolate · Cookie · Crisp/chewy · Indulgent · Shareable

See the recipe

RUBY RASPBERRY VELVET CAKE

A colourful reinterpretation of the classic velvet cake, pairing raspberry with Ruby chocolate for a fruit-forward, contemporary expression.

Why it fits the trend
Velvet cake is instantly recognisable; Ruby and raspberry move the familiar cake into a brighter and more distinctive flavour and colour territory without losing the appeal of the original.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut RB2

Key flavours / textures:
Ruby chocolate · Raspberry · Cake · Fruity · Creamy



by
PAUL YOCHUM,
UNITED STATES



See the recipe

TARTE TATIN PRALINE

The flavours of the French tarte Tatin are translated into a refined praline — taking a familiar caramelised-fruit dessert into an entirely different chocolate format.



by
DRIES DELANGHE,
BELGIUM

Why it fits the trend
This is a particularly strong example of Familiar Favourites, Reimagined. The recognisable flavour cues of a classic dessert remain, but the format changes completely: from plated pastry to confectionery.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut Velvet, Callebaut Gold

Key flavours / textures:
Caramelised fruit · Caramel · Chocolate · Praline · Smooth centre / crisp shell

See the recipe

CRÈME BRÛLÉE DONUTS

A playful meeting of two favourites: the soft, indulgent appeal of a doughnut combined with the creamy custard and caramelised finish associated with crème brûlée.

See the recipe



by
MARK TILLING,
UK

Why it fits the trend
Rather than reinvent either classic completely, this creation brings two familiar experiences together in a new format. It captures the trend's appetite for nostalgic, recognisable desserts with an unexpected contemporary twist.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut W2

Key flavours / textures:
Vanilla / custard · Caramelised sugar
Soft doughnut · Creamy centre
Crisp brûléed finish



2/

RICH, ROASTED & NUTTY

Go deeper into the season



RICHNESS
ISN'T SIMPLY
ABOUT ADDING
MORE. IT'S
ABOUT BUILDING
GREATER DEPTH.



Autumn and winter naturally lend themselves to deeper, warmer flavour profiles — and nuts are taking an increasingly prominent role.

Pistachio remains firmly in the spotlight, propelled by the continuing influence of Dubai chocolate and its now-familiar pairing with chocolate. But the nut story is evolving. Pecan is emerging as one to watch, while hazelnut, caramel, maple and brown butter bring layers of roasted, toasted and caramelised flavour.

There's also room to elevate the familiar. Whole nuts, provenance and more distinctive varieties can turn an everyday pairing into something with a stronger premium story.

This season, richness isn't simply about adding more. It's about building greater depth.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Pistachio keeps its momentum
Chocolate and pistachio continue to move beyond the original Dubai chocolate format into bakery, drinks and desserts.

Pecan enters the conversation
Its rich, buttery character opens up new possibilities alongside chocolate, caramel and warming flavours.

Roasted gets richer
Brown butter, toasted nuts, caramelisation and roasted flavours create greater depth and complexity.

TREND OPPORTUNITY

Explore the deeper side of chocolate.
Layer chocolate with nuts, caramelised notes and roasted flavours. Play with whole nuts and contrasting textures, or give an established chocolate-and-nut combination a new seasonal expression.

EXPLORE →

- Pistachio
- Pecan
- Hazelnut
- Brown butter
- Caramel
- Maple
- Coffee
- Praline

HAZELNUT ACORNS

A celebration of hazelnut and chocolate in two expressions: deep 811 dark chocolate and creamy, caramel-noted 823 milk chocolate, brought together around a roasted hazelnut praline.



by
NICOLL NOTTER,
UNITED STATES

Why it fits the trend
This creation puts the roasted nut at the centre rather than treating it as an accent. Hazelnut praline is expressed through both dark and milk chocolate, demonstrating how one familiar nut can create different layers of depth.

Key Callebaut product(s):
811 Dark Chocolate · 823 Milk Chocolate
Gold Chocolate · W2 White Chocolate

Key flavours / textures:
Roasted hazelnut · Praline · Dark cocoa
Caramelised milk · Creamy gianduja
Chocolate shell

See the recipe



PECAN, CARAMEL & COOKIE CHOCOLATE BAR



by
ESTEFANÍA MONGE,
UNITED STATES

A layered chocolate bar built around Silky Ghana milk chocolate, combining cookie gianduja with pecan praline ganache and caramelised notes in a refined expression of familiar comfort flavours.

Why it fits the trend
Pecan is the hero here, supported by caramel, cookie and the naturally caramelised profile of Ghana milk chocolate. The recipe takes recognisable nutty, roasted flavours and builds them into a more sophisticated confectionery format.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Callebaut Signature Collection Ghana
Origin Chocolate

Key flavours / textures:
Roasted pecan · Caramel · Cocoa cookie
Almond · Milk chocolate · Fleur de sel
Smooth ganache · Gianduja · Velvet finish

See the recipe



KING CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE & HAZELNUT

A chocolate and hazelnut interpretation of the traditional King Cake, bringing rich chocolate and roasted nut flavours to an established seasonal favourite.

See the recipe



by
LORENTZ DE MEYER,
BELGIUM

Why it fits the trend
Hazelnut and chocolate are one of the most familiar roasted flavour combinations, while the King Cake format gives them a distinctly seasonal context. It bridges two of the guide's themes particularly well: comforting tradition and deeper roasted winter flavours.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Extra Brute

Key flavours / textures:
Chocolate · Hazelnut · Roasted nut · Pastry · Rich filling · Crisp/soft contrast

DUBAI BROWNIE

A rich chocolate brownie inspired by the continuing Dubai chocolate phenomenon, combining deep chocolate indulgence with pistachio and contrasting crunch.

See the recipe



by
MARK TILLING,
UK

Why it fits the trend
Pistachio remains one of the defining nut flavours of the moment, and this creation shows how the Dubai chocolate influence is moving beyond the original tablet into familiar bakery formats. The brownie makes a viral confectionery flavour combination relevant to the pastry counter.

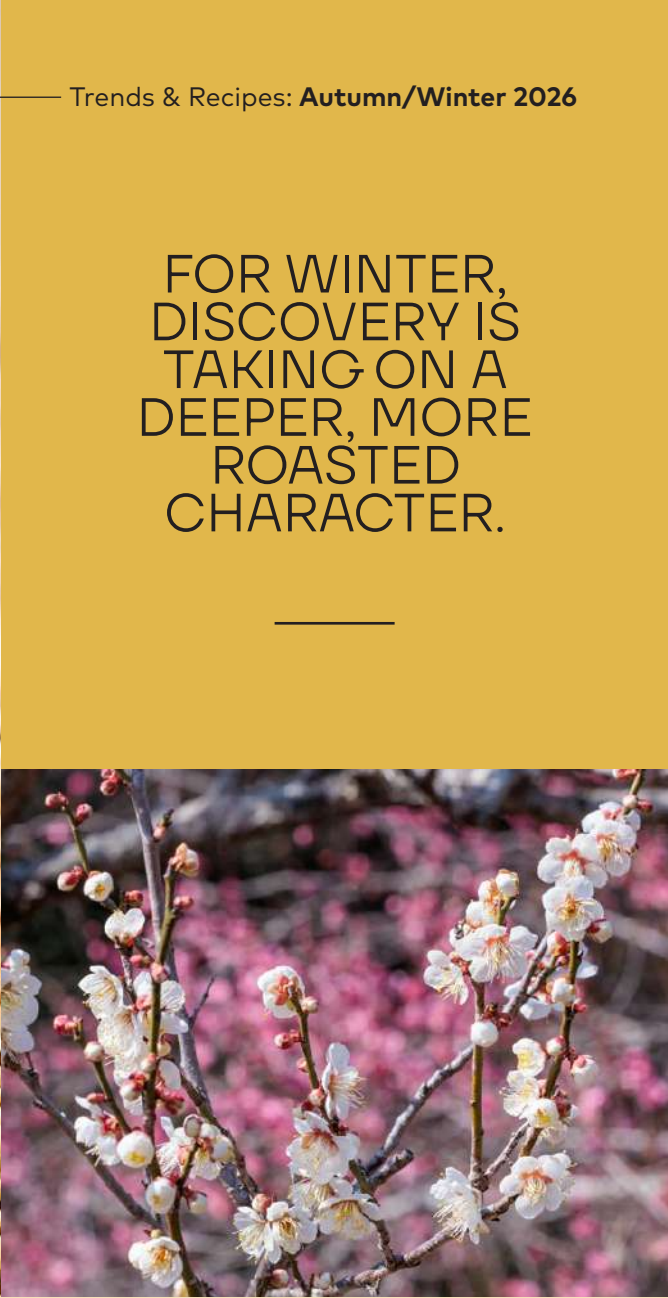
Key Callebaut product(s):
811, W2, 823

Key flavours / textures:
Chocolate · Pistachio · Nutty · Rich brownie · Creamy · Crunchy



3/ EAST ASIAN INFLUENCE

A new depth of flavour



FOR WINTER,
DISCOVERY IS
TAKING ON A
DEEPER, MORE
ROASTED
CHARACTER.

East Asian flavours continue to influence bakery, café and dessert culture around the world. Matcha is now well established, but a broader palette of flavours is coming into focus.

Hojicha brings deep roasted tea notes that pair naturally with chocolate, dairy, nuts and citrus. Black sesame offers nuttiness, subtle umami and striking visual contrast, while matcha continues to evolve through new combinations and applications.

What connects these flavours is their ability to bring contrast and complexity. Roasted, bitter, nutty and umami notes can temper sweetness and reveal a different side of chocolate — creating combinations that feel contemporary without relying on novelty alone.

For winter, discovery is taking on a deeper, more roasted character.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Beyond matcha
Hojicha and black sesame are expanding the East Asian flavour palette appearing in global bakery, café and dessert culture.

Roasted meets chocolate
Tea, sesame and nutty flavours bring depth that works particularly well with chocolate and dairy.

Less sweet, more complex
Bitter, roasted and umami notes create contrast and help balance sweetness.

TREND OPPORTUNITY

Use contrast to reveal something new.
Explore how roasted tea, sesame and other East Asian flavour cues can change the expression of chocolate. Combine them with citrus, nuts or fruit to introduce another layer of contrast.

EXPLORE →

- Hojicha
- Black sesame
- Matcha
- Sesame
- Calamansi
- Citrus
- Chocolate

WHITE CHOCOLATE & MATCHA BONBONS

White chocolate provides a creamy canvas for matcha in these elegant moulded bonbons, allowing the tea's distinctive vegetal bitterness to balance the chocolate's sweetness.

See the recipe



by
MARK TILLING,
UK

Why it fits the trend
Matcha meets its match. The bittersweet, grassy character of matcha cuts through creamy white chocolate, creating the kind of less-sweet, contrasting flavour profile at the heart of the East Asian influence.

Key Callebaut product(s):
W2

Key flavours / textures:
White chocolate · Matcha · Creamy
Vegetal · Bittersweet · Crisp shell
Smooth centre



SOY & BARU SNACK

A bold confectionery snack combining soy ganache with Baru praline and Thai curry cashews, bringing together chocolate, salt, spice, roasted nuts and umami in one layered creation. The original recipe uses soy sauce alongside Madagascar dark chocolate, with curry, ginger and turmeric in the crunchy cashews.

Why it fits the trend
Sweet takes a savoury turn. Soy brings umami and salinity to chocolate, while curry-spiced cashews and roasted Baru add warmth and crunch — an adventurous expression of the sweet-savoury contrasts influencing contemporary chocolate.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Madagascar, Ghana, Gold

Key flavours / textures:
Soy · Baru · Cashew
Thai curry · Caramel
Dark chocolate · Salty
Spicy · Creamy · Crunchy



by
MARTIN DIEZ,
UNITED STATES



See the recipe

QUINTIN SESAME

A sesame-led bonbon combining caramelised sesame praline, tahini and roasted black and white sesame within a caramelised white chocolate shell. The result amplifies sesame in several forms, from smooth praline to whole roasted seeds.



by
ROMAIN RENARD,
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Why it fits the trend
Sesame, turned all the way up. Black and white sesame are roasted, caramelised and transformed into praline, bringing intense nuttiness and subtle savoury notes to sweet caramelised chocolate.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Gold Quintin

Key flavours / textures:
Black sesame · White sesame
Tahini · Praline · Caramelised chocolate
Roasted · Nutty · Smooth · Crunchy

See the recipe



MATCHA SESAME GANACHE & CALAMANSI JELLY PRALINES

A vibrant bonbon built around contrasts: sharp Calamansi and bergamot jelly meets creamy sesame-matcha ganache and a crisp matcha-sesame base. Earthy, roasted and umami-rich notes are lifted by bright citrus acidity.

[See the recipe](#)



by
LEON KROHN,
SWITZERLAND

Why it fits the trend
Earthy meets electric. Matcha and sesame bring bitterness, nuttiness and umami, while Calamansi and bergamot cut through with vibrant acidity — showing how East Asian influences can create entirely new contrasts in chocolate.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Power 41, Pailleté Feuilletine

Key flavours / textures:
Matcha · Sesame · Tahini · Calamansi · Bergamot · Almond · Milk chocolate · Umami · Zesty · Creamy · Crisp

SESAME, PRALINE & MILK CHOCOLATE TARTLET

A cocoa sablé tart layered with roasted sesame praline and creamy 823 milk chocolate ganache. Almond praline, tahini, toasted sesame, Feuilletine and sea salt create a combination that's rich and indulgent without losing the distinctive roasted character of sesame.

[See the recipe](#)



by
ALEXANDRE BOURDEAUX,
BELGIUM

Why it fits the trend
Sesame shows its sweeter side. Roasted sesame and tahini bring nutty, subtly savoury notes to creamy milk chocolate and praline, while sea salt and crisp Feuilletine create contrast in every bite.

Key Callebaut product(s):
823, Extra Brute Cocoa Powder, Dark Chocolate Flakes

Key flavours / textures:
Roasted sesame · Tahini · Almond praline · Milk chocolate · Cocoa · Sea salt · Creamy ganache · Crisp sablé · Crunchy Feuilletine



4/

BRIGHTEN THE SEASON

Cut through the richness



SOMETIMES THE BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE WINTER RICHNESS IS TO CUT STRAIGHT THROUGH IT.



Autumn and winter may be associated with deep, indulgent flavours, but some of the season’s most interesting combinations come from contrast.

Citrus brings acidity, fragrance and colour. Orchard fruits offer natural sweetness and familiarity. Darker berries and jewel-toned fruits introduce tartness and intensity. Together, they provide a counterpoint to chocolate, nuts, caramel and richer winter textures.

From mandarin, clementine and blood orange to pear, blackcurrant, pomegranate and yuzu, fruit can make an indulgent creation feel brighter, fresher and more vibrant.

Sometimes the best way to celebrate winter richness is to cut straight through it.

WHAT WE’RE SEEING

Citrus comes into focus
Bright acidity and aromatic profiles provide natural contrast to richer seasonal flavours.

Winter fruit brings colour
Pear, apple, fig, pomegranate, blackcurrant and other fruits introduce freshness and visual appeal.

Contrast creates balance
Acidity and tartness can cut through sweetness, fat and richness, allowing the chocolate itself to remain distinctive.

TREND OPPORTUNITY

Create contrast, not competition.
Use fruit to complement the chocolate rather than overwhelm it. Explore acidity against sweetness, fragrance against roasted notes and vivid colour against darker winter palettes.

EXPLORE →

- Orange
- Mandarin
- Clementine
- Kumquat
- Bergamot
- Pear
- Blackcurrant
- Pomegranate
- Yuzu

KUMQUAT, BERGAMOT & ORANGE BLOSSOM TARTS

A bright tart built on cocoa pâte sucrée, layered with kumquat confit, Rustic Fleur de Cao mousse and crèmeux, and finished with a fragrant bergamot and orange blossom glaze. The combination was inspired by the yellow-fruit notes of the chocolate and flavours from the chef's childhood.



by
GEORGIOS MOUZELIS
GREECE

Why it fits the trend
Winter, with a brighter side. Zesty kumquat and bergamot meet fragrant orange blossom, bringing acidity and floral freshness to the deep roasted cocoa and yellow-fruit notes of Fleur de Cao.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Fleur de Cao, Extra Brute Cocoa Powder

Key flavours / textures:
Kumquat · Bergamot · Orange blossom · Dark chocolate · Cocoa · Citrus · Floral · Creamy · Crisp pastry

See the recipe



CHOCOLATE MANDARIN CARAMEL PETIT GÂTEAU



by
MARY GEORGE
UNITED STATES

Why it fits the trend
Let citrus cut through. Bright mandarin brings acidity to the gentle sweetness of Ghana milk chocolate and rich vanilla caramel, creating a dessert built around contrast and balance.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Ghana

Key flavours / textures:
Milk chocolate · Mandarin · Vanilla · Caramel · Sea salt · Buttery sablé · Soft mallow · Smooth · Crisp

See the recipe



CHOCOLATE PEAR UGANDA VANILLA TART

Inspired by the French classic Poire Belle Hélène, this contemporary tart layers almond-cocoa shortbread with pear cream, Uganda vanilla and silky Rustic Fleur de Cao namelaka.

See the recipe

Why it fits the trend
A winter classic gets a fresher balance. Ripe pear brings juicy fruit notes to deep chocolate, while Uganda vanilla adds aromatic warmth — a softer expression of the season's fruit-and-chocolate contrast.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Fleur de Cao, Extra Brute Cocoa Powder

Key flavours / textures:
Pear · Uganda vanilla · Dark chocolate · Almond · Cocoa · Fruity · Creamy namelaka · Crisp shortbread

811 SOUFFLÉ WITH KUMQUAT & CLEMENTINE

A warm 811 dark chocolate soufflé contrasted with vibrant kumquat and clementine confit and chocolate-hazelnut streusel. The balanced cocoa profile of 811 provides the foundation for bright citrus aromatics and nutty depth.

See the recipe



Why it fits the trend
Give chocolate a citrus lift. Kumquat and clementine bring vibrant acidity and aromatics to the balanced cocoa of 811, while hazelnut streusel adds a deeper, roasted counterpoint.

Key Callebaut product(s):
811, Extra Brute

Key flavours / textures:
Dark chocolate · Kumquat · Clementine · Hazelnut · Citrus · Cocoa · Airy soufflé · Confit · Crunchy streusel



5/

SMALL TREATS, BIG INDULGENCE

Make every bite count



AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER HIGH PERCEIVED VALUE IN A COMPACT FORMAT



Indulgence doesn't have to come in a large format. Smaller portions are appearing across bakery, desserts and snacking, giving consumers opportunities to enjoy something special in a more accessible format

But smaller shouldn't mean less considered. The opposite can be true: when there's less on the plate or in the hand, **every element has to earn its place.**

Rich chocolate, contrasting textures, premium finishes and distinctive flavours can turn a small pastry, confection or individual treat into a complete moment of indulgence.

For chefs and operators, that creates an opportunity to **deliver high perceived value in a compact format** — whether it's an everyday treat, an addition to a coffee occasion or something chosen simply because it looks too good to resist. The underlying Winter 2026 research identifies scaled-down formats across desserts and bakery as a notable seasonal development.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Smaller formats gain ground
Individual and bite-sized creations fit naturally into snacking and flexible eating occasions.

Accessible indulgence matters
A smaller treat can provide a premium experience while remaining an achievable everyday purchase.

Every detail works harder
Chocolate choice, texture, filling and finish become especially important when the format is compact.

TREND OPPORTUNITY

Think smaller. Don't compromise.
Concentrate flavour, texture and visual impact into formats that deliver from the first bite. Consider individual pastries, petits fours, madeleines, sablés, chocolate bars and other premium snacking formats.

EXPLORE →

- Individual pastries
- Small bakes
- Chocolate bars
- Biscuits
- Petits fours
- Premium snacking

70% CALLEBAUT CHOCOLATE CANELÉ

A chocolate take on the classic French canelé, with 70-30-38 dark chocolate and Plein Arôme cocoa bringing deep cocoa intensity to its soft, custardy centre and signature dark caramelised crust.



by
CHANTAL MOLNAR,
SOUTH AFRICA

Why it fits the trend
Small in size. Big on chocolate. The classic canelé gets an intensely chocolatey twist with Callebaut 70-30-38, packing deep cocoa flavour into every caramelised, bite-sized creation.

Key Callebaut product(s):
70-30-38, Plein Arôme Cocoa Powder

Key flavours / textures:
Dark chocolate · Cocoa · Rum · Vanilla · Caramelised crust · Soft custardy centre

See the recipe

CARAMEL & MILK CHOCOLATE CHOUX

A small-format choux filled with whipped 823 milk chocolate ganache and salted caramel, topped with crisp craquelin and finished with Dark Chocolate Crispearls.

Why it fits the trend
Little choux. Lots going on. Creamy milk chocolate, salted caramel, crisp craquelin and chocolate crunch turn a small pastry into a complete indulgent experience.

Key Callebaut product(s):
823, Dark Chocolate Crispearls

Key flavours / textures:
Milk chocolate · Salted caramel · Vanilla · Creamy ganache · Crisp craquelin · Crunchy Crispearls · Light choux



by
ALEXANDRE BOURDEAUX,
BELGIUM



See the recipe

DARK CHOCOLATE ORANGE MADELEINES

A familiar madeleine elevated with bright orange marmalade and a thin, snappy shell of 811 dark chocolate — adding freshness, chocolate intensity and contrasting texture to a simple small bake.



by
ALEXANDRE BOURDEAUX,
BELGIUM

Why it fits the trend
A little cake with an extra snap. Orange-filled madeleine meets a crisp coating of 811, turning an everyday favourite into a more indulgent, contemporary treat.

Key Callebaut product(s):
811

Key flavours / textures:
Dark chocolate · Orange · Honey · Buttery cake · Fruity marmalade · Soft · Snappy chocolate shell

See the recipe



PLANT-BASED COCOA SABLÉ

by
PAUL YOCHUM,
UNITED STATES

An elegant plant-based sablé combining deep cocoa with a nutty filling of roasted almond, toasted coconut and caramelised sugar, finished with Rustic Fleur de Cao for a crisp chocolate snap.

See the recipe

Why it fits the trend
A small bite that doesn't hold back. Deep cocoa, roasted almond and toasted coconut meet creamy filling and a crisp dark chocolate finish, concentrating premium indulgence into an elegant plant-based treat.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Fleur de Cao, Ghana, Power 41, Extra Brute Cocoa Powder

Key flavours / textures:
Dark chocolate · Cocoa · Roasted almond · Toasted coconut · Caramelised sugar · Nutty · Crisp sablé · Creamy filling · Chocolate snap

GHANA CHOCOLATE BAR

A compact layered bar built around Silky Ghana milk chocolate, with cocoa cookie gianduja and pecan praline ganache bringing together chocolate, nuts, caramel and cookies in one refined format.

See the recipe

by
ESTEFANÍA MONGE,
UNITED STATES

Why it fits the trend
Indulgence, layer by layer. Cookie, pecan praline, caramelised notes and silky milk chocolate pack multiple flavours and textures into one small-format chocolate treat.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Ghana

Key flavours / textures:
Milk chocolate · Pecan · Caramel · Cocoa cookie · Almond · Fleur de sel · Gianduja · Smooth ganache · Velvet finish



SPOTLIGHT /

MORE THAN A HOT CHOCOLATE

When a drink becomes a dessert

Hot chocolate has always belonged to the colder months. What's changing is how far chefs are taking it.

IT CAN BE A DESSERT, AN EXPERIENCE AND A CREATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

This winter staple is moving beyond the classic cup, borrowing flavours, textures and finishing techniques from the dessert world. Toasted and brûléed marshmallows, flavoured creams, layered toppings and inclusions are transforming hot chocolate into something altogether more indulgent — and more visually distinctive.

Dessert favourites are crossing into the cup too, with inspiration ranging from tiramisu and sticky toffee pudding to banana pudding, while less expected flavours such as miso and black sesame introduce a savoury or roasted edge.

Hot chocolate is no longer just something to drink. It can be a dessert, an experience and a creation in its own right.



WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Dessert enters the cup
Recognisable dessert flavours and components are turning hot chocolate into a more complete indulgence.

Toppings get serious
Creams, toasted marshmallows, sauces and inclusions add contrasting flavours and textures — as well as visual impact.

The experience matters
Layers, finishing touches and unexpected formats bring theatre to a familiar winter favourite.

EXPLORE →

- Dark chocolate
- Milk chocolate
- Caramel
- Hazelnut
- Speculoos
- Marshmallow
- Praline
- Coffee
- Toasted & brûléed notes

SPECULOOS HOT CHOCOLATE

A biscuit favourite, made to sip. Dark chocolate meets spiced speculoos, whipped cream and biscuit for an indulgent take on the winter classic.



[See the recipe](#)

WHAT COULD YOU CREATE?

Treat the cup like a dessert
Start with great chocolate, then build around it. Layer flavour and texture, reinterpret a familiar dessert, or create a signature finish that makes the experience unmistakably yours.

HAZELNUT DREAM

Turn up the texture. 811 and hazelnut praline create a rich, nutty base, finished with whipped cream, chocolate shavings and hazelnut crunch.



[See the recipe](#)

TECHNIQUE /

TEXTURE TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Because flavour is only part of the experience

Texture can transform how we experience chocolate. The snap of a shell, the crunch of a nut, the chew of a marshmallow or the melt of a ganache can make each bite more interesting — and more memorable.

Across sweet creations, contrasting textures are being layered together to create greater sensory impact. Crisp meets creamy. Airy meets dense. Smooth chocolate gives way to an unexpected crunch or soft centre.

For chefs, texture offers another dimension for creativity without necessarily adding complexity to the flavour profile. A familiar combination can feel entirely different simply by changing **how it breaks, bites, melts or lingers**.

This season, don't just think about how a creation tastes. Think about how it feels.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Contrast creates interest

Combining smooth, crisp, crunchy, chewy and aerated elements keeps each bite evolving.

Texture elevates the familiar

A new sensory element can give an established chocolate or flavour combination a completely different experience.

The reveal matters

Shells, layers, inclusions and centres create anticipation — what you see on the outside doesn't have to tell the whole story.

WHAT COULD YOU CREATE?

Build the experience bite by bite.

Think beyond flavour pairing and consider the journey through the creation. Where does it snap? What crunches? What gives way? What melts? Use contrasting textures to create moments of surprise and make chocolate more sensory.

EXPLORE →

- Snap
- Crunch
- Chew
- Melt
- Air



DON'T JUST THINK ABOUT HOW A CREATION TASTES. THINK ABOUT HOW IT FEELS.

ROASTED GRAIN CARAMEL BAR

A multi-layered chocolate bar where texture changes with every bite: smooth coffee-caramel ganache, crisp gavotte, buckwheat praline, sobacha gianduja, miso caramel and candied pecans, all enclosed in chocolate.

Why it fits the trend
Layer it. Then layer it again. Creamy ganache and caramel give way to crisp gavotte, praline and caramelised pecans, turning each bite into a progression of textures.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Gold, 823, 811

Texture journey:
Snap · Cream · Crisp · Crunch



[See the recipe](#)

RUBY & CRUNCHY CASHEW PRALIN

A Ruby bonbon combining smooth pomegranate ganache with a crunchy cashew praline and Ruby-cashew gianduja, balancing RB2's bright fruitiness with the buttery character of cashew.



Why it fits the trend
Smooth on the outside. Crunch waiting within. A crisp Ruby shell reveals silky pomegranate ganache and crunchy cashew praline, creating contrast through every layer.

Key Callebaut product(s):
RB2

Texture journey:
Snap · Silky · Crunch



[See the recipe](#)

LEMON MARSHMALLOW BITES

A composed small bite built around texture: buttery vanilla sablé supports airy lemon-vanilla marshmallow, salty crumble and crunchy Gold chocolate praline, finished with a vivid lemon gel.

Why it fits the trend
Soft, airy, crisp, crunchy — all in one bite. Pillowy marshmallow meets buttery sablé, crumble and caramel praline, showing how contrasting textures can make a small creation feel complete.

Key Callebaut product(s):
Gold

Texture journey:
Crisp · Airy · Crunch · Melt



[See the recipe](#)

MESQUITE

Dark chocolate, smoked almond praline and ancho chilli come together in a confection inspired by the heat and intensity of cocoa roasting. The smoked almonds provide the nutty foundation while the chilli introduces subtle warmth.



Why it fits the trend
Crunch gives way to melt. Smoked almond praline brings roasted texture against smooth chocolate ganache, creating a confection that changes as you eat it.

Key Callebaut product(s):
845, Pailleté Feuilletine

Texture journey:
Snap · Crunch · Melt

[See the recipe](#)

FLAVOUR FRONTIER /

A SAVOURY
EDGE

When sweet meets unexpected

The line between sweet and savoury continues to blur. Chefs are looking beyond traditionally sweet ingredients, using salt, umami, spice and savoury flavours to bring greater complexity to chocolate.

Rather than competing with sweetness, these contrasting notes can help balance it. Miso, sesame and other umami-rich ingredients can deepen flavour, while more unexpected pairings challenge expectations of where chocolate belongs.

The result can be familiar enough to enjoy, but surprising enough to make you think twice.

Sometimes the most interesting side of chocolate is its savoury one.

SOMETIMES
THE MOST
INTERESTING SIDE
OF CHOCOLATE IS
ITS SAVOURY ONE.

WHAT
WE'RE SEEING

Umami adds another dimension

Savoury and fermented notes can temper sweetness and bring depth and complexity to chocolate.

Boundaries continue to blur

Ingredients and flavour combinations are moving more freely between sweet and savoury applications.

Unexpected creates intrigue

Contrasting ingredients can turn chocolate into something less predictable — and create combinations worth talking about.

EXPLORE →

- Umami
- Salt
- Miso
- Sesame
- Spice
- Wine
- Savoury ingredients
- Sweet-savoury contrast

RUBY CHOCOLATE
SALAMI WITH
CHOCOLATE
CRACKERS



Chocolate joins the cheeseboard. Fruity Ruby chocolate is packed with dried fruit and roasted nuts, then served salami-style with crisp cocoa-nib crackers

See the recipe

TOAST FOIE
GRAS & RUBY



An unexpected match. Rich foie gras meets the fruitiness of Ruby chocolate, with fig and port wine jelly bridging sweet and savoury.

See the recipe

RED WINE &
CHOCOLATE
SOUFFLÉ



Rich, fruity, bittersweet. Red wine and red berries bring acidity and tannic contrast to dark chocolate, with Gold adding a final caramel note.

See the recipe



CREATE WITH CALLEBAUT

Your chocolate. Your starting point.

Every trend in this guide can take a different direction depending on the chocolate you choose.

Go deeper with dark chocolate. Add creamy caramel notes with milk. Bring sweetness and contrast with white. Introduce fruitiness with Ruby or explore distinctive flavour profiles through the Signature Collection origin chocolates.

Start with the chocolate, then make the trend your own.

DARK & INTENSE

For depth, contrast and cocoa intensity

Pair with roasted nuts, coffee and caramel — or create contrast with citrus, fruit and more aromatic flavours.

Explore:

[811](#) · [70-30-38](#) · [Power 80](#) · [Signature Collection dark chocolates](#)

Connects to:

Rich, Roasted & Nutty · Brighten the Season · A Savoury Edge

MILKY & CARMELISED

For creamy, comforting indulgence

Build around milk chocolate's dairy and caramel notes with nuts, praline, biscuits, spices and roasted flavours.

Explore:

[823](#) · [Gold](#) · [Signature Collection milk chocolates](#)

Connects to:

Familiar Favourites · Rich, Roasted & Nutty · Small Treats

WHITE & CREAMY

A canvas for flavour

White chocolate gives matcha, citrus, fruit, spices and aromatic ingredients room to express themselves.

Explore:

[W2](#) · [Velvet](#)

Connects to:

East Asian Influence · Brighten the Season · Familiar Favourites

FRUITY & EXPRESSIVE

For colour, acidity and contrast

Ruby's natural fruitiness opens up combinations with berries, nuts, citrus and more unexpected savoury ingredients.

Explore:

[RB2](#)

Connects to:

Brighten the Season · East Asian Influence · A Savoury Edge

DISCOVER ANOTHER EXPRESSION

Go beyond the familiar

Explore the Callebaut Signature Collection when the flavour profile of the chocolate itself needs to play a leading role — from distinctive fruit notes to roasted, botanical and origin-led expressions.

BUILD THE EXPERIENCE

COCOA

Add colour and deeper roasted cocoa character with Callebaut cocoa powders.

PRALINE & NUTS

Bring roasted flavour, richness and texture through pralines, pastes and nut preparations.

TEXTURE

Layer in crunch and contrast with [Crispearls™](#), [Pailleté Feuilletine](#) and chocolate decorations.

FINISH

Use chocolate decorations and finishing products to add visual impact, texture and perceived value.

READY TO CREATE?

Explore the [Callebaut range](#) and find the chocolate, flavour and texture for your next creation.





www.callebaut.com