

CEE Edition

TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

2026 & Beyond



WGSN


CALLEBAUT®
MASTERS OF TASTE



INTRODUCING THE TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

Chocolate confectionery is under pressure in Central Eastern Europe. In this price-sensitive region, innovators must deliver on emerging consumer needs to justify value-for-money without compromising on taste or experience, whilst placing purpose at the heart of product creation.

Price

Central Eastern Europe (CEE) is a cost-conscious market with instability of cocoa supply and resulting price surge strongly impacting local consumers' consumption. Consumers in the region are growing more discerning, seeking value-for-money and casual indulgence experiences. This increased expectation of confectionery has placed additional pressure on brands to innovate across price points.

To justify value-for-money, CEE consumers are looking beyond the basic needs of price, convenience and taste, seeking additional benefits from their purchases that speak to heritage and creative newness. This presents a range of opportunities for chocolate makers to go much further and deliver on the region's emerging and diverse consumer needs.

People

More so than other regions, people in CEE enjoy connecting with their local identity and childhood and adding playfulness into their lives. While nostalgia is a key sentiment, CEE consumers crave creativity and innovation in the way that chocolate can meet these needs. Whilst value is top of mind, consumers in the region are willing to pay a premium for confectionery that feels more rewarding. Increasingly, innovators are tapping into these emerging sentiments to elevate their offer, adding inclusions that excite consumers and modernise traditional flavour pairings, without compromising on price or experience.

Purpose

At its core, chocolate is about indulgence. But brands also need to define a wider purpose, underpinned by a sustainable supply chain that supports farmers and the environment. Purpose should be built in from the start,



while trend-led innovation should connect to people's evolving needs and help justify the value expectations that come with higher price points. To help you deliver on value and place price, people and purpose at the centre of innovation, discover the top chocolate trends forecasted for 2026 and beyond. Become Masters of Taste by exploring the sentiments and strategies that will influence purchasing decisions in CEE and drive regional industry growth.

THE TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS IN CEE

01 'MINORSTONE' CONFECTIONERY



02 CHOCOLATE NOSTALGIA



03 HYPER-LOCAL CHOCOLATE



04 LOW & NO CONFECTIONERY



05 SELF-CARE TREATS



06 SENSORIAL CONFECTIONERY



07 EVERYDAY LUXURY



This document has links to jump to sections & explore further reading.



'MINORSTONE' CONFECTIONERY

Consumers are redefining the meaning of celebration by broadening its scope. No longer are traditional life milestones, such as marriage or having children, stealing the limelight. Today, consumers are celebrating smaller, more personal, but equally important achievements — or 'minorstones' — such as professional successes. As a result, they will increasingly seek confectionery that facilitates or celebrates alternative occasions and social gatherings.



From

Feeling limited by traditional life milestones and societal expectations



To

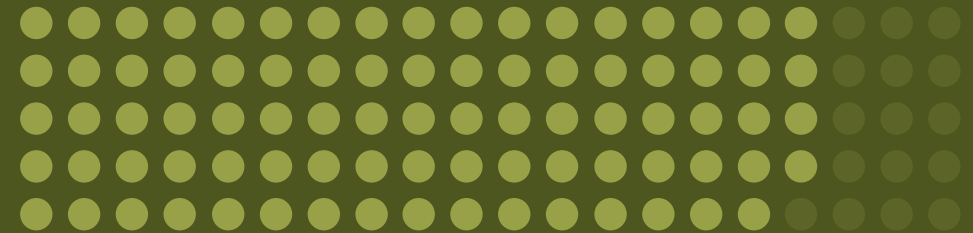
Finding new occasions to celebrate and indulge



Pexels | Jonathan Borba

"In my mind, indulgence is associated with things that you celebrate. So it could be a **promotion in the office or maybe a result**, an examination that you wrote and you fared well. How you celebrate that, is indulgence for me."

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Study, 2025



84%

of CEE consumers enjoy celebrating smaller or non-traditional milestones with friends and family.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey (CEE), 2025



HYPER-LOCAL CHOCOLATE

To celebrate heritage and reconnect with cultural identity, consumer interest in local, regional and seasonal produce is rising. Chocolate innovators are responding by exploring hyper-local, seasonal ingredients in confectionery, and revisiting indigenous flavours to create unique treats that blend ancestral roots with a modern twist.



From

Connecting with personal culture through food and tradition



To

Celebrating hyper-local and ancestral roots, using food to strengthen one's identity



Pexels | Pranjal Kumar

“Consumers crave the taste of childhood and are willing to pay more for it. Great example from Poland is a brioche with white blueberries... people are paying three times more for these.”

Kamil Szulc, Chef at Callebaut Chocolate Academy

88%

of consumers seek chocolate confectionery that reflects their cultural heritage or identity.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey (CEE), 2025



LOW & NO CONFECTIONERY

Consumers are growing more mindful of the impact of sugar and ultra-processed foods on their health. They increasingly demand confectionery that aligns with health and wellness goals, but does not compromise on indulgence and pleasure. Global palates are also shifting towards treats that are less sweet and more complex, leading confectionery makers to use fewer, fresher and more nuanced ingredients.



From

Restrictive diets focused on sugar replacements that compromise on taste



To

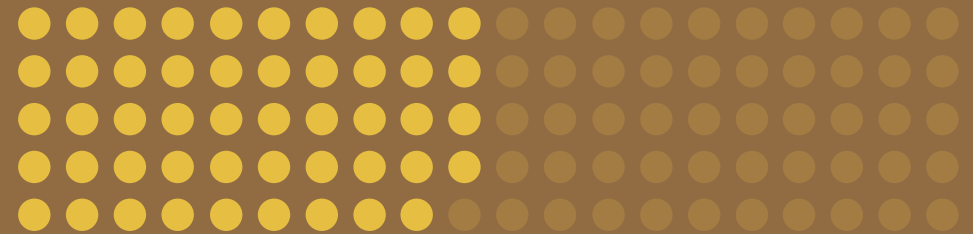
Rewarding treats with fewer ingredients, moderate sugar content or healthy alternatives



Pexels | Jonathan Borba

"If you look back at the old recipe books, the amount of sugar that they had versus the amount of sugar we use now is vastly different. I think **tastes have become less sweet**, and the trends and our recipes reflect that."

Alistair Birt, Chef



49%

of consumers think shorter ingredient lists are very relevant when buying chocolate confectionery.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey (CEE), 2025

SENSORIAL CONFECTIONERY

Evolving from 'instagrammable' treats, sensorial confectionery is soaring in popularity, as consumers look for novel experiences in food that elicit excitement and defy expectations. While presentation still delivers visually 'for the gram', consumers are becoming more discerning with taste, prompting innovators to experiment with stimulating textures and unexpected flavours in traditional confectionery.



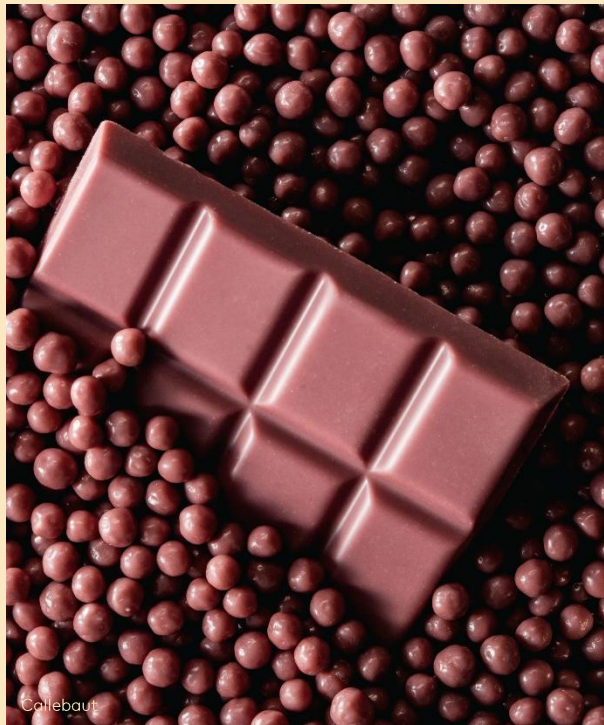
From

Over-the-top treats that look good 'for the gram'



To

Hyper-sensorial confectionery that defies visual, taste and textural expectations



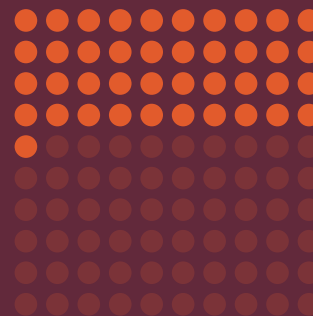
47%

of consumers are very drawn to chocolate confectionery that has a surprising or unexpected texture.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey (CEE), 2025

"Things are getting more adventurous with the different flavours. Everything's getting bigger and more dramatic. People need something extra."

Justin Ellen, Content Creator & Celebrity Baker



41%

of consumers also find chocolates that blend sweet and savoury flavours very relevant to them.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey (CEE), 2025

BECOME MASTERS OF TASTE

Today's consumers are looking for connection, cultural discovery, moments of wellness, and small indulgences in their daily lives — and confectionery can help to satisfy these desires.

For brands, this presents an opportunity to craft chocolate that surprises and delights — from playful formats and inventive flavours to treats that celebrate heritage, support mindful choices, and create moments worth savouring.

Even as cocoa prices fluctuate, placing people and purpose at the heart of innovation allows brands to create compelling, value-driven products that resonate emotionally and sensorially. From 'Minorstone' Confectionery to Everyday Luxury, the trends outlined are just the start of an exciting journey in chocolate innovation.

To help you turn these insights into a tailored strategy for your brand and create products and experiences that captivate consumers and drive growth, **contact Callebaut at www.callebaut.com.**



FORECASTING THE TRENDS

The Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends 2026 & Beyond white paper is a collaboration between Callebaut and WGSN, the world's leading trend forecasting agency.

Our comprehensive research into the top chocolate trends is the culmination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, analysed by trend experts at WGSN.

Sources include

Consumer Survey

An online survey spanning 24 markets and 24,000 consumers was conducted in September 2025. For this white paper, the data was filtered to global consumers who have purchased chocolate confectionery in the last 12 months.

Consumer Diaries

Qualitative diaries collected from consumers in the United States, Brazil, India, and the United Kingdom.

Expert Interviews

Interviews with 20 chefs and experts in the food & drink industry across 13 markets.

Search Data

Open source data from Google Trends was analysed to identify trending ingredients and formats based on search volume growth (from October 2023 to September 2025).

WGSN Social Data:

Food & Drink Signal Map

WGSN's Social Data was leveraged to identify growing keywords and ingredients related to confectionery. WGSN's proprietary Food & Drink Signal Map tracks 4000+ curated food influencers globally to identify new topics within food & drink.

WGSN Proprietary Trend Intelligence & Secondary Research

WGSN's consumer and food & drink forecasts are produced by industry experts and published on [wgsn.com](https://www.wgsn.com), informing the future-focused insights in the report, and was enriched with bespoke secondary research.

Trend Scans

Global and market-level signals of change and innovator case studies were collected and analysed by local trend experts.



DISCOVER MORE

This report covers 4 key chocolate confectionery trends in Central and Eastern Europe. Reach out to our sales team today to discover all 7 Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends of 2026 & beyond, must-know case studies and confectionery concepts of the future.

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