

TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

2026 & Beyond



WGSN


CALLEBAUT®
MASTERS OF TASTE

INTRODUCING THE TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

Chocolate confectionery is undergoing a transformation. Amidst market challenges, innovators are raising the bar by placing purpose at the heart of product creation, while catering to the evolving needs and expectations of consumers.

Price

The global chocolate landscape continues to be in flux. The instability of cocoa supply has led to a surge in prices, resulting in market polarisation. While private labels gain market share from budget-conscious consumers, luxury brands are also experiencing growth by going beyond the basics. This polarisation is impacting not only volumes but consumer expectations of chocolate confectionery across price points. To justify paying more, consumers are looking for value-adds beyond price, convenience and taste, towards more emotive experiences. This presents an opportunity for chocolate makers to go much further and deliver on changing consumer needs.

People

People enjoy connecting and celebrating with others, looking after their health, and taking small breaks from everyday stress. When chocolate taps into these needs, it can feel more relevant and rewarding. Most consumers aren't focused on rising cocoa prices or alternatives like compound

chocolate — they care about the experience that great confectionery can give them. Chocolate has a natural ability to bring people together, brighten a moment, and add a little indulgence to daily life.

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 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 and drive industry growth.



THE TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

01 'MINORSTONE' CONFECTIONERY



02 CHOCOLATE NOSTALGIA



03 HYPER-LOCAL CHOCOLATE



04 NEW WORLD CHOCOLATE



05 LOW & NO CONFECTIONERY



06 NUTRITION- BOOSTED BITES



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'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

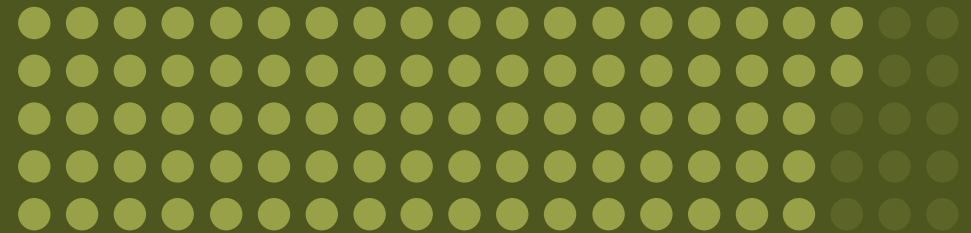
Finding new occasions to celebrate and indulge



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



87%

of consumers enjoy celebrating smaller or non-traditional milestones with friends and family, rising to 91% for Gen Z.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey, 2025

NEW WORLD CHOCOLATE

New cultural powerhouse countries such as South Korea are influencing global palates by inspiring curiosity in niche ingredient exports. Consumers are increasingly open to trying international flavours and experimenting with chocolate pairings they've never tasted before, from the likes to Asia, LATAM and the Middle East.



From

Exploring food exports from cultural superpowers such as France or Italy



To

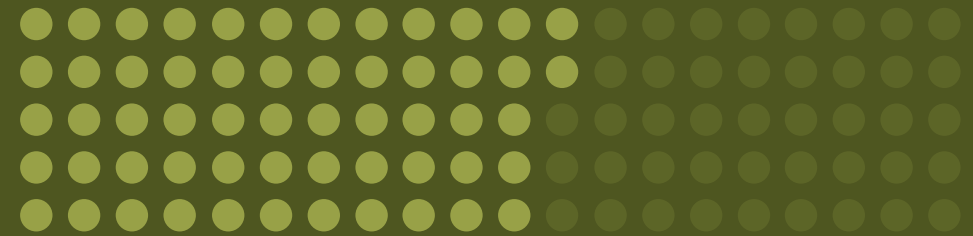
Exploring niche foods and flavours, particularly those from countries with growing soft powers



Unsplash | Hugo Kruip

“Younger customers are seeking **new and adventurous** products. They are seeking **Asian ingredients** like matcha, calamansi, or yuzu. It's really important to them.”

Kamil Szulc, Chef at Callebaut Chocolate Academy (Poland)



57%

of consumers say that their food & drink habits have changed in the past year, influenced by ideas from other cultures. This figure rises to 71% for Gen Z and 65% for Millennials.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey, 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

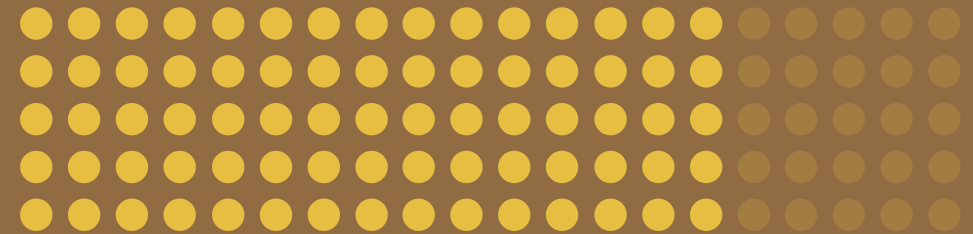
Rewarding treats with fewer ingredients, moderate sugar content or healthy alternatives



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 (UK)



75%

of consumers actively try to avoid processed foods, and 83% look for shorter ingredient lists when buying chocolate confectionery.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey, 2025

NUTRITION-BOOSTED BITES

Fueled by a growing focus on health and rapid uptake of GLP-1, a medication for weight loss and diabetes, consumers want snacks that balance convenience, health and taste. The answer? Mini and bite-sized confectionery formats that are flavour-rich and nutrient-dense, with added ingredients that tackle everything from energy to gut health.



From

Indulgences in large portions



To

Mini and bite-sized treats that are nutrient-dense, offering targeted wellness in satisfying formats



Pexels | Anete Lusina

“The number one thing is **portion size**, as consumers know that they can tolerate a little bit. **Sugar alternatives or less sugar** still make chocolate taste good, and **nutritional benefits** can be added through ingredients like fibre instead of sugar.”

Kim Ross, Nutritionist (US)



38%

of consumers agree that chocolate that comes in a small portion size is very relevant for them, and an additional 44% think it's somewhat relevant.

Callebaut x WGSN
Global Consumer Survey, 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.



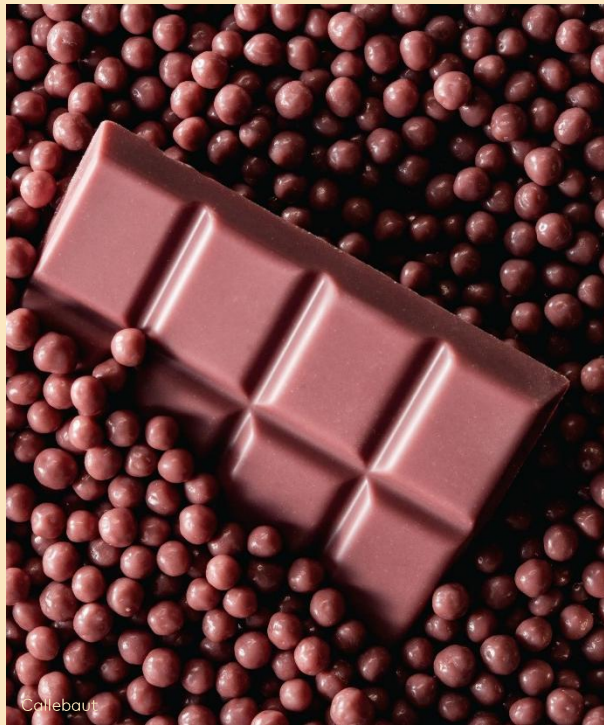
From

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



To

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



42%

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

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey, 2025

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

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Study, 2025



44%

of consumers are very drawn to chocolate confectionery that has a surprising or unexpected texture, rising to 52% for Gen Z and Millennials.

Callebaut x WGSN Global Consumer Survey, 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 New Chocolate Connoisseurs, 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 5 key chocolate confectionery trends. Reach out to our sales team today to discover all 10 Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends of 2026 & beyond, must-know case studies and confectionery concepts of the future.

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