2026

SF SPECIALITY FOOD | CONFECTIONERY AND CHOCOLATE BUYER



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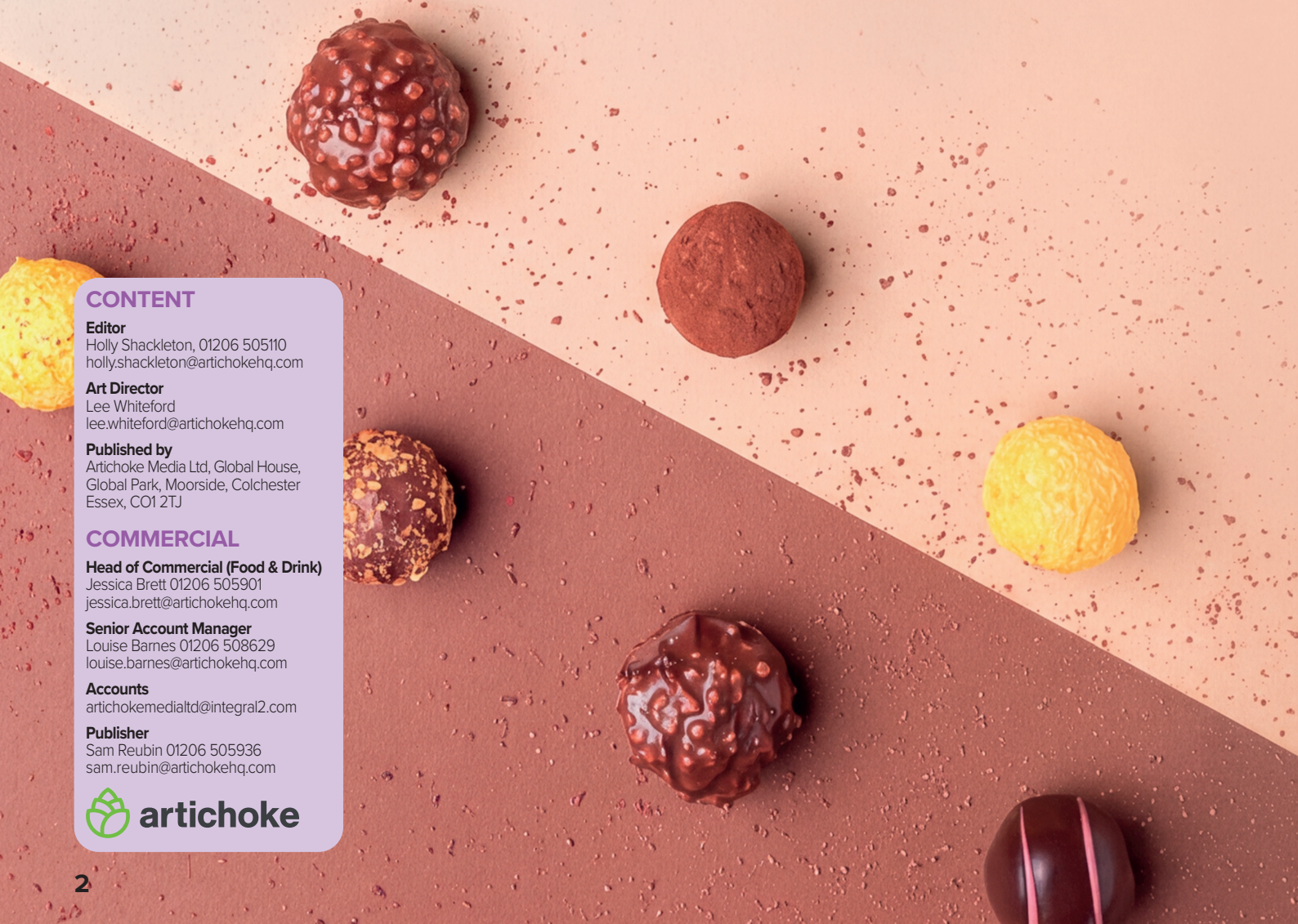


Welcome to the 2026 edition of *Confectionery & Chocolate Buyer*, brought to you by the team behind *Speciality Food*. This publication is being released at what feels like the peak of 'small comforts'; consumers are seeking out affordable ways to treat themselves while the world seems uneven and budgets are tight, and chocolate and confectionery are the perfect way to do just that.

The modern definition of value means that many shoppers are not just on the hunt for a sugar fix whatever the consequences to their health or the environment – instead, they're actively seeking out new experiences in terms of flavour, texture and format, sustainability credentials that make them feel they are doing good while indulging, and innovative tastes from around the world that provide a sense of culinary adventure.

With self-gifting rife and chocolate and confectionery still top of the tree when it comes to sharing and treating those we love, this sector offers a valuable opportunity for fine food retailers. In these pages we highlight the products worth knowing now and explain how to make the best of this delicious sector – for your customers, business and the wider world.

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Trending Now

Today's shoppers are looking for more than a simple sugar hit. From premium provenance and adventurous flavours to better-for-you formats and nostalgic treats, there are plenty of opportunities to make the fixture more exciting

Premium and provenance

The appetite for premium chocolate shows no sign of slowing, with shoppers increasingly interested in the story behind what they buy. Fine food retailers are well placed to showcase chocolate with clear provenance, quality ingredients, distinctive makers and strong production stories. Single-origin chocolate, bean-to-bar products and products highlighting particular cocoa-growing regions can all give shoppers a reason to trade up.

Naturally sweetened

Health-conscious shoppers may be paying closer attention to sugar, but that doesn't mean they are abandoning confectionery. Instead, there is growing interest in products that deliver indulgence in a more considered way. Reduced-sugar recipes, naturally sweetened products, smaller formats and chocolate combined with nuts, fruit or other recognisable ingredients can all appeal. For independent retailers, the opportunity is to present these products not as 'diet' confectionery but as premium treats where quality matters as much as quantity.

Texture

Texture is becoming an increasingly important part of the chocolate experience. Think crunchy inclusions, chewy centres, caramel, crisped grains, nuts, biscuit pieces and contrasting layers – products that offer something to discover beyond the chocolate itself. Across the board, consumers are prepared to pay more for an experience rather than simply a product. Look out for products with a strong visual and textural point of difference that can be communicated easily on-shelf.

Global flavours

The influence of global food culture is feeding directly into chocolate and confectionery, with shoppers becoming more adventurous about flavour combinations. Ingredients and profiles associated with the Middle East, Asia and Latin America are providing inspiration, alongside familiar favourites given a contemporary twist. Pistachio, tahini, sesame, cardamom, chilli, yuzu and tropical fruits can all bring something different to the category. A small selection of more unusual flavours can add theatre without requiring a major range overhaul.

Functional confectionery

The boundaries between confectionery, snacking and wellness continue to blur. Protein, fibre and other functional claims are increasingly appearing in products traditionally associated with indulgence, while nuts, seeds, fruit and dark chocolate can help give treats a more 'wholesome' positioning. The opportunity is particularly strong for retailers with customers who want something indulgent but are also conscious of what they are putting into their diets. Look beyond traditional bars to functional bites, clusters and filled chocolates.

31.15%
Premium products commanded **31.15%** share of the United Kingdom confectionery market size in **2025**
Mordor Intelligence

Nostalgia

While shoppers are becoming more adventurous, there is still enormous power in familiar flavours and childhood memories. Retro confectionery, traditional sweets and classic chocolate combinations can provide an emotional connection – particularly when presented in premium packaging or made with better quality ingredients. Nostalgia also works particularly well around Christmas and other gifting occasions, when shoppers are looking for products that feel comforting, familiar and fun.

Gifting and discovery

Chocolate and confectionery are natural gifting categories, but premium independents can take this further by making the experience feel more curated. Beautifully packaged boxes, unusual assortments, tasting collections and limited editions can all provide strong gifting opportunities. Smaller premium formats can also work as accessible treats or add-ons, helping indies to capture impulse purchases while larger boxes and collections encourage shoppers to trade up. The key is to merchandise confectionery as an experience worth sharing, gifting or discovering rather than simply another sweet treat.

"Sugar in craft chocolate is really about bringing out flavour – it's like a seasoning. In mass produced bars sugar is often the primary ingredient, designed to give you an instant "buzz" and to make you want 'more, more, more' ... which isn't necessarily great"

SPENCER HYMAN, COCOA RUNNERS

Sustainable

Fine food shoppers are genned up on ethical and environmental issues, and often willing to spend a premium on products which offer sound credentials



HOW TO SELL...

Enlighten, don't preach

Even the most ardent environmentalist doesn't want to be shouted at about the sustainability credentials of the chocolate bar in their basket. Share just the information that makes the treat more appealing at first glance, and be able to offer up further intel if the customer wants to know more.

Share stories

Welcome customers into the worlds of your sustainable suppliers. Tell the stories of how a brand's work has positively impacted a cocoa-growing community on social media or with POS.

Stay up-to-date

If you can, find out which sustainability concerns speak loudest to your customers – environmental, social, or a combination of the two – and keep abreast of how the world's news could impact the work of the sustainable confectionery brands you stock.

EXPERT VIEW

Seeking balance

Lee Holdstock, Soil Association Certification

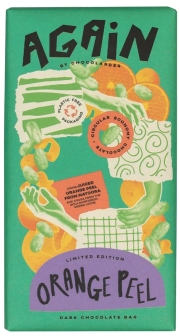
While some consumers may see price as a barrier to eating more organic food, some of the latest research actually shows that it is lower- and middle-income shoppers who are now the most frequent buyers of organic food and drink, whereas the highest income bracket are 'Dealseekers', buying organic less frequently when offers mean the price is more comparative to conventional. The research shows consumers are seeking a balance between cost and value.



"The research shows consumers are seeking a balance between cost and value"

FAIR AND FRUITY

Who says sustainable confectionery has to be worthy? These picks show that caring for the planet doesn't equal flavour-free.



Again Orange Peel Dark Chocolate Bar
A combination of waste orange peel and chocolate made from cocoa beans grown by sustainable farmers.
chocolarder.com

Divine 70% Dark Chocolate With Raspberries
Rich dark chocolate with vibrant raspberry for a perfectly balanced sweet-tart finish.
divinechocolate.com

7%
There has been 7% growth of sales of organic in major retail over the last 12 months

Organic Market Report 2026, Soil Association Certification

SEARCH VOLUME FOR FAIRTRADE **CHOCOLATE BARS AND SNACKS** CONSISTENTLY **INCREASED** FROM OCTOBER **2025** TO FEBRUARY **2026**, REACHING **1041.1** IN FEBRUARY 2026 – THE STEADY **INCREASE** IN SEARCH VOLUME INDICATES **GROWING** CONSUMER **INTEREST** IN **FAIRTRADE** OPTIONS

Accio



40-50 million
people's livelihoods are tied to cocoa-reliant industries
Global Market Report: Cocoa Prices and Sustainability

TREND SPOTLIGHT

Traceable cocoa, transparent sourcing and stronger links to farmers are moving up the agenda as retailers and shoppers demand greater clarity over where cocoa comes from and the environmental and social impact of its production. Rather than relying on broad sustainability claims, brands that can demonstrate cocoa origin, sourcing relationships, certification and progress on deforestation are giving retailers a more compelling story to share with customers. As premium chocolate shoppers become more discerning, transparency is becoming part of the value proposition – alongside flavour, craftsmanship and quality.



SHARED INDULGENCE

These chocolate treats may be reaping rich rewards for communities and environments around the world, but they're rich in flavour, too...



Jade & Joy Luxury Marshmallow Biscuit

Coated in Rainforest Alliance chocolate, these bars are vegan-friendly, gluten-free, dairy-free, lower in sugar and high in protein.
jadeandjoy.co.uk



Chocolate And Love Panama 80%

Full bodied yet mild, decadent and incredibly smooth with hints of nuts and an extraordinary chocolate flavour, ideal for the chocolate purist.
chocolateandlove.com



Chococo Triple Chocolate Slab

47% house milk chocolate from Colombia drizzled with 72% Ecuadorian dark chocolate and sprinkled with blonde button drops.
chococo.co.uk



Candied Orange Peel in Dark Chocolate

Sweet and chewy, properly candied orange with a citrus bite, covered in 70% dark chocolate.
gnawchocolate.co.uk

Affordable Luxury

Brits may be on a budget, but that doesn't mean they're not craving a treat... Here's how to satisfy their cravings for guilt-free indulgence



3.9%

The UK premium chocolate market is projected to grow at a CAGR of **3.9%** from **2025** to **2030**

Grand View Horizon

£ HOW TO SELL...

- ***Consider the 'new value'***

Affordability isn't a simple question of price versus budget any more, even when it comes to indulgences such as confectionery. Instead, fine food shoppers are seeking out the premium markers familiar to fine food operators – provenance, personalisation, sustainability and more – to decide whether a product is worth their hard-earned money.

- ***Trial bundle deals***

We're a far cry from BOGOF deals here, but bargains are still attractive to today's shopper. Consider smaller formats, offering a discount if a customer buys 3+ items in a chocolate maker's range, or create themed groupings of product at a lower price – for example, old fashioned sweet shop bon bons and toffees.

- ***Create hampers***

Hampers allow you to add extra value to a selection of chocolate and confectionery products, and by selling them at clear price points – £10, £30, £50, say – you can be providing the extra tick of convenience to your customers, too.

- ***Communicate value***

Power up your team to talk about the true value of the products they're stocking – familiarise them with their taste and story, and invite companies in to build in-person connections if you can – plus maximise POS and marketing tools including social media to share stories.



"Retailers who plan for a move toward affordable indulgence, social food occasions and trusted local expertise will be better placed if as history suggests consumers begin seeking comfort and reward closer to home"

MARK KACARY, THE NORFOLK DELI

TEMPTING CONFECTIONERY

Shoppers of all ages would struggle to resist these perfect examples of affordable luxury...



Walkers Nonsuch Double Dipped Chocolate Toffees

Indulgently chewy toffees double dipped in luscious milk chocolate.

walkers-nonsuch.co.uk



Josh's Chocolate Gigantic Milk Chocolate with Cornish Sea Salt™ & Caramel Buttons

Smooth 36% milk chocolate buttons with sea salt and crunchy caramel.

joshschocolate.co.uk



Fudge Kitchen Sea Salt Caramel Fudge

Handcrafted in small batches, blending rich buttery sweetness with delicate flakes of sea salt for a perfectly balanced finish.

fudgekitchen.co.uk



Booja-Booja

CONFECTIONERY AND CHOCOLATE BUYER Must Try 2026

Award-winning chocolate brand Booja-Booja is extending its all-year-round, core range, bringing new flavours to both its everyday treating and gifting collections. The Grand Selection is a new addition to the company's elegant 16-Truffle gift box format. This carefully curated selection features two brand new flavours; sensational Fine de Champagne & Strawberry and scrunchy Fruit & Pecan Praline Crunch. Its Eight Truffle Box range is also growing with its popular Salted Caramel Mocha Truffles now available in this single-flavour format, and the new Fruit & Pecan Praline Crunch Truffles launching in this format too. All available to order from wholesalers now.

boojabooja.com



MODERN LUXURY

Exciting new formats and recognisable fine food flags make these options extra tempting for shoppers looking for something special.

61%

of chocolate users view premium chocolate as an affordable luxury, even among those under financial pressure

Mintel

Venchi Chocoviar

A special range dedicated to 75% Cuor di Cacao, where delicate aromas and contrasting textures meet the irresistible crunch of Venchi's 'chocolate caviar'.

justgourmetfoods.co.uk



Firetree Chocolate Single-estate Tanzanian Dark Chocolate

Fine dark chocolate from the Tanzania's Kilombero Valley, featuring 74% cocoa with slow-roasted nibs.

firetreechocolate.co.uk

THERE IS A GROWING **DEMAND** FOR **PREMIUM** AND **ARTISANAL** CHOCOLATES, WITH CONSUMERS **WILLING** TO PAY **MORE** FOR **HIGH-QUALITY**, **ETHICALLY** SOURCED AND **UNIQUE** PRODUCTS

Market Report Analytics

EXPERT VIEW

Justify the Premium

Matt Hopkins, Indie

Consumers will pay more for confectionery when they can immediately understand why it's worth more. Quality ingredients, provenance, craftsmanship and genuine innovation all help justify the premium, but presentation and storytelling matter too. Affordable luxury works particularly well when the product feels distinctive enough to gift, share or turn an everyday treat into an occasion.



"Quality ingredients, provenance, craftsmanship and genuine innovation all help justify the premium"



Thoroughly Modern Sweets

Cater for today's shopper with these HFSS-compliant and gut-friendly sweets with a 'whoosh' of fruity flavour

Squidgy gummies bursting with tropical flavours. Zippy, mouth-watering sours. Smoothie-inspired chews infused with the essence of summer berries. Are you hungry yet? How about if we told you every single one of those taste sensations could be experienced in a collection of sweets that are not only made with natural colourings and flavourings, and HFSS compliant (containing 95% less sugar and 45% fewer calories than comparable brands), but packed with gut-friendly fibre?

Tweek Sweets was founded by a confectionery lover in Sweden, who knew only too well how challenging it can be to find lower sugar treats that pack a punch and deliver on flavour. Today, the brand's products have grown a huge following in the country, holding a more than 40% market share, and being enjoyed by diabetics, as well as candy fans seeking innovative, healthier new ways to enjoy a little sweet indulgence.

Available through UK wholesalers, Tweek Sweets' range (made with the highest-grade natural sweeteners) includes three 'hero' collections.

The bouncy Smoothie Chews are softer than the mainstream, sugar-added varieties, delivering a 'whoosh' of strawberry and tropical fruit flavours.

Fruit Fresh is Tweek Sweets' take on a traditional fruit gummy. Again, softer in texture, these colourful little bites pop in the mouth, with the juicy sensation of three scrumptious flavours – raspberry and strawberry, lemon, lime and mandarin, and forest fruits.

And no confectionery line is complete without a bag of lip-puckering sours.

Tweek Sweets' Fizzy Fusions mean your customers don't have to miss out on their fix of the retro classic. Refreshingly tangy, the assortment excites with the exotically tantalising flavours of bubble gum, melon and cola.

Beyond these, the range also includes options for chocolate lovers – from the light and crispy chocolate-covered Corn Crunchers, to chewy Toffee Caramels, and the very unique Amazing Arrack foam sweets, smothered in chocolate.

With consumers thinking more now than ever before about sugar intake, now's the time to take stock of your sweetie selection.

"Tweek Sweets are enjoyed by candy fans seeking innovative, healthier new ways to enjoy a little sweet indulgence"



Chocolate Gifting. Elevated.

With an enviable provenance and time-honoured popularity, Anthon Berg is a prime year-round gifting solution

In a sector which prizes story, honest heritage and prime craftsmanship, Anthon Berg is perfectly positioned to offer discerning shoppers with a range of gifting ideas that will transform any day into an occasion.

The Anthon Berg brand dates back to 1884, when Anthon Berg opened a small chocolate shop in Copenhagen, venturing into quality chocolate making after experimenting with chocolate marzipan treats. Its iconic chocolate liqueur bottles were introduced in 1924, becoming the product that Anthon Berg is now internationally recognised for. In 1957, the brand was appointed Purveyor to the Royal Danish Court, reinforcing its credentials as a premium Danish chocolatier.

"This is particularly valuable for fine food retailers because heritage provides credibility and differentiation," explains Louisa Jones, senior brand manager at World of Sweets, which distributes the range in the UK. "Anthon Berg isn't simply another premium chocolate brand; it has more than 140 years of Danish chocolate-making history and a distinctive product story that retailers can communicate to shoppers."

This year the Anthon Berg packaging has had an update, introducing an elegant, premium new look that reinforces the brand's gifting credentials, "making every gift unforgettable," says Louisa. Each box of chocolates is hand-packed and has been created to inspire retailers and consumers. The rebrand is built around the concept of 'Chocolate Gifting. Elevated', and for fine food retailers, this is an important evolution. "The new identity gives the brand a more contemporary, premium presence while retaining its Danish provenance and distinctive chocolate heritage," she continues.

The latest packaging direction also puts much greater emphasis on the iconic chocolate bottles, premium finishes and the relationship with famous spirit brands. "The intention is to make the product communicate its quality and craftsmanship before the shopper even picks it up," Louisa explains. In short, the rebrand represents heritage with a more modern expression – "helping retailers appeal to existing Anthon Berg fans while opening the brand up to a new generation."



An iconic selection

The range is broader than Anthon Berg's famous chocolate liqueur bottles, although these remain the brand's hero product. The key areas include: Chocolate Liqueurs – the iconic bottle-shaped dark chocolates filled with world-renowned spirits and liqueurs; Chocolate Cocktails – bottle shaped dark chocolates filled with cocktail-inspired flavours such as Mojito, Cosmopolitan, Piña Colada, and Lemon Drops; Single Malts – premium chocolate bottles filled with single malt whiskies; Marzipan – a Danish speciality of chocolate covered marzipans blended with fruit and spirits, alongside a Baileys Marzipan; pralines and gift boxes – aimed at premium gifting and sharing; and seasonal products – supporting Christmas with a premium advent calendar filled with liqueur chocolate bottles.

Catering for modern gifting occasions

Historically, Anthon Berg has been strongly associated with Christmas, Easter and traditional gifting in the UK. However, the brand is deliberately moving beyond just gifting occasions, and in many markets is consumed as an indulgent treat, particularly in the home Scandinavian markets.

This is a key part of the repositioning. The brand wants to move from being something consumers only buy for a special calendar occasion to something they can use to create smaller moments of indulgence and togetherness throughout the year.

"The brand tagline of 'Creating Sweeter Memories' is therefore quite powerful: it gives the retailer permission to merchandise Anthon Berg around moments, not just seasons," says Louisa.



OUR **USP**

Anthon Berg

Suitability for gifting is arguably one of Anthon Berg's biggest strengths, says Louisa Jones, senior brand manager

- **Built-in theatre**
  The miniature chocolate bottles are instantly recognisable and recreate the appearance of famous spirits brands in chocolate form. They are much more distinctive than a conventional box of chocolates.
- **Premium story**
  Danish heritage dating back to 1884, Royal Danish Court credentials, quality chocolate and partnerships with well-known international spirit brands.
- **Inherently social**
  The individual bottles encourage people to open a box and discover different flavours together, making the gift an experience rather than simply something to eat.

EXPERT VIEW

Louisa Jones, senior brand manager at World of Sweets

Sustainability is particularly relevant to the rebrand because Anthon Berg is trying to demonstrate that premium gifting and responsible packaging can work together. For retailers, that means sustainability is becoming less of a separate brand message and more of an integrated part of the Anthon Berg proposition: premium product, premium presentation and increasingly considered packaging.



"Sustainability is increasingly being built into both Anthon Berg's product development and packaging strategy"



Gifting

A box of fabulous chocolates or a hamper of artfully curated confectionery never disappoints... Here's how to inspire your customers to level up their gifting game

FUN AND FLAVOURFUL

We love these colourful gifting options, and your customers of all ages will too...



Cocoba Candy Coated Milk Chocolate Bar

This handmade milk chocolate bar is made from the highest quality Belgian milk chocolate and topped with candy coated chocolate beans.

cocobachocolate.com



Booja-Booja Coconut Chocolate Wonders

Blissfully light and creamy coconut chocolate ganache rolled in rich chocolate flakes.

boojabooja.com



Rococo Chocolates Nutty Egg Crate

Each smooth, hazelnut praline-filled egg is foiled for freshness and visual appeal, creating a charming, premium gift.

rococochocolates.com

RETAILERS THAT FOCUS ON **STORYTELLING**, **PERSONALISATION** AND **INSPIRATION** WILL BE BEST POSITIONED TO **THRIVE**

Mintel

£ HOW TO SELL...

- ***Think format***

Everybody loves receiving a beautifully packaged gift, and if the item in question is already gift-ready – think particularly attractive packaging and perhaps ready-wrapped with a bow for good measure – all the better for the time-poor giver.

- ***Personalisation sells***

Self-serve hampers with a gift-wrapping service add to the occasion for the shopper and recipient alike, and mean that the gift can be personalised as needed. If you have space to spare, consider adding a fresh chocolates counter for optimum wow factor.

- ***Don't stint on quality***

This is no place for cheap and cheerful. While a confectionery gift doesn't need to be expensive to be gratefully received, it needs to have been selected from a carefully curated range by a customer who knows the recipient's preferences, so offer a selection that ticks a number of boxes – a range of percentages, both grown up and fun options, and plenty for free-from consumers.

TREND SPOTLIGHT

Chocolate gifting is moving firmly beyond the traditional boxed assortment. Today's shoppers are increasingly prepared to spend more when a product delivers quality, provenance and a compelling story – whether that means artisan truffles, small-batch chocolates, regional specialities or distinctive flavour combinations.

For retailers, curation is key. A tightly selected range of products with clear points of difference can work harder than an extensive, undifferentiated fixture, particularly when staff can explain the maker, ingredients and provenance behind each product. Personalisation is another important driver, with limited editions, unusual formats and beautifully presented smaller gifts offering alternatives to standard gifting lines. Meanwhile, ethical credentials are becoming increasingly commercial, as traceable cocoa, responsible sourcing and recyclable packaging give shoppers additional reasons to trade up.

The time has come to make gifting feel discovery-led, premium and genuinely gift-worthy, while using storytelling and merchandising to increase perceived value and basket spend.



£374
Despite inflation, UK gift spending held steady for Christmas **2025** at **£374** per shopper
Mintel



TRUFFLES

There's a reason why truffles have been considered peak chocolate gifting for generations. Rich, attractive and unapologetically luxurious, nobody can resist them...



Chocolarder Sea Salt Caramel Truffles

Golden caramel made using sea salt and fresh cream from Cornwall is encased in spheres of Ashaninka 72% dark chocolate and rolled in pressed cocoa powder.
chocolarder.com



Holdsworth Chocolates Espresso Martini Collection

Aromatic coffee ganache truffles, blended with a dash of vodka and encased in rich and creamy milk and dark chocolate.
holdsworthchocolates.co.uk



Montezuma's The Grand Truffle Selection

This collection includes nine handcrafted truffles in 100% recyclable packaging.
montezumas.co.uk

EXPERT VIEW

Love and pleasure

Jennifer Earle, consultant

"Chocolate is a perfect gift because of its association with love and pleasure and because it isn't always something people feel like they can buy for themselves because it can feel a bit too indulgent to buy the fancy chocolate for yourself – especially if you haven't yet tried it and know if it's worth the money. Sharing chocolate you know is great with someone is a lovely way of saying 'I like this and I think you'll like it too'. It makes it feel personal."



"Chocolate is the perfect gift because of its association with love and pleasure"



Pride of Place

With its delicious blend of tradition and innovation, Bon Bon's is paving a successful path in the confectionery sector

From humble beginnings, Bon Bon's Confectionery has become one of the most-loved names on confectionery shelves. The business began in 2007 in Wetherby, West Yorkshire, founded by Mark Rowntree. The business started as a small shop on the high street selling premium confectionery. Mark was quick to learn the strength of confectionery as a category – an affordable treat, suitable for both gifting and impulse sales. Something which really stood out to Mark was the emotional response sweets and chocolate can generate, especially the sense of nostalgia.

These insights inspired Mark to create Bon Bon's Traditional Sweets range: hand-packed favourites including hard-boiled sweets, fudge and liquorice – a Yorkshire favourite. Mark wanted to capture the charm of an old-fashioned sweet shop, but in premium, ready-to-sell packs rather than plastic jars or self-service pick and mix. With impulse sales in mind, shelf appeal was essential.



Clear packaging allowed the sweets' colours to shine, while the neat, uniform packs created bold block displays, bringing the traditional sweet shop experience into a more polished retail format.

A winning concept

It was around this time Mark teamed up with long-standing friend Peter Julian to explore the opportunity for this concept to be sold into the speciality food market.

Mark and Peter quickly identified markets looking for quality products with a point of difference to the mass market offerings. These included garden centres, farm shops and cultural historic attractions. With these markets in mind, the concept was refined specifically to meet these sectors' needs.

The key features of Bon Bon's traditional sweet range remain the same today; a broad range of best-in-class sweets including favourites for all ages and premium products supplied in high impact displays which deliver the WOW! factor.

A key part of Bon Bon's success has been the company culture and values established by Mark and Peter.

While not strictly a family business, the founders were determined to build something different from the companies they had previously worked for; a business that values its people, takes pride in what it does and how it operates, and remains firmly focused on delivering success for its customers.



A new family

Following early success, Bon Bon's was acquired by The Lanchester Group in 2018. Primarily a wine wholesaler, wine bottling business and gift company, the Lanchester Group was looking to expand its gifting division and saw Bon Bon's as a good fit to its portfolio of companies. From Mark and Peter's perspective, they saw an entrepreneurial family-run business as the perfect custodians for Bon Bon's to take the company forward.

The Lanchester Group has invested more than £2 million into Bon Bon's, taking it to a new home in Tockwith just outside of York – less than six miles from Mark's original shop. Further investment has included the commissioning of automated packing to support Bon Bon's hand packing operation, acquisition of a confectionery distribution business [HF Chocolates] and the installation of a chocolate production facility.

As part of the Lanchester Group's carbon management strategy a 210kW solar array was installed at Bon Bon's Moorside site. During peak summer weather Bon Bon's now export more energy to the grid than they import.

Beyond the investment and operational support, the Lanchester Group has largely left the team at Bon Bon's to operate with the same principles towards product development, brand management and customer service the company has become known for.

Bringing bold flavours to more chocolate lovers

It was during Bon Bon's chocolate-making journey that the business discovered Choc Amor.

Operating from a small shop in Ormskirk, Lancashire, Choc Amor had built a loyal following and earned prestigious awards including Great Taste, Academy of Chocolate, and International Chocolate Awards.

TOP PRODUCT



Choc Amor
Salt Liquorice Chocolate
Dark chocolate with notes of blackcurrant, salt and liquorice.
chocamor.co.uk

EXPERT VIEW



"Choc Amor is uniquely flavoured, award-winning chocolate but, just as importantly, it has a story and a soul which everyone at Bon Bon's will be careful to carry forward. We're blessed to learn from founder Paul and Jacqui and enormously proud to help more people to enjoy this tremendous chocolate."

BEN YATES
JOINT MD AT BON BON'S CONFECTIONERY



Choc Amor was founded in 2012 by chocolatier Paul Williams and his wife Jacqui. Paul's approach goes beyond traditional flavour pairings, drawing inspiration from a chef's mindset to blend premium single-origin Colombian cocoa with a wide range of ingredients. This creative process produced distinctive and unique combinations including Blackcurrant, Salt & Chipotle.

The awards and unusual flavour combinations piqued the interest of Bon Bon's joint MDs Kirsty Firth and Ben Yates who met with Paul and Jacqui in their shop in late 2024. A morning was spent sampling Paul's creations and by lunch plans to take Choc Amor to more consumers were already being discussed. "We'd never tasted chocolate like it; Paul looks at flavour combinations from a unique perspective for a chocolatier. The quality of the ingredients and the way Paul makes his chocolates means you can really taste the individual layers of flavours; he takes you on a taste journey," says Kirsty Firth, joint MD.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bon Bon's Confectionery began as a small shop on Wetherby's high street selling premium confectionery.

Once Bon Bon's discovered Choc Amor's daring creations, the team knew these chocolates deserved a bigger stage so Bon Bon's acquired Choc Amor in May 2025 and moved production to their facility in Tockwith with the intention to service Bon Bon's customers in the speciality food market. A key aspect of the acquisition was to retain the services of Paul and Jacqui to be at the heart of the brand, ensuring every piece of Choc Amor chocolate meets their exacting standards while driving innovation for exciting new flavours.

"Choc Amor is uniquely flavoured, award-winning chocolate but, just as importantly, it has a story and a soul which everyone at Bon Bon's will be careful to carry forward," says Ben Yates, joint MD. "We're blessed to learn from Paul and Jacqui and enormously proud to help more people to enjoy this tremendous chocolate."

Still made in small batches, Choc Amor is now produced and sold exclusively by Bon Bon's into the speciality food market. Since Bon Bon's took over production, the range has been awarded three Great Taste Awards, and has also been confirmed as a finalist for The Grocer New Product Award 2026.

BEHIND THE BRAND

Sizeable production

Since the wholesale operation began, Bon Bon's has developed, produced and sold more than 1500 different items under the Bon Bon's brand and still packs more than 4.8 million units by hand every year. Ranges include Traditional Sweets, Bon Bon's Gourmet and The Real Good Food Co.

Product innovation

Alongside the year-round ranges, Bon Bon's develops seasonal collections annually for Christmas and Spring and produces private label items for some of the nation's most iconic food retailers.

Chocolate specialists

In 2023 Bon Bon's moved into chocolate production. Having previously sourced chocolate products from external suppliers for its collections, the decision was made to bring production in-house. This enabled Bon Bon's to develop and produce its own chocolate products for both its year-round and seasonal collections, further strengthening its product offering and creative capabilities.

Innovation

From trending global flavours to multisensory experiences, confectionery is a vehicle for foodie discovery in 2026 and beyond

LED BY FLAVOUR

As consumer palates become evermore adventurous, so do the confectioners and chocolate makers catering to them...



Curious By Nature Espresso Nutini Nut Mix

A blend of caramelised mocha hazelnuts, cocoa-spiced pecans and walnuts, with indulgent dark and white chocolate-coated coffee beans.

rmcurtis.co.uk



Chocolarder Wild Gorse Flower 50% Milk Chocolate Bar

50% Dominican Republic milk chocolate infused with hand-foraged wild gorse flower, crafted in Cornwall.

chocolarder.com



FATSO Drunk'n Monkey

Banana chips, a glug of rum and a sprinkling of sea salt all wrapped in dark Colombian chocolate.

sofatso.com



TREND SPOTLIGHT

Collabs are all over the food sector right now, from wine businesses partnering with mixer brands to snacks and beer. On the confectionery front, M&M's have partnered with film distributor Warner Bros to bring out a *Practical Magic 2*-themed pack. On the fine food front, consider working with a confectionery maker to create a range perfectly tailored to your customers' tastebuds.

Meanwhile, one-dimensional textures are no longer tickling shoppers' tastebuds; instead, they're looking for clever formulations which excite their palate and keep them going back for more. Think soft centred confectionery with a crisp coating or a moreish combination of creamy chocolate and crunchy crystals.

The three international flavour-led British consumers would currently like to explore are Korean, Malaysian and South American, says Bidfood. Look out for sweet/savoury combinations with plenty of spice, as well as Asian flavours such as yuzu and matcha.



46% OF CONSUMERS WANT TO TRY THE LATEST FOOD TRENDS

Bidfood

£ HOW TO SELL...

Gen Z might not be ruling the roost when it comes to basket spend (yet), but despite their flighty reputation they're well worth getting on-side. Here's what they're looking for from chocolate and confectionery right now...

- ***Smaller portions***
  To younger generations, smaller-than-standard portions – think bite-sized – suggest flexibility and portability.
- ***Textural***
  A combination of two or more textures appeals to Gen Z, who are looking for experience beyond taste.
- ***Emotions***
  Connect with younger people's emotions to invite sales. A pleasurable reward that they can create an occasion around is a winning formula.
- ***Sharing***
  Chocolate and confectionery products that Gen Z can share with their friends are hot right now – think easily portionable indulgence.



35%

A unique flavour is a key differentiator for **35%** of chocolate eaters, highlighting the importance of innovation in taste profiles

Mintel

Montezuma's

CONFECTIONERY AND CHOCOLATE BUYER Must Try 2026

Montezuma's brings together exceptional chocolate, bold flavours and a distinctly British sense of fun. Made in West Sussex for more than 20 years, its range spans indulgent bars, truffles, buttons and gifting, with flavours from classic combinations to more adventurous pairings. The chocolate is palm oil free and made without unnecessary additives, while responsibly sourced cocoa and recyclable, biodegradable or compostable packaging reflect the brand's commitment to doing things differently.

montezumas.co.uk



INTERNATIONALLY-INSPIRED

Travel has widened the palates of British consumers, who are now looking to transport their tastebuds through excellent confections



Choc Amor Orange Jalfrezi

Moreish milk chocolate flavoured with orange oil and spices.

chocamor.co.uk



Mandira's Kitchen Bombay Mix Burst

Couverture chocolate packed with crunchy, spiced Bombay mix, moving from sweet to savoury and gently spiced in every bite.

mandiraskitchen.com



Truede Halva with Rose Petals

The nutty richness of traditional tahini-based halva with the delicate floral notes of rose.

truede.com



Haldiram's Coconut Burfi

A traditional Indian sweet made with concentrated milk solids and coconut powder.

haldiramuk.com

Healthier Indulgence

From health credentials to social benefits, there's plenty of reasons why craft chocolate and confectionery should be relished guilt-free



£ HOW TO SELL...

- ***Talk percentages***
While a high cocoa percentage doesn't automatically equal a healthy choice, put simply the more cocoa solids are in a bar the less space there is for sugar. Many shoppers may balk at the thought of an 80%+ chocolate bar, but there are plenty of makers who have got the sweet/bitter balance just right.

- ***Fibre's trending***
It's a little known fact that good quality dark chocolate contains reasonably high levels of fibre: around 5.5g per 50g for bars with 70-85% cocoa. An attractive proposition for the shoppers actively seeking out food with health benefits, and fibre is a hot topic right now.

- ***Antioxidant-rich***
This is a well-known term in red wine circles as well as for blueberry fans, but did you know that dark chocolate contains polyphenols too? There are heaps of health claims around polyphenols that it's worth reading up on, but this is another tick box for healthy shoppers worth drawing attention to.

- ***(Potential) cognitive benefits***
Cocoa flavanols may support blood-vessel function and modestly improve blood pressure and circulation, as well as potentially improving blood flow to the brain. Plus, scientists suggest potential benefits for some aspects of cognitive function.

40%

of UK shoppers seek healthier options by avoiding harmful ingredients

McKinsey

TREND SPOTLIGHT

"Savouring with sharing has all sorts of other social benefits; you'll not only discover all sorts of flavours when discussing them but it provides a great means to bond, discover all sorts of unexpected facets of your partner and it's a great entry point to all sorts of other discussions," says Spencer Hyman of Cocoa Runners.

Bringing people together over premium chocolate and confectionery is one of the great joys of life, and can be replicated in a myriad of ways – good news indeed for creative and modern fine food retailers.

Consider the chocolate board; very similar to the cheese boards we all know and love but instead of cheese you're relishing a carefully curated raft of delicious chocolates. Theme them if you wish – a tour of your favourite craft dark chocolates from around the world could work well.



NATURAL GOODNESS

Naturally farmed and well fermented chocolate can be a healthy food, just make sure to keep an eye on sugar levels, too



Melt The Wild Bar

Made from a rare cacao from the Bolivian lowlands in Beni. Local people collect ripened fruits from the trees. The beans are fermented and dried naturally in the sun.

meltchocolates.com



Summerdown

CONFECTIONERY AND CHOCOLATE BUYER Must Try 2026

Summerdown grows, harvests and distills their signature Black Mitcham peppermint on their regenerative farm in Hampshire. Prized for its pure, bright character, it had been all but lost to England until Summerdown brought it back from America over three decades ago. Today around 70 acres inspire their award-winning chocolates and teas. Open a box and an intense wave of mint transports you to their fields, a peppermint playground for peacocks, bees and butterflies. Whether your customers are treating themselves, serving after-dinner mints or choosing a gift with a story, Summerdown's whole range is perfect at Christmas and all year round.

summerdown.com



21%
of British consumers seek out bitter flavours
Innova Market Insights

HEALTH-GIVING

Purchasing chocolate and confectionery doesn't have to mean sacrificing health goals, as these products demonstrate...



Nourish The Nutty One

A divinely chocolatey, fudgy coconut brownie, high in gut-loving fibre and packed full of natural, nutritious ingredients.

nourish-growcookenjoy.com



Creative Nature Chocolate Chunk Cookie

Gluten, dairy, soya and nut-free, this crunchy cookie is also a source of fibre.

creativenaturesuperfoods.co.uk



Stuffed By Protein Ball Chocolate & Hazelnut

A gooey-centred two-textured confection that combines indulgent flavour with high levels of protein.

theproteinballco.com

EXPERT VIEW

Less is more

Spencer Hyman, co-founder of Cocoa Runners

By savouring and sharing craft chocolate, and in particular focusing on its amazing flavours, we believe that consumers will not just have more fun, but will gravitate to bars that are healthier for them. Flavour in chocolate is a proxy for great farming and crafting, and that means more polyphenols, theobromine, magnesium and all the other great stuff. Savouring also stops you scoffing and slows you down (so 'less is more').



"Flavour in chocolate is a proxy for great farming and crafting"



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Over 100 years of chocolate creation

Guilbert's Chocolates' delicious blend of heritage and innovation has been delighting shoppers for over a century

Established in 1910, Bristol-based Guilbert's Chocolates have been hand-making chocolates using traditional methods for over 100 years. While now an electric mixer is used instead of hand-mixing, everything else is done by hand, just as Piers Guilbert did a century ago.

Guilbert's catches the eye in the quest for original and exquisite flavours. Catering to everyone, the company offers the optimum selection of luxury handmade chocolates that are available today. When buying chocolates with Guilbert's, you are buying cocoa-inspired works of art in place of the ordinary mass-produced chocolates.

Guilbert's provide a variety of luxury handmade chocolates to choose from, whether they are being purchased for an occasion, or as a treat to oneself.

The company's chocolates are available in a large variety of fillings such as fruit fondant creams, gingers and truffles. They provide endless possibilities of combinations of flavours, whether it be through the pre-packed selections in fantastically designed tins or boxes, or in smaller boxes that are hand-selected for their customers. The most popular products are the delectable Rose and Violet creams, a recipe that has been popular with customers for years.

Other age-old recipes, such as the crystallised peppermint creams and crystallised fondants, are still just as popular today as they were back in 1910. In addition to keeping those old traditional recipes alive, Guilbert's also enjoys experimenting with new flavours that are popular with the customers of today – such as the Blackberry, Absinthe and Salted Caramel Truffles varieties.

The future of Guilbert's is to continue on with its proven popular recipes and stay true to its heritage, whilst at the same time creating new and exciting flavours to complement these, hand-selected by their customers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bristol-based Guilbert's Chocolates have been hand-making chocolates using traditional methods for over 100 years.



Guilbert's CHOCOLATIERS SINCE 1910

Established in Bristol in 1910

We have been hand making chocolates for over 100 years.

Guilberts branded chocolates are available for retailers nationwide.

We supply some of the top names under their brands, so although you may not be familiar with the Guilberts name or brand, you could quite possibly be familiar with our product.



Contact sales@guilbertschocolates.co.uk or call 0117 9268102

Inclusive

The shoppers following special diets are just as in need of indulgence, and there are plenty of smart products on the market to help you satisfy their sweet teeth

PLANT-BASED

Cater for your customer cohort who favour dairy-free chocolate and confectionery with these delicious finds



Rhythm 108 Roasted Almond Butter Tablet

Filled with a deliciously nutty, smooth almond filling that melts in your mouth and coated in Swiss vegan milk chocolate.

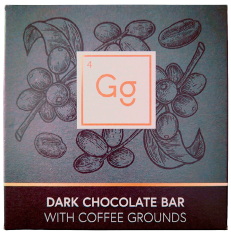
rhythm108.co.uk



Fudge Kitchen Raspberry Coconut Ice

A vegan-friendly combination of sweet, creamy coconut with a bright burst of raspberry for a perfectly balanced treat.

fudgekitchen.co.uk



Grounds For Good Dark Chocolate Bar With Coffee Grounds

Vegan, dark chocolate made with repurposed coffee grounds and oil.

groundsforgood.co.uk



Mighty Fine Vegan Honeycomb Bar

Satisfyingly sweet and crunchy honeycomb smothered in Oat Mylk Chocolate.

mightyfine.co

TREND SPOTLIGHT

Flavour innovation is moving into free-from. Cookie dough, popcorn, caramel, pistachio, biscuit-inspired flavours and other dessert cues are helping free-from confectionery compete on excitement rather than simply suitability. This is making free-from an attractive proposition for everyone, not just allergy sufferers.





£599.9 million

The UK gluten-free market is forecast to grow to **£599.9 million** by **2029**

Markets and Markets

"To stay ahead, brands can explore premium, texture-rich and GLP-1-friendly innovation while rethinking cocoa, supporting gut health and embracing AI"



HONORATA JAROCKA,
MINTEL ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL, FOOD & DRINK



SUGAR-FREE

Perfectly suited to those customers looking to minimise their consumption of refined sugars



Savvy Sweets Berry Bears

Containing prebiotic plant fibre, pectin, stevia and erythritol to ensure they remain low in calories and sugar whilst providing great flavour.
savvysweets.co.uk

3.1%
Approximately **3.1%** of UK adults follow a vegan diet
CPD

GLUTEN-FREE

While pure chocolate is gluten-free, additions such as wafer and cookie pieces can make confections unsuitable for coeliacs or those following gluten-free diets.



Foods of Athenry Blondie Cookie Shots

Bite-sized vanilla shortbread treats, perfect for a guilt-free indulgence. Gluten-free, wheat-free and vegan.
foodsofathenry.ie



Biona Coconut Wafer Rolls – Vanilla

Light, crisp wafers made with fresh organic coconut milk, coconut sugar and natural flavourings. Dairy-free, gluten-free and plant-based.
biona.co.uk

£ HOW TO SELL...

Consumers of all generations and palates are shaping their chocolate and confectionery consumption around the likes of GLP-1 medications and free from diets, and while it may seem that this indulgent sector is the antithesis of those lifestyles, there are ways you can tap into these shoppers' cravings for something sweet...

GLP-1

Consumers following GLP-1 shaped diets aren't necessarily eschewing all treats, they're simply being more considerate about what they're buying and eating. Their appetites will be smaller than pre-jab so offer a range of smaller-scale chocolate bars and confections. Many will be looking for added nutritional benefits so their overall health doesn't suffer as a result of their smaller consumption, so products with functional elements such as nootropics, superfoods and seeds will do well with this cohort.

Vegan

Plant-based chocolate and confectionery is nothing new, but over the years we've seen an evolution in the variety of what's on offer. Coconut and oat milk alternatives in place of dairy add a subtle sweetness that may lead to slightly smaller quantities of sugar being used, and some non-vegans actually prefer the texture of non-gelatine gummy sweets to their conventional counterparts, so don't assume they have to stay glued to your free-from shelves...

Reduced sugar

Many shoppers are looking to reduce their sugar consumption, and this is just as much the case in the confectionery world as it is elsewhere in the sector. While 'hidden sugars' aren't so much of a concern here, careful consumers are finding more 'natural' types of sugar – think unrefined or less processed – an attractive proposition, as well as formulations which contain less sweetness overall.



The Spirit of Exploration

30 years after launch, Forest Feast continues to surprise and delight discerning shoppers with a deliciously innovative range

EXPERT VIEW



"We've consistently reinvested in our people, manufacturing capabilities, our brands, and product innovation, while staying true to the values the business was built on. Thirty years later, I still come to work with the same excitement and belief that great products and great people are what drive long term success."

MICHAEL HALL MBE, FOUNDER AND CEO OF FOREST FEAST

TOP PRODUCTS



Double Chocolate Crispy Raspberries
Whole freeze-dried raspberries smothered in layers of chocolate.



Double Chocolate Crispy Strawberries
Whole freeze-dried strawberries coated in Belgian chocolate.
forestfeast.com

Innovation has always been at the heart of Forest Feast. Our brand is rooted in discovery, sourcing exceptional ingredients from all four corners of the globe and bringing them back to our base in Co. Armagh, where they are carefully crafted into distinctive, indulgent snacks. From the beginning, our ambition has been to make snacking more exciting, more delicious, more carefully crafted and more memorable.

That spirit of exploration remains our USP, turning our curiosity for great ingredients and bold flavour combinations into premium snacks that offer consumers something genuinely different. It is an approach that has earned Forest Feast more than 20 Great Taste Awards and built a strong reputation for quality, creativity and innovation.

This year marks 30 years of Forest Feast and while the business has grown significantly at 58% YoY [Circana, 52 w/e 24 January 2026, Total UK All Outlets], our spirit of exploration has remained constant. What began as a small family run business has evolved into an internationally recognised premium snack brand, now sold across 22 markets, with more than 150 people based at our headquarters in Portadown, Co. Armagh.

For us, that evolution has always been about more than scale. It has meant continually investing in our people, production capabilities and product development, allowing us to bring distinctive, high quality products to market and respond to changing consumer tastes. That approach has helped us build a growing portfolio of premium snacks with a clear point of difference for customers and retail partners.

As we celebrate 30 years, our focus is firmly on the future. Our ambition is to double the business by 2030, supported by continued investment in innovation, manufacturing, people and brand development.

Responding to consumer demand

Our latest launch is a great example of this commitment: a duo of freeze dried, chocolate dipped fruit snacks, Double Chocolate Crispy Raspberries and Double Chocolate Crispy Strawberries. Whole freeze dried fruit is coated in layers of Belgian chocolate, creating a distinctive contrast between crisp, intensely fruity centres and smooth, indulgent chocolate.

71%
of consumers cite texture as a key driver of snack enjoyment
IN food, 2026

The launch responds to growing consumer demand for new flavours, premium ingredients and exciting textures. In fact, 71% of consumers cite texture as a key driver of snack enjoyment [IN food, 2026], highlighting the opportunity for more sensorial-led snacking experiences. Freeze drying gives the fruit its distinctive crunch, while Belgian chocolate adds an indulgent dimension, creating a snack that sits between fruit and confectionery.

For fine food retailers, the range brings something new and distinctive to the premium snacking category, combining both exceptional ingredients and exciting, layered textures.

"Thirty years on, our ambition remains the same: to keep exploring, innovating and creating snacks that surprise and delight"

NEW

CRISP. DIPPED. WONDERFUL.



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FOREST FEAST

BY APPOINTMENT TO THE ROYAL DANISH COURT

Anthon Berg

SINCE 1884

Chocolate Gifting. *Elevated.*



CREATING *sweeter* MEMORIES
SINCE 1884