TRENDSETTER EDITION

THE BIGGEST TRENDS SHAPING OUR SECTOR THIS YEAR

May 2025

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CONNECTING THE FINE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY



THE FLAVA PEOPLE

SCOTT DIXON: THE VALUE OF TRENDS IN RETAIL P. 22



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TASCA

JOSH DALLAWAY: RELISH FOOD FROM SOUTHERN EUROPE P. 30



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In this issue

6 **Oliver Lloyd**
consultant

17 **James Grant**
No2 Pound Street

REGULARS

12 **Product News**

14 **Farm Shop Focus: Fordhall Farm**

15 **Counterpoint: Selling Seasonal Cheese**

16 **Cheese Uncut**

20 **Centre Spread: Outdoor Eating**

33 **Trend Watch: Fermented Foods**

38 **Last Words**

FEATURES

18 **The Slice is Right**

22 **Trendsetters 2025**

23 **Nuts for Nuts**

24 **Appetite for Better**

26 **Best Dressed**

28 **Summer Sips**

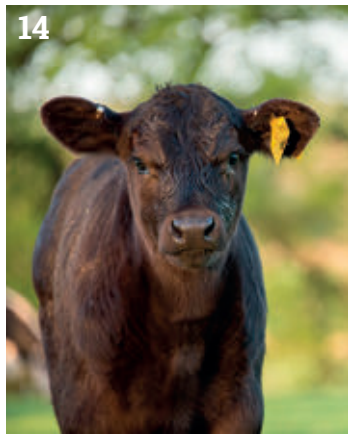
30 **In Search of Sun**

32 **Better For You**

34 **The Diverse World of Dips**

36 **A Growing Opportunity**

37 **A Taste of Tradition**







EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the May 2025 issue of *Speciality Food*. We are proud to present this as our Trendsetters Edition; a showcase of the trends shaping the market this year.

As well as highlighting the hottest trends of 2025, we advise on the best products to stock to ensure that your shelves appeal to trend-seeking shoppers and share expert intel into why – and how – you should maximise these opportunities

Everything from snacks and summer drinks to better for you food and drink is covered, so we're confident you'll find some ideas that work for your establishment.

We also speak to the experts to uncover why trends are worth investing in, and how to do so without diluting your key message and ethos. Hint: do it at your own pace, and in your own style.

Consultant Ollie Lloyd delves into the growing opportunity offered by Asian cuisine, too, while cheesemonger James Grant introduces us to the next generation of additive cheese makers.

We also profile award-winning farm shop Fordhall Farm, highlight our favourite al fresco eats, and so much more...

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com





Stay on trend this summer

Speciality Food delves into the most exciting categories to watch over the next few months

When you're in the 'buying seat', it's easy to become distracted by all the noise circulating in the food and drink industry. There's always something shiny and new just around the corner, promising to be to be 'the next big thing' that will sweep shoppers off their feet.

At *Speciality Food*, we've always got our finger on the pulse, and we spend a great deal of time exploring innovations and new products, learning from analysts and experts which products are the ones worth investing in.

Here are our thoughts for the second half of 2025.

Drinks that do you good

There's no getting away from the vast expansion of the functional drinks sector – nor the positive reception from consumers. Until the last two years, the category was largely dominated by kombucha (expected to grow by 13.8% in the next five years), followed by gut-friendly sodas, which latched onto the gut health conversation, claiming to help drinkers upgrade their internal microflora.

Expansion of both types of drink continues apace – their ongoing success encouraging other brands to join them in the wellness space. We're seeing interest in protein water, ACV drinks, green tea energy drinks, and in adaptogenic products (particularly those aimed at perimenopausal women) boosted with ashwagandha, mushrooms and minerals such as magnesium.

According to Statista, almost 10% of UK consumers are spending more than £20 per month on functional drinks, so it's certainly worth considering these products more seriously.

Protein

Protein has (for now) replaced gut health as the wellbeing focus of the moment. It's being talked about everywhere, and by a more diverse demographic of people, beyond gym fanatics. More is being understood and shared about the role of protein in managing weight and blood sugar, and helping to support our muscles as we age.

Dr Rupy Aujla's most recent book – The Doctor's Kitchen: Healthy High Protein – has already topped best-seller lists and he, and others in the wellness field, are being very vocal about the benefits of protein right now, which has naturally led to spiked interest in retail. Cognitive Market Research's data predicts 6% growth in the protein market between 2024 and 2031.While plant protein substitutes have plateaued, as the industry pivots to adapt to consumers preferences towards 'cleaner' alternatives, the products thought to benefit most will be high-quality meat, tofu, tempeh, beans, pulses, nuts, anything infused with collagen, snacking salamis and jerky.

UPF-free food

A recent report from the American Journal of Preventative Medicine (capturing data from eight countries) found that ultra-processed foods make up a startling 53% of the average British person's energy intake – second only to the USA (55%). Researchers claim this propensity to rely on heavily processed products could be responsible for thousands of premature deaths.

The UK Government has responded by saying it will continue to double down on ways to minimise the health impact of UPFs here, having already targeted junk food advertising aimed at children, and introduced HFSS regulations.

Consumers are becoming much more aware about the implications of UPF-led diets, paying greater attention to labels and ingredients. In fact, a Facebook group (Reducing Ultra-Processed Foods) set up just months ago, already has nearly 100,000 active members, demonstrating just how important it is for retailers to be mindful of what they offer in a speciality setting.

Asian condiments

If there's one product that swept the floor in artisan retail last year, it was chilli crisp, riding on the coattails of 2023's hot honey craze. Independents tell us their customers cannot get enough of this umami, spicy condiment. And it's led shoppers to explore further the deliciously diverse offerings of Asia, as they recreate dishes they've eaten in restaurants or seen on social media at home.

Brands tell us their customers value authenticity, natural ingredients, and multifunctionality. Ones to watch include rayu, gochujang, togarashi seasoning, XO sauce, sriracha, ssamjang and kecap manis. We predict a boom in Asian ingredients in 2025, with South American condiments projected to be on the up for 2026 as consumer awareness grows.

Fruit and nut snacks

Credence Research thinks there will be a 5.78% growth in the UK dried fruits market between 2024 and 2032, while Statista believes the nuts market will grow by 5.55% between 2025 and 2030.

We've seen dramatic changes in both of these snacking categories in the last 12 months alone, with new products constantly becoming available. Not only are most of them HFSS compliant (creating better opportunities for grab and go impulse purchases in larger stores) but they lean heavily into customer preferences for healthier snacking that can help them boost their fibre, vitamin, mineral and protein intake.

Statista says sustainably sourced and organic nuts are worth stocking as their trajectory for consumer interest rises. While Mintel's data shows premium options (luxury chocolate coated or seasoned nuts, for example) will prove their value to retailers, as 55% of consumers say they would pay more for gourmet snacking products.

That's certainly plenty of food for thought!

Turn to our Trendsetters report from page 22 to discover more of the trends you need to know about in 2025.



"International inspiration"



OLIVER LLOYD
CONSULTANT

The names Longdan and Oseyo might not mean much to many readers of this magazine, but I suspect they're worth paying a little more attention to, as they are a big part of one of the major food trends. I am thinking of our love affair with international flavours and discovering and adopting dishes from around the world.

News broke last week that Longdan is opening a 110,000-square-foot store in Glasgow, and Osyeo is planning to open yet another store, this time in Manchester. While Oseyo is distinctly Korean, Longdan offers a broader range of Asian foods; both cater to British foodies who increasingly love international cuisine, showing just how mainstream the global food trend really is.

For too long, we have looked to the major retailers' 'world food aisles' to see where the next trend in international foods is coming from. However, if you want to look into the future, one should look more closely at Asian supermarkets across the country, which offer an ever-growing set of amazing ingredients that allow foodies to play in their kitchens. If you wander around some of the newer chains, like Oseye, you'll see a retail experience that is distinctly modern and designed for British foodies, regardless of their ethnicity.

There are several reasons why Asian food is a trend that is here to stay, and they revolve around the most significant trend out there: a post-Covid awareness of our mortality. Healthy eating is one of the biggest topics in the world of food, and yet, nutritious food can often be bland, and the miracle supplements costly and more rooted in science than in taste.

The sauces and flavourings used in Asian foods elevate the likes of broccoli and beans to dishes we can all get excited about. I love making smashed cucumbers with garlic, rice vinegar, soy sauce, sesame oil and a few chilli flakes. Tenderstem broccoli with oyster sauce and garlic makes a great side dish to accompany a piece of fish. Aubergine is endlessly versatile with any number of sauces and is a great way to use up leftover sauces and chilli oils.

Ultimately, many consumers see Asian food as healthier than its Western counterparts, and items like kimchi and miso reinforce this view. To understand how things could unfold, you only need to look at the stories being told by TikTok influencer and low-waste chef Max La Manna about miso. Inspired by the founder of Zoe, Dr Tim Spector, he suggested that miso is a great way to add a delicious, salty kick to your favourite meals, whether that's a soup, stew or pasta sauce. The argument goes that stock cubes are not always the healthiest option and can contain many unknown ingredients, while miso only contains three ingredients to make: soybeans, salt, and a type of fermented rice called koji.

If you walk down a Tesco aisle, you will find a broad range of Korean products from Korean brands. Restaurants like Itsu are launching cooking sauces and new ways to create their food at home in all manner of retailers. Other areas where you can see this trend are in the ever-expanding noodle offerings of supermarkets, which are increasingly similar to those found in Asian supermarkets. Noodles are perceived as super quick and tasty (although not particularly healthy) and are loved by younger generations. This is a sector that is completely ignored in specialist retail but there are so many brands, particularly in the US, that are trying to reinvent this sector and make it 'cleaner' and healthier.

The chilli aisles of specialist retailers are okay, but many underestimate foodies' love of spice and the rapid growth in this space. New brands emerge all the time in this space, with eye-catching premium packaging and often eye-watering in-mouth experiences!

There is an opportunity for retailers to offer a broader range of products inspired by Asian cuisines. One of my favourite finds at a recent food show was a product called All the Auties, which is working to re-imagine the world of paneer with new flavours and cleaner processing. It tasted delicious and would look amazing on the shelf. That is not to say that stocking these kinds of items isn't without risk, as you need to tell people how to use them. But it ultimately is what people are looking for and is often more exciting than something that would look at home in a farm shop of 10 years ago.

> "There is an opportunity for retailers to offer a broader range of products inspired by Asian cuisines"

Just a third of indies adopting AI, despite potential benefits

According to recent research by Faire, while a third of the UK's independent retailers are utilising AI for the benefit of their business, one in 10 are reluctant to adopt the sometimes controversial technology

The survey of 300 independent retailers found that 83% have begun to use AI, with a third using it every day, but 10% of respondents cited a lack of understanding, worries about cost and a lack of trust as the biggest barriers to them adopting the tool.

18% said that they were worried about losing the 'personal touch' their business benefits from, while 14% were concerned about becoming overly dependent on the technology.

However, those using AI on a regular basis claimed that they were saving around two hours in time each day, as well as £80 in daily costs. Customer service enquiries, marketing and research are AI's most common uses in the independent retail sphere.

Charlotte Broadbent, UK general manager at Faire, said, "Despite tough economic conditions, many of the independent retailers we work with are embracing AI to save time, cut costs, and compete with bigger retailers. What's exciting is that technology – and particularly some of the AI driven tools we offer our retailers – are helping to level the playing field, giving small businesses access to the same efficiencies and insights as much larger competitors."

"We're also seeing some resistance to AI, particularly among shop owners who don't fully understand or trust the technology, or worry about losing many of the things that make independent shops so unique and important to our local communities. Of course, not every shop is there yet. Some are still wary, and that's understandable because this tech is new. But the ones leaning in are showing how adaptable and innovative small businesses can be. I'm confident we'll see even more creative uses of AI that allow retailers and small business owners to focus on what they do best: curating brilliant products and creating memorable customer experiences."



Open Farm Sunday is back for 2025

Sunday 8th June sees the return of Open Farm Sunday – the annual open day for the farming industry.

On that day, hundreds of farm gates will be opened to the public to offer a valuable opportunity to experience the world of farming, recognise its value in our everyday lives, and shine a light on the role of sustainability in the food industry.

The national initiative is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming). For more information on how to get involved visit farmsunday.org





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Survey reveals shoppers want to buy more loose fruit and veg

Plastic is 'out' and loose produce is 'in' according to recent studies by WRAP and Aquapak

A new survey from WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste brand has shown that UK adults would prefer to buy 19 out of 21 common fruit and vegetables loose rather than packaged.

Statistics from the report revealed 78% of those surveyed said they would buy their usual fresh produce unpackaged if it were sold that way – the highest given answer compared to other packaging formats, followed by paper bags or sacks (77%), and cardboard trays, boxes or cartons (75%).

Less than half said they would be likely to buy in plastic packaging, trays, boxes or cartons (46%) and the only packaging with a lower preference score was wooden crates (43%).

The biggest reason for choosing loose over packaged products (68%) was that it allows shoppers to buy only the exact amount they need.

And of the 21 fruit and vegetable items measured in the survey, it's bananas that topped the list (70%) to be sold loose.

It's older consumers, aged 76 and above (73%), or 55 to 75 (68%) who prefer the option of loose produce, compared to 38% of those aged 16 to 24.

WRAP's campaigning continues to highlight the overall benefits for consumers financially, and for the planet (in waste and plastic saving) that offering loose fruit and vegetables can bring.

For example, it said, if all of the apples, bananas and potatoes in Britain were sold loose, 60,000 tonnes of food waste could be saved each year.

The organisation has called for a consultation on a packaging ban across the 21 items it identified which could be sold loose, with a recommendation developed in conjunction with the food and drink industry, across the supply chain. Selling these types of produce free of packaging could potentially save 100,000 tonnes of food and 13,000 tonnes of plastic film being wasted in people's homes every year.

Love Food Hate Waste's senior campaign manager, Jackie Bailey, said, "In the UK, 60% of all food wastes comes from people's homes, with fresh fruit and veg making up the largest proportion. Buying loose fruit and veg has the potential to significantly cut the amount of food ending up in the bin, and we have the evidence that it is what consumers want. Now is the time for retailers and shoppers to make that reality. Increasing loose fruit and veg offerings in store will not only reduce plastic waste, but also enable shoppers to buy closer to their needs, slashing food waste, and preventing tens of thousands of tonnes of CO_2 emissions."

Circular economy minister, Mary Creagh, added, "Farmers work tirelessly to put food on our nation's tables, so it is absurd that households are throwing away £1,000 a year in food that could have been eaten. Through our £15 million food surplus fund, food producers, charities and Government are working together to ensure more produce gets to those who need it most."

At the same time that WRAP highlights a rise in consumer interest in loose produce, new research by Aquapak has shown shoppers don't feel UK retailers and brands are doing enough to reduce the use of plastic packaging.

Sixty-five per cent of those surveyed felt businesses were falling short when it comes to cutting plastic from the supply chain, with only 18% of those asked believing enough is being done.

The findings show that British shoppers want to see retailers take more positive steps towards reducing the impact of the packaging they use on the environment.

In the survey, 59% wanted to see conventional plastic replaced with an alternative material which can be recycled and doesn't harm the environment, 57% said more paper-based packaging suitable for kerbside recycling should be used, and 49% said retailers and producers should stop using traditional single-use plastic completely.

Aquapak CEO, Mark Lapping, said, "Our research shows that consumers want to see more from brands and retailers when it comes to cutting the use of plastic packaging. We recognise that businesses have many challenges to deal with when it comes sustainability, whether it is carbon, water or biodiversity but it is important that they don't just pay lip service to new technologies but opt for real change."

Over the next year 56% of those asked said they would try to buy more products without single-use plastic packaging such as polyethylene bags and hard-to-recycle crisp packets and chocolate wrappers. They said they're prepared to take even more extreme steps over the next three years, with 46% saying they will stop buying single-use packaged items and those difficult to recycle altogether.

Businesses facing environmental challenges through the supply chain should take heart, Aquapak says, in the fact that almost one third (32%) of consumers said they would be prepared to pay more for 100% recyclable packaging.







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Shoppers urged to shop independent

This year's Independents' Day UK, a drive to get consumers shopping more regularly in independent stores, runs on 4th July

At last year's event, over 25,000 independent retailers engaged with the campaign in partnership with town management teams, business improvement districts and chambers of commerce and local business, and the number is set to be even higher for 2025 as the demands on independent retailers deepen.

The team behind the mission work closely with the British Independent Retailers Association (Bira), the Independent Retail Consortium (IRC) and the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM).

An estimated 25,000 independent retailers engaged with the campaign in 2024, along with more than 100 different town management teams, business improvement districts (BIDs), chambers of commerce and local business groups across the country.

Howard Robinson, a spokesperson for Independents' Day UK, said, "The UK's independent retail sector is resilient, creative and adaptable and provides employment, choice and quality of service to local communities throughout the country.

"That's why we hope that the public will show their support by simply heading out across the weekend starting on Friday July 4th, spend few pounds and enjoy everything that is great about our independent and locally owned retailers."

For more information and to get involved visit independentsdayuk.org/get-involved

Growth bubble is about to burst, says FDF report

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF), representative of Britain's 12,000 food and drink manufacturers, has published a new report stating that while the food and drink manufacturing sector makes a sizeable contribution to the economy, this is not predicted to last.

The Powering Communities report shares stats from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which illustrate that the food and drink manufacturing sector presently contributes £37bn to the UK's economy – a growth of over 17.9% in a decade, and representing nearly a quarter of Britain's overall manufacturing turnover.

However, with business confidence dropping to -47 last quarter and billions of pounds of costs piling onto the sector, the FDF is urging the government to take action to address barriers to growth.

These include a lack of access to highly skilled talent, low investment in innovation and falling food and drink export volumes.

Jim Bligh, director of corporate affairs, communications and packaging at FDF, said,

"Our industry is vital to ensuring we have a thriving food system here in the UK, providing high-quality, affordable food. And we are a major part of the UK's wider manufacturing sector, offering good careers, driving investment, and promoting international trade. Food and drink manufacturing is uniquely placed to make a positive impact in every village, town and city in every constituency in the country.

"But with food and drink businesses under increasing pressure, we've reached a pivotal moment where government must act to safeguard this foundational sector's future growth and the UK's food security. We've set out more than 40 steps government can take to remove unnecessary roadblocks to growth for the benefit of every community in the UK."

Further details can be found in the FDF's *Investment for Growth* report.

Just Gourmet Foods unveils bold rebrand and bigger vision

This spring marks a bold new chapter for Just Gourmet Foods as they unveil a fresh new look, open their 10,000 sq. ft warehouse, and expand their curated offering of Italy's finest artisanal products to the UK's most discerning retailers, delis, and food halls.

The rebrand reflects not only the evolution of our business but also the bridge between old and new – rooted in Italian excellence, built for the future.

Founded by Gianfranco Perri, whose roots run deep in Calabria's sun-drenched soil, Just Gourmet Foods has always been about more than food. It's about heritage, authenticity, and honouring generations of traditional craft.

Inspired by childhood summers on his grandparents' farm, Gianfranco's passion for real, quality ingredients drives everything the team behind Just Gourmet Foods does.

From heritage olive oils and small-batch sauces to artisan pasta and sweets, Just Gourmet Foods works directly with trusted family producers across Italy's diverse regions to bring true Italian craftsmanship to shelves across the UK.

As demand grows, so too does Just Gourmet Foods' range. Exclusive new suppliers are joining their portfolio, supported by their new distribution hub and stellar customer service.

With purpose, passion, and provenance at its core, Just Gourmet Foods is ready to serve its finest chapter yet.



New look for Algy's Farm Shop

A popular North Norfolk farm shop has been given a new lease of life, just in time for 2025's busy summer season.

Algy's Farm Shop has undergone an extension, and more energy than ever has been invested into ensuring that the stock sold under its roof is both of high quality and supports the local economy.

Annabel de Capell Brook, general manager, said, "Customers are blown away by the transformation and are thanking us for letting them have this amazing new provision. We are run by a third generation farming family and are well into our asparagus season – all grown on the farm."

As well as selling homegrown produce, Algy's Farm Shop is supporting producers from the local area by stocking them on their shelves. "I have introduced a huge number of local suppliers and we are super proud to champion such amazing local artisans," says Annabel.



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PRODUCT NEWS

Take stock with our new food and drink round-up

Fairfields creates Chorizo & Red Wine crisps



The artisan crisp producer has released Chorizo & Red Wine crisps as a limited edition flavour.

Made using natural flavourings with a sizeable hit of paprika, the new flavour will appeal to chorizo lovers with its smoky profile with hints of garlic and fruity red wine undertones and is available in 150g sharing packs.

As with the rest of the Fairfields range, the Chorizo & Red Wine flavour is gluten-free and vegan-friendly.

Robert and Laura Strathern, co-founders of Fairfields Farm, said, "We can't wait for crisp fans to try our new Chorizo & Red Wine flavour. Consumers are always seeking new and exciting flavour experiences, and this one delivers. As soon as we tried it we knew we were onto a winner! As always, we're proud of our new product development who have created this perfect flavour, as well as everyone who has worked tirelessly to bring it to life. It's a limited edition, though, so we just hope that everyone who wants a pack gets their hands on one!"

fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk

Oat Avenue produce Matcha variant



Oat Avenue have added a Matcha Granola Butter to its range, offering a naturally energising spread for health-conscious shoppers.

Created using roasted oats and trending matcha, the new product is a subtly sweet spread packed with antioxidants and is 100% plant-based, top 14 allergen-free, palm-oil free, refined-sugar free, and made with natural ingredients.

Granola butter is a healthy alternative to nut butters, and can be drizzled over porridge, spread on toast, served with yoghurt or eaten straight from the jar.

Iva Danchova, founder of Oat Avenue, said, "With matcha's popularity continuing to rise and oat-based products taking centre stage, we believe this flavour taps into both trends at just the right time. Matcha Granola Butter blends the earthy richness of matcha with the creamy, oat-based texture. It's nut-free, plant-based, and refined sugar-free — making it a unique, health-conscious alternative for modern consumers."

oatavenue.com

New special edition from Tracklements

Wiltshire-based producer Tracklements has released a new special edition product ideal for warm weather foods, only available while stocks last.

The new Pineapple & Chilli Relish is zesty, sweet and tangy with heat from chillies, ginger and mustard seed, and is delicious served with pork, fish and rice or alongside barbecued foods. Plus, it is suitable for vegans and those following gluten-free diets.



It is an update on Tracklements' Pineapple Achar, an incredibly popular Special Edition from 2021, following requests from retailers and consumers.

Guy Tullberg, managing director of Tracklements, said, "This is such a versatile wonder, at the moment it's giving mango chutney a run for its money in our house where we're devouring it with a prawn curry but as soon as the sun comes out I'm rolling out the barbecue to have it with pork ribs."

tracklements.co.uk



Biona launches chocolate-coated snacking range

Biona has announced the release of a three-strong selection of organic chocolate covered fruit and nut snacks.

Created to appeal to the growing number of shoppers searching for snacks that offer indulgence and flavour as well as premium quality, the new range consists of chocolate coated almonds, strawberries and cherries.

The almonds are oven-roasted before being sprinkled with sea salt, while the strawberries and cherries are freeze-dried to preserve their natural flavour, nutrients and colour, before being coated in Fairtrade-certified 62% dark chocolate which is also palm oil-free.

Carmen Ferguson, brand manager at Biona's parent company Windmill Organics, said, "At Biona our snacks category is certainly an area where we see plenty of potential for further growth, and we're delighted to bring to market these three new organic products that combine the nutritional power of nuts and fruit with the indulgence of high-quality dark chocolate. Not only are they delicious, but consumers will also like the fact they are packaged in paper, to meet the growing demand for more sustainable packaging solutions."

biona.co.uk

Pork scratching-flavoured crisps enter market

Crisp makers Made for Drink have partnered with pork scratching brand Mr Trotters to create pork scratching flavoured crisps.

The collaboration taps into the current trend of 'newstalgia', whereby classics are given a new lease of life, and the product

The new snack is the perfect pairing with a full-bodied real ale, white wine or crisp lager.

Dan Featherstone, founder of Made for Drink, said, "Naturally teaming up with slow-cooked snacking hero, Mr Trotter is too enticing an opportunity to swerve. We simply couldn't wait to add their unique seasoning to our glorious crisps. Something fun and tasty, for what can sometimes feel like a bit of a serious category."

madefordrink.com





Freja releases broths inspired by Asian cuisine

The clean-label broth brand has released Chicken Ramen and Beef Pho Instant Bone Broth as limited edition launches.

The new products contain authentic flavour and nutrition and provide the same convenience as a conventional stock cube, but contain no artificial additives or ultra-processed ingredients.



Chicken Ramen is a smooth, umami broth infused with miso, garlic and ginger for a Japanese-inspired dish, while Beef Pho is deep and aromatic with the authentically Vietnamese taste of star anise, cinammon and cloves.

Freja's award-winning range brings together slow-simmered bone broth with vegetables, herbs and spices, providing consumers with high levels of protein, collagen, and all nine essential amino acids.

They are made with only natural ingredients including grass-fed beef and free-range chicken, and are gluten and dairy-free.

Jess Leather, co-founder, said, "The stock and broth category is flooded with ultra-processed options that rely on artificial flavourings rather than real ingredients, and this is often worse when you get into the World Foods aisle. We wanted to change that and create a healthy, flavourful, store cupboard hero. Our Instant Bone Broths are made with real, slow-simmered bone broth, bringing a delicious, restaurant-quality taste without the additives - just great flavour and great nutrition in one easy and convenient step."

frejafoods.com

Nashi creates hangover prevention drink

A science-backed drink based on Korean pear juice has been created to support alcohol metabolism, and is now available for UK retailers to stock.



Nashi is designed to reduce the severity of hangovers and is inspired by a Korean tradition in which Korean pear juice is used as a hangover remedy, an ancient tip that has been verified by modern studies.

Made from 100% Korean pear juice, each can of Nashi provides the 220ml dose that has been proven to support the body's alcohol breakdown process.

The new product taps into the growing mindful drinking and wellness-driven alcohol alternatives market, and is to be consumed 20 minutes before drinking alcohol for optimum effect.

Taya Jackson, co-founder, said, "We created Nashi because we believe life is for living, whether that means hitting the gym, enjoying time with family, or simply getting through the workday without a pounding headache. We're not about encouraging excessive drinking – we're about making it easier to enjoy a balanced lifestyle so you can have the night before and the morning after."

nashipearjuice.com

Realfoods Organico makes wholesome addition to range

The wholefood supplier has welcomed a six-strong range of jarred beans and pulses to its selection.



Sourced from Italian family farms, the new products – Borlotti Beans, Chickpeas, Red Kidney Beans, White Cannellini Beans, Black Turtle Beans and Fine Peas – have all been grown using techniques which ensure high levels of fibre and that they hold their shape without becoming too starchy in texture.

Every batch of beans in the range has been hand sorted, soaked overnight and pressure cooked before being bathed in Sicilian sea salt.

Charles Redfern, founder of Organico, said, "As one of the tastiest, most sustainable food categories on the planet it was important that we lent our weight to the great bean and pulse debate by doing our bit to ensure they stay front-of-plate. Needless to say our 'as nature intended' beans and pulses represent the most 'planet positive' range you'll find on shelf, adhering to our uncompromising organic and environmental impact targets in terms of pesticides, climate and biodiversity."

organicorealfoods.com

Sorso releases timesaving meal solutions

Sorso's range of tomato and red pepper-based products has been designed to help consumers cut down on midweek prep by providing the same depth of flavour and nutritional benefits as cooking from scratch.

The range consists of sauces, concentrated pastes and gazpachos that contain no added sugars, preservatives or additives and contain premium vine-ripened tomatoes selected for their natural sweetness and vibrant flavour.

All natural and gluten-free, the products can form the base of many every day dishes.



Sandra, founder, said, "I was frankly tired of bland meals and an unhappy family, so I decided to try my hand at making the kind of tomato-based sauce I remembered having as a kid, transforming our dinner table to enjoy quality family time over a delicious and nutritious meal. I'm now on a mission to give busy families the same opportunity by bringing my sauces to everyone, to feed families around the UK."

sorsosauce.com

COTSWOLD FAYRE
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New Infused Olive Oils from Olives Et Al

Olives Et Al have launched a three-strong range of infused olive oils which have been infused and bottled by hand in Dorset.

Available in Chilli, Lemon and Basil variants, each item in the range is made with 100% extra virgin olive oil – making them entirely seed oil-free – and is perfect for dressing, drizzling, dipping and marinading.



Chilli Olive Oil is infused with a range of chillies for optimum flavour and balance, including Aleppo pepper for rich, earthy sweetness; Lemon Oil, infused with lemon oil and zest, provides a citrussy punch; and Basil Olive Oil is delicious served with tomatoes and pasta.

Lewis Slayden, head of business development, said, "As an ex-chef and avid barbecuer, I'm personally very excited to use these in marinades and dressings. The bright, bold design has real shelf presence and does justice to our food ethos of keeping things simple. With Olive Oil more popular than ever, it's a perfect addition to a summer range."

olivesetal.co.uk





FORDHALL FARM

A natural passion for doing things properly drives this award-winning business

Nestled in rural North Shropshire lies Fordhall Organic Farm, the UK's first community-owned farm that offers food lovers from near and far an opportunity to connect with the land which supplies a rich menu of food to relish.

Low impact organic farming has been the name of the game on the site for 70 years, and the land is shared by pasture-fed cattle, sheep and pigs as well as the local community; in 2006 the farm was saved from industrial development by siblings Ben and Charlotte Hollins and a community of 8,000 supporters, now formalised as a charitable community benefit society under the name Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI).

"In the space of three or four months they raised £800,000 in non-profit shares," begins James Martin, farm shop manager. Testament to the "wholesomeness" of the unique mission, this audience stretched across the UK and beyond to countries overseas; food lovers across the world were keen to get involved in an initiative that benefited both the land and its people.

Organic growth

From pioneering – but humble – beginnings (prior to the project the land had been organically farmed by Arthur Hollins, Ben and Charlotte's Dad, an approach that was far ahead of its time), the business has "come on leaps and bounds," says James. "Arthur was one of the first organic farmers in the country and we still follow a lot of the traditional farming techniques he used, but we've grown to incorporate a farm shop which champions produce from the farm and a catering business, headed up by Ben as tenant farmer of the charity initiative, which is run by Charlotte.

"The Community shareholders care about the land and our people," continues James. "And it helps that in many ways British consumers have come full circle in their appreciation of traditional farming techniques. Our customers engage wholeheartedly with what we do; they want to buy produce directly from the farmer, and while they're here they look around the farm and see the animals. It's all natural, and we're very honest with them."

Learning together

Education is key to the Fordhall Farm mission, and landlord, the FCLI, take this responsibility seriously. From hosting children from urban environments who have never visited a farm to bringing members of the local community who are looking for companionship together, everyone is welcome to experience the Fordhall Farm way of life. Whilst visitors are on the farm there are also a number of free walks available for the public to enjoy and a café.

Responsible farming

The team's passion for doing things properly is huge, starting with being Pasture For Life registered. "We're resolutely nose-to-tail," says James, "and we communicate this with our customers to explain why we don't have infinite numbers of popular cuts." Indeed, less well-known cuts of meat are an important part of Fordhall Farm's butchery offering in order to make full use of the animals farmed – and to treat them with the respect they are due.

Fordhall Farm Shop also have their own onsite bakery, preparing handmade sausage rolls, pork pies, family pies and pasties for customers and for their catering sister company who supply large-scale events across the country. Naturally these are made using their own meat from the farm and local suppliers. This means there is full traceability across every product they make, and it also helps ensure nothing is wasted from the butchery.

Beyond butchery, Fordhall Farm sells a variety of local and organic items. "Not everything in our range is organic, but if a product has been made locally we know that it's produced with as much care as we put into our range," says James. "Our cattle and sheep are certified Organic, however the abattoir we use isn't because that would mean our animals need to travel excessive distances. To avoid the stress on our animals we chose to use a local and trusted abattoir. The downside is that we can't get Organic certification for the beef and lamb products, but we'd rather support a local business and our animals, putting their welfare first".

Hard work, rewarded

The team's efforts were recognised at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards 2025, where they won the title of Best Online Business. "We're so proud to have won. We put a lot of time, money and energy into making our website represent what we do on the farm and we're delighted that it has paid off."

As well as being proud custodians of this national and highly recognised award, Fordhall Organic Farm relishes the role that it plays in its customers' lives; for example, shoppers proudly share photos of their culinary creations.

Run with care and compassion, Fordhall Organic Farm truly offers a taste of how things can be done for the better.

> "Our customers engage wholeheartedly with what we do; they want to buy produce directly from the farmer, and while they're here they look around the farm and see the animals. It's all very natural, and we're very honest with them."

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SELLING THE **SEASON**

Spring/summer cheeses deserve special treatment – here's how to do just that

While there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to seasonal cheeses, the options independent retailers stock in their counters can vary throughout the year. This has as much to do with the cheeses available at any given time as it does with the demands of the consumer, so the smart cheesemonger takes both aspects into account when choosing what to stock as the months roll on.

Come summer, as a rule, shoppers are after fresher cheeses to pair with lighter meals, but this isn't always a given, says Jen Grimstone-Jones of Pangbourne Cheese Shop/Cheese Etc. "We tend to stock a lot of softer cheeses in the spring and summer whereas autumn and winter sees more hearty cheeses in the counter. Although having said that we sell a lot of Raclette and Reblochon all year round and they are usually seen as winter cheeses!"

Soft goat's milk cheeses and soft cows milk cheeses – especially ones hailing from Europe – are winners at The Cheese Lady, as Svetlana Kukharchuk explains. "They do them so well, for example the French Loire Valley cheeses. All amazing! I also love Burrata in the summer when it's been made with fresh milk."

Seasonal variations

Of course, seasonality plays a part when it comes to the natural flavour of cheese too, as Jen explains. "Generally cheeses made in the spring/summer are made using milk from animals that are grazing outdoors whereas winter cheeses are made using milk from animals which are being fed on winter feed. This means that summer cheeses are often more herbaceous. When thinking of which cheeses to eat you have to therefore consider when the cheese was made and how long it is aged for. Montgomery Cheddar for example is 12-14 months old and so cheeses consumed in the summer were made the summer before and so the cows are out in the pastures enjoying the fresh air."

The availability of some cheeses gets a summer boost, Jen continues. "Goats and sheep milk cheeses are generally more available in the summer as the animals tend to reproduce in the spring and so their milk is more available for cheesemaking. As these cheeses are often only a few days or weeks old, they are best enjoyed in the summer."

Avoiding wastage

As a rule, soft, fresh cheeses can be a little more demanding when it comes to their care, but the well-known wisdom of wrapping them well and bringing up to room temperature still rings true. "We sell the softer cheeses just as they ripen up so they're perfect for eating, and we advise our customers to buy them as near to when they want to eat them as possible," says Jen. "Summer cheeses should be looked after the same as all cheeses – keep them wrapped up well and in the fridge. If it's particularly warm they don't take as long to come up room temperature for eating so take them out of the fridge half an hour before serving."

Svetlana also shares her tricks of the trade with customers. "I recommend that people enjoy them as soon as possible, and that they don't buy more than they need. There are lots of different ways fresh cheeses can be enjoyed, so if a customer enjoyed one on a cheeseboard the next day they could try it in a salad or a range of other dishes."

With fresher cheese spoiling quicker than older options, wastage could easily be a problem – so smart stocking is the way forward. "We actually have almost no cheese wastage in the shop. We are very lucky in that we have high footfall all year round and we get a mix of people – some want cheese that is perfect for that day, others want it to be ready for a few days' time. We get cheese delivered to us four days a week so we can replenish stocks very quickly. We have blackboards in the shop that highlight cheeses which are perfect for eating."

Svetlana and her team are also proactive about getting in the right quantity of seasonal cheeses to avoid wastage. "We don't order too much, especially when it comes to soft cheese. We just order as much as we need, and because we get orders every week from multiple suppliers, that's generally okay.

The Cheese Lady team have found that by implementing a system whereby all highly perishable cheeses are clearly dated and rolled through in order of freshness, wastage can be more or less avoided.

Upselling opportunities

A great pairing can make a cheese sing, and Jen has a few go-to options – with seasonality at their heart. "It is always important to think about what you are serving with your cheese e.g. what's in season at the moment. Fresh figs always work well with cheese and these are generally available in the summer. I'm a big goats cheese fan and absolutely love them with fresh cherries whereas my partner loves rhubarb with cheese. Asparagus baked with Mozzarella is a heavenly combo! Drinks-wise I would go for a lighter wine such as a Rosé or a dry Riesling with a softer cheese and then a dry cider with the harder varieties."

> "It is always important to think about what you are serving with your cheese e.g. what's in season at the moment"

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Big move for goats' cheese producer

Artisan goats' cheese maker Norton & Yarrow is back in production following a five-month hiatus, having moved the business from Oxfordshire to Carmarthenshire.

Serendipitously, the move has taken co-owner Rachel Yarrow back to the 120-acre farm her parents lived on in the 1970s, with two key reasons for relocating.

"We were tenants in Oxfordshire where we started up," explained Rachel, "and we'd outgrown that tenancy. We wanted our own farm so that we could carry on expanding the business, developing the grading side of it particularly and pasture goat dairying, which is quite unusual in this country. It's something I've got quite passionate about."

Additionally, Rachel says they'll now be able to produce Norton & Yarrow cheeses with 100% milk from their own herd, rather than relying on supplementing from other farms.

It was quite a challenge moving 241 goats across the country, but they're now happily installed in their new home, and the first batches of cheese (including Sinodun Hill and Brightwell Ash) have already gone out to the cheesemakers' regular customers ahead of 'peak milking' time in the middle of July – all now presented with new labelling, complete with both their original and Welsh names.

Excitingly for goats' cheese lovers, Rachel added that she and Fraser are using the facilities at Food Centre Wales to work on a product with a longer maturing period, inspired by a fact-finding trip to France. "We visited a lot of French cheesemakers with a similar sized herd to us. They'll make a Tomme, for example when they have their summer milk flush, and mature it over a few months to stretch out the making season." Watch this space, she said.

Scottish cheesemaker diversifies

Errington Cheese, maker of award-winning Lanark Blue and Corra Linn, has officially opened the next phase of its business – Errington's Barn & Kitchen.

Selina Cairns, whose father founded the cheesemaking business four decades ago, said she thinks it's now more important than ever for cheese producers to secure their futures by diversifying.

"It's something more farmers will have to do," she explains of the decision. "And people want to see the produce, to know what they're buying and where it comes from. This gives them the opportunity to speak to us directly."

After Covid, when many of the restaurants and hotels Errington Cheese supplied closed, Selina said the team quickly realised they needed to make a bold move as their key customer base disappeared. It's taken a while to move all the pieces into place, but they're looking forward to being part of the UK's burgeoning agritourism sector.

"We have a café/restaurant, based on the produce from our farm, so cheese primarily," Selina explained. "We also have meat – we feed our pigs whey (the byproduct from our cheese) so we've got our own bacon and sausages; it's a seasonal, daily changing menu."

Visitors can also enjoy farm walks, cheese tastings and farm to fork experiences.



Godminster unveils two new cheeses

Operating in a climate where organic milk supply is limited, Godminster has decided to branch out beyond its much-loved waxed organic range, adding two new artisan non-organic pre-packed cheeses to its stable.

"We see times are challenging for people," said commercial and operations director Jessica Kimber-Holloway, "so we wanted to introduce a range of slightly more affordable cheeses that are more of an everyday purchase than a treat. We wanted something that has that Godminster quality and trust behind it, with our quirky touch – so the names are quite fun – but at prices that are slightly more approachable."

There's a gap in the market, Jessica thinks, between 'bog standard' Cheddar, and the kind of premium products Godminster is known for. "If you're in a farm shop, what do you choose if you want something a bit different, but can't quite afford a premium waxed cheese? What we've created are elevated products that form the basis of a step in the right direction of trying more interesting Cheddars. And the packaging is bright and quite enticing."

Middlewick Witch is a mature Cheddar, while Scarlet Crumb is the brand's new Red Leicester. Both tap into Godminster's signature use of local folklore and mythology, with the characters based on hunky punks (a type of gargoyle). "One of the best examples of them in the UK can be found on our local church in Castle Carey," Jessica explained.

The cheeses are available in 200g pre-packed portions, ideal for your grab and go selection, with the maker already experiencing a high level of interest.

Burford named Supreme Champion at British & Irish Cheese Awards 2025



A washed-rind, Alpine-style cheese from Gloucestershire has been named Supreme Champion at the British & Irish Cheese Awards 2025.

Produced at Manor Farm in the Cotswolds by King Stone Dairy – a small-scale, regenerative operation – Burford was originally conceived by farmhouse cheesemaker David Jowett as a way to capture the sweet complexity of the farm's summer pastures. It's now being made year-round to reflect the seasonality of the farm's single herd organic cow's milk, with tasting notes including charcuterie, hazelnut and hints of tropical fruit.

David said, "We are delighted to hear that Burford has been awarded the title of Supreme Champion at this year's British & Irish Cheese Awards! Burford is one of our newer cheeses, only really being in production over the past year or so, so we are especially proud to see the cheese doing so well so soon. I feel that Burford is the combined result of the brilliant milk production by Seb and his team here at Manor Farm, the careful and precise cheesemaking techniques we carry out in our cheese production, and skilled affinage practices carried out in our maturing rooms. The award is a tribute to the quality of farming and craftsmanship of our teams."



Authentic Italian sandwich cheese launched by DalterFood Group

DalterFood Group – a key Italian player in the national and international dairy sector – is now offering a range of cheese products ideal for deli counters, sandwich bars and foodservice operators.

Available sliced, flaked and in shavings, the group's 100% Italian aged Spinoro stands out for its golden hue and enveloping aroma, with a crisp yet delicate flavour that makes it perfect for blending with other ingredients. Spinoro is made exclusively using Italian milk and is suitable for vegetarians.

Thanks to its consultative approach and ongoing dialogue with clients, DalterFood Group is also able to develop tailor-made solutions with its Spinoro. With a flexible structure and a strong commitment to delivering high-quality cheeses, the group is the ideal partner for food companies that want to respond to market trends with products offering a truly authentic Italian taste experience.

Burt's Cheese launches new 'Cheshire-style' blue



Claire Burt, founder of Burt's Cheeses, is celebrating her newest creation being named Best New Cheese at the British & Irish Cheese Awards.

Having started out in 2009, near Knutsford, Claire moved her operation to Bidlea Dairy two years ago, allowing her to take advantage of bigger facilities and expand the business, while using milk direct from their herd.

Bidlea Blue is Claire's homage to the dairy. "I've always wanted to play around with a Cheshire style cheese," she explained, talking of the beginnings of this variety, which is based on a Cheshire recipe, using a different starter, and following the process of draining the whey, allowing the PH to drop, salting and stacking rather than pressing.

Once formed, the cheeses are pierced to develop their blue veining, and wrapped in vine leaves soaked in local Gwatkin Cider – a method Claire put into practice last year, winning the Blue class of the Affineur of the Year competition, using a Stilton.

Claire says she loves the extra layer of texture and deep flavour the soaked leaves bring to Bidlea Blue. "We realised it helps to protect the rind, but also it makes the rind stickier and fudgier. You still do get that Cheshire sharpness and a bit more acidity from the paste, and it has a harder texture and stronger blue flavour than Burt's. It's more up front and spicy. I've really enjoyed developing it!"

Try Rowcliffe's new truckle range

Specialist cheese and deli wholesaler, Rowcliffe, has recently unveiled the latest offering from its own Rolling Cheese Co brand – waxed truckles.

The collection of 200g cheeses has been meticulously chosen to deliver an exquisite tasting experience, beginning with a base of 18-month matured Cheddar, chosen for its sweet, sharp, lingering flavour. This is blended with a diverse selection of additions to craft a truckle of every palate, including Victorious Vintage (also available as a 2kg cutting cheese), Smoked Splendour (gently smoked over oak), Rocking the Herbs (infused with herbs and mild spices), Truly Truffle (adorned with natural black truffle), Lady in Red (vintage Red Leicester), and Ka Pow Chilli (Red Leicester with cayenne, sweet bell pepper, jalapenos and herbs).

Rowcliffe marketing manager, Helen Hunt, said the team is "thrilled" with the new additions. "We have dressed a cow for each product, who embodies the essence of its flavour," she added. The range is available now.



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"Let's celebrate well-made additive cheese"



JAMES GRANT
NO2 POUND STREET

I have generally taken a swerve when it comes to additive cheese. This last month I have been sampling additive cheese made with passion, natural ingredients and the consumers in mind. Quality is key as well as the nutritional content.

There are so many different additive cheeses available but mostly these are highly processed with e numbers, dehydrated flavours and oils added. They are often produced by extrusion that removes the air from the paste and giving the so-called cheese a pudgy consistency. The paste comes out of the extruder under high pressure and is cut off in discs. There is no waste with this process. The disks are then dipped in wax and labelled accordingly.

A lot of these waxed and flavoured Cheddar styles use a starter culture used for sweeter Alpine-style cheeses. That culture is Lactobacillus Helveticas, and it gives a big up front sweet and nutty flavour. This culture is naturally used to make Gruyere and Emmentaler. Sadly, these cheap waxed alternative cheeses have a highly processed paste with e numbers, additives, adjunct culture (falsely enhancing flavour) and unnatural colouring. Not really the best cheese for nutritional needs. They are covered in brightly coloured wax, catchy names and have eye catching labels. Sadly, the uneducated consumer buys them without understanding how cheaply they are being made and how poor the nutritional content when compared to other natural additive cheeses.

I visited IFE (International Food & Drink Expo) at Excel in March. I was pleased to taste some outstanding cheese with natural flavours. I visited the cheesemaker Vega Mancha and sampled their fabulous, flavoured range on cheese. I was not at all disappointed. First taste was cured sheep cheese covered with honey and oregano, and it was delicious. The oregano was picked locally and the honey from local hives. What more could I ask for than a beautiful and well-balanced cheese complimented with a delicious herbaceous sweetness? Then I tried a cured extra spicy sheep cheese, five to six months aged. It was immense – the flavour of the cheese was indeed sheepy with a glorious heat and colour from the local cayenne pepper. These Spanish examples were exemplary and something that perhaps British cheesemakers may want to sample for good ideas.

In the UK there is some movement in flavoured cheesemaking, and I was thrilled to see The Cornish Cheese Co having some fun experimenting. I tried an immense Brie that had been cut horizontally and sandwiched with a delicious filler of mascarpone and natural limoncello. There was also a Brie with wild garlic and mascarpone as well as cranberry and apricot and ginger. These cheeses were all handmade and what's more made to order! Do check out what Philip and The Cornish Cheese Co are doing when it comes to cheesemaking as well as their sustainable and ethical mission.

Flavours mask any of the actual cheese flavour in large industrially produced waxed cheese. These cheeses are not examples of real cheesemaking nor do they hold any decent nutritional benefits. Sadly, theses industrially produced cheeses are about how much money can be made. What is the cost to society, surely, we should consider our local agrarian cheesemakers and stop buying from unscrupulous industrial producers with only money in mind. Our land, animals, people and communities deserve healthy sustainable cheese. I was so pleased to see the innovation in British cheesemaking and how flavour enhanced can be good when done properly. What is important, when done properly, is that flavour can work in cheese as a perfect pairing in one. It can be made ethically and sustainably. It may take longer and is harder to produce but it is real with natural unadulterated or overworked flavour.

Many of our Continental friends have used flavours properly for centuries. Think about French Brie and truffle, Spanish and Italian herb cheeses and Dutch caraway seeded cheese. Do shop around for British alternative naturally flavoured cheeses. When you realise how the wax is being pulled over your eyes with these British so-called artisan truckles you will be in a more healthy, ethical and sustainable place.

> "I was so pleased to see the innovation in British cheesemaking and how flavour enhanced can be good when done properly"

THE SLICE IS RIGHT

Excellent charcuterie is a must for any deli counter. But which varieties are striking a chord with consumers? We ask the experts



COMMENTATORS



JAMES SMART
THE REAL CURE



DYLAN FOURIE
MACKNADE



JESUS LLAMAZARES
LOS ORIGENES

When it comes to solving the age-old question, 'what's for dinner?', the deli counter can, with certainty, come to the rescue.

In fact, from hunky chunks of artisan cheese, to freshly prepared salad pots and golden sausage rolls, there's no occasion the deli can't cater to. Picnics in a hurry, say. Or sides for the barbecue.

Where the deli really comes into its own is in the warmer months, when everyone's bursting to get outside for a spot of al fresco eating. And it's the grazing board or charcuterie platter that continues to capture the imagination of food lovers across the world.

A spread of charcuterie can be as easy or ostentatious as you like. A few slices of silky Parma ham draped lazily over ripe juicy slivers of melon is simplicity itself. Or you could (as many are) go to town, creating a dizzyingly complex display of salami roses, and fruit rainbows to wow guests.

There is a clincher, though. If you want to make an impression, those cured meats – the centrepieces, if you will – need to be of the best quality. And this is where speciality retail comes in.

What's trending on the grazing board?

The art of salting and curing is centuries old but continually innovating as consumer tastes change.

An important, and underestimated part, of the recent British charcuterie boom is snacking salamis, which fit in perfectly with growing consumer preference for high-protein, meaty treats.

James Smart, founder of The Real Cure, produces Venison Beer Sticks and Beef Snacking Salami alongside his range of British charcuterie – all made with sustainable, ethically sourced meat. These products are taking off 'big time', he says.

"We tested the water a number of years ago with our Wild Venison Beer Sticks smoked over oak. They were incredibly popular, so we decided to do a 100% beef version, and we've just brought in a new black truffle pork snacking salami. They're all ambient, and we're finding they're some of the most popular things we make now."

There's a big consumer base for these products, James adds. "They sell really well and re-order rates are really high. When you think that they're only £5 for a pack of five, that's an easy sell to the consumer."



Could 2025 also be the year of terrines and rillettes? Dylan Fourie, deli manager at Macknade, certainly thinks so. Considered a bit of an underdog in most counters, these French style offerings seem to be experiencing a renaissance, particularly amongst younger shoppers keen to widen their palates and experiment further on their charcuterie boards.

"Customers are trying these things on holiday and coming in to buy them from us," Dylan says, adding that they have a small line of products including pork rillettes, duck rillettes and a couple of pâtés, selling an incredible 4-6kg of rillettes every couple of days.

"The key thing with pâtés is to get people to taste them with the things they go best with – don't just give them a bit on a spoon. Show them options!

"Put pâtés or rillettes with a bit of crusty bread, or a cornichon to show how to eat the product. That tasting element is what really sells these things."

Sticking to a few staples in this category will stand you in good stead, Dylan says. "We like to push the boundaries on the deli and to explore new things, but traditional recipes and styles have their place because they work."

The Italian essentials

Every counter should include a flavour of Italy, because it's what customers know and expect, Dylan continues.

"The Italians have a very authentic and simple way of curing meat. You know what you're getting, and it's preservative-free to a great extent," Dylan says. "That's why we like it so much."

With such a wide range of producers to choose from, how do you know what you're buying is the good stuff? There are a few things to consider. Parma ham, Dylan says, for example, must be San Daniele, and his preference is 18 to 24-months. "We find that's an exceptional product with a good balance of flavours. It's not overly salty or sweet and displays beautifully as well."



The quintessential, must-have Italian salamis, he continues, are Napoli and Milano – ideally in natural casings. You could have 40 salamis in the counter, Dylan adds, but these two are the ones customers are naturally drawn to.

"Another great one is finocchiona with fennel. It looks beautiful on the counter and time and time again people come back to try 'the fennel one' – it's not an easy one to say. Then you've got Milano (which is quite simple), Napoli (with hints of pepper) and a fennel salami – three great all-rounders."

A taste of France

We've already established that pâtés and rillettes (largely from France) are striking a chord with customers, but what else does the French larder bring to the table? The answer is plenty, says a spokesperson for FICT (French Charcuterie and Deli Companies).

"Preserving, fermenting and curing are such buzzwords," says FICT. "We know from our research that lots of people are enjoying charcuterie boards and sharing boards over a glass of wine."

FICT's raison d'etre is to put the best of the best French charcuterie front and centre of those moments. "A lot of skill and very traditional processes go into French charcuterie. And many products have PGI and PDO labelling – we know that's important for traders and customers," FICT continues.

French delicacies FICT thinks British speciality shops should be stocking include dry-cured ham and salamis, sausages (including andouille, andouillette, boudin blanc and boudin noir), rillettes and pâtés.

Saucisson is a key anchor point in any deli stocking French charcuterie, FICT says. "It's the product people know and feel comfortable with. Buying an excellent saucisson will give them confidence to try other things."

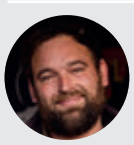
Consumers here are ready though, they add, for something new to the market. "To sell these products, retailers need to lean into the traditions behind them. Tradition is what customers value and alongside labels such as PGI or Label Rouge, is an important factor in their purchasing decisions."

More than chorizo

Just as Spanish cheese is often shoehorned to mean Manchego, few consumers know more about Spanish charcuterie than the Serrano ham or chorizo they find in their local supermarket. And they're missing a trick, says Jesus Llamazares, founder of specialist Spanish deli, Los OrigenES.

The king of Spanish charcuterie has to be Jamon Iberico – a very special product indeed. The process to make Iberico ham has been trialled in the UK, but it's not just the acorns or the grazing land or the climate that makes this charcuterie so revered around the world – it's the place

RETAILER TIPS



Dylan Fourie, deli manager at Macknade, shares his advice for displaying and serving charcuterie

- Think volume, volume, volume. You want the counter to look abundant without being too messy. If you can get in three legs of ham at a time, do it. A full counter looks phenomenal
- Keep the front end of each product neat and tidy throughout the day. Take each ham out and slice from the front if you start to see a dull colour
- Display your ham fat side down – when its trimmed sometimes it doesn't look so nice. And stagger them in the counter, using wooden supports to raise them up to create nice tiers
- Slicing in advance, we find, doesn't work at all. Slicing to order means the meat is kept in its best condition up to the last minute
- Remove the outer casing when slicing salami – nobody wants that stuck in their teeth!
- Use sheet layering to separate sliced meats. At the moment we're trialling paper to see how it works and it's going well
- Hang your salamis if you can. They all come with a string and you simply need to use banana hooks to display them. Visually it's very impactful
- Don't throw away the bones. When we get close to the knuckle or when we have uneven pieces, we cut them up into small portions and put them on the counter at 50% off. People use them to make stocks and stews. We do the same for the ends of salamis. It ensures everything gets used



itself. Even the Southwestern Coastal breeze plays a part in its beauty.

The ham passes through a number of chambers, says Jesus, each for a different length of time and at a different humidity, until it reaches its final destination – a drying room with open windows, where it will rest for 3.5-4.5 years, kissed by the warm Spanish air.

It really is a labour of love. One that begins with the pigs themselves. "They grow free-range, not in farms," says Jesus. "So they have access to acres and acres of land. And another important thing, that not even some people in Spain know properly, is the breed of pig. The best Iberico ham is 100% acorn fed (Iberico de Bellotta). That means the mother and father are Iberian breed with full traceability. If it's 50%, the mother is Iberian breed, and the father is Duroc and acorn fed."

There are four protected regions in Spain for the production of Jamon Iberico – Pedroches and Jabulgo being the best known, with bigger marketing budgets behind them.

Jesus' favourite is from the Extremadura region. "For me, it strikes the right balance between the North and the South and I know I am paying for the product, not the marketing!"

Beyond Jamon Iberico, Jesus says retailers should pay more attention when buying chorizo. "Most chorizo in the UK is a cheap chorizo," he explains, saying the real deal should also be made using meat from the Iberian pig.

'Real' chorizo has a different flavour entirely. "It's never hot," he continues. "If you have chorizo that is hot, it is not Iberico." What you should find, in the genuine article, is a mixture of finely cut fat and meat, which is cured for a short amount of time with paprika and perhaps a few other spices. It should not, Jesus adds, taste overly salty. "Salt masks a good product. It should be about enjoying the special taste of the meat and the paprika."

The most important thing when selling any charcuterie, Jesus says, is reminding customers to bring it out of the fridge 45 minutes to an hour before serving to allow all of its flavours to come alive. Your tasting samples on the counter should get the same treatment.

STOCK CHECK

Speciality Food Magazine • 2025



MARSH PIG NDUJA SALAMI

Handmade fiery soft, spreadable salami, made with 100% free-range East Anglian pork. Free from gluten, wheat and lactose.

marshpig.co.uk



SERIOUS PIG SNACKALAMI – CLASSIC

The best British pork from Kent transformed into snackable salami sticks, styled to a French recipe and flavoured with garlic and pepper. High in protein, low carb and gluten-free.

seriouspig.co.uk



SUNDAY CHARCUTERIE COPPA

The very finest rare breed, high welfare pork, cured and seasoned in small batches to a melt-in-the-mouth finish.

sundaycharcuterie.co.uk



LECALE HARVEST PORK RILLETTES

Chef-made in small batches in Northern Ireland, using the best quality pork. This tasty product is ambient, with a 12 month shelf life.

lecaleharvest.co.uk





Stock up for summer with our pick of the best al fresco eats of 2025

1 LUCY'S DRESSINGS BEARNAISE SAUCE

Hosting a dinner party or just treating yourself, this Béarnaise sauce adds a restaurant-quality touch to grilled or pan-seared fillet or ribeye steak. This rich and creamy sauce from Cotswold Gold is made with Cotswold Gold rapeseed oil and enriched with Cotswold butter can also be enjoyed with salmon or asparagus. It's brightened with acidity from Dijon mustard, white wine vinegar and lemon.

lucysdressings.co.uk

2 WBC WICKER HAMPERS

The essence of corporate gifting is about creating standout unboxing experiences that seamlessly combine generosity with a picture-perfect aesthetic. If you're looking for the ultimate summer vibe, WBC's collection of handcrafted wicker hampers is a cut above the rest. Choose from an extensive selection of colours and sizes – and complete the look with a customised embroidered cotton liner.

wbc.co.uk

3 CLAWSON FARMS WAX TRUCKLES

Clawson Farms' deliciously characterful truckles is a flavour-packed range of six cheeses each made from premium ingredients and represented by a unique personality. They are perfect for barbecues, picnics or Father's Day gifts.

clawsonfarms.co.uk



4 DRIVERS PICKLES
DELI RANGE

Elevate your picnic with these delicious savoury offerings from Drivers Pickles. Producing premium quality pickles, relishes and chutneys since 1906, the 5th generation of the Driver family know a thing or two about pickling perfection. Choose from any of the 22 products in the Deli range to take your outdoor dining offering to the next level.
pickle-lovers.co.uk

5 FAIRFIELDS FARM
CRISPS

Fairfields Farm produces delicious gluten-free and vegan, homegrown and handcooked crisps at their independent farm. Using regenerative farming and renewable energy, the brand puts sustainability first. Available in single serve and sharing, their award-winning crisp range includes Cheese and Onion flavour and Sweet Chilli. Plus, a new limited-edition Chorizo and Red Wine flavour has just joined their lineup!
fairfieldsfarmcrisps.co.uk

6 OLIVES ET AL
FLAVOURED OLIVE OILS

Perfect for drizzling over salads and a superb base for marinades, these Basil, Chilli and Lemon-infused Olive Oils are incredibly versatile. Made in Dorset with 100% extra virgin olive oil and ideal for those looking to avoid seed oils, they are flavour-packed store cupboard staples.
shopolives.co.uk

7 COTSWOLD GOLD
BURGER SAUCE

Summer is on its way and that means so is BBQ season. Cotswold's Gold's new Burger Sauce will elevate any burger to another level. This smoky and piquant sauce is made with Cotswold Gold Extra Virgin cold-pressed rapeseed oil slowly smoked over beech for five days. It is balanced with sweetness from roasted red peppers and tomatoes. Also available from Artisan Food Club & Cotswold Fayre.
cotswoldgold.co.uk



We're officially in the 'what's hot and what's not' era, and the food and drink sector is being shaped by consumers like never before. Social media is a key force in 2025, taking the place of 'The Delia Effect' – whereby Delia Smith would use an ingredient on an episode of her television show, and the next day sales of it would be through the roof – but it comes with pitfalls.

It can seem as though some trends disappear like a puff of smoke almost as soon as they appear, while others stand the test of time... but for different reasons. The Dubai chocolate trend is one case in point. Originating from TikTok, it's current ubiquity is largely down to hyper visibility across social media platforms, leading an increasing number of brands to create their own take on the viral product.

Meanwhile, the concept of 'health is wealth' may well have begun on social media, but this 'trend' has evolved into a movement that has shaped the eating habits of millions of Brits as well as the food and drink sector that serve them.

Ultimately, there's only one smart way to approach trends: to consider your audience and what they want to buy. If you can create a story around a current trend that is relevant to your business, go all out, but chasing after ephemeral trends could well turn out to be a fool's errand – and one that keeps you unsustainably busy, at that.

Read on for insider info around the trends we believe are here to stay – and that *Speciality Food* readers are in prime position to capitalise on.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR



TRENDSETTERS 2025

INDUSTRY INTEL ● MARKET STATS ● PRODUCTS TO STOCK

WHAT'S **INSIDE**:

23 Nuts about Nuts
Why retailers should refresh their nut range – and what to stock

34 Appetite for Better
A tasty blend of tradition and innovation is feeding the snack market in 2025

26 Best Dressed
The market for oils, vinegars and dressings is changing... here's how and why

28 Summer Sips
These are the key trends quenching shoppers' thirsts this year

30 Southern Europe
Brits are hungry for sunshine via the cuisines of Southern Europe

32 Better For You
The health-driven products worth stocking now

33 Trend Watch
Exploring the rise of fermented food and drink

34 Condiments
UK consumers are hankering for flavour and versatility

36 A Growing Opportunity
Why smart retailers are opting to cater for pets

37 Tradition
Nostalgia sells in 2025 – here are the products to have on your shelves



Scott Dixon, MD of food innovation company The Flava People, believes that the opportunities provided by trends can be harnessed with smart storytelling

Retailers can harness food trends and brand partnerships by staying agile and culturally in tune while maintaining alignment with their core values. Acting quickly to launch trend-driven products (especially limited-time offers) can capture consumer interest, but success depends on thoughtful planning and execution. Collaborating with brands that resonate with the target audience adds credibility and emotional appeal, whilst sometimes resonating with key occasions that have strong affinity with these brands (e.g. Guinness & Six Nations/ Baileys & Christmastime/Pinch of Nom and January health-kicks, etc). Trends also offer a low-risk way to test new ideas; successful limited editions can be scaled into permanent offerings, while providing real-time insight into consumer behaviour.

Retailers should ensure trend-led products are visually appealing and digital-friendly to maximize shareability on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. In support of brand partnerships, collaborations should be supported by influencer marketing and user-generated content to increase reach. The most effective trend-based strategies connect short-term excitement with longer-term consumer movements – such as linking a viral plant-based product to wider sustainability efforts or integrating nostalgic flavours into broader heritage-themed campaigns. Offering exclusive access to trend-driven products through loyalty programs or apps also builds brand engagement, creates a sense of community, and encourages repeat visits. Ultimately, by balancing the buzz of the moment with meaningful, value-driven storytelling, retailers can use trends and partnerships to remain relevant, drive growth, and deepen customer loyalty.



Ben Alalouff, Chief Strategy Officer for Live & Breathe says that *Speciality Food* readers should think carefully before adopting trends in their store

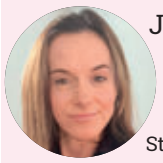
Independent retailers should only evolve their offering by selectively embracing trends, guided by genuine consumer insights rather than fleeting hype.

Reacting to every passing fad dilutes brand distinctiveness, but ignoring trends altogether can render retailers disconnected from consumer expectations and market realities.

They should, like a living and breathing organism, observe, learn and nurture continuously, consuming and emitting in a way that benefits their life-force – in this case – their consumers.

Identifying those useful trends involves discerning whether they represent substantial shifts in their consumers' behaviours or values rather than short-lived novelty.

Hopping on the latest trends isn't a strategy, but hopping on trends that are hyper relevant to your consumer and their sub-cultures is and will pay the commerce dividends."



Jess Kaye, business director for Chilli (part of IMA), says that it's important for retailers to keep up on the trend pulse

Strategically, trend watching can help identify emerging opportunities and threats, particularly on a macro level. This will help expand brand strategies and ensure your business stays in touch, relevant and responds to changing consumer priorities.

At a tactical level (activations, promotions), micro and local trends can provide inspiration that will fuel growth and provide stimulus to help understand current challenges from your customers' perspective.

Not catering to trends or ignoring how they are shaping the world around you risks your business feeling dated. At worst, you could alienate or insult your customers, so whilst you may decide NOT to act on a trend, an awareness of it means you are ready to act, if necessary, for either an opportunity, or to stave off a threat.

Fads tend to be limited to very specific product categories, whereas trends cross category and country boundaries and evolve. Fads are linked to short term movements and rarely involve significant changes to consumer lifestyles. The key thing to remember is that fads don't last. That doesn't mean you should ignore them! Fads can help freshen up a brand with some seasonal interest as they peak, but ONLY if investment is low and implementation fast. If you are too slow to act on a fad you will certainly miss the boat.

Unsurprisingly, AI continues to be a key trend, particularly for personalisation, and there has also been a recent rise in experience retail – giving shoppers opportunity to immerse themselves in the features and benefits of the offer.

> "Ultimately, there's only one smart way to approach trends: to consider your audience and what they want to buy. If you can create a story around a current trend that is relevant to your business, go all out, but chasing after ephemeral trends could well turn out to be a fool's errand, and one that keeps you unsustainably busy at that"
>
> HOLLY SHACKLETON, SPECIALITY FOOD



NUTS ABOUT NUTS

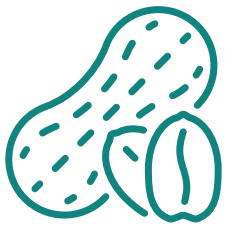
Rich in health benefits, flavour and versatility – no wonder nuts are trending in 2025

Nuts are big news in 2025. While just a few years ago the market was focused in on snacking – with salted or dry roasted peanuts dominating proceedings – these days the options are far more varied (and delicious).

Consumers can now uncover a wealth of nut snacks whatever their dietary preferences, whether they're keen on their inherent health benefits or seeking indulgence. Nuts can be coated in fine quality chocolate or presented as part of a heart-healthy snack mix; the choices are endless.

There's a whole host of other options on the market, too, from plant-based milk alternatives to Asian-inspired condiments and sauces, and nut and seed-heavy granolas and muesli, meaning that every meal of the day provides opportunities to go nuts.

Almonds, cashews, hazelnuts and pistachios are proven strong sellers, but keep an eye out for lesser-known options to satisfy your shoppers' taste for new.



"[The nut] trend is driven by the increasing health consciousness among consumers, as well as the rise in veganism and vegetarianism. As a result, there is a growing market for innovative and sustainable nut-based products, such as nut milks, butters, and snacks"

SOURCE: STATISTA



A TASTE FOR **PISTACHIO**

Nuts also have the ability to go viral; Dubai chocolate being a prime example. A chocolate bar filled with pistachio creme and crispy knafeh, created by Fix Dessert Chocolatier became a worldwide sensation in 2024 and spawned all manner of iterations – including in the speciality food market.

Dubai chocolate hasn't only inspired chocolatiers and mainstream retailers including Marks & Spencer to create their own version of the treat; pistachio has become a trending flavour across the board – from bakery products to hot drinks, as well as pizza toppings and in the form of pistachio pesto – and this trend is set to stay for months to come, as the season for pistachio ice cream and pistachio topped Burrata beckons.



STOCK CHECK

2025 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



OLIVES ET AL TRUFFLE SALTED ROASTED NUTS

Luxurious kiln roasted peanuts, cashews and almonds flavoured with truffle salt.

olivesetal.co.uk



PROPER NUTTY SMUNCHY PEANUT BUTTER

A uniquely textured nut butter containing only 99.5% peanuts and 0.5% salt. Deliciously versatile.

propernutty.co.uk



RAISE SNACKS RASPBERRY

Delicious clusters of nuts and seeds with fruity raspberry flavour. High in fibre and protein, and gluten-free.

raisesnacks.co.uk



BUTTER BIKE CINNAMON RAISIN PEANUT BUTTER

Plump, juicy raisins and toasty warm cinnamon lace a rugged peanut butter for a naturally sweet and moreish spread.

butterbike.co.uk



Truffle & Percorino Roasted Nut Mix

FOREST FEAST

Truffle & Pecorino Roasted Nut Mix from Forest Feast is a new gourmet snack blend featuring slow-roasted peanuts, cashews, almonds, pecans, and macadamias, seasoned with zesty Italian Pecorino cheese and enriched with the earthy flavour of black truffle. This innovative offering caters to the growing market for premium, high-quality snacks, providing a standout option in the snacking category.

forestfeast.com

Cocktail Hour Nuts

CAMBROOK

Cocktail Hour Nuts 140g is a nut mix to get you in the party mood with its combination of chilli cashews and peanuts, hickory smoke seasoned almonds, and caramelised sesame hazelnuts, as served in some of London's most famous cocktail bars. This mix is one of Cambrook's specialities with their know how in the art of baking, seasoning and caramelising the best grades of nuts. A unique and irresistible sweet and salty combination perfect for the Cocktail Hour or indeed any hour!

cambrookfoods.co.uk



AN APPETITE FOR BETTER

The UK snack market offers a heady mix of tradition and innovation, and fine food retailers are in prime position to benefit



COMMENTATORS



NATASHA JONES
FAIRFIELDS



SAS HORSCROFT
BURTS SNACKS



SOPHIE HARVEY
SOFFLE'S



MARK GREEN
TWO FARMERS

As Brits are a nation of snackers, and the great news is that the UK snack market is more than ready to deliver. Whether your customers are hankering for indulgence in front of the telly or a health boost on-the-go, there's plenty of options for you to choose from to ensure their cravings are satisfied.

This opportunity is ideal for Speciality Food readers as, according to Mintel, 55% of UK shoppers believe that premium snacks are worth paying more for, and 69% thinking that they're more of a treat than conventional snacks.

Of course, format is just as important as flavour; while single serving snacks are ideal for on-the-go, sharing packs merchandised well – perhaps alongside dips, antipasti and other snacking options – could inspire a snack-fuelled gathering of family and friends.

"Format is important to shoppers, who want the ability to get sharing packs and impulse packs, so it's important for brands to cater for both markets wherever it makes sense, and important for retailers to understand the kinds of consumption occasions that these different formats fit," says Natasha Jones of Fairfields.

The flavour outlook

Meanwhile, familiar flavours sell say Mintel; 59% of British consumers opt for traditional flavours when it comes to crisps, but familiarity is less important in nuts and popcorn – 42% and 39% respectively.

At Burts Snacks, a blend of innovation and delicious well-known flavours is the order of the day – the brand is celebrating the launch of its new ridged crisps in Mature Cheddar & Caramelised Onion Chutney flavour. "The launch was inspired by a desire to meet the growing consumer demand for bold, unique, and premium flavours in snacking," explains Sas Horscroft, head of marketing and innovations.

"Approximately 33% of global consumers are intrigued by new, unique, and different flavours [McKinsey] and with the addition of deep ridges in this product format allows for more intense flavour capture, delivering a richer taste experience."

Classic flavours – think salt and vinegar, cheese and onion and simply salted – will always be strong sellers, but many shoppers have an appetite for taste innovation. "The spice train shows no sign of relenting into 2025," says Natasha, "and at Fairfields Farm we're seeing that our redeveloped (and even spicier) Sweet Chilli crisps are winning both new fans and awards. Brands like Takis are disrupting the UK market and redefining heat. At the same time – and hand in hand with that – we are seeing a rise in global influence in flavours. The British shopper has always loved to try new things, and Korean, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines having a bit of a 'moment'."

Fairfields have recently announced the launch of its 2025 summer edition, which is sure to impress guests. "Our summer edition leaps on the Mediterranean 'picky bits' trend with a Chorizo & Red Wine flavour, which is rich and smoky with the sweet acidity of red wine having a bit of a boxing match on your tongue with deep, smoky paprika undertones," explains Natasha.

Provenance sells

Players in the fine food market can offer a story behind their products to set themselves apart from mainstream brands, and provenance is a valuable way to do just that.

Burts has opted to source ingredients from local suppliers, in an added boon for speciality retailers. "As a company based in Devon, Burts values the importance of using high-quality, regionally produced ingredients to create premium snacks that reflect the rich culinary heritage of the area. Quicke's Cheese, renowned for its exceptional Cheddar and is produced just a short distance from Burts' own headquarters, making it the perfect partner for delivering an authentic flavour," says Sas. "By using Quicke's, Burts not only ensures the freshness and quality of the cheese but also supports the local economy and reinforces its dedication to sustainability and provenance."



THE **VALUE** OF THE **CRISPS**, SAVOURY **SNACKS** AND **NUTS** MARKET GREW TO **£6.38 BILLION** IN **2024**

MINTEL

"Provenance remains important, even in the light of cost of living," says Natasha, "with consumers looking for more British-made, local produce that extends from their fresh veg all the way through to their snacks."

A taste for new

Innovation is rife in the snacking sector, but it's often variations of well-loved and recognised foods – given an on-the-go glow-up – that particularly succeed. Soffle's is a prime example, offering moreishly crunchy pitta chips in familiar, flavour-packed variations.

According to Sophie Harvey, founder of Soffle's, the British snack market offers opportunities for discerning shoppers. "Crisps are so wildly popular but now healthier alternatives also are. As innovative snacks are becoming more available for the consumer, they can now make different choices when choosing what to buy. Seeing oyster mushroom crisps is a big sign that not only is any snack possible it is also being bought by the consumer."

Soffle's offers a range of flavours, with Rosemary & Thyme the top seller, but Sophie can see less familiar flavours becoming increasingly popular. "I can see more natural flavoured snacks gaining popularity along with seasonal offerings, but tangy sriracha, Asian flavours, truffle... all seem to be going down a storm, yet sometimes you just can't beat the salted OG!"

Snacks are much more than an on-the-go food – they offer an opportunity to create a moment, meaning that there are upselling opportunities abound. Crisps and dips are a classic combination for a reason, and Sophie has recently launched an Olive Oil Hummus to cater for this demand. "Sharing with family and friends is definitely what we made them for, and we see lots of consumers enjoying them this way. Making a bit of a spread with dips, olives, salads and drinks is the perfect occasion."

For Darcy Ogston of Native Snacks, tweaking traditional foods has proven successful; their range of popular Asian snacks – in a convenient and suitable-for-all format – offers retailers a valuable opportunity to cash in on nostalgia and convenience in one hit. "Differentiation is key," begins Darcy. "Our snacks are healthier and plant-based versions of prawn crackers and mini poppadoms that allow more consumers to try our products, and those who due to dietary restrictions could not eat them can now eat them again. Nostalgia is very powerful when it comes to shoppers."

Providing a snack that is not only able to be enjoyed by all consumers but also a high quality take on restaurant classics is a great move. For shoppers, Darcy says, "Quality and functionality are major drivers, both can go hand in hand. Quality ingredients as consumers are even more conscious of what they put into their body, that's why we never use artificial ingredients and have a clean label. Consumers like to know what the back of a pack means so use quality and easy to understand ingredients, that is why we ensure our prawn crackers and mini poppadoms are restaurant quality to give the same eating experience at home and don't compromise on taste or texture."

Elsewhere, look out for snacks based on roasted or freeze-dried fruit and vegetables – seasoned roasted chickpeas or seaweed snacks offer a point of differentiation as well as an option for health conscious and innovation-hungry shoppers.

An experimental future

"The future of the crisp and bagged snacks category lies in bold flavour innovation, responsible sourcing and authentic storytelling," predicts Sas. "Consumers are looking for

SUSTAINABILITY IN SNACKS

It's not only provenance that plays an important role in shoppers' snacking decisions in 2025, sustainability does too. Two Farmers are a prime example of a brand with sustainability at their core; not only is their packaging compostable but their mission to be kind to the planet begins long before their potatoes hit the production facility.

"To have good potatoes, you need good soil," begins co-founder Mark Green. "In Herefordshire, where we're based, and across the UK we've been blessed with good soil, but its quality is deteriorating with the current style of farming. In order to keep supplying the market with delicious, high quality produce – and for generations to come – we need to look after our soil."

Mark believes that the old style of farming, incorporating crop rotation alongside other traditional techniques, is the way forward. "These days we'd call it regenerative farming, but it's simply the way my father and generations before him used to work the land."

The potatoes used for Two Farmers crisps are grown within two miles of the factory, and the team is utilising technology to make the business as carbon neutral as possible.

With consumers displaying an appetite for both delicious snacks and sustainable options, Two Farmers is guiding the way towards a future which incorporates both.



snacks that not only taste great but also reflect their values, and that's where Burts continues to shine. We see a continued appetite for exciting flavour profiles, but that doesn't mean tradition is going anywhere. Classics remain popular, but they're being joined by bolder more adventurous combinations that bring something new to the snacking aisle."

Sophie believes that the UK's snacking sector will become increasingly experimental. "Having more alternative snacks so readily available I think is on the rise more than ever, and consumers will step away from the traditional products and flavour profiles. Alongside this, creators can also feel confident to use unexpected and exciting ingredients and know there will be the demand for them."

For Natasha, the future looks bright for the UK snacking sector despite the challenges of previous years. "On the go snacking is yet to fully recover from the pandemic, with the sector still rising rapidly but not yet at pre-COVID levels. I'd expect those to catch up by the end of next year, however, with the increase in consumption occasions and our return to busy lifestyles," she says. "Snacking through retail, on the other hand, is holding firm and as pockets continue to be squeezed, our premium handcooked crisps are seen as an affordable luxury. I would also expect that to continue, with little impact from HFSS on smaller, independent retailers except a wider selection of snacks to stock! From a shopper attitude point of view, I can only see localism and sustainability becoming even more important."

Retailers undoubtedly have a role to play when it comes to supporting the growth of the snacking industry – and the relationship is mutually beneficial. By merchandising products well – alongside products that could create a 'moment', for example – retailers can boost sales across segments. "Great merchandising can really help promote and sell snacks," says Darcy. "Creating a World Foods display or section in-store really helps promote our products alongside curry pastes, sauces and rice products, making them an easy meal solution to shop together. As a brand we are more than happy to contribute towards POS free of charge if we are told this is how they will be merchandised in store to improve the shopping experience."

> "As innovative snacks are becoming more available for the consumer, they can now make different choices when choosing what to buy"

STOCK CHECK

2025 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE



TWO FARMERS HEREFORD HOP CHEESE & ONION

Homegrown potatoes, sliced, cooked in small batches, and seasoned with a dusting of sharp Hereford Hop cheese and onion.

twofarmers.co.uk



BURTS CHEDDAR & CARAMELISED ONION CRISPS

The perfect blend of rich, savoury cheddar sourced locally from Quicke's complemented by the sweet tang of caramelised onion chutney.

burtschips.com



SIMPLY ROASTED DUCK & HOISIN

An award-winning flavour for the brand, featuring a vegan seasoning inspired by the restaurant classic. Vegan friendly and only 93 calories per bag.

simplyroastedcrisps.co.uk



SERIOUS PIG SNACKING PICKLES

The finest Indian gherkins pickled for the perfect balance of saltiness and tang, and featuring a fresh hit of dill.

seriouspig.co.uk



FOREST FEAST HEATHER HONEY PEANUTS & CASHEWS

Peanuts and cashews glazed with Scottish heather honey and roasted with hand-harvested sea salt.

forestfeast.com



SOFFLE'S PITTA CHIPS ROSEMARY & THYME

Crunchy, all natural pitta chips seasoned with classic herbs.

soffles.com



SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

SNACK BUYER 2025
COMING SOON



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BEST DRESSED

Dressings, vinegars and oils have long been cupboard staples ... but the market has changed considerably, with more choice and versatility than ever before, *Speciality Food* reports

COMMENTATORS



ANDY HARRIS
VINEGAR SHED



LABAIKA ASHIRU
WOMERSLEY FOODS



NICKI WEDGEWOOD
COTTAGE DELIGHT



BARNES EDWARDS
THE GARLIC FARM/WILD ISLAND

Salt, pepper, oil, vinegar. What would we do without them? Alongside herbs and spices, they're the absolute backbones of the kitchen, bringing everything we cook to life.

Extra virgin olive oil has been booming (despite almost doubling in price) as customers seek to remove UPFs and seed oils from their diets.

And now they're turning their attentions to buying better vinegars and dressings. Shoppers are voting with their feet, seeking out artisanal, craft made varieties to tantalise their tastebuds. And this is where fine food retail can step up to the pantry.

Vinegar's time to shine

The vinegar category has moved on a great deal as consumers continue to be inspired in myriad ways.

By chefs, keen to demonstrate the versatility of fruit, rice wine, balsamic, sherry, and craft malt vinegars. By the 'Glucose Goddess' Jessie Inchauspé, who's been extolling the virtues of consuming apple cider vinegar before meals to help prevent spikes in blood sugar (with Fortune Business Insights predicting a global 5.7% CAGR in ACV by 2032). And by the trend towards fruit vinegars, which are being stirred into soft drinks and cocktails, and used as glazes and dressings – a touch of blackberry vinegar splashed into the pan with a duck breast at the end of cooking does marvels for any resulting sauce, for example.

A vocal advocate for vinegar is Andy Harris of London's Vinegar Shed. The beauty of selling vinegars in speciality retail, Andy explains, is bringing the 'real deal' to customers, who have by and large only previously been exposed to industrially made versions found in supermarkets.

There's so much more to discover, he adds. "Particularly with wine vinegars. There are four types; fruit flavoured, where they turn fruit into wine and turn that wine into vinegar; macerated vinegars where fruits are combined with the vinegar and other ingredients to get an intense flavour; rice wine vinegar from Asia; and coconut vinegar from around the Philippines, Pacific and Caribbean. Whichever country you go to, there will be some sort of wine vinegar used in their cuisine."

What's happened in the last 20 years, he thinks, is everyone's become "obsessed with using balsamic for drizzling every which way".

"Their perception was malt vinegar for fish and chips, maybe a bit of red wine vinegar to make a French vinaigrette." But that perception is changing rapidly.

"That's why I wanted to introduce people to more exciting vinegars, using different grape varieties and ageing processes. These are not ingredients that should sit in the back of your cupboard for occasional use!"

Womersley Foods has certainly seen a surge of interest in its vinegars, says spokesperson Labaika Ashiru. "They offer an easy way to bring big flavour without fuss, and they appeal to a wide range of dietary preferences," he explains. "We think the rise in home cooking, a focus on health-conscious choices, and the push for sustainable, quality ingredients all play a part."

The brand's Raspberry Vinegar is a longtime customer favourite and what he calls Womersley's most iconic flavour, alongside Lime, Black Pepper & Lavender.

Flavoured varieties should be considered by all speciality retailers looking to capture the imaginations of their food savvy, curious customers. And they're no longer a niche or novelty. "They're a staple," Labaika adds. "They're not just condiments – they're conversation starters. They are the surprisingly delicious and versatile ingredients you didn't know you needed in your kitchen until now."

Create a stir amongst new and regular customers by demonstrating the beauty of these products in-store. Show how fruity vinegars can be twirled with sparkling water and ice to make a refreshing shrub drink, how they can make an easy glaze or marinade, or even a quick dessert. "If you haven't tried our vinegars with cheese, you're missing out," says Labaika.

The balsamic boom

Balsamic vinegar is a category Cottage Delight has seen go from strength-to-strength since the brand's wholesale arm took on exclusive distribution of Italian maker Ponti's products in the UK independent sector. "They've got 99% brand awareness in Italy," explains Cottage Delight marketing lead, Nicki Wedgewood. "They're a B Corp, and are all about provenance, authenticity and quality. Everything is very environmentally friendly, and there are no additives or added sugar. Their real focus is bringing out flavours," she adds.

The range includes balsamic and fig balsamic glazes that are "so rich and sticky" according to Nicki, who says they're often called the 'Italian ketchup', so ubiquitous are they in





family homes.

Three balsamic vinegars, ranging from 12 months to three years, are included in the new offering, too. Each has IGP accreditation, which Nicki says is an important signifier of excellence for consumers. "Foodie customers want the best of the best, something with provenance and that feel of quality behind it."

Also delving into the balsamic world is The Garlic Farm, which launched Black Garlic Balsamic Vinegar and Smoked Garlic Balsamic Vinegar at the end of last year as a creative solution to food waste, steeping 'imperfect' cloves for a rich, intense finish.

Dressing to impress

While there will always be home cooks who like to stir up their own concoctions for salads, Mintel's last report on the condiments and dressings categories in 2023 showed a whopping 96% of households had at least one ready prepared product in their wheelhouse. Add to that the 42% who said they'd be willing to pay more for a better-for-you-version, and the 43% who thought premium condiments and dressings made a meal feel more special, and you've got quite the captive audience.

Barnes Edwards, director of The Garlic Farm – which owns Wild Island dressings – says the figures tally with what they've found; that there's a trend towards flavouring up whole foods while keeping an eye on health claims. Artisan "dressings, oils and vinegars tend to be relatively healthy" he says, adding that they're great for livening up summer salads, elevating and adding depth to even the simplest of dishes.

In the Wild Island range, Barnes says he's noticing a buzz around the more unusual flavour combinations right now, such as Spiced Fig Balsamic. This oil-free dressing and dip not only clings beautifully to leaves, but also serves as a flavoursome marinade and glaze at BBQ time, bringing sweetness, a touch of tartness, and warmth to whatever it touches. "Our oils and vinegars use fresh ingredients and they are packed full of flavour," Barnes continues, saying he thinks there's some exciting innovation in the category, with customers influenced not only by quality, but by provenance and flavour too."

When it comes to flavour, Nicki says every bottle of dressing should do what it says on the label. Cottage Delight has four products in its range, and each one really packs a punch. "Our Acacia Honey & Mustard Dressing has to pull out that honey flavour. It contains 18% honey in the recipe and that's paired with a lovely Dijon mustard. It's a wonderful creamy, yellowy colour which stands out on the shelf. People really love that. In the Roast Garlic & Red Pepper Dressing, the garlic gives a sweet, almost nutty flavour. It goes with so many things, like in pasta or over pizza. These are flavours that encourage people to experiment a bit. That's what we're all about as a brand."

Although taste is king, Nicki says shelf appeal is just as important when it comes to dressings. "With our range, the colours are vivid and bold, and we've got feedback from the trade that that's a massive thing for them. Customers notice our products! In spring and summer, everyone's thinking 'let's have a lovely salad for lunch' and these products will catch their eye."

Imperative to clinching extra sales, Nicki adds, is displaying these products alongside barbecue and picnic options, to get shoppers thinking about all the wonderful things they can create in the kitchen over the warmer months.

RETAILER TIPS



Andy Harris of Vinegar Shed shares his advice for stocking and selling premium vinegars

- Be aware with what you can do with your vinegars. Do tastings, and talk to people about how they can go beyond salad dressings
- Make sure you offer 'good', 'better' and 'best' options across a range of price points
- Look out for sherry vinegar labelled as PX which is made with the sun-ripened grapes. It's much denser in colour and that, like balsamic, is good with desserts and cheeses
- Always have red wine vinegar, but try to move onto other artisan wine vinegars too, like a Muscat or Banyuls
- Think of ways you can cross sell vinegars. For example, stocking ice cream to go with raspberry or prune vinegars. I love getting people to experiment, and having them come back in to say, 'that was really nice'



STOCK CHECK

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE • 2025



WILLOW CREEK BLOOD ORANGE FLAVOURED OLIVE OIL

The South African maker's award-winning oil has a truly unique taste, with zesty, almost floral notes. Perfect for sweet and savoury cooking.

willowcreek.co.za



TENUTE CRISTIANO IGP SWEET TROPEA ONIONS FLAVOURED EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

An intensely flavoured oil. Only a few drops are needed to impart the sweet taste of crushed Tropea onions to the single varietal Carolea olive oil.

justgourmetfoods.co.uk



ALL DRESSED UP MISO & SESAME

Pimp up grains, vegetables, noodles and more with this zippy, tangy, but creamy all-natural dressing.

alldressedupdressings.com



KIKKOMAN PONZU CITRUS SEASONED SOY SAUCE – LEMON

Deliciously combines Kikkoman's Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce with a splash of lemon. A fantastic dip or dressing for salads.

kikkoman.co.uk



ISLE OF WIGHT TOMATOES OAK SMOKED TOMATO BALSAMIC

This is a very special vinegar, produced in small batches, steeping oak smoked Isle of Wight tomatoes in Modena Balsamic vinegar for several weeks for an irresistibly smoky flavour.

iowtomatoes.co.uk



GILLYS FOODS POMEGRANATE BALSAMIC DRESSING

Crafted with Italian pomegranates, the condiment brings a complex, layered sweetness to salads, grilled red meats, cheeses and fresh berries.

gillysfoods.com



OSTLERS ORGANIC APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

A smooth, apply, natural and organic apple cider vinegar, made using apples from Ostlers own organic orchard and matured slowly.

ostlerscidervinegar.com



SUBLIME CREATIONS RAREST OIL OF WHITE TRUFFLE

A new offering from the premium flavoured butter brand. Real white truffle aroma and smoked garlic give a heady taste and scent to 100% Picual olive oil.

sublimebutter.com



ARTISAN VINEGAR COMPANY ARTISAN MALT VINEGAR

Production begins with fine Maris Otter malt and Cornish spring water, naturally fermented and oak matured before being drawn from the barrel.

artisanvinegar.co.uk



FONTANA FORMIELLO GLAZE

This rich glaze, made using a higher concentration of grape must and aged balsamic, gives a sticky, sweet taste to dishes with no added sugars or colourings.

fontanaformiello.com



SUMMER SIPS

What are the must-stock drinks speciality retailers should be turning to this summer? *Speciality Food* looks at the key trends

COMMENTATORS



ASHLEIGH MORLEY
MR FITZPATRICK'S TEMPERANCE BAR



MICHELLE WILKINSON
BELVOIR FARM



KIT NEWELL
HIVE MIND



CHRIS LOSH
WORLD ALCOHOL FREE AWARDS



LAURA WILLOUGHBY
CLUB SODA



ELLIE BRADSHAW
WILD LIFE BOTANICALS



JESS HILLIARD
SPORTS NUTRITIONIST

Early summer is a fabulous time to set out your stall as an independent retailer. Brighter, warmer weather naturally encourages shoppers to feel more positive ... making them receptive to new products and sampling. And right now their sights are firmly fixed on al fresco occasions. When the sun is high in the sky, those trellis tables and blankets come out in force, with consumers keen to bring a point of difference to their picnics and barbecues. And this applies to both food and drink.

What are the summer sips you should be stocking more of this year? Let's delve in.

Nostalgia reigns

No doubt about it, as we've written previously, the nostalgia and retro trend is still capturing the hearts and imaginations of British shoppers. This is reflecting strongly in the drinks industry, as brands switch up their offerings to meet the market. We're seeing tactile, vintage-style bottles and on-pack design creeping in, while old-fashioned flavours take hold.

Ashleigh Morley, owner of Mr Fitzpatrick's Temperance Bar (the last original bar of its kind in the UK), says demand for tradition is overwhelmingly high, and shouldn't be ignored in retail or foodservice settings.

The call for milkshakes, soda floats, mocktails, cordials and childhood favourite soft drinks has been enormous she explains, saying the bar's top sellers are sarsaparilla, dandelion and burdock, cream soda and the unusual-sounding blood tonic. "Blood tonic sounds weird and wonderful, but it is one of our traditional flavours made with raspberries, nettles and rosehip," she explains. "We are very much about nostalgia, and love hearing memories relating to these flavours."

Customers are telling Ashleigh and her team they've had enough of drinking alcohol, and have found myriad benefits to abstaining for their health and sleep. "Yet they want something different to enjoy that feels like a treat."

Adult soft drinks on the rise

Moderation is being seen across the UK drinks sector. And while this is negatively impacting sales of some alcohol beverages, it's having the opposite effect on soft drinks, which continue to flourish as a result.

Belvoir Farm, which has just introduced new 275ml bottles across its range, says it's feeling the impact as this category continues to grow. "As more people cut down, or move fully away from alcohol in their diets, especially Gen Z, consumers are looking for exciting alternatives to enjoy," says senior category and insights manager, Michelle Wilkinson. "The adult soft drink mocktail range is now worth £5.6 million – up 81% on last year, dominated by Belvoir (40% market share) especially driven by our Lime & Yuzu 750ml mocktail, worth almost £1 million."

Investing in mocktails and soft drinks geared to the adult market is wise, Michelle suggests, as is ensuring you give space to low and no-calorie drinks, which are also seeing a boom. "With two-thirds of UK carbonated soft drink sales coming from low and no-calorie drinks, it is a trend we are more than aware of that may affect ASD," she says.

Keeping it natural

The soft drinks market, says Kit Newell, co-founder of Hive Mind, is made up of around 99% larger players, which can make it difficult for newcomers to penetrate. And yet, "there have been some fantastic breakthrough challenger brands, which points to a change in consumer behaviour".

He's observing a pushback away from artificial sweeteners, but also consumers looking at ways to reduce their sugar intake, while keeping an eye on ingredient lists.

"The bad press of ultra-processed foods has driven a desire for drinks with natural, understandable ingredients," Kit adds. And that inspired Hive Mind to launch a range of Honeyade products. "Along with the drive away from ultra-processed food and drink, there has also been a parallel decrease in alcohol consumption, so we felt the time was right for us to produce a soft drink that has all the same values as our range of meads."

Hive Mind's new drinks are made using real, unprocessed honey from their own hives in the Wye Valley. "It's about what isn't in it, as much about what is in it," Kit reflects. "Offering products that align with consumer values is hugely important. Shoppers are choosing more natural, minimally processed, healthy options, but also products that are made sustainably and ethically (it also helps if they taste great). Simply put, if a retailer does not offer products that align to the consumers' values, this will force them to shop elsewhere."



Aligning with alcohol-free

"There's a growing number of people who don't drink at all," says Chris Losh, founder of the World Alcohol-Free Awards, who thinks this is a trend that will continue, and one retailers should take note of as they restock their drink collections. "It's certainly a thing for people under the age of 25. The biggest growth, though, is from people who still drink alcohol, but want to drink less of it. They might only have two or three alcoholic drinks, mixing in a couple of alcohol-free drinks alongside them. Or they're switching to alcohol-free options during the week."

Put simply, Chris says, consumers want non-alcoholic options. "There's a mountain of research out there showing how much less people are drinking. A good recent report by KAM shows drinkers under the age of 55 are drinking more moderately than they used to, and 4.7 million Brits are now drinking half of what they used to. That's a big shift."

According to Laura Willoughby of Club Soda, Drinkaware puts the number of adults moderating in the UK at 90%.

"It is part of a widespread and increased focus on health, both mental and physical," she thinks. "So their spending on alcohol-free drinks is part of their healthy decision making." What hasn't changed, she adds, is that people want to socialise, and alcohol-free drinks are a part of the conversation so they can, "still enjoy a night out or evening in front of the TV without compromising on their health goals".

Alcohol-free wine has proven Club Soda's biggest selling category, followed closely by mood-enhancing and fictional drinks which she says "fly off the shelf".

When buying low or no alcohol, Laura says retailers must put taste first. "Drinks do not have to mimic alcohol, but do need to taste great and suit the evening socialising occasion. They have to look the part, be complex in flavour, and have natural speed humps that make the drink sippable rather than rehydrating."

A brand that fits neatly into this category, while satisfying consumer intrigue in natural flavours, is Wild Life Botanicals, which founder Ellie Bradshaw calls 'bubbles with benefits'.

Unlike some alcohol-free wines, this range starts life at 14% ABV, with the alcohol later removed and recaptured through the distillation process.

Ellie, who's always worked in hospitality, says she started the brand as, being a 'mum taxi' in rural Cornwall, having a drink at the weekends became impossible. "Also, I've always been passionate about plant power and wanted to know if I could fuse those worlds –a non-alcoholic wine that tasted like wine, but that delivered all the functions of what I wanted with a health kick to boot."

Zero alcohol was "good", but she found working with a product at 0.5% ABV (which is still classed as no alcohol in the UK) "made such a difference to the mouthfeel and texture".

"When you remove alcohol from any beverage it loses that viscosity and those 'speed bumps which impact your behaviour when you drink. With Wild Life, we've designed it to be sipped like a Champagne or Prosecco, rather than a soft drink," she explains.

The brand has a Nude and a Blush option. The Nude being "refreshing with lots of green, sherbetty notes", and the Blush being laced with a touch of Tempranillo grape "for a bit more fruitiness", with 75cl and 20cl bottles, and 250ml cans available.

Each is infused with botanicals to enhance their flavour profile and wellbeing credentials – from lemon balm for gut health, to adaptogenic ashwagandha to calm, damask rose for boosting mood, plus the full suite of B vitamins, zinc and Vitamin C.

Ellie says the drinks are appealing to a wide range of customers, from fitness fanatics in their early 20s, to people in their 80s who can't drink alcohol because they're taking medication. "It's incredibly diverse and the drinks are so inclusive," she says, adding these products, and drinks like them, fit perfectly into today's speciality retail settings.

"It all goes back to consumer demand. There's been a real shift in the landscape, and consumers are now much more wellbeing focused. To see this as a trend is slightly short-sighted. It's here to stay and is going mainstream. You don't have to be a vegan or non-drinker to enjoy them – so many people are flexing in and out of the category and when you've got some really heavy weight players like Guinness Zero sponsoring key events like Rugby Six Nations it's great as a small producer to see that momentum."

Putting the fun in function

A further category within drinks that can't be ignored, as our experts have already explained, is functional, with functional ingredients such as CBD, fibre, pre and probiotics and natural sources of energy being infused into everyday serves – not only drinks aimed at the health sector.

Jess Hillard, sports nutritionist at Warrior, says she's seen a surge of interest in alternatives to coffee, such as the green tea extract L-Theanine (for those who don't want to experience a post-coffee energy crash), while CBD (as it's become better understood by consumers) has filtered into the mainstream for its calming, soothing effects.

Along with these, she recommends retailers bringing fermented drinks into their ranges. Kombucha is a refreshing option for summer, for example.

"If retailers wat to stay competitive in the food and drink industry and drive growth, this is where the market is heading," she adds. "Keeping in tune with current demands will ensure that customers return, knowing they will find the newest and trending drinks in stock."



> "There's been a real shift in the landscape, and consumers are now much more wellbeing focused. To see this as a trend is slightly short-sighted. It's here to stay and is going mainstream"
>
> **ELLIE BRADSHAW, FOUNDER, WILD LIFE BOTANICALS**

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE · 2025 ·

STOCK CHECK



SUMA PEACH & TURMERIC KOMBUCHA

Aromatic peach and anti-inflammatory turmeric pair deliciously in this low-sugar, craft-brewed organic kombucha.

suma.coop



SAVYLL PALOMA

An alcohol-free take on one of the 'it' drinks of 2023. Bittersweet pink grapefruit mingles with tequila essence and lime.

savyll.com



FHIRST LIVING SODA - CHERRY VANILLA

Tart, sweet and creamy with sour cherries and vanilla, this functional soda contains no added sugar and is filled with 2 billion stable living probiotic cultures and 5g prebiotic fibre.

fhirst.com



LONDON ESSENCE CO PINK GRAPEFRUIT CRAFTED SODA

Bright, crisp and fresh – this soda balances zesty high notes with savoury undertones. It's a match made in heaven with tequila or artisan vodka.

londonessenceco.com





IN SEARCH OF **SUN**

The cuisines of Southern Europe are a flavour-packed choice for shoppers seeking a dose of sunshine

Southern Europe has long been one of the most popular holiday destinations for British consumers, and shoppers across the board are now relishing the plethora of carefully crafted cuisine from these regions that are now available on our shores. The foods of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey offer consumers a smorgasbord of delicious food and drink, from the well-loved pastas and ragus beloved of families up and down the UK to Spanish cheeses, Greek olives and Turkey's aromatic dishes. While a number of products from this region – particularly from Italy – are strong sellers, and rightly so, it's worth exploring lesser known foods to delight customers who wish to travel from the comfort of their dining room tables.

"EVERYTHING ELSE TAKES A BACK SEAT WHEN IT COMES TO DINING"



Josh Dallaway, head chef at Tasca, says that the beauty of Southern European food lies in its diversity

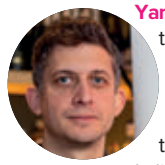
"I think people are only now realising what these culinary giants are actually all about. It's not just tiny portions of padron peppers or fried potatoes that are on offer. The diverse nature of these bountiful countries can give you a tonne of different dishes while still staying true to their soul and identity. I love the slower pace of life in this part of the world, where eating is as important as anything else, if not the most important thing. Everything else takes a back seat when it comes to dining. It isn't just something to get you through the day, you actually savour and appreciate the food and the company you're with. The level of care and attention in the produce is far superior to the UK, and this speaks volumes in the dishes themselves. There is a reason that pan con tomate can exist all over Spain but not in England. There just isn't that same care for the product. There are many restaurants in London that now offer fantastic food from this part of the world but charge insanely high prices, thus defeating the very purpose of this cuisine and culture. Spain and Portugal have this incredible knack of appealing to all and alienating none. Something we try our best to emulate at Tasca.

The seafood has to be the highlight of any trip to Spain and Portugal. Whether it is a simple calamari sandwich, boiled goose barnacles or a huge plate of scarlet prawns, the level and care of which goes into the sourcing and preparation is always a skin tingling moment when you take that first bite. The cured meats and cheeses that grace tables with a cold beer is truly hard to beat. I love that the simplest of dishes can give you unknown levels of joy just by being that; simple. The cachorrinho from Gazella, the XL scarlet prawns from Ramiro, the calamari sandwich from the central bar, all are so simple and yet so perfect.

Two musts for my kitchen are always a high quality olive oil and vinegar. Citizens of Soil Portuguese olive oil is fantastic. An aged sherry vinegar can bring any dish to life. These are two things that are definitely not worth skimping on and you'll see the benefits for sure.

GREEK FOOD IS ON THE UP

Yannos Hadjiioannou and Stefanos Kokotos, co-founders of Maltby & Greek, believe that the popularity of Greek cuisine is gaining momentum in the UK market



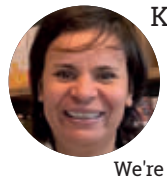
Yannos: "We believe that Greece is catching up on the culinary map here in the UK. Whilst Italian, Spanish and French cuisines have been well represented, it's not until recently that we have witnessed the emergence of a new breed of modern Greek restaurants. A young generation of chefs and sommeliers have come together both in Greece and in other European countries and London to represent this trend."



Stef: "A post-Covid tourism boom in Greece has allowed visitors to experience more unusual takes on the traditional Greek recipes along with wine pairings that help to elevate the experience. Greek and international restauranteurs have picked up on this wave and have delivered some exciting projects and even the first Michelin starred restaurant for Greek inspired food in the UK."

Yannos: "We see an interest in artisan products – be it dairy, meat or fish – good quality ingredients from different parts of Greece. Maltby&Greek started at Maltby Street Market by importing off the beaten track products – traditionally smoked eel, bottarga (grey mullet cured roe), aged cheese from the islands, capers and caper leaves, rock samphire and a host of unusual, lesser-known Greek ingredients. On the better-known ingredients such as feta cheese and extra virgin olive oil, we have gone the extra mile to find

"SPANISH OLIVE OILS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIES"



Karla Amara, manager of Olives & More, states that the love that goes into Italian and Spanish food is key to its success in Britain

We're passionate about stocking premium ingredients and giving people a taste of where they went on holiday – we even take requests of products to stock when people return from being away and want to enjoy a taste of their travels at home.

Our main focus is on olive oils in terms of quality and health benefits, and beyond that we stock a wide range of other products. I would say that Italy takes up the biggest space in our store, and this is helped by the fact that British shoppers are so familiar with it – it's part of their every day repertoire. For example, we sell a lot of high quality tomato pastes and sauces, and lots of fresh pasta.

We sell incredible Manchego, charcuterie and wine from Spain, but really it's Spanish olive oils that are the biggest part of our range – they're the best quality you can buy, and we sell a lot of products with high quality olive oils at their heart such as chocolates, biscuits and sauces.

From Italian and Spanish food, our customers expect delicious freshness and quality, a story and a lot of love, and it's hard to find that kind of authenticity in the UK. They also appreciate the simplicity of these products; there are no additives, just simple, high quality ingredients brought together – for example, olives in fine olive oil.

Italians are known for their simplicity; three great quality ingredients and you have a dish. To make this work, quality is the most important thing – tomatoes have to be fresh and smell incredible, for example – and British shoppers are appreciating this more and more.

There is work to be done in terms of the popularity of Spanish food. While Italian cuisine is widely understood in Britain and is enjoyed frequently, food and drink from Spain is often oversimplified to just tapas so people consider it food for a party rather than for everyday enjoyment.

High quality Spanish olive oils are a prime opportunity for independent retailers, because their price point means that supermarkets won't stock them; supermarket shoppers aren't necessarily looking for stories and holiday memories, but that's something that independents can provide brilliantly.

ROOTED IN TRADITION



Stefano Cuomo, CEO of Macknade shares his love of Turkish cuisine

Having just returned from Istanbul, Turkey and its diverse and burgeoning food and wine scene has to be on your radar! The quality of the cooking, rooted in tradition, and brought to life through innovation, is incredible... all based on fantastic ingredients! Whilst their wines are still some way from being universally recognised here, they are an absolute treat but need a helping hand to navigate. I would be getting stuck into fantastic Turkish ingredients and sign posting customers to how best use them.

> "Turkey and its diverse and burgeoning food and wine scene has to be on your radar"

and source the best barrel aged feta by far and what we consider one of the best early harvest EVOO's out there, working directly with the producers that make these unique and amazing products. All of these products and ingredients lend themselves not only to Greek restaurants and delis but a variety of cuisines from around the world - Asian, Mediterranean, and so much more."

Stef: "The other interesting thing that we have witnessed is this marrying of Greek food ingredients and Greek wines – the latter have now become so much more accessible and customers actively seek these out, which has opened a whole host of new on- and off-trade venues that might start with Greek wines and then acquaint themselves with Greek ingredients to pair or just compliment their existing offering."

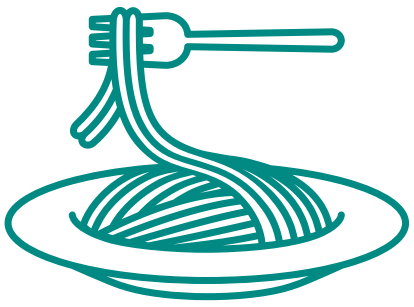
Yannos: "By choosing to work with small artisan producers, we have consciously moved away from large production and into time-tested, traditional production methods that follow the seasons and allow time to both the earth and nature to recover.

The majority of our partner producers are family businesses – third, fourth and fifth generation artisans linked to their places of birth, fostering huge pride for their products and land. For them and for us at Maltby&Greek this is way more than a simple marketing tagline of sustainability, origin, provenance... As all of these are given and reflecting the ragged landscape, small holdings and the natural environment they work in – up in the mountains of Crete, on the stony islands of the Aegean or the lush mountains of Northwest Greece."

Stef: "We don't see customers that buy our products as pure consumers but a lot more like us – we are seeking different flavours that are closer to the ones we grew up with. I mean the aromas, flavours and textures of products reminiscent of us growing up in Greece, learning to eat and cook with our parents and grandparents and knowing that there is a lot more to Greece than the basics offered by bulk food products."

THE **UK** IS THE **FOURTH** LARGEST MARKET FOR **ITALIAN** FOOD AND DRINK, WITH **30%** OF **EXPORTS** TAKEN UP BY **PDO** AND **PGI** PRODUCTS

ITALIANFOOD.NET



2025 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE STOCK CHECK



NUNEZ DE PRADO UNFILTERED EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Made using a blend of Picual, Picudo and Hojiblanca olives. Organic, unfiltered and unpressed with delicious tropical fruit flavours.

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IL BORGO DEL BALSAMICO TRADITIONAL BALSAMIC VINEGAR OF REGGIO EMILIA

This DOP Gold Label balsamic is made only with grapes from the Reggio Emilia region, and produced and aged to strict regulations.

justgourmetfoods.co.uk



SEGGIANO ROASTED ARTICHOKE HEARTS IN EVOO

Seggiano's artichokes are considered some of the most exquisite in the world. Once roasted over volcano rock, the hearts are preserved in extra virgin olive oil.

seggiano.com



AMALTHIA KALAMATA OLIVE TAPENADE

From one of the oldest olive producers in the city of Kalamata, this tapenade is only flavoured with olive oil, salt and vinegar and is made without additives or preservatives.

maltbyandgreek.com



Pasta
SUMA

Suma's organic White Orzo, White Strozzapreti, and White Orecchiette are made the traditional way from heritage wheat by an Italian co-operative of 300 farms, a mill, and a pasta factory. Using a slow drying process powered by 100% renewable energy, these pastas have a rich, full-bodied flavour and ideal texture. By choosing this product, you support farmers receiving a fair price and contribute to sustainable agriculture. The packaging is 100% plastic-free, made from sustainably sourced paper, ensuring an environmentally friendly choice. Perfect for a variety of Italian dishes, these versatile pasta shapes bring authentic taste and quality to your kitchen.

suma.coop

Bergamot Oil
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Experience the extraordinary synergy of antioxidant powerhouses in Tenute Cristiano's Bergamot Flavoured Oil. This premium creation unites renowned Calabrian bergamot, celebrated for its high flavone content and antioxidant properties, with polyphenol-rich extra virgin olive oil from their ancestral groves. The result? A luminous elixir that elevates both traditional and contemporary cuisine. Part of their artisanal flavoured collection, which includes Mediterranean Herbs, Cipolla di Tropea Onion, Lemon, and Orange variants – each celebrating Calabria's remarkable gastronomic treasures.

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Tomato Sauces
SORSO

SORSO is an all-natural, gluten-free, tomato and sweet red pepper base sauce that comes in unique flavours, to cut down midweek meal prep. Developed with the mission to give favourite dishes the same depth of flavour, as cooking from scratch, with all the nutritional benefits, to support busy people to eat well, and save time. Products are designed to be used over pasta, gnocchi or vegetables; in a stir fry, as a dip or sandwich spread, for a pizza base, or on fish, chicken or meat. All recipes are crafted using premium vine-ripened tomatoes, selected for their natural sweetness, juiciness, and vibrant flavour. These tomatoes form the foundation of SORSO's authentic and nutritious recipes.

sorsosauce.com

Cold-Pressed Olive Oil
THE COTSWOLD CARDILLO

Crafted with tradition and care and offering a true taste of Italy, using only the finest ingredients from both Italy and the Cotswolds, the Cotswold Cardillo range brings the essence of Southern Europe to your kitchen. The cold-pressed olive oil, presented in elegant green bottles, is pure liquid gold – free from additives, boasting a bold, fruity aroma with hints of spice from Itrane olives grown in the sun-drenched hills of Minturno. Meanwhile, the artisan apple cider vinegar, made from handpicked Rock Cotswold apples, is unfiltered and raw, retaining the mother for depth of flavour and health benefits. Whether drizzled over fresh salads or infused into marinades, these exceptional products add richness and authenticity to any Mediterranean-inspired dish.

thecotswoldcardillo.co.uk/shop/



BETTER FOR YOU

With awareness of functional food on the rise, it's time to cash in on Brits' hunger for health

There can be no doubt about it – good health is trending. British shoppers are more conscious than ever about the impact that what they consume has on their overall health, and while a few years ago weight loss was the prime driver for healthy food choices, there's now a plethora of health concerns that products are aiming to solve for shoppers.

The market is awash with good-for-you products, but it's not always easy to see the wood (genuine article) for the trees (products that shout about their trendy credentials without delivering).

Natural wholefoods are a great way to go – no long ingredients lists to decipher, and potentially easy to source locally (therefore offering a low environmental hit), think simple and seasonal for optimum effect. 'Eat the rainbow' is a good rule of thumb for fibre hunters, and the smart indie retailer stocks slightly more unusual produce to stand out from the supermarkets, so look beyond the classics to impress health-savvy shoppers.

Nootropics – natural or synthetic ingredients that claim to improve cognitive function such as memory and attention – have been creating a buzz for a few years now, but to keep things simple for yourself and your customers, think functional. Products that offer to aid sleep and gut health are particularly popular right now, and you can either opt for food and drink products that contain ingredients like magnesium, prebiotics/probiotics and added vitamins, or gen up on foods that naturally provide those benefits. Ultimately, stocking better for you foods could boost the health of shoppers and your bottom line.

Brownie Bars
HEYLO!



Don't miss out on the little treats that make life worth living! HeyLO!'s handmade vegan and gluten-free brownie bars, crafted with premium cocoa powder and natural ingredients, deliver that chocolatey bliss you've been missing – without derailing your day or your diet. What makes HeyLO! Brownie Bars magical? They contain just half a sugar cube worth of sweetness compared to regular brownies with a whopping nine sugar cubes! Yet they still deliver that rich, indulgent chocolate experience that feels like a proper treat. "Life's too short to feel bad about your food," says Heidi Normanton, founder of HeyLO!

weareheylo.com



Dumplings
LOVE SUM

Love Sum Dumplings are riding the wave of the trend for great Asian Food and recently the growth in awareness and appeal for authentic dumplings. With dumplings noted as one of the Top 10 2025 Food Trends by Whole Foods, their range of world inspired dumplings created by MasterChef finalist Sandy Tang include Smoky Korean BBQ Beef Mandu and Hoisin Duck Dumplings. Manufactured daily in London, all products are chilled and come ready to eat in under 8 minutes. Available from Cotswold Fayre, Cress, CLF and CN Foods.

lovesum.co.uk

Kombucha
SUMA

Suma's new sparkling organic kombuchas are craft-brewed and traditionally fermented from natural ingredients. Suma kombucha offers a quality product and packaging and includes the traditional bestseller, ginger; a fruity option with strawberry and raspberry; and a more adventurous peach and turmeric. The kombucha market is still in its infancy with growth predicted as people look for alternative soft drinks that are natural, lower in calories, without artificial sweeteners and alcohol free. They RRP at £1.75 making them competitive in comparison to other kombuchas and other healthier soft drinks in the chiller.

suma.coop



SELLING GUT HEALTH

As arguably the biggest trend in wellness right now, it's well worth investing in gut health-boosting food and drink. With many of the products on the market ideal for fine food shoppers thanks to their quality credentials and eye-catching branding, with a little education – think POS and recipe suggestions – fermented food and drink could be a profitable way to welcome in new health-conscious consumers.

Here, Annie Davis, clinical nutritionist at Body Fabulous Health Clinic, registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioner and member of British Association for Nutrition & Lifestyle Medicine (BANT) & CNHC recommends must-stock, health-giving products:

Kefir: A fermented drink made from milk. It's like yogurt but with a thinner consistency and a tangy flavour and contains more strains of probiotics. Kefir is great for gut health and digestion.

Kimchi: A Korean dish made from fermented vegetables (often cabbage and radishes) with spices and seasonings. It's packed with probiotics and can support digestion and immune function.

Sauerkraut: Fermented cabbage that's rich in probiotics, fibre, and vitamin C. It's great for gut health and can aid in digestion.

Kombucha: A fermented tea beverage made with tea, sugar, and a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY). Kombucha is rich in probiotics and antioxidants, supporting both gut and immune health.

Miso: A traditional Japanese seasoning made from fermented soybeans, rice, or barley. Miso is a good source of probiotics and can support gut health and digestion.

Sourdough Bread: Sourdough is made through a natural fermentation process where yeast and lactic acid bacteria break down the flour. It's easier to digest than regular bread, and the fermentation process lowers the glycaemic index, making it a better choice for blood sugar regulation.

> "With the continued popularity of seaweed and the increasing interest in harvesting readily available aquatic plants for more-sustainable sources of protein and nutrients, the tide is turning toward foods made with more sea and freshwater greens"

SOURCE: WHOLE FOODS MARKET

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE • 2025 • STOCK CHECK



BIO & ME SUPER NUTTY MUESLI

Packed with almonds, cashews, brazil nuts and lightly toasted coconut flakes, this muesli is rich in fibre and contains no added sugar.

bioandme.co.uk



EATEN ALIVE CLASSIC KIMCHI

Crisp Chinese leaf and crunchy shredded veg with heaps of ginger, chilli and garlic. Vegan, gluten-free, 100% natural, unpasteurised and biolive.

eatenalive.co.uk



UNCONFORM FLAT WHITE

Vegan cold-brew coffee featuring nootropics Ashwagandha, Ginkgo Bilboa and Vitamin 12.

impact-coffee.com



ROBOT ORGANIC HONEY COLA KOMBUCHA

A healthy alternative to conventional cola drinks, this is made using premium organic ingredients including wild honey, natural kombucha, lemon, orange and cola nut.

robotkombucha.co.uk

Sponsored by

Tracklements



FERMENTED FOODS

The food and drink sector is alive with excitement about fermentation

WHY IS FERMENTED FOOD BIG NEWS IN 2025?

Ever eager to add shortcuts to health to their diets, UK consumers are raving about the health benefits of fermented food and drink. Considered to offer a raft of health benefits and moreishly tasty – once you get used to the signature 'tang' – fermented food and drink is a boon for retailers wanting to cater to health-conscious foodies.

WHAT'S HEALTHY ABOUT THEM?

Proponents of fermented foods are mainly focused on the benefits fermented food and drink have in terms of gut health. By rebalancing your gut biome as a result of increasing gut biodiversity, there's a whole host of health boosts fans can enjoy down the line such as less bloating, clearer skin and better sleep.

"Traditional fermented foods are associated with a host of potential benefits, including increasing vitamin concentrations (such as folate and vitamin B12), reducing anti-nutrients (the chemicals that block the absorption of nutrients in the gut), lowering blood pressure, supporting our immunity and may even have a calming effect on the body," explains Dr Megan Rossi, world-leading gut health scientist and founder of Bio & Me. "Fermenting has also been shown to lower the gluten and lactose content in sourdough bread and dairy, respectively."

HOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

"I believe the link between gut health and mental health is having a big impact, and with mental health issues rising at an alarming rate people are becoming much more curious about what they can do to improve their mental health," says Josh Puddle, founder of MOMO Kombucha.



ISN'T SOURDOUGH SUPPOSED TO BE GREAT FOR MY GUT, TOO?

Yes – so long as you're eating the real deal. Genuine sourdough, containing only flour, water and a little salt, relies on fermentation to create its signature texture and holes throughout the dough. Those suffering with gut issues often claim that they can digest sourdough more easily than conventional bread available in supermarkets, so it's a great everyday way to hop onto the fermented food train.

WHAT'S CONSIDERED 'FERMENTED'?

Trending food and drink such as kombucha, kimchi and saurkraut are the most headline-grabbing options – and ideal for those following plant-based diets – but there are plenty of fermented dairy products too, such as aged cheeses, live yoghurt and kefir, which is available in drinkable and spoonable formats for optimum versatility.

HOW ABOUT FOODS FROM OVERSEAS?

Asia offers up a varied larder of fermented foods, a lot of which are now trending thanks to their visibility across social media and use by chefs in cookbooks and television shows. Miso and tofu are two examples that are easy to get hold of.

HOW SHOULD FERMENTED FOODS BE SERVED?

"Fermented food is so versatile!" says Pat Bingley, co-founder and managing director at Eaten Alive. "Fermentation opens flavours up, and alongside the acidity it makes them an amazing condiment that can stand up to other big flavours and pair amazingly with cheese or cured meats. On the flip side they can be an element of seasoning for plainer foods like rice or beans."

WHAT DO I NEED TO BE WARY OF?

As with any fermented food, there's a risk that alcohol levels might be higher than you'd initially assume. Some health experts advise that pregnant and breastfeeding women steer clear for that reason, plus without proper care and refrigeration fermented foods can turn troublesome.

ANY TIPS FOR RETAILERS NEW TO FERMENTATION?

"Choose authenticity," advises Josh. "So many of the commercial fermented products are a long way from what you would make at home. In kombucha, we're the only brand of any scale that is raw and completely unfiltered. The vast majority are pasteurised, heavily filtered or brewed from concentrate. We've proved over the last six years that kombucha drinkers are willing to pay up for the real deal."

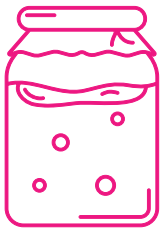
Raw and unpasteurised is also the name of the game at Eaten Alive. "Always look for raw products that need to be chilled," says Pat. "Pasteurisation kills the texture, flavour and the amazing bacteria that created them and go on to support the consumer's wellbeing."

WHAT ARE THE BEST PRODUCTS TO STOCK?

While many shoppers across the board are aware of the health-boosting properties of fermented food and drink, it's worth offering a few options for those less accustomed to their inherent funky flavours as well as punchy options for seasoned fermentation fans. We love MOMO Kombucha's Elderflower Kombucha for this reason, as it's refreshing and easy-drinking while still packing plenty of wellness points.

IS IT WORTH SELLING DIY FERMENTATION KITS?

While there are plenty of DIY kits on the market, without the full gamut of hygiene regulations and technology it can be tricky to ensure their absolute safety – so it might be safest to stick to commercially-produced options.



THE UK FERMENTED INGREDIENTS MARKET IS PREDICTED TO BE WORTH UPWARDS OF £4.5 BILLION IN 2035

SOURCE: FUTURE MARKET INSIGHTS

> "Traditional fermented foods are associated with a host of potential benefits"

The Life & Soul of the Pantry

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THE DIVERSE WORLD OF DIPS

The condiments category has exploded in the last few years, as consumers discover unique flavours from across the globe

What is a dining table without a few bottles or jars for dunking and dipping? Ketchup is a shopping basket staple in the UK, but brands and retailers are noticing the average consumer really is upping the ante in terms of what lands on their plate these days.

They want more spice (having attuned their palates to chillies across the last couple of generations), more flavour, and greater authenticity – and they're prepared to pay more for premium options, especially those made entirely with natural ingredients.

"The fact that, with just one product, you can relive childhood memories, is so compelling," says writer Claire Dinhut (AKA Condiment Claire), talking about the rising popularity of the category. "It might be something your mum used to make for you, or something you ate on a holiday. Also, they allow you to travel all four corners of the world, even if you can't afford to fly.

"When you buy a jar, you can unlock that trip for yourself, recreate dishes you've always wanted to try, and expand your knowledge about foreign places. That's so special."

10 condiment trends you need to know

MULTI-PURPOSE MARINADES AND DRESSINGS

Versatility means less waste, and that's something shoppers are thinking more broadly about. A number of new dressings, dips and marinades have been designed with multiple uses in mind, and that's highly worth considering when making purchasing decisions.

CHILLI CRISP

These jars of fragrant oil, laden with knobbly, crispy, crunchy pieces of chilli, garlic and onions or shallots, are really cornering the condiment arena, with some independents saying these products have become their biggest sellers. Chefs and influencers are using them everywhere – on burgers and pizzas, in stir fries, and even over ice cream!

ASIAN FLAVOURS

Chilli crisp leads the way here, but consumers want more. And they're experimenting in a big way with Asian condiments. Harry Wolff-Evans, owner of butchery, deli and bottle shop, Reuben's, says, "Asian food, especially East Asian, is really having its moment. Absolutely I think it's because of the growth of social media, and recipes being available online for people to experiment with. The best thing for me, personally, about that part of Asia and cooking, is you can get so much flavour into a dish with very little work. The ingredients pack a punch."
Top products to stock include gochujang, ssamjang, rayu, XO sauce, sriracha and kecap manis.

HOT SAUCE

The USA has been tapped into the hot sauce market for quite some time – and their fever for flavour is now catching on here. "It's a $2 billion industry," says Neil Ridley, author of *Hot Sauce*. "You see such a level of craft going into some of the smaller sauces." He recommends stocking artisanal, small batch hot sauces from brands whose raison d'être isn't blinding heat, but rather expressing the fruitiness and core flavours of the chillies they use.

SWICY

Chefs and foodies continue to fall for the lip-smacking appeal of swicy condiments such as hot honey. "What we're seeing," says chef and Sorted Food co-founder, Ben Ebbrell, "is a continued increase in global curiosity around food." Sweet and spicy combinations are commonplace in many cuisines, and that's now coming across in the UK dining scene, with shoppers keen to recreate street food vibes in their own kitchens.



43% OF **CONSUMERS** THINK **PREMIUM** CONDIMENTS LIKE **HOT SAUCE** MAKE A **MEAL** MORE **SPECIAL**

MINTEL





BARBECUE SAUCE
Barbecue culture is taking hold in Britain, with more and more households investing in serious kit. While purists will insist on making their own sauces and glazes, there's a huge number of grilling enthusiasts seeking out products to make their pulled pork and slow-cooked short ribs sing. If barbecue cuts are a speciality at your butchery counter, be sure to offer the best sauce selection you can get your hands on.

MULTI-USE SEASONINGS
We've already espoused the benefits of stocking versatile dressings, but this applies to seasonings too. At trade shows we've seen a burst of new and established makers selling products designed not only for use in stews and sauces, but for stirring into oils, yoghurt, cream cheese and other vehicles, transforming them into dips. These kinds of products are commonplace in Switzerland and Germany, and just now catching on here.

ALT RELISHES AND PICKLES
We all know onion marmalade and fruity chutney – which will always have a place in retail and the home – but alternatives are taking off on the UK food scene. We're talking quirky ferments, pickles in ever weird and wonderful concoctions, candied jalapenos, spicy coconut chutneys and more. Don't be afraid to experiment. And sample, sample, sample.

FRUITY KETCHUPS
Have you tried banana, black garlic, mango or damson ketchup? No? Well, you really should, as some independent retailers tell us they are outperforming the classic 'Tommy K' on their shelves, appealing to the customer who likes ketchup, but wants to dip their toes out of their comfort zone.

FLAVOURED BUTTERS
Yes, butter is considered a condiment. And we've seen the compound/ flavoured butter category take off in the last 12 months. Savoury butters are, say butchers, an easy upsell in the counter, allowing home cooks to bring an oomph of flavour to steak in seconds. We also like the way these products have expanded into the sweet realm, enhanced with cinnamon, chocolate, booze and honey.

STOCK CHECK
2025 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE

HALOPENOS ORIGINAL SWEET SHREDDED HALOPENOS
Award-winning sweet, sticky, spicy shredded jalapenos to make pizzas, nachos, cheese on toast, burgers and slow braises pop.
halopenos.com

TRACKLEMENTS SMOKIN' CHIPOTLE SAUCE
Smoked chipotle and scotch bonnet chillies mingle with lime, tomatoes, red peppers and coriander in this tongue-tingling flavoursome sauce.
tracklements.co.uk



BIG GINGER SAUCE CO ANGEL HOT SAUCE
A best-seller for the brand. Sweet, sour and spicy, it can be used in myriad ways, from dipping and dunking, to brushing over grilled meats.
bigingersauce.com



WHITE MAUSU PEANUT RAYU
Gently fried garlic, roasted peanuts, sesame and Korean chilli flakes, with a house-blend chilli mix and agave for sweetness.
whitemausu.com



SUBLIME BUTTER NO. 8 – RED CHILLI, SMOKED SALT & LIME
This piquant, warming, perfectly seasoned butter brings an umami kick to a huge range of dishes and baked goods.
sublimebutter.com



THE GARLIC FARM BLACK GARLIC KETCHUP
This finger-licking sauce combines the balsamic, tamarind undertones of fermented garlic, with a blend of spices. Almost like the lovechild of ketchup and brown sauce.
thegarlicfarm.co.uk



Chilli Crunch
THE WOOLF'S KITCHEN

This best-selling, Great Taste award-winning condiment brings bold, Asian-inspired flavour to adventurous shelves. Created by Dominique Woolf - winner of Channel 4's The Great Cookbook Challenge - it's inspired by her Thai roots and crafted in the UK. Crispy garlic and onions, shiitake mushroom powder and chilli flakes deliver irresistible texture and umami depth. Balancing heat, salt and a touch of sweetness, it's the kind of versatile flavour bomb you'll want to dollop on everything - from poached eggs and noodles, to grain bowls and even burrata. Vegan-friendly and free from additives, including MSG, it taps into the crispy chilli oil trend, making Woolf's Kitchen Chilli Crunch the standout condiment for delis and independents seeking high-quality, story-led products with serious flavour appeal.
thewoolfskitchen.com

Sichuan Chilli Crisp
YEP KITCHEN

Bold, fiery, and deeply addictive, Yep Kitchen's Sichuan Chilli Crisp has quickly become a cult favourite across the deli scene. Shallots, fermented beans, and premium spices deliver a perfect balance of heat and umami. Encapsulating the authentic flavours of Chengdu, but crafted in the UK, it's the only product of its kind using British cold-pressed rapeseed Oil, elevating everything from noodles and eggs, to a simple cheese toastie. Yep Kitchen is putting the real taste of Sichuan on the map. A must-stock product in 2025.
yepkitchen.com





Spicy Tomato & Caramelised Onion Chutney
THE BAY TREE

The Bay Tree believes that taste is one of life's great pleasures, and with the Bake Off culture boosting the idea of experimenting with flavours, many people are discovering that food can be fun and exciting. Made with a sense of adventure and a passion for tradition, The Bay Tree's goal is simple - to make the joy of nature's finest flavours a part of everyday life without the addition of any unnecessary ingredients or preservatives. From catering tubs to hospitality tinies, and a range of consumer sizes, The Bay Tree offers superior preserves, sauces, and condiments for everyone.
thebaytree.co.uk

Wild Garlic Sauce
TRACKLEMENTS

Taking a leaf (excuse the pun) out of the great tradition of foraging and using the best of the UK's seasons to make meals interesting Is Tracklements Wild Garlic Sauce. This delicate plant grows in abundance in UK woodlands from March to May but can now be enjoyed year round in this best-selling sauce. The perfect point of difference with steak or served with meaty white fish, or simply to breathe life into a potato salad.
tracklements.co.uk





A GROWING OPPORTUNITY

Man's best friend can be a boon to fine food retailers, too – it just takes a holistic approach

"THIS CATEGORY IS ONLY GOING ONE WAY – UP"

Ollie Harkus of Some Grub predicts the future for the pet supply market

The demand for functional feeding, natural ingredients, and hypoallergenic formulas is outpacing the wider pet food market, and there are a few key shifts happening:

- A move away from generic "premium" labels towards evidence-backed functional nutrition
- A rejection of fillers and grains in favour of real, digestible ingredients
- A growing interest in novel proteins, driven by sustainability and allergy concerns
- An increase in supplements and personalisation, as pet owners look for more tailored nutrition
- We're focused on delivering nutrition that genuinely improves pets' health while reducing environmental impact

We're a nation of pet lovers, with more households than ever before adding a furry friend or two (or more) to their family. While supermarkets may be the natural destination for bulk-buying daily pet food, due to their convenience as well as the many online players offering tailored health-boosting options, there is a valuable opportunity for independents here too.

Delis, food halls and farm shops might not seem like the most obvious choice when it comes to pet supplies, but with the raft of better quality products on the market it makes perfect sense. "Fine food retailers have built their reputation on quality and curation. Their customers trust them to stock the best, whether that's food for themselves or their pets," says Ollie Harkus, co-founder of insect-based dog snack brand Some Grub. "The difference with independent retailers is the space they have to tell a product's story. Discovery-driven purchasing is key in this category, and when customers can see, feel, and understand the benefits of a product, they're more likely to make the switch."

The other key thing to consider is the tangible value of customer experience, says James Lacy, CEO and co-founder of Denzel's. "People go to independent fine food retailers for an elevated experience that they can't get at home or at the supermarket, and a lot of people will take their dogs with them in the same way as they would their child – and they wouldn't make that experience only for themselves and not their child or dog."

These moments hold tangible results for Speciality Food readers. "These customers stay longer, they spend more money and they have a better experience, so retailers get more value out of being dog friendly. If a place puts pupiccinos on their menu and sells dog treats, people will enjoy the experience with their dogs and talk about it, post on social media about it. They'll also return because they know that place will cater to their whole family."

With pet treats, similarly to kids' snacks and colouring-in kit, not commanding a high price, there's only so much revenue that can come directly from the sales of these products, says James. "However, what retailers do see is a significant increase in customer experience and sentiment, and repeat business from that customer coming back to buy more coffee, more drinks, more food, etcetera, because they have had a great experience – and are more likely to stay longer while the whole family (including the dog) is happy and settled."

It's worth bearing in mind that by not catering to pets, you might well be turning potential customers away – if they don't feel that their pet is welcome they're less likely to spend time in your establishment.

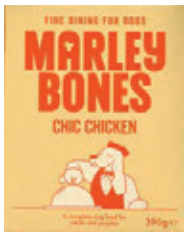
Levelling-up pet nutrition

Pets have long been a member of the family, but these days their humanisation is impacting what they're fed with too – pet food is now being treated, by brands in the fine food sphere at least, in the same way as human food, "Pet parents today are more informed than ever. The humanisation of pets is no longer a trend – it's the norm. A lot of owners are applying the same scrutiny to their pet's diet as they do to their own; some even build spreadsheets, and that's driving demand for food that goes beyond just "premium" branding," says Ollie.

The negative impact of the poor nutrition found in ultra-processed foods isn't just a concern in the human food sphere – it's shaping the pet industry too. "Social media and word-of-mouth have played a huge role in exposing the impact of ultra-processed pet food, and the numbers speak for themselves—over 50% of vet visits are now linked to allergies. Pet owners are waking up to the hidden cost of cheap, low-quality food, and they're looking for real nutrition that actually supports their pet's health. The shift is clear – functional nutrition is now the expectation, not a bonus."

According to Ollie, customers are looking to cover-off a range of tick boxes from their pets' food and snacks: they're looking for gut health, functional health benefits, ingredient transparency and sustainable, and novel proteins.

2025 SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE STOCK CHECK



MARLEY BONES CHIC CHICKEN
Wet food formulated by vet nutritionists to ensure optimum nutrition. Contains chicken, vegetables and superfoods.
marleybones.com



IT'S THE DOG'S PEANUT BUTTER BALLS
Delicious, healthy and all-natural peanut butter balls for dogs.
itsthedogsofficial.com



SCRUMBLES DRY FOOD FOR PUPPIES & TOYS
A hypoallergenic, natural recipe for small and medium puppies, free from allergens, with DHA and probiotics for digestion.
scrumbles.co.uk



DENZEL'S BRUNCH BITES
Low calorie training treats containing salmon and avocado.
denzels.co.uk



MR BUG THE FRUITY ONE
A delicious and sustainable insect based dog treat that combines protein-rich mealworms with apple, cranberry and honey.
mrbug.co.uk

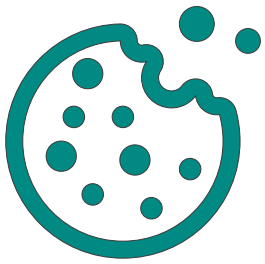
A TASTE OF TRADITION

Retailers are always looking to the future, but what if the key to success could be found in the past?

What do you reach for when you're craving comfort food? It's certainly not chocolate-coated insects, fruit leather bars or a protein shake! While all these products have their place in food retail, especially as consumers think more carefully about wellbeing, health, sustainability and a number of other purchasing considerations, no one working in food and drink can deny the pull that traditional and nostalgic foods have had over the last 12 months.

There's a growing consumer preference, says Good Food Studio development manager, Gabriel Bray, towards retro products, and those perceived as more 'wholesome', likely influenced by an increased awareness of ultra-processed food. "This shift suggests that the recent nostalgia trend isn't just about sentimentality – it's also becoming a marker of quality and authenticity," he says.

Ensuring you follow new trends, while embracing the old, is key in fine food retail today, say insiders. So, alongside those aforementioned insects, be sure to deliver a thread of homely, cosy-feeling lines across categories, showing them just as much love during promotions as the super-flashy boxes of newness.



2/3 OF GLOBAL **CONSUMERS** ARE SEEKING OUT **TRADITIONAL** COMFORT FOODS AND SMALL **INDULGENCES** FOR **SELF-CARE** PURPOSES

FMCG GURUS



5 WAYS TO TAP INTO THE NOSTALGIA TREND

- Seek out products with traditional and nostalgic branding. Chequers, candy stripes and dots all draw the eye, as do vintage-style tins, and even oldy-worldy typefaces on packaging. Consumers are being drawn to products that will look bring them a sense of cosy comfort when they look in their cupboards or pantries

- Retro puddings are 'in'. Big, blousy desserts are here to stay and should be a major consideration in your café or foodservice operation, deli counters and even the freezer aisle. Try sampling roulades, gateaux, billowing lemon meringue pies, trifle pots, blancmanges and cream-laden Victoria sponges. And create some fun inspiration around your product lines on social media – maybe showing how to use bottles or jars of chocolate sauce and local ice cream to make banana splits or sundaes at home

- When it comes to snacks, although shoppers are being drawn in by wellbeing claims, they're still totally on board with the classics, and crisps will never stop being part of their 'treat me' experience. The flavours most resonating at the moment tally with tradition – consumers are being drawn to meaty varieties especially, from good old roast beef and mustard to ham or chicken. Don't forget to stock up on prawn cocktail too, with some excellent premium options from artisan makers now available

- The rattle of a biscuit tin is so evocative of many people's childhood memories. Remind shoppers these aren't just for gifting occasions by putting them front and centre in tasting sessions, maybe with little cups of tea for dunking. Show them how gift tinned biscuits can play a part in their self-treating experience

- Sweets are so much more appealing decanted from big glass jars, or sold in miniature jars reminiscent of traditional candy shops. If you have space and resource, set aside an area for your own tuck shop, or pre-pack pick 'n' mix sweets into decorative bags as a grab and go option

STOCK CHECK

SPECIALITY FOOD MAGAZINE 2025



SECOND STREET ROASTED HAZELNUT TOFFEE BRITTLE DARK CHOCOLATE

The Irish maker's irresistible plant-based toffee brittle, enhanced with hazelnuts, and coated in smooth Belgian dark chocolate.

secondstreetbakeshop.com



BROWN BAG CRISPS ABERDEEN ANGUS BEEF & ONION

A classic pairing of succulent Aberdeen Angus roast beef, with a bold hit of onion. Free from gluten and dairy.

br**ownbagcrisps.co.uk**



ENGLAND PRESERVES CHERRY AMOUR JAM

Deeply flavoured, with a hint of almond. This jam is made with nearly 60% cherries sourced from a historic orchard in Essex.

englandpreserves.co.uk



COTTAGE DELIGHT CHEESE BOARD CHUTNEY

This chutney brings the warm taste of British Bramley apples and figs to the table in a chutney that bursts with fruity goodness.

cottagedelight.co.uk



THE GREAT BRITISH PORRIDGE CO RED BERRY & PUMPKIN SEED

A healthy and balanced start to the day. Combines British wholegrain gluten-free oats with goji berries and raspberries. Naturally sweetened with dates and coconut cream.

greatbritishporridgeco.co.uk



FARMHOUSE BISCUITS FARMHOUSE OAT FLIPS

A key line for the brand and one of its biggest sellers. These are packed with chunky oats, delivering a toasty, warm, sweet flavour and crumbly texture customers love.

farmhouse-biscuits.co.uk



Peppermint Teas
SUMMERDOWN

Summerdown brings you a range of 100% plastic-free restorative herbal teas, all made from the essential herbs grown on the brand's RSPB Fair to Nature certified Hampshire farm. The collection includes the original Peppermint tea, which is 'twice as minty' because Summerdown's Black Mitcham peppermint leaves are dried and then infused with the essential oil from its own distillery; a relaxing and soothing Peppermint & Camomile tea; and, for those in search of a truly comforting, shoulder-loosening brew, a mild and calming Camomile tea, made from floral camomile heads grown on the farm.

summerdown.com

Traditional Toffees
WALKER'S NONSUCH



Traditional sweets are making a comeback, and Walker's Nonsuch Toffee is leading the way. As one of Britain's oldest toffee makers, the family-run company of five generations offers rich, creamy Toffee Twin and Toffee Duo hammer packs, made with care for you to share. Twin features classic Original Creamy, while Duo combines Original Creamy and Nutty Brazil. Perfect for Father's Day or simple summer delights, these retro-style treats blend nostalgic flavours with modern appeal. With the signature toffee hammer included, just "whack, unwrap, and enjoy" each delicious bite. Walker's Nonsuch brings heritage confectionery into today's trend-driven market with timeless charm.

walkers-nonsuch.co.uk



FINAL CALL

Here at *Speciality Food* we're happily hopping out of Easter and full on into the summer season. Having recently returned from Farm Shop & Deli Show, we're bubbling over with ideas and inspiration.

Seeing so many new products and innovations reminded the whole team that this is an industry that never stands still, constantly evolving in line with ever changing consumer and market trends.

There was a huge amount of optimism in the arena at the NEC, both amongst stand holders and retailers, who (despite tricky financial times) have been buoyed by the recent spate of good weather.

It's amazing the impact a little bit of sunshine can have on shoppers. According to experts, sunlight increases the release of serotonin from the brain, making us feel calmer, happier, and focused. In this state of mind, consumers show a greater inclination to buy, and tend to spend more on their purchases because – studies say – they want to 'make the most of summer'.

With even more bright weather predicted on the horizon, it's crucial that speciality retailers maximise their selling potential, so they don't miss this window of opportunity.

For starters, ensure your social media is on point. Engage with followers, and work on ways you can build this following in the summer months via giveaways, competitions and publicising events. Use social media to regularly inform and excite shoppers about the new products they need to try this year.

We've seen businesses have brilliant success with simple devices such as chalking up 'What's New' on a blackboard, pinning this to their Instagram grid and Facebook account weekly.

Now's the time to pull focus on all the 'summery' products you've bought in – from canned wines and cocktails to salad dressings and picnicking snacks. Think carefully about promotions and positioning in-store, ensuring these items are visible, well priced, and look enticing. And don't forget to offer regular tastings – these make a massive difference to sales.

With the sun out, and excellent quality products in stock, the sky's the limit this summer.

We love hearing from our readers. Do you have a story to share or expertise to pass on? Please get in touch with charlotte.smith-jarvis@artichokehq.com

5 MINUTES WITH

NICHOLAS SPENCER CEO OF IBIS RICE



WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?
If you don't count paper rounds it was lining concrete gutters with aluminum and working in a skate shop, both started at the same time when I was 16.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
Chris Packham is a brand ambassador for IBIS Rice. I grew up watching The Really Wild Show and admire his ability to be a punk, an activist and such an accomplished TV presenter, conveying his passion for wildlife to so many.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU'VE EVER DONE?
A door-to-door sales job. The first door I knocked on I realised I hated it and apologised to the homeowner!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF YOUR JOB?
I've been living in Cambodia for nine years and we currently work with 2,000 farming families living in unique forest habitats – the better we do as a business, the better the outcome for farmers and forests. Connecting consumers so directly to these impacts is amazing – I have the best job in the world.

AND YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?
Everything has to come together exactly right each year, financing, audits, etc for us to meet our commitments to farmers, and when things get tight the pressure can be pretty intense with so many farmers' incomes are at stake.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST SUPPER?
Kuy Teav (Cambodian noodle soup) and a pint of Guinness.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?
"We'll get there"

FAVOURITE PART OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
So many people within the industry are passionate about it, and food is a universal language that can easily share joy and excitement.

LEAST FAVOURITE PART OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY?
It can feel that the food industry only works at mammoth scale and at glacial speed, so trying to effect change within it can be hard work.

WHAT IS THE WEIRDEST THING YOU HAVE EVER EATEN?
The more I have travelled and experienced different cultures, and the more we learn about the impact of what we eat on our health and the health of our planet, I actually think the weirdest things to have eaten are the almost plastic popping sweets I used to love as a kid.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?
Read and Destroy by Dan Adams.

SWEET OR SAVOURY?
Hmm. Well the official answer is savoury...





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CONTENT

Editor
Holly Shackleton, 01206 505110
holly.shackleton@artichokehq.com

Content Creator
Charlotte Smith-Jarvis, 01206 505981
charlotte.smith-jarvis@artichokehq.com

Art Director
Lee Whiteford
lee.whiteford@artichokehq.com

Published by
Artichoke Media Ltd,
Global House, Global Park,
Moorside, Colchester
Essex, CO1 2TJ

COMMERCIAL

Senior Account Manager
Jessica Brett 01206 505901
jessica.brett@artichokehq.com

Senior Account Manager
Louise Barnes 01206 508629
louise.barnes@artichokehq.com

Accounts
artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

Publisher
Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@artichokehq.com

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TRIED & TESTED



FIREBRAND BREWING CO
SHOREBREAK ALCOHOL FREE HAZY PALE
Long summer days spend lolling in the sunshine and supping on a refreshing drink are very nearly upon us, and with more interest than ever in non-alcoholic options it was with great interest that I sampled this beer... and it doesn't disappoint. Refreshingly hoppy with tropical notes thanks to being brewed with simcoe, citra and cascade hops, its a moreish easy drinker without the hangover.
firebrandbrewing.co.uk

PEAT'D ORIGINAL OAK SMOKED TOMATO SAUCE
It's no exaggeration to say that this is one of my favourite culinary discoveries of 2025 thus far. An absolute flavour bomb that is great in a wide range of dishes – from straight-up with pasta to pizza sauce and slow-cooked meat – it's now a non-negotiable in my store cupboard. Made using peat from the Isle of Islay and hand-smoked in small batches, it's a must-buy for anyone who's a fan of smoky flavours... And a no brainer for BBQ season.
peatd.com

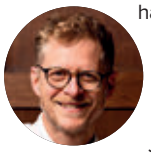




MOMO X NATOORA
BLOOD ORANGE KOMBUCHA
Speaking of delicious drinks minus the hangover, MOMO's collaboration with Natoora is an eye opener for seasoned and newbie kombucha drinkers alike. While some kombuchas on the market are overly sweet, like soft drinks with a fermented tang, this tipple has a refreshing blood orange taste without any unnecessary sugariness – making it a great choice for grown up non-drinkers looking for a health-giving and thoroughly delicious beverage. Note: only available until July, so act fast!
momo-kombucha.com

THE INDEPENDENT SHOPPER

Alistair Craig, head chef of The Montagu Arms



At The Montagu Arms, we offer a diverse and carefully crafted house menu that reflects our commitment to exceptional dining. For families seeking a relaxed atmosphere, Monty's Inn, our traditional country pub, provides the perfect setting. If guests prefer to dine outdoors, our picturesque English country garden offers a charming alfresco experience surrounded by nature. Finally, for a more refined atmosphere, our smart wood-panelled dining room promises an intimate and sophisticated setting.

Our guests are always treated to an unforgettable experience complete with fresh, and delicious local ingredients – we're proud of our commitment to sourcing the finest ingredients that showcase the very best of Hampshire's larder.

From honey to game dealers and artisanal cheese producers, we are very fortunate to have such an exceptional range of local produce right on our doorstep. Over the years, we have built strong, collaborative relationships with our suppliers, which has been incredibly beneficial for both sides. We're also proud to have our very own Kitchen Garden where we grow anything from Jerusalem artichokes to edible flowers.

As a hotel with deep roots in country heritage, the concept of forest-to-fork dining is immensely important to our offering. By working closely with carefully selected local suppliers, we ensure the produce we serve is not only top-quality but also reflects the current season and surrounding landscape.

One of our key suppliers, Owtons Butchers, has become integral to one of our signature dishes: slow-cooked lamb. From Owtons, we source high-quality lamb shoulder joints, which we braise with ras el hanout, onions, and garlic. The dish is served with creamy houmous and a fresh salad, creating a perfect balance of comforting flavours and the richness of the lamb – a truly warming and delicious choice for winter.

Being able to source components of our dishes from reliable and respected suppliers is essential to maintaining the quality and integrity of our offerings.

For our fish, we rely on Premier Fish, which is based near Salisbury, from whom we source fish caught along the South Coast. Each morning, I receive a WhatsApp message detailing the latest catch, ensuring our menu features the freshest fish available. One of the standout items we source from Premier Fish is my personal favourites: chalk stream trout. This amazing English rainbow trout is farmed sustainably, with the farms drawing water from the Test and Itchen Rivers.

For vegetables and cheese, we've been working with Country Fare for years, and they continue to provide us with exceptional produce. This includes Tunworth Cheese and British Camembert, a particular favourite, made from cows who have grazed in rural Hampshire. This cheese is made by hand and has a delicious sweet and nutty flavour.

As mentioned previously, our meat is from Owtons Butchers who are based near Hedge End. They sell some cracking produce sourced from Hampshire and I particularly enjoy the sirloin we use for our Sunday Roasts.

Each year I look forward to meeting new producers and tasting what this year brings. It's exciting to see what more we can do with our menu using the exceptional ingredients available to us.

PARTNER CONTENT

Garofalo



LIGHTEN UP THE ITALIAN WAY

Spring is the perfect time to brush away the culinary cobwebs

While Italian cuisine is renowned around the world for its rich and familiar ragus and pasta dishes, come Spring it's time to freshen up your customers' palates and offer something a little lighter to welcome the warmer weather.

While temperatures might not have yet hit the heady heights of summer, customers across the board are looking for lighter dishes to brighten up their repertoire as the sun shines (a little) more consistently.

Thankfully, Italian cuisine offers a raft of ingredients to make it easy for you to upgrade your customers' diets for the new season – and it doesn't take much, if any, investment to get the ball rolling.

Indeed, chances are that you'll already have many of the products already in your range; think flavour-packed pestos, fresh green vegetables and lemons to be liberally zested over everything – sweet or savoury – for a hit of spring/summer flavour.

As the weather warms up and shoppers begin to eat al fresco again, simple dishes that can be thrown together with minimum effort are the order of the day. Think artichoke hearts thrown together with seasonal asparagus, simple local potatoes and a sharp, lemony dressing, and topped with fine quality fish and a fresh Italian cheese such as Ricotta or Burrata.

Don't think that pasta is out until the cooler months, though. Tinned fish and beans mixed with a citrussy, herby dressing are delicious served with all manner of pasta shapes – long or short – and comforting classic spaghetti with meatballs can be updated for the warmer weather with the use of fresh instead of tinned tomatoes, perhaps enlivened with sweet roasted peppers.

This style of eating is familiar to Italians and our other Continental cousins, but perhaps less so in the UK, so spread foodie inspiration via recipe cards and simple POS located by your Italian staples such as fine quality olive oil.

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