

TRENDS

TO KNOW

JULY 2023

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DATASSENTIAL

SWEETEN UP THE MENU
WITH THE LATEST

DESSERT TRENDS

THE TREND

Desserts are always a consumer favorite, but it's a category where tried-and-true platforms (cakes, ice cream, cookies, pies) are always showcasing new trends and flavors.

Flavor is key for desserts: 84% of consumers say the flavor profile is extremely or very important when deciding on a dessert. Many of the flavors driving innovation today are global, including churro-flavored items, matcha, mochi, tres leches, and tiramisu. Seasonality is also key in the dessert category, with nearly half of consumers saying they look forward to seasonal and limited-time desserts from specific restaurants.

Nostalgic desserts are also back in action, including birthday cake being used as a flavor profile, funnel cakes (in new formats like funnel cake "fries"), and soft serve ice cream.

DAIRY REPORT

Dairy is obviously a key component in desserts, but there are new opportunities to make it the star of the show. Trending options like tres leches cake (+9% on menus over the past 4 years), cream cheese frosting (+4%), and soft serve ice cream (+3%) can leverage dairy in new and unique ways through clever flavor and format swaps. Dessert is an indulgent category by its very nature (63% of operators say their customers don't care about nutrition in desserts), so most consumers are open to desserts that call out rich ingredients like cream and butter, but using lighter swaps like yogurt can win over those remaining health-driven consumers. Cheesecake is another option with room to grow: 79% of consumers love or like it.

MENU INSPIRATION

BURNT BASQUE CHEESECAKE

Lapeer Seafood Market |
Alpharetta, GA
With sherry syrup and candied kumquat.

TRES LECHES TIRAMISU

Nick & Sam's Steakhouse | Dallas, TX
Three milk sponge cake, tres leches sauce
espresso, mascarpone.

FIOR DI LATTE SOFT SERVE GELATO

Ciccio Mio | Chicago, IL
Olive oil, chestnut honey, sea salt,
fennel pollen.

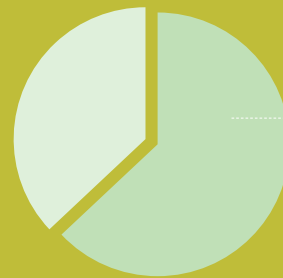
MATCHA FLAN

Joule | Seattle, WA
With black tea caramel and black
sesame sauce.

RICOTTA SEMIFREDDO

Stanza Italian Bistro & Wine Bar |
Salt Lake City, UT
Moscato strawberries, pistachio sable crumb,
vanilla mascarpone cream.

DATA FILE



63%

OF CONSUMERS HAD A
DESSERT IN THE PAST
DAY

Datassential's 2023 Dessert Keynote Report

TREND STAGE

UBIQUITY



Desserts as a whole are a consumer favorite category in the final Ubiquity stage of the Menu Adoption Cycle (MAC). But, like in so many categories, there are a wide range of dessert formats and flavors that fall in various stages of the MAC. Innovative global options like Basque cheesecake and Thai rolled ice cream are in the first stage, Inception, while well-known varieties in the last stage, Ubiquity, like cakes and cookies, are ripe for innovation and new ideas.

Consumers love dessert and the majority treat themselves to a dessert on any given day, but it's a category that is always showcasing new ideas and flavors. Global flavors, seasonal options, and nostalgic desserts are key opportunities. Consider on-trend options like tres leches cake, innovative cheesecake flavors, and new takes on ice cream.

KEY TAKEAWAY