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Packaged Food Trends

A look at the trends influencing food packaging design and innovation.

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Introduction

Making meals at home continues to be popular as consumers look to save costs and meet their health and taste preferences, creating opportunities for packaged food brands. However, rising prices leave packaged foods vulnerable in the event of future increases. Consumers are expected to continue spending on essential categories, but they may reduce volumes in non-essential categories, trade down, swap ingredients, or reduce spending on premium products. It is increasingly important to appeal to discerning and budget-conscious consumers.

While individual food categories have their own unique trends and consumer needs, this report explores some overarching themes impacting the packaged food market as a whole.

**The brands mentioned in this report are trademarks of their respective owners. Inclusion of these brands in this report is not meant to imply an association with or endorsement from the respective trademark owners.*

Demographic Changes

As birth rates decline, younger generations are shrinking while older consumers are growing. These demographic shifts pose issues for children's food categories, causing brands and products traditionally targeting kids to expand or re-invent themselves for older consumers. Euromonitor notes, "Categories like breakfast cereal and carbonated soft drinks have seen a rise in new brands that offer flavors and packaging that seem very child-orientated, but with ingredient lists and nutrition labels that are very much aimed at adults." There is also an opportunity for products with fiber, potassium, and B vitamins and those that help older consumers manage chronic conditions like hypertension, heart disease, or diabetes.

72% of consumers would switch brands if there were a product or package that was easier to use.
(Arthritis Foundation survey)

Accessible packaging can help drive brand loyalty among aging consumers with conditions like arthritis, dexterity limitations, vision impairments, and more. Ergonomic container shapes, easy-grip closures, tactile markings, larger font sizes, and more appeal to older generations. The Arthritis Foundation and Target have partnered to create guidelines to help packaging designers and engineers create easy-to-use packaging. Kellogg added NaviLens technology to several of their cereal packages. Their press release states, "Consumers can locate the boxes from several feet away, navigate to them, and hear their names, package sizes, and nutritional information."





Wellness Drivers

Health and wellness have been influential trends in packaged food for years, but the drivers are changing. The growing popularity of GPL-1 weight-loss drugs will likely cause significant shifts in food consumption. While U.S. use of these medications is currently relatively low (estimated at around 6%), increased adoption will have long-term impacts on packaged foods, including decreased demand for indulgent products, preference for smaller portions, and increased interest in lean proteins. The growing backlash against “ultra-processed foods” and the increased awareness of the importance of gut health are other health and wellness drivers impacting food categories.

Almost 50% of U.S. consumers are trying to reduce their consumption of processed foods. (Euromonitor)

When it comes to packaging, this may lead to demand for smaller sizes for single-serve products, including snacks, soups, desserts, and prepared meals. Prominent packaging claims, overt nutritional information, and clear health benefit callouts are increasingly important. Nestle’s Vital Pursuits brand was developed for people taking GPL-1 drugs, with a smaller serving size and bold protein callout.



Flavor Exploration

Today's consumers are more curious and adventurous in their eating and interested in experimenting with unique and unexpected flavors and ingredients. People across generations want to have new experiences and explore cultures other than their own, driving the popularity of international ingredients and globally inspired foods in home cooking. Spices and spicy foods are gaining in popularity, leading to interest in spices with flavor profiles that go beyond just "chili" to those with more specificity and regionality.

39% of global consumers enjoy trying new tastes and food combinations. (Euromonitor)

Packaging with authentic brand design that reflects the flavor profile and ingredient origins can add credibility and drive trial. Custom structural solutions and unique stock packaging – like the award-winning Moreno Cedroni bottle – attract consumers by standing out on the shelf and suggesting premium quality. Studio One Eleven® creates world-class custom solutions for packaged food brands of all sizes.





Bottle made with plant-based resins.



Farm-to-Fork Sustainability

Consumers care about sustainability more than ever, and packaged food brands can demonstrate their commitment to the environment in various ways. According to Euromonitor, “Today’s savvy consumers are invested in the product’s journey, not just the result. Prioritizing sustainable sourcing, local production, and sustainable farming practices proves a vital commitment to tackling food insecurity – a standout selling point.” There is growing interest in locally sourced products, organic formulations, plant-based diets, and sustainable packaging.

Retail sales of packaged food products with at least one sustainability claim grew at 7% CAGR 2020–2023. (Euromonitor)

Berlin Packaging’s dedicated team of sustainability experts helps our customers with sustainable packaging strategies and solutions that best fit their product needs. From sourcing to end-of-life, we quantify a package’s environmental impact throughout its entire life-cycle. With life-cycle assessments (LCAs), we can calculate a product’s environmental footprint – including its carbon footprint (greenhouse gas emissions) and water, mineral resource, and fossil fuel use – to help our customers make informed, objective packaging decisions.



We Believe Anything Is Possible®

With over 100 years in the packaging industry, more than 2,000 packaging professionals and a global network of suppliers and warehouses, we offer 50,000+ SKUs of plastic, glass, and metal containers, closures, and dispensing systems across all markets for customers just like you.

Our Business Model

Berlin Packaging combines the best elements of manufacturing, distribution and logistics, and value-added service providers to deliver cost-effective packaging solutions to our customers. Our mission is to improve our customers' net income through packaging products and services. We are the world's largest Hybrid Packaging Supplier®.



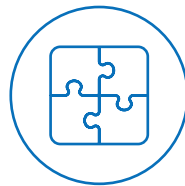
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