



As we see consumers seek natural and functional foods that offer an amplified experience such as enhanced flavor, color, texture, etc., we gain a greater understanding of how consumers' choices signal their lifestyles and personal values.

This month we take an in-depth look at these specific trends and how they apply to the world of beverages.

Beverages Trends Overview

The beverage sector is evolving just as the world of reformulated foods is. Within this field, healthier products are arising.

Beyond general health, mental health and focus have been spotlighted in recent years. Nootropics are the main characters in the beverage category. Most of you will be familiar with adaptogens like reishi or cordyceps mushrooms. Adaptogens are elements that help our bodies adapt to environmental stress and avoid the associated damage. Research indicates that reishi mushrooms protect against oxidative damage and also help boost the immune system (Liu et al., 2010; Su et al., 2015).

It seems every day, new drinks containing novel ingredients such as L-theanine, Lion's mane, and probiotics appear on the market, touting their health benefits. Meanwhile, consumers have more agency and make confident decisions, which makes them more likely to spend money on products that boost their health and wellbeing. They seek good health via nutrition as a protection mechanism for themselves.

Here is a closer look at how food and beverage companies are adapting their products according to the current trends and, especially, the novel products in the market.

Mental Health, Cognitive Health, and Other Health Benefits

As you might easily guess, these trends tend to interrelate. The case of physical and mental health is a good example.

In April 2022, the American brand 'Gym Weed' developed and launched a botanical hemp-infused energy drink formulated with lion's mane and L-theanine, Vitamins of the B group, and electrolytes. This formulation helps support recovery post-workout and increases enjoyment and motivation.



This is not the first time we have seen L-theanine in beverages aiming to regulate mental health. L-theanine is an amino acid that has proven capable of crossing the blood-brain barrier after ingestion, thus providing the efficacy to perform its role in

regulating mental health. It has a stress and anxiety buffering effect.

Gut health is strictly connected to mental health, something food scientists and researchers have been investigating for a while. This is reflected in newly developed beverages containing probiotics.

Probiotics are live microorganisms that can positively affect general human health and strongly contribute to mental health due to the gut-brain axis communication.

In January 2022, Spare tonic developed and launched a Probiotic sparkling tonic. This product contains protein from fresh whey, is non-GMO, and is rich in B vitamins.



US Brand Odyssey recently launched a sparkling natural Energy and Focus enhancing drink with Mixed Berry flavor. The product is infused with 2500mg of Lion's Mane and Cordyceps mushroom extracts and 85 mg of caffeine to create long-lasting vitality. These components are adaptogenic, which can increase the body's ability to resist the damaging effects of stress and promote or restore normal physiological functioning. The brand states that this product boosts clarity and focus.

The mixed berry flavor is also pleasing to consumers.



Naturally Functional Foods



The trend toward purchasing 'natural' products rich in functional ingredients is increasing, which is also reflected in the recent product launches. Naturally functional foods are booming.

The brand Yoi is a plant-based food and beverage company inspired by Japanese fermentation. Yoi's beverages are formulated with organic ingredients, including almonds, coconut, and pumpkin seeds. They are non-GMO, vegan, gluten-free, and dairy free. These aspects make Yoi's product very inclusive. Consumers can now find probiotic and prebiotic enriched plant milks where the prebiotic of choice is inulin. Inulin is a popular chicory root fibre that not only contributes positively to gut health but can also provide a sweet taste, hence allowing for sugar reduction in beverages.

Probiotics of choice are normally *S. thermophilus*, *L. bulgaricus*, *L. paracasei*, among many others.

The addition of these probiotic microorganisms is linked to promoting cognitive response, improved immune system, and general wellbeing. Using probiotics in beverages is less challenging than in complex food formulations because these live microorganisms are sensitive to temperatures and pH fluctuations. The use of probiotics in foods and beverages has skyrocketed its global market value from 42.55 billion USD in 2017 and is expected to reach 94.48 billion USD by 2024 (Insights, 2020).

How are you ensuring your consumer's cognitive health? Are you looking into gut health, adaptogens, or nootropics? What will best align with your consumers' needs?



Immune Health

It is no secret that immune health-boosting foods and beverages have been thriving for the last two years, and this trend will continue in the future.

Immune health beverages experienced 57% market growth from April 2019 to March 2022, according to Innova Market's Database.

Within this category, energy drinks and carbonates are rising more and more. These types of drinks are particularly popular among Millennials.

An example is Baya Energy – Mango Guava Sparkling Energy Drink, a drink launched by coffee giant Starbucks in January 2022. The product is characterized by enrichment with Vitamin C, which supports the immune system by exerting an antioxidant protective action.

Speaking of immunity-boosting sparkling water, in January 2022 US Brand Positive Energy launched, a new sparkling water energy formulated with a combination of immune-boosting vitamins and Zinc. It is a zero-calorie, zero-sugar product.



Environment and Food up-cycling

We cannot avoid talking about the trend related to food waste upcycling. Food waste has been a particular point of action for most companies and consumers. They feel accountable for environmental and ethical commitments and expect transparency about a brand's climate and ethical obligations (Intel, 2022).

With this in mind, we have witnessed companies discovering new uses for food waste. An example is what the Kellogg Company has done. Working with UK-based company Seven Bro7hers (2019), they created beer made from non-standard cereal pieces.



What is next, and what is here to stay?

What strategies are you putting in place to tackle food waste and produce a more sustainable environment? Do you and your end consumers share the same values?



According to Mintel's Global Consumer report, by 2030, consumers will better understand what makes them and their biological needs unique. This will be a key driver for companies, which will be pushed to boost personalisation, hence offering more custom drinks (and foods) as consumers become more aware of the connections between nutrition and health.

Food manufacturers are increasingly looking at reducing the amount of sugar in their products and increasing the fiber content (which is also an excellent strategy to improve and ensure gut health). In some cases - and this is something that is taking over more and more - we will need personalized foods and beverages. Products can, in fact, be tailored according to people's body type, body fat percentage, and even DNA profiles.

In this regard, the already mentioned aspect related to microbiome research, gut health, and gut-brain communication will drive more and more product development. Functional drinks promoting health will remain very popular, especially regarding cognitive health.

Products that promote calming effects on the mind, such as Marley's Mellow Mood Peach Raspberry Relaxation Tea from the US (a powerhouse of botanical elements), will gain popularity in supermarkets. We are looking at superfoods: something enriched not only with vitamins and bioactive components but also botanical elements.



Conclusions

In conclusion, the most prevalent beverage trends include products that enhance physical performance and general health, primarily mental and cognitive health. There is an extreme interest in immunity and bioactive components that can boost and support a regular and healthy immune system.

The trend toward personalization is taking over, especially since the Covid-19 outbreak, and is something that will further evolve into individualized nutrition.

Plant-based products and food waste up-cycling will continue trending for beverages and foods, with consumers becoming increasingly interested in sustainable products.

Where are you positioned within these trends, and how will you stand out from your competition in the future?



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We have one spot opening up end of September if you are interested to talk to us!

Referred links :

Global Food and Drink Trends 2022 |

Mintel.com <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20153767/>

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1697771536?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2221169117308420?via%3Dihub>

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<https://www.positivebeverage.com/>

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<https://www.foodbev.com/news/kelloggs-and-seven-brothers-create-more-beers-from-cereal/#:~:text=Kellogg's%20has%20expanded%20a%20collaboration,barley%2C%20creating%20a%20chocolate%20flavour.>

IFT-Health Strategies in Beverages, 2022 (<https://www.innovamarketinsights.com>)

<https://www.mintel.com/global-consumer-trends-2030>