



FLAVOR FORECAST

2026

Opportunities in the Food & Beverage Space:

Sauce from Somewhere

People are more flavor fluent than ever—consumers are embracing bold, next-level sauces, dips, drizzles, and spreads not just for taste, but as a way to explore the world. From micro-regional dips to bold, condiments, today's consumers are chasing authenticity, cultural connection, and layered flavor experiences that go beyond the basics.

Themes:

Mediterranean Mezze | Regional Heat | Japanese Curry | Saucy Experimentation

47% of consumers ate a globally-influenced food within the past week (beyond mainstream Chinese, Italian, or Mexican).

Datassential, Global Flavors Report, 2025

OUR PREDICTION:

Hyper-regional moments and bold cultural condiments will collide in new, purposeful ways.

Mc Flavorsolutions

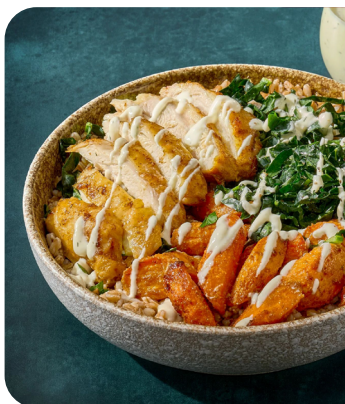
Visit our [website](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

Trend Bite

Mediterranean Mezze

The concept of mezze, or shared plates that make up an appetizer course, is infiltrating restaurant menus and homes alike. The vibrant condiments, spreads, and sauces that accompany mezze offer a playful way to explore the tastes and textures of the Mediterranean. Bold, zesty flavors like harissa, tzatziki, toum, and pomegranate molasses not only elevate sauces and spreads but also inspire flavor profiles for snacks, yogurts, and beyond.

Translated into taste by our experts:



Roasted Chicken

with Toum: Bold and unapologetically garlicky, Toum is the “miracle mayo” of the Levant, prepared with only four ingredients – garlic, lemon, oil, and salt. Check out a recipe from our culinary team pairing it with roasted chicken and a veggie grain bowl.



Roasted Red Pepper

Harissa Hummus: Harissa — the fiery condiment from North Africa — has been transformed into a **paste blending roasted red peppers, olive oil, chili peppers, garlic and more.** Our Product Development (PD) team applied it to hummus for a vibrant fusion of heat and depth.

Flavorsolutions

Visit our [website](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

Request a **FREE Flavor Sample**

Regional Heat

Szechuan chili crisp, sambal, and South-African Chakalaka are just some examples of hot takes on local condiments that have heat seekers excited. The overall global interest around heat is driving exploration into regional spicy sauces. The result is the discovery of craveable flavor profiles that reflect regional depth and cultural nuance, such as Mexican chamoy that artfully balances heat with salty, sour and sweet.

Translated into taste by our experts:



Sambal Crusted Lamb Chops: Crafted by our culinary team, this recipe will transport your tastebuds with the bold, aromatic flavors of Sambal - a spicy Indonesian condiment made from ground chili pepper.



Watermelon Chamoy Refresher: Featuring **Watermelon Flavor, Chamoy Type Flavor, Optify™ Heat Type Flavor, and Optify™ Juicy Modifier**, this PD-developed demo delivers refreshing watermelon notes, subtle fermented pepper nuances, and a balanced heat finish.

Japanese Curry

Curry-based flavors continue to be a global powerhouse. Regional takes on curry are exploding in popularity, and Japanese curry is no exception. Often called 'curry rice' or 'katsu curry' (with the addition of chicken cutlets), the Japanese take on curry is roux based and stew like with carrots, peas and onions. The thick, velvety rich curry has more sweetness and little to no heat compared to other curries, making it a great entry point to experience Japanese cuisine.

Translated into taste by our experts:



Fish and Chips with Curry Sauce: The culinary evolution of Japanese influence in British gastropubs and eateries introduces a reimagination of the classic fish and chips. Crafted by our culinary team.



Japanese Curry Sauce Seasoning Mix: This dry mix is inspired by Japan's convenient home-style curry. Developed by our seasoning team, it is rich and savory with warming spices and red pepper contributing mild heat.

+41%

predicted 4-year
growth of JAPANESE
CURRY on menus.

*Datassential,
US, '25-'29*

Saucy Experimentation

Around 30% of global consumers have increased their consumption of table and cooking sauces due to the expanding range of options*. With the rise in sauce experimentation, sauces and their flavors are finding new and creative applications. Sauces like Nuoc Cham are being reimaged in tacos, marinades, and street food-inspired snacks. Mumbo Sauce from Washington, D.C., is showing up in Korean fried chicken mashups. Consumers favor sauce-inspired fusions for their blend of familiarity and novelty.

Translated into taste by our experts:



Savory Donuts with Szechuan Chutney:

Playing off a newfound appreciation for a wide variety of traditional and innovative chutneys in Australia, this recipe is a perfect point of entry to the exciting flavor fusion of Indo-Chinese cuisine. Medu Vada, an Indian savory donut, stars as the vessel for sweet, spicy, and savory Schezwan Chutney.



**Mambo Sauce Sweet
Potato Chips:** Our PD team created a **Mambo sauce-inspired seasoning**, capturing the sweet, sour, and spicy profile iconic to Washington, DC, and applied it to a sweet potato chip.

The Takeaway

Sauces, dips, and drizzles are becoming vessels for regional flavor exploration. They're elevating everyday meals and sides, honoring heritage, and inviting experimentation through bold, micro-regional flair. This presents an opportunity to allow your consumers to experience the world through authentic sauces and sauce inspired profiles, no matter the end application.

[Click](#) to learn more about the McCormick 2026 Flavor Forecast® and check out all of the *Sauce from Somewhere* recipes.

Ready to translate trends in tastes?
We've got you covered.

[Contact us](#) to get started.



Click to request your
FREE flavor sample



Black Currant Labneh with Roasted Beets