

Market Intelligence Digest

Volume 2 Issue No. 19 | May 2020



The Department of Trade and Industry - Export Marketing Bureau (DTI-EMB) is mandated to oversee the development, promotion and monitoring of Philippine exports. The DTI-EMB provides the exporters the enabling environment to make them globally competitive.

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Savory Comfort Foods for Anxious Times

by Martin Pasco

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May 2020

COVID-19 has caused consumers huge anxiety in 2020. Hence consumers want foods to improve their mood. But what can meals, sides, and seasonings offer in response?



Mintel Recommends

Key into nostalgia via return to 'classic' dishes

Consumers want foods to improve their mood. Adults who feel anxious can turn to savory foods from more simple times i.e., childhood. Dishes consumers ate during childhood (cooked by Mom) would nourish them physiologically and emotionally. Meals and sides brands can dial up classic dishes to resonate with consumers the current context.

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Execute emotional benefit which transcends culture

The execution of 'comfort food' may differ between cultures. But global consumers share a common emotional bond to treasured childhood dishes, which will often share characteristics e.g., warming, creamy texture, and umami taste. Meals, sides, and seasonings brands can leverage this emotional benefit in messaging across regions.

Help consumers do modern healthier indulgence

Health-conscious consumers who turn to more indulgent savory foods e.g., carb heavy, will feel some guilt. Hence nostalgic foods will need elevating to reflect modern health consciousness. Meals and sauces brands can use plant-based foods to offer a 'dirty vegan' experience to consumers who seek more modern permissible indulgence.



Photo by Steyn Viljoen from Pexels

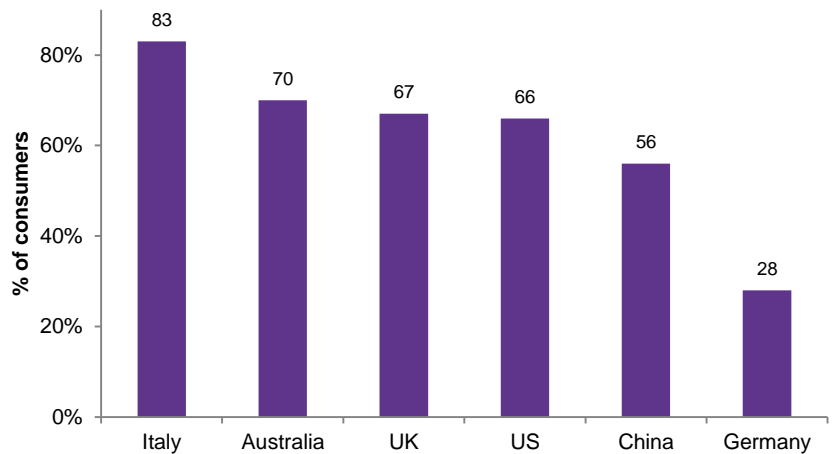
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Key into nostalgia via a return to classic dishes

Prepared meals and seasonings brands should flag their role in recreating the classic dishes which stressed consumers often turn to for comfort. In uncertain times consumers typically feel nostalgia for an era which was simpler and safer.

Global: consumers who are worried or extremely worried how COVID-19 will impact their lifestyle, 20-25 March 2020



Base: UK, Italy, Germany: 1,000 internet users aged 16+; Australia: 500 internet users aged 18+; US: 2,000 internet users aged 18+; China: 1,200 internet users aged 18-59, 20 March-25 March 2020 Source: Lightspeed/Mintel; Dynata/Mintel; KuRunData/Mintel; Mintel's Global COVID-19 Tracker.

The tastes and aromas of savory dishes (cooked by Mom) often transport adults back to their childhood.

Indeed, 2020 is a worrying time for consumers globally given the threat of a COVID-19 driven economic downturn.

Adults across the globe are worried that the virus will impact their lifestyle e.g., 66% of US adults and 83% of Italian adults.

Consumers will seek, often unconsciously, foods which enhance their mood i.e., 73% of US adults feel that their diet affects their emotional wellbeing. Also 53% of UK adults want food that 'makes me feel good now'.

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Consumers across the world want to improve their moods/emotional wellbeing

Food is already something consumers associate with mood and wellbeing, hence there is huge potential for mood-boosting foods and diets in the future.

SNACK TO IMPROVE MOOD

43%

of **Indian** consumers snack to improve their mood

LOOK FOR A MOOD IMPROVING DIET

40%

of **New Zealand** consumers would ideally like their diet to help improve their mood/wellbeing (eg. help to relax)

Photo by Pixabay from Pexels

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IS IMPORTANT

54%

of **Filipino** consumers say that managing emotional wellbeing is important and is something that describes them very well

Base: 1,000 internet users aged 18+ in each market

Source: Dynata/Mintel; Rakuten/Mintel

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Execute mood enhancement but, in an ownable way

Meal center, side dish, and seasonings brands can leverage their role in delivering the mood soothing benefit (offered by comforting foods) which has relevance across cultures.

The challenge will be for meals and sides brands to execute their role in offering emotional comfort as seen through their brand lens. Crucially, brands require an ownable execution to prompt trial (eg. Knorr Stock Pot for Bolognese) and to avoid driving sales for their generic category.

Indeed, the execution of 'comforting savory food' may differ between cultures. But global consumers share a common emotional bond (which transcends cultures) offered by treasured dishes from childhood made by Mom. Also these dishes will share characteristics e.g., warming, creamy texture, carbohydrate-heavy, or umami taste etc.

