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FOODBYTES

YOUR FREE DATASSENTIAL
TREND REPORT

FUTURE FLAVOR FORECAST
EATENTAINMENT

STADIUMS

SEASONAL FLAVORS

HOME RUN LTOS

shake things up with
the ultimate guide to
sizzling summer trends

summer's
back!

summer lovin'

TOP 5 GROWING FOODS, FLAVORS, & INGREDIENTS ON SUMMER MENUS



CAROLINA — UP 800%



FRESH MOZZARELLA — UP 200%



BLT — UP 175%



FLOUR TORTILLA — UP 150%



WHITE SAUCE — UP 100%

*The data above is representative of four-year growth in summer LTOs from INSIDER.



fruit, salad, & watermelon

ARE A FEW OF THE TOP ITEMS CONSUMERS MOST ASSOCIATE WITH AND LOOK FORWARD TO EATING DURING SUMMER

-Seasonal LTOs HotShot Report



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A surprising thing I learned

It's crazy to me that a lot of restaurants are now struggling with being able to keep their outdoor seating because cities are going back to pre-pandemic patio restrictions (read more on pg. 14). There are enough issues restaurants are dealing with right now; they don't need another wrench thrown into the mix. Aside from the investment operators put into outdoor seating, it's also a shame since we've seen how much consumers love al fresco dining, and summer is such a prime time for it.

My favorite summer flavors

A rise in temperature directly correlates to how much more I crave bubble tea, one of my fave summer treats. While I love milk tea, fruit tea smoothies (honeydew or mango are my go-tos) with tapioca are just so refreshing on a hot day. I've also recently discovered that my local grocery store stocks burrata, so during these unseasonably warm days we've been having in Chicago, I've been doing a lot of burrata toast topped with pesto eggs. So yummy with minimal cooking required, which is key for me to not be sweating up a storm in the kitchen.

Summer is my absolute favorite season. I live in Chicago, so after the blustery cold, dreary, winter that seems like it spans the entire year, there's nothing I love more than summer in Chi-Town. We've had a super steamy early May with unusually warm temperatures in the 90s already, but no matter how hot and humid it gets, I always vow to never complain about the heat because I'd much rather be miserably hot than miserably freezing. And after two years of the pandemic, I know I'm not the only one who's so ready to get back to having an amazing summer.

With summer vibes on the horizon (or already seemingly here depending on where you live), and pandemic restrictions loosened throughout the country, we thought it was perfect timing to officially welcome summer and scream, "Summer's back!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" from this rooftops in this issue of *FoodBytes*.

Just as fall is synonymous with pumpkin spice and apple everything, there are a few flavors that are quintessential to summer, such as watermelon and berries (watermelon and wild berries specifically are the top highest-indexing seasonal fruits on menus during the summer according to our *2022 Seasonality Trends Report*). But in the pages ahead we're also going beyond the more obvious summer flavors and showcasing the five flavors and ingredients we think should be on your radar this summer and even next.

Also discover what's happening with stadiums and eatertainment, two key areas consumers will be flocking to this summer as two-plus years of pent-up demand for a return to more normal social activities reaches a boiling point. And on the topic of sports, see how to hit a home run with seasonal specials as we showcase top-scoring summer LTOs from our SCORES platform.

Renee Lee Wege,
Senior Publications Manager

keep it peachy.

peaches are *the* top-indexing flavor in several seasonal summer LTO categories including:

- 🍑 beverage flavors (white peach)
- 🍑 seasonal tea
- 🍑 seasonal pie flavors
- 🍑 seasonal salad ingredients
- 🍑 sweet flavors

-Discover more seasonal flavor trends in our [2022 Seasonality Trends Report](#)

5 TRENDS TO WATCH THIS SUMMER

Even if you've already got your summer lineup set, you never know when you might have to improvise as ingredient shortages and supply chain issues continue to plague the industry. Plus, it's never too early to bookmark flavor inspiration for next year, right? Here are five key ingredients, flavors, and dishes to keep in the back of your mind for summertime innovation.



1. hearts of palm



These artichoke-like, hearty vegetables have been at the core of several seafood alternatives and were one of Datassential's Top 10 Flavors & Ingredients To Watch for 2022. Toss **hearts of palm** into refreshing summer salads, treat it just like artichoke and combine it with good ol' spinach dip (at left is Warm Hearts of Palm & Spinach Dip from Texas-based Fogo de Chao), simply serve spears on a summery charcuterie spread, sear it up like scallops, or take inspiration from hearts of palm pasta products to create lighter versions of a carby consumer favorite. And fun fact: Trader Joe's last year announced that its Hearts of Palm Pasta was its number-one selling pasta (yes, even though it's technically an im-pasta).



2. non-dairy ice cream

Non-dairy ice cream is another trend that made our flavors to watch list, and there's not much more synonymous with summer than cool ice cream. As consumers look to treat themselves to lighter versions of childhood favorites, vegan ice cream shops have popped up throughout the country, like Vaca's Creamery, the first all-vegan ice cream shop in Chicago. At left is the creamery's S'mores Sundae with cinnamon cookie crumble, toasted marshmallows, and chocolate sauce.

3. dragon fruit

Dragon fruit is one of the top-growing ingredients on beverage menus, increasing 107% over the past 4 years (MenuTrends). The vibrant, tropical fruit is also trending upward on menus overall (up 16% in the last year alone, a pretty big feat considering shrinking pandemic-era menus), and the top-growing fruit on menus today. Much of that boost has been from Starbucks' tropical Dragon Drink (at right), but expect to see more of this blushing beauty (its vibrant color adds to its Instagrammability, after all) in a variety of menu items, from cocktails to ice cream like the Mango Dragon Fruit Sherbet at right from Ballston Spa, NY-based Stewart's Shops.



I scored a 93 in SCORES!

Pickled egg adds a pop of color and acidity to fried pig ears at Frogs Leap Public House in Waynesville, NC.



4. pickled everything

From pickled jalapenos to pickled onions to pickled eggs, **pickled ingredients** can add just the right amount of zing to summertime staples. (Plus, with price increases and shortages of eggs recently, you might as well try to keep what you can get for longer, right?) Pickled red onions are one of the top-growing veggie ingredients on menus, growing 45% over the past 4 years (MenuTrends). Add brightness (both in color and taste) with a touch of pink, pickled onions on tacos or summer staples like hot dogs.

5. papaya

Papaya is known for its hydrating properties, making it perfect for keeping up with the summer heat. The fruit is often paired with fruits like peaches in smoothies (papaya juice is a key ingredient in hydration smoothies at Smoothie King) and is one of the highest-indexing fruits on summer menus. Papaya can even do double duty for operators: green papaya (which is just the unripe version of the fruit) takes on savory flavors in traditional, refreshing-for-summer Thai papaya salad.



Bright, crunchy, refreshing papaya salad (like this one from Cafe De Bangkok in Fort Collins, CO) is a natural fit for summer.

> 50%

OF CONSUMERS ARE
VERY INTERESTED
IN REVISITING AN
EATERTAINMENT
EXPERIENCE

-Datassential Eatertainment HotShot Report



GET SOCIAL WITH SOCIAL NACHOS,
SAYS PUNCH BOWL SOCIAL.

*Shown here is the Denver-based
eatertainment chain's Cauliflower Nachos
with corn tortilla chips, queso Oaxaca,
sliced jalapenos, roasted cauliflower, and
pickled onions.*

summer vibes only

Two-plus years of the pandemic has led to pent-up demand from consumers who are more than ready to get back to a life before COVID. Warm weather and sunny skies are on the horizon, opening doors for the return of summer activities such as attending sporting events and grabbing food and drinks with a bit of entertainment on the side. According to *Fast Casual*, restaurants are "enjoying a renaissance as diners rediscover the joy of socializing and mingling while enjoying great food and company" at eatertainment venues. Here's what's going on in these key summertime segments.

1.



spotlight on STADIUMS

Summertime brings the return of outdoor activities such as root, root, rooting for the home team. Below we're going around the horn and diving into three developments to know.

1. Over-the-top, unique stadium foods are back and bigger than ever before. Pictured far left is a **\$151 World Champion Burger** sold by the Atlanta Braves that includes a Wagyu patty, gold leaf-wrapped foie gras, grilled lobster tail, cage-free eggs, and truffle aioli. For a cool \$25K, fans can get it with a replica World Series ring. Other new stadium foods include the above-pictured **Banh Mi Dog** at Nationals Park and **Brisket Egg Rolls** and **Alligator Corn Dogs** at the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Field.

2.



2. Being short on staff can lead to even longer lines this summer at stadiums. Sports fans at Purdue's Alexander Field can rest easy, though, as Purdue Athletics teamed up with hospitality partner Levy and two drone delivery services to **pilot the delivery of concession staples like water, hot dogs, and chips, via drone.**



3.

3. Also capitalizing on consumer convenience is Instacart's debut of **AI-powered checkout technology** at Boston's Fenway Park. The Caper Counter shown at left allows hurried fans to simply place their concession choices on the device, and then pay. **Instacart says the smart checkout system cuts transaction times by 65%.**

EATERTAINMENT

UPDATE



Where do you go after you're sick of your home and office?
Your 3rd Spot is hoping to become your, well, third spot.

Your 3rd Spot, a 30,000-square-foot eatertainment venue, is set to open the first of 9 locations across the country in June in Atlanta. The new venture founded by AMP Up1 Hospitality aims to be consumers' go-to third spot away from homes and offices and boasts a restaurant, bar, beer garden, and patio stocked with games based on "replayability" such as bowling, curling, air hockey, billiards, shuffleboard, and ping pong, among others. According to *Atlanta Magazine*, some of the food and beverage options Your 3rd Spot plans to offer include small plates like cucumber sushi, Brazilian cheese bread, waffle fry poutine, trendy matches lattes and mochi donuts, and a variety of drink options like build-your-own cocktails.

QUOTE TO KNOW

As the pandemic appears to subside, at least one major chain is banking on the return of experiential dining that includes entertainment options such as arcade games.

Dave & Buster's opened eyes in April when it announced the acquisition of 50-location family-entertainment concept Main Event for \$835 million.

Some in the industry feel there's pent-up consumer demand for such experiential dining after more than two years of pandemic-related inconveniences like periodic lockdowns or mask mandates.

-The Food Institute

OPPORTUNITY

32%

OF CONSUMERS SAY NEW AND BETTER FOOD OPTIONS WOULD MOTIVATE THEM TO VISIT EATERTAINMENT VENUES MORE OFTEN

-Datassential's Eatertainment Hot Shot Report


score!

HERE'S HOW TO HIT A HOME RUN WITH SUMMER LTOS

Datassential's SCORES database showcases how consumers have rated thousands of LTOs and new menu items, including ones that specifically debuted during the summer season. When it comes to seasonal LTOs, there's a lot at play, from using what's naturally in season to creating menu items that will grab consumers' attention at a time when at-home grilling or social gatherings like BBQs or sporting events could also be competing for a share of consumer spend. Below are four of the top summertime LTOs from last summer, ranked by their overall composite score and annotated with insights on what made them stand out. **What inspirations and lessons can you take from these LTOs that hit it out of the park?**

Jul 2021 \$2.00

Pollo Tropical
CUBAN HOT DOG



Starts with an all-beef frank on a soft hot dog bun and is then topped with ham, Swiss cheese, pickles, papitas and finished off with a drizzle of mayo-mustard.

Unbranded PI: 47%	☆☆☆
Branded PI: 64%	☆☆☆
Uniqueness: 57%	★★★★★
Frequency: 25%	★★★★★
Draw: 52%	★★★★
Value: 71%	★★★★★

SCORE 99
superstar


At \$2, Pollo Tropical's Cuban Hot Dog scored the best in Value with 71% of consumers saying the item was a good value for the dollar amount menued.

With 68% of consumers loving or liking hot dogs (FLAVOR), it's no surprise that putting a unique Cuban twist on the summer staple elevates the LTO, scoring big points with consumers on its Uniqueness score.

Everything's better with bacon, right? Farmer Boys Restaurant puts a twist on classic caesar salad with flame-grilled chicken, bacon, and diced avocado.

Jun 2021 \$8.99

Farmer Boys Restaurant
CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD



A classic with a twist, featuring flame-grilled chicken, hand-diced Hass avocado, hickory-smoked bacon, and Parmesan cheese on a bed of hand-chopped romaine lettuce accompanied by Farmer Boys' signature Parmesan-crusting sourdough toast.


Unbranded PI: 58%	★★★★★
Branded PI: 71%	☆☆☆
Uniqueness: 37%	☆☆☆
Frequency: 27%	★★★★★
Draw: 44%	☆☆☆☆
Value: 46%	★★★★★

SCORE 99
superstar

Strong Purchase Intent scores boosts this salad into superstar territory.

Aug 2021 \$5.75

Coffee Bean And Tea Leaf
COOKIE BUTTER ICE BLENDED DRINK



Our cookie butter beverages combine our premium espresso with spice and brown sugar cookie notes to create a sweet & spicy treat.

Unbranded PI: 48%	★★★★
Branded PI: 71%	★★★★★
Uniqueness: 54%	★★★★★
Frequency: 31%	★★★★★
Draw: 60%	★★★★★
Value: 40%	☆☆☆


SCORE 99
superstar

This sweet cookie butter concoction scored well with consumers, appealing to the growing number of consumers who enjoy the decadent flavor (63% of consumers who have tried it love or like it, according to FLAVOR). Putting cookie butter in a drink plays off the popularity of other sweet dessert beverages such as caramel lattes or snickerdoodle shakes.

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf's cookie butter drink scored above average in four out of six SCORES metrics, leading to one pretty-near-perfect-scoring LTO.

Jun 2021

Mccormick & Schmick's
LOBSTER & SHRIMP ROLL

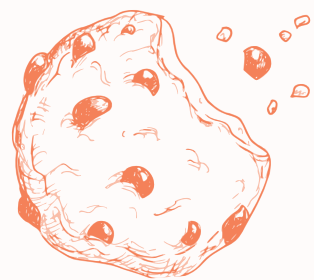


Served with Chesapeake Fries + Cup of Clam Chowder.

Unbranded PI: 56%	★★★★
Branded PI: 67%	★★★★★
Uniqueness: 49%	★★★★
Frequency: 25%	★★★★★
Draw: 63%	★★★★★
Value: -	

SCORE 99
superstar

Branded Purchase Intent is high for this Lobster & Shrimp Roll, which means consumers can see themselves purchasing the sandwich specifically at McCormick & Schmick's. Operators can look to this metric as an internal gut check on whether an item appears to align with a brand. For instance, an ice cream chain offering this same lobster roll would probably not score the same for Branded Purchase Intent.



A FEW FINAL TREND BITES

All amped up for summer, now? We hope so. Before we sign off from this summer trends issue, we're recapping how you can make the most of the trends and insights we highlighted and look forward to next month's issue that'll shed more insights on seasonal specials and LTOs.

3 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION ON SIZZLING SUMMER TRENDS

- **Think outside of staple summer ingredients.** While it never hurts to offer standbys you know consumers will love, such as ice cream and strawberries during the summer, go beyond what's expected to stand out in a sea of options. Whether it's going next-level with dragon fruit and papaya, or offering dining with a side of eatertainment, pinpoint ways you can differentiate from the competition.
- **Level up on foods and beverages.** Speaking of eatertainment, consumers are hungry (and thirsty) for new and unique food and beverage options at eatertainment venues. Add flair to your own menus with the type of next-level items offered at eatertainment venues, like the waffle fry poutine or create-your-own cocktails planned for Your 3rd Spot in Atlanta.
- **Capitalize on top-trending ingredients and flavors.** Don't want to stray too far outside the box? We got you. If you're looking for ingredients and flavors for menu or product innovation that are resonating with consumers, you can pretty much bet your pony on peach, which is a top summer flavor in everything from iced tea to salads to pies.



KEY QUOTES

Outdoor dining and patios have been a saving grace for restaurants during the pandemic, but as restrictions ease, many restaurants are in a bind this summer when it comes to al fresco options. In Portland, ME, changes to the city's outdoor dining regulations means most restaurants won't be able to have as much outdoor seating as the past two summers. Michele Corry, co-owner of Petite Jacqueline, won't be able to have outdoor seating because of regulations surrounding the number of toilets required per customer.

She told the *Portland Press Herald*, "Overall, it's going to be a disappointment to the locals and the tourists because they loved the outdoor dining, and it made them feel safe. I think there's this idea that we're back to normal, and it's not. We're still digging out of the hole caused by the pandemic."

In San Antonio, many restaurants also say patios and outdoor dining have become essential to their bottom line. *San Antonio Express-News* says, "Before the pandemic, patios were seen as a nice bonus option that might draw some business for a few months out of the year. But when there were strict occupancy limits for indoor dining rooms and customers were feeling more comfortable eating outdoors than inside, restaurant owners added patios or started beefing up the ones they had with more tables and better cooling and heating systems.

"Maybe it's a case of if you build it, they will come, but now you can find diners parked at an outdoor table at nearly any date on the calendar, and owners see patio dining as a permanent, year-round part of their business."

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT MONTH?

We touched on fiery-hot summer LTOs in this issue, but next month, we dive even deeper into the inferno. Get a sneak peek at our upcoming *LTO Keynote Report* and discover the deals and items getting consumers in the door. The countdown to the can't-miss issue starts now!



HUNGRY FOR MORE TRENDS? Check out last month's Report Pro releases!



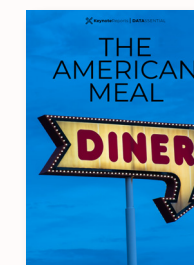
CC: Future of Fast Food
Want a side of insights with that? Drive right up for the latest dive into next-generation QSRs.

What's the future of fast food? Get a glimpse in this issue of *Creative Concepts*, which features data on what innovations consumers want to see at QSRs, including walk-up windows and outdoor seating. We also shine a spotlight on forward-thinking concepts that are redefining what fast food can be, such as operators offering plant-based Nashville hot "chicken" sandwiches and plantable kids' meal packaging.



WB: Global Desserts
Looking for a sweet sugar rush? Power through your day with these sweet insights.

If you've got sweets on your menu or product line, don't miss this issue of *World Bites*, because it's packed with desserts from all over the world. Treat yourself to insights on everything from multi-layered medovik honey cake to mango sticky rice to sticky-sweet malva pudding and gulab jamun.




Keynote Report: The American Meal
How are Americans eating today? Dig into all the insights surrounding the American meal.

The concept of the "American meal" is not singular. We eat gathered around our tables, at our desks, in our beds, and while driving our large vehicles on our endless highways. What we eat, how we eat, why we eat, and when we eat is just as diverse and unique as each of us. Discover it all in this *Keynote Report*.




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