

# **BARRY CALLEBAUT RELEASES 'TOP CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY TRENDS 2026 & BEYOND' REPORT**

Powered by our new Future of Taste trends framework, the report reveals the innovation trends and consumer shifts set to shape the future of taste within the chocolate confectionery category.

- **Built on extensive quantitative and qualitative studies, the report identifies the key consumer trends shifts shaping the future of chocolate confectionery.**
- **With consumers seeking more emotional and connected value, sensorial experiences, and purpose-driven products, the report aims to empower industrial manufacturers to innovate with confidence and create chocolate experiences that deliver value.**

**Zurich/Switzerland, February 3, 2026** – Barry Callebaut, the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa solutions, unveils its Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends 2026 & Beyond report, powered for the first time by its new 'Future of Taste' trends framework – a global methodology built to provide a forward-looking view of how chocolate confectionery is evolving and what innovation forces are reshaping the industry. With rapidly changing consumer expectations, this report delivers strategic clarity for brands seeking to innovate with confidence and secure long-term growth.

This edition comes at a moment when the chocolate category is undergoing significant evolution. Fluctuating cocoa prices, shifting consumption behaviors, and new expectations around value are forcing brands to rethink how they innovate. While consumers remain deeply committed to the emotional experience of chocolate confectionery, they increasingly expect purpose-driven creation, cleaner profiles, richer sensory experience, and formats that justify premium price points.

This year's report highlights these shifts and frames where the next growth opportunities will emerge in chocolate confectionery in the years to come.

## **A new multi-layered methodology to decode the future of taste in chocolate confectionery**

The 'Future of Taste' methodology brings together a multi-source intelligence model designed to decode the future of chocolate confectionery. The report draws on:

- A partnership with WGSN, the world's leading trend forecaster, leveraging social data, curated influencer signals, and future-focused forecasts.
- A 24-market, 24,000-person survey (conducted by Barry Callebaut in collaboration with Walr and WGSN in September 2025), filtered to respondents who purchased chocolate confectionery in the past 12 months.
- Qualitative taste diaries from consumers in the US, Brazil, India, and the UK.
- 20 expert interviews with chefs and food and drink specialists across 13 markets.
- Google Trends analysis tracking fast-growing ingredients and formats in chocolate confectionery (Oct 2023 to Sep 2025).
- Proprietary trend scans and case studies gathered by Barry Callebaut's Consumer and Market Intelligence teams worldwide.

This combined intelligence dataset creates one of the industry's most robust and future-focused views on taste and innovation in chocolate.

### **The five chocolate confectionery trends defining 2026 and beyond**

#### **1. 'Minorstone' Confectionery**

Chocolate remains deeply tied to life's celebrations – big or small. From workplace wins to personal achievements, people increasingly mark 'minorstones' with indulgent treats. 87% of consumers say they enjoy celebrating smaller or non-traditional milestones with friends and family.

#### **2. New World Chocolate**

Younger consumers are seeking new and adventurous products, influenced by new cultural powerhouse countries such as South Korea. Gen Z and millennials seek Asian ingredients such as matcha, calamansi, and yuzu. 57% of consumers say their food and drink habits have changed in the past year – rising to 71% for Gen Z and 65% for millennials.

#### **3. Low & No Confectionery**

Global taste palates are shifting toward less sweetness, more nuance, and shorter ingredients list. Leading brands and innovators are using fresher, fewer, and more transparent ingredients. 75% of consumers actively try to avoid processed foods, and 83% look for shorter ingredients lists when buying chocolate confectionery.

#### **4. Nutrition-boosted bites**

Portion size is becoming a strategic lever for brands. Consumers are increasingly seeking mini and bite-sized confectionery formats that are flavor-rich and nutrient dense, with added ingredients

that support energy and gut health. Globally, 38% of consumers agree that portion-size is very relevant, with an additional 44% of consumers finding it somewhat relevant.

## 5. Sensorial confectionery

Multisensory chocolate is surging in popularity as consumers look for novel experiences in food that elicit excitement and defy expectations. What began as 'instagrammable' treats is now a full sensorial movement. 42% of consumers find chocolates that blend sweet and savory flavors very relevant to them while 44% are highly drawn to unexpected textures, rising to 52% among Gen Z and millennials.

### **Strengthening customer experience through trends leadership**

The launch of our new Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends 2026 & Beyond report marks a strategic milestone for Barry Callebaut's customer experience agenda, offering brands and partners a clearer view of emerging tastes and helping them accelerate innovation with precision.

"Our ambition is to be the trusted advisor for our customers' brands. The Top Chocolate Confectionery Trends 2026 & Beyond report, built on our new 'Future of Taste' methodology, strengthens that commitment. By translating deep insight into clear opportunities, we help our customers innovate with purpose, unlock brand growth, and deliver measurable commercial impact. This is how we create sustainable chocolate experiences that delight and empower our customers' brands to grow stronger, faster, and with confidence in a rapidly changing market." – Dries Roekaerts, President Customer Experience

### **Access the report**

The report featuring the five core trends is available on our [website](#).

### **About Barry Callebaut Group ([www.barry-callebaut.com](http://www.barry-callebaut.com)):**

With annual sales of about CHF 14.8 billion in fiscal year 2024/25, the Zurich-based Barry Callebaut Group is the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate solution provider for chocolate experiences across the full spectrum of chocolate, cocoa and non-cocoa alternatives – from sourcing and processing cocoa beans to crafting premium chocolates, fillings and decorations. The Group operates more than 60 production facilities worldwide and employs a diverse, committed workforce of over 13,000 people. Barry Callebaut serves as a trusted partner for the entire food industry, from large-scale food manufacturers to artisanal and professional users such as chocolatiers, pastry chefs, bakers, hotels, restaurants and caterers with Callebaut® as its main global brand. The Barry Callebaut Group is dedicated to making sustainable chocolate the norm – helping secure the future of cocoa and improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers. It supports the Cocoa Horizons Foundation, which aims to shape a sustainable future for cocoa and chocolate.

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