

SENSORIAL DELIGHT IN F&B

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF INSPIRATION FOR
SENSORIAL INNOVATION IN 2026.

WE'VE HIGHLIGHTED FOUR 'TASTER' SENSORY-
DRIVEN TRENDS FROM THE WORLD OF F&B THAT WILL
HAVE IMPACT IN 2026 - AND UNLOCK NEW
POSSIBILITIES ACROSS ADJACENT CATEGORIES

Multi-sensory food and drink is nothing new. Heston Blumenthal was pairing sound with seafood and designing flavour journeys years ago. But in 2026, what was once experimental has become expected.

Sensory trends in food and beverage now evolve at speed - intensifying, mutating, and re-emerging in new forms, driven less by novelty and more by cultural need.

As our lives grow flatter, faster and more digital, appetite shifts toward experiences that engage the whole body. The result is a renewed, escalating demand for flavour, texture and sensation that does more than taste good - it registers.

And let's not forget the impact of GLP-1s where the cultural value of eating shifts away from volume and towards meaning. Food and drink are no longer expected to fill us up; they're expected to hit different. In a world of reduced appetite, sensation becomes currency.

SENSORY IMPERFECTION

A push-back on broader hyper-engineered perfection and sameness, this is an extension of the pleasure of the artisanal – visible and perceptible sensorial imperfection and non-uniformity that serves as a short cut to trust, quality, and clean ingredients. Think cloudiness, non-uniform or soft carbonisation, variation in foam or texture, and shifting flavour notes – signalling freshness, life and naturality rather than over-engineered UPFs.



COLOUR SHIFT MOOD MAGIC

Numerous cultural drivers have ignited this space – seeking micro-moments of joy, playfulness and whimsy meet the desire for self-expression and social connection and currency through shareable transformation. This is seen in colour-shifting and reactive visuals that respond to interaction (mixing, dissolving, chewing) – already happening with spectacle-driven beverages and hyper-visual confectionery. Sensory cues include gradient shifts, sparkle and clarity-to-cloud transitions, bringing fun vibes through purposeful innovation.



BURNT BUTTER DEPTH, TOASTED GLOW

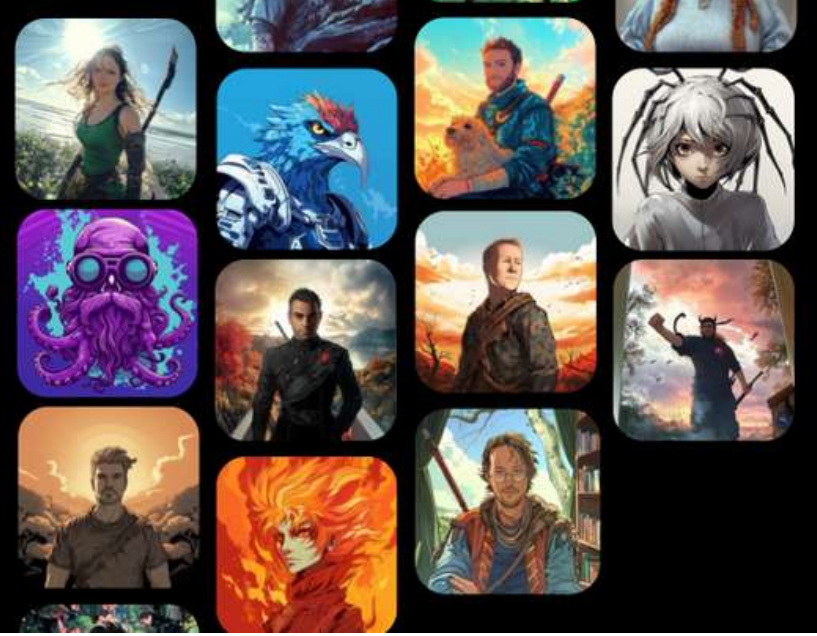
In bakery, ice cream, RTD coffees and 'grown-up' desserts, browned, toasted notes are emerging as a comforting sophistication cue. The driver is a sense of homeliness and warmth without extreme sweetness, leaning into the need for comfort and nostalgia. Sensory cues include nutty caramelised aroma, silky mouthfeel and lingering toast finish. These are premium, flavour-led products that support relaxation and small, meaningful rituals.



SAVOURY AS THE NEW REFRESHING

In electrolyte waters, functional soft drinks and alcohol alternatives, savoury-leaning refreshment is rising as a sugar-light alternative that still feels grown-up and satisfying. Driving this is purposeful consumption without sensory fatigue. Cues include saline lift, umami depth, mineral richness, crisp carbonation and a clean finish.





KEEN TO EXPLORE SENSORIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR CATEGORY?

Get in touch:

info@onestrategystudio.com

Naomi Kolawole, Nicola Avis + our virtual team “The 5”

