

The Bread Category Is on the Rise

Emerging consumer health demands, a desire for more ethnic/gourmet varieties, and more functional, flavorful, and fun products are reshaping the bread market, and the category is perfectly positioned to bring in the dough.

While 30% of consumers surveyed for a 2013 Packaged Facts report strongly agreed that they're cutting back on consumption of white bread and 26% somewhat agreed, the future for the \$13.4 billion U.S. bread market looks good. In fact, eight in 10 adults reported buying the same amount or more packaged, branded, and sliced bread in the last six months, according to Mintel's *Bread and Bread Products—U.S.*, a 2014 report. Consumers are increasingly preparing sandwiches themselves, and away-from-home sandwich consumption remains close to its peak in March 2013, according to Technomic.

Two-thirds of consumers bought Hispanic breads (e.g., tortillas, taco shells) in 2013; 42% bought wraps/general flatbreads (non-ethnic); 41% croissants; 41% Italian breads (e.g., focaccia, ciabatta); 37% seasonal breads (e.g., pumpkin); 36% flavored/artisan breads; 35% Middle Eastern breads (e.g., pita, lavash, naan); 29% egg-based breads (e.g., challah, brioche); and 28% pretzel bread/rolls, according to Mintel.

What are some of the hot product concepts in bread? Smaller portions (e.g., demi-loaves) and fun shapes for kids (e.g., *Pepperidge Farms Honey Whole Wheat Goldfish Bread*) have high appeal. Watch for "super functional" forms of bread (e.g., Rich Foods' *Classic Hoagie Flats* and *Flatilla* pockets for foodservice). Reser's Stonemill Kitchens introduced flavored artisan sourdough bread bowls. Pepperidge Farm's *Bake-at-Home Artisan Crafted Breads*, Pillsbury's *Artisan Bread Mixes*, and Alexia Foods' *Ancient Grain Frozen Rolls* made with teff should appeal to consumers seeking an authentic, distinctive bread.

A *Smoked Gouda Chicken on Brioche Sandwich* at Wendy's and a *Big N' Toasted Texas toast breakfast sandwich* at Dunkin' Donuts are examples of the ways in which breads are becoming the new restaurant differentiator. Subway menus a *9-Grain Wheat Bread* baked on premise; Panera Bread

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offers freshly baked flatbread sandwiches.

Pretzel, brioche, English muffin, Texas toast, onion rolls, multigrain, artisan, panini, flatbread, marble rye, and Cuban breads were among the fastest-growing restaurant burger and sandwich carriers in 2013, according to Datassential *MenuTrends* data. Flatbreads (e.g., naan, pappadum, lavash, pita); ancient grains (e.g., kamut, spelt, amaranth); non-wheat flours (e.g., rice, millet, peanut); ethnic flours (e.g., fufu, teff, cassava/yucca); and seeds (e.g., chia, flax) are among the 2014 hot culinary trends involving breads cited by American Culinary Federation chefs surveyed by the National Restaurant Assn. in 2013.

Bread is overlooked as an appetizer. Diners are more likely to order garlic bread, bread sticks, or cheese bread as an appetizer than salsa, seafood, or spinach/artichoke dips, according to Technomic's 2013 *Starters, Small Plates & Sides Consumer Trend Report*.

Health-consciousness is a factor in consumers' bread consumption patterns. In 2013, 37% of shoppers switched to a healthier bread, up 3% over 2012, according to the Food Marketing Institute's 2014 *Shopping for Health Survey*.

High-fiber claims would influence 37% of consumers to opt for one brand of bread over another; either all natural or added nutrients would influence 22%; low sugar 20%; low carb 19%; perceived healthier flours 16%; and gluten-free 11%, reports Mintel.

Just under one-third of consumers (31%)

try to avoid high fructose corn syrup in bakery products, 30% try to avoid *trans* fats, 29% hydrogenated fats, 25% GMOs, 9% gluten, 7% dairy/lactose, and 4% wheat, according to the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Assn.'s (IDDBA) *What's in Store 2015* report. Weston Foods' *Country Harvest Veggie*

Bread, made with tomatoes, red/green pepper, carrots, and other vegetables, delivers one full serving of vegetables per slice. Half (48%) of U.S. consumers sought out a "full serving of fruits/vegetables" claim in 2013, according to Mintel's *Food Packaging Trends—U.S.*, a 2013 report. *Arnold's Double Protein* bread contains 7 g of protein per slice and a whopping 19 g of whole grains per serving. *Arnold's Double Fiber* bread delivers 48% of the daily fiber requirement.

According to Packaged Facts' 2014 report, *Weight Management: Consumer Mindsets*, 28% of adults trying to lose weight buy low-carb foods; 21% of those trying to maintain weight do so. One in five food shoppers look for low-carb claims, per FMI. Nine in 10 of those trying to maintain a low-carb diet cut out white bread and 17% cut whole-grain bread, according to a 2014 HealthFocus report.

Diet breads, such as Julian Bakery's *Paleo Bread*, are inspired by the trendy Paleolithic diet. *Bob's Red Mill Low-Carb Bread Mix* has only 5 g of net carbs per serving. *Nature's Own 9-Grain Bread* contains just 40 calories per slice. Gluten-free breads still account for less than 1% of total bread sales, per IDDBA. **FT**



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