



Beyond Food: 5 Tasty Trends in Food & Drink Retail

10 min read

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happen





**One cannot think well,
love well, sleep well,
if one has not dined well.**

Virginia Woolf, author

Good food and drink

is fundamental to human health and happiness; food and drink retailers have an essential role to fill.



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Which trends are shaping food and drink retail today?

Answer: convenience, wellness, and ethics.

Consumers are looking for food and drink to be there exactly when and where they want it. However, wellness-focused foods that nurture body, mind, and soul are highly sought-after. And consumers are increasingly interested in where their food has come from – choosing sustainable, ethical products.

Read on for five key trends in food and drink retail that will help you nourish your customers.





Trend 1



A taste for eCommerce

Despite the sensory and physical nature of food and drink, the retail sector hasn't been prevented from joining the online revolution. Consumers are flocking to experience the benefits of eCommerce; ordering food and drink online to enjoy greater convenience and wider choice.



Online supermarkets that deliver to people's homes are gaining popularity versus traditional supermarkets, whilst the latter combat the threat by creating online ordering options. Other convenient online food options include subscription-based meal kits and snack boxes catering for restricted diets.

Nonetheless, this online growth needn't be a disadvantage for brick-and-mortar food businesses. Bulk ordering of non-perishable food items online could leave the physical shops free to focus on high-quality fresh produce. Consumers still welcome the opportunity to smell, touch – and even taste! – food before buying it. We're now seeing an integration of the online and

offline worlds, and it's an exciting time.

So, how do you maximise your chances of success when selling online?

- » When you sell food and drink online, beautiful imagery is essential. Without the other senses, photos, videos — and rich product descriptions — are extra important.
- » Take logistics into account for eCommerce, especially when dealing with perishable goods. It's not a simple task to keep food fresh over long distances.
- » If you focus on eCommerce, don't ignore the people on your doorstep. "Near

me" Google searches are increasing, so register with Google My Business (Maps) and prepare for footfall.

- » Niche markets have strong online communities. Think about where your potential customers gather online, and build a profile for your online store in those spaces.



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Trend 2



Food for the soul

Food and drink is now expected to nourish the body, the mind, and the spirit. Eating is no longer just a way to satisfy a pang of hunger. Certain diet trends and products promise to offer a boost in overall well-being — using superfood ingredients or removing bad nutrients.



Added sugar is being shunned by many consumers, in favour of natural sweeteners such as monk fruit. High-fat/low-carb diets like Keto and Paleo are also gaining momentum — particularly with fitness enthusiasts.

Fermented food and drink such as kefir, tempeh, and kombucha are an acquired taste, but they're becoming popular for their high-nutrient content and probiotic properties. Meanwhile, consumers looking to relax and reduce anxiety are choosing edible products containing CBD oil — including tea, beer, and even ice cream!

In order to stand out in a competitive landscape, your wellness products should emphasise their unique properties and potential to enrich the consumer's life.

- » Consider branding and design in packaging carefully, and adapt it to your audience. For example, for a more “boho” audience, you can use minimalist kraft-style packaging.
- » Make personal recommendations to help the customer to get the best results from the product — such as which other foods complement the nutrient profile.
- » Market your product as a lifestyle choice: it's not just a food but part of the customer's identity. For example, certain vitamins and minerals to increase sport endurance or concentration.
- » Last but not least, be careful not to promise health benefits that are not backed up by science; stick to what you can prove!



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trend 3



Love the origins and keep it green

Whether it's a treat for finishing a mega-project at work or treasuring a loyal friend, gift giving is an enormous trend – not only in lifting a person's day but in transforming your beauty business.



Ethical and environmental concerns are shaping our food and drink choices. Consumers want to know where their food has come from, how it was produced, and its impact on the environment. Remember: keep your friends close, and your farmers closer!

In the case of meat, people are looking for organic, free-range, and local produce that assures them of humane animal treatment. They are also less concerned about perfection when it comes to fruit and veg: so-called “ugly” produce that’s still full of flavour is gaining popularity.

Another key issue is packaging. Consumers are choosing products with less plastic — preferring compostable and recyclable packaging options. Some supermarkets and gro-

cery stores are also encouraging customers to BYOV (bring your own veg bag)!

As a food and drink retailer, sustainability could also help you achieve scalability.

- » Sign up to a sustainability scheme or trust label, so conscientious customers will know they can have confidence in your products.
- » Look at your whole supply chain: are you happy that the highest ethical and environmental standards are being maintained throughout? If so, shout about this with full confidence!
- » Fruit and veg retailers can sell products marked with natural branding or stickers, avoiding the waste and en-

ergy consumption of plastic. Also consider beeswax wraps and wooden cutlery.

- » Love local! Local collaboration is a win-win. It’s more efficient and environmentally friendly, and it also helps to build connections and relationships.



**Keep your friends close,
and your farmers closer!**





trend 4



The snack is back

With hectic lifestyles, long commutes, and on-the-go socialising, the snack food industry is absolutely booming. But we've moved beyond the days of a chocolate bar or a bag of crisps. Consumers are now expecting something more compelling from their snacks.



As we might expect from the prevalence of wellness products, healthy snacks are increasingly in demand. From water lily seeds, to mushroom crisps and power balls, natural and nutrient-rich snacks are the choice for many. For hydration, consumers are enjoying water which is infused with vitamins, minerals, and pre-biotics: coconut, maple, and cactus water stand out as the most popular.

With many people favouring a low-carb diet, sports bars and cereal bars (high in protein) are no longer the preserve of fitness fans. Sports snacks are now seen as a mainstream healthy snack option.

But health isn't the only consideration for snacking. Gourmet snacks that tantalise the taste buds are also in vogue – in the form of small packaged portions of prosciutto or aged

mozzarella, for example. Your food and drink business could take advantage of the shift towards snacking.

- » Offer a snack box subscription service, so customers can pre-order the snacks they'll need for the week ahead.
- » In a brick-and-mortar shop, make sure you display snacks in prominent positions so people can easily pick them up in a hurry.
- » Review your snack selection so that it's up to date with the current trends, perhaps adding healthy snacks and sports nutrition options.



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trend 5

Plant power

Whether for ethical, environmental, or health reasons, more and more people are turning to a plant-based diet. The number of products catering for vegetarians and vegans has sky-rocketed in recent years, and Allied Market Research estimates the market will reach \$7.5 billion by 2025.





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Innovative meat and fish substitute products are helping people to make the switch away from an omnivorous diet. For example, jack fruit has become well known for its ability to mimic pulled pork, and “fish” made from plant protein flavoured with algae oil is now available to satisfy cravings for seafood.

For consumers cutting out dairy, plant-based milks and butters remain popular. Whilst soy and almond milk contin-

ues to be a staple, oat and pea milk are also gaining favour. Seed butters are increasingly being chosen over nut butters, as they pose less of an allergy risk.

There has also been a surge in plant-based desserts with lower sugar content, which satisfy both vegans and wellness seekers. Avocado ice cream and hummus milkshakes are examples of the unconventional desserts that are piquing interest.

So could plant power bring energy to your business?

- » Your products might be naturally vegan already – so shout about this on the packaging! It could become a great selling point.
- » Think about introducing a range of plant-based foods to your offer, so you can

appeal to vegan and flexitarian households alike.

- » If you sell products that are “almost” vegan, why not ask the producer about ingredient alternatives that could make food vegan-friendly without compromising flavour?



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What's next?

After 60 years in business, we know the power of payment trends. But we also know what stays constant: the consumer demand for convenience, choice, and the ability to pay in whichever way they prefer.

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