

SUMMER 2025

TREND WIRE

LIMITED-TIME OFFERS, NEW
ITEMS, NEWS, & TREND TIDBITS
FROM THE TRENDOLOGISTS





MUST-KNOW NEWS IN 10 WORDS OR LESS

1. Town & Country's in-store restaurants help increase store sales
2. Chuck E. Cheese opens nostalgia-inducing Chuck's Arcade in 10 malls
3. McDonald's Snack Wrap has returned, leading to increased foot traffic
4. Wegmans tests AI-powered Caper Carts that could eliminate checkouts
5. FDA debuts AI-powered Elsa tool to decrease food safety risks
6. Shake Shack leans into nostalgia for their Summer BBQ Menu
7. Chili's taps into 90s nostalgia with their Radical 'Rita



Pictured clockwise from above: Wegmans and Instacart partnered to create AI-powered **Caper Carts** they're testing; Chuck E. Cheese's new spinoff concept **Chuck's Arcade**; and **Chili's Radical 'Rita** featuring dragon fruit, blue curaçao, and Lunazul blanco tequila. The cocktail changes color to bright purple when stirred with a swizzle stick.





66%
**OF CONSUMERS
WHO HAVE TRIED
DUBAI CHOCOLATE
LOVE OR LIKE IT**

- Datassential Consumer Preferences

FLAVOR TO KNOW

Dubai chocolate took off first on social media (learn more in our [Social Media Sensations Report](#)), and now operators and retailers are getting in on the trend, showcasing the concept as a flavor for a variety of products.



Pictured left to right:

After a successful launch of **Dubai Style Chocolate** featuring milk chocolate, pistachio paste filling, and crunchy kataifi (shredded phyllo), Lindt rolled the concept out to national retailers recently including Meijer, Publix, and Kroger.

Shake Shack launched a **Dubai Chocolate Pistachio Shake** nationwide on June 24 showcasing pistachio frozen custard blended with toasted kataifi and encased in a crackable dark chocolate shell, harkening back to another social media trend, [cracking lattes](#).





LATEST LTOS



1. **Hardee's**, for a limited time, offered a Carolina Gold Hand-Breaded Chicken Sandwich featuring Duke's Carolina Gold BBQ sauce, bacon, dill pickles, lettuce tomato, and mayo. The sandwich is marked as a Superstar in Launches & Ratings with a composite score of 86.



1. **Cold Stone Creamery** released a Mangonada Shake-Up that combines mangonada ice cream, mango boba, whipped topping, and on-trend Tajín. It was a Top Performer in Uniqueness and Frequency.



2. **Village Inn's** limited-time Loaded Hashbrown Pancakes featured three buttermilk pancakes infused with hash browns, cheddar cheese, bacon crumbles, and chives. They were topped with bacon and a dollop of sour cream.



3. **Bonefish Grill** for a limited time served a Matcha Colada, a mocktail described as creamy and featuring matcha, pineapple, coconut, and fresh sour.



RETAIL RUNDOWN

1. **Cheez-It** partnered with Wendy's to launch a Baconator flavor.
2. **Liquid Death** teamed up with Fruity Pebbles to launch a Cereal Criminal flavored sparkling water that tastes like cereal milk.
3. **Philadelphia**, the brand known for its cream cheese, launched Philly-tini Olives stuffed with cream cheese to pair with on-trend martinis exclusively on the Divina Market website.

RELATED READING

Learn more about how to put a twist on trending martinis, which are prime newstalgia, in our *Trend Watch: The 2023 Beverage Issue*.





STANDOUT SUPERSTARS

	ICED S'MORES LATTE <i>Cracker Barrel</i> Rich chocolate sauce, espresso, and milk, served over ice. Topped with whipped cream, marshmallow sauce drizzle, and graham cracker crumble.	COMPOSITE SCORE 92 SUPERSTAR	48% UNIQUENESS 51% UNBRANDED PURCHASE INTENT
	MEATBALL MARINARA POCKET <i>Piada Italian Street Food</i> Our authentic Italian piada dough filled with grass-fed meatballs and our signature marinara and mozzarella, hand-rolled and baked until golden.	COMPOSITE SCORE 96 SUPERSTAR	45% UNIQUENESS 58% UNBRANDED PURCHASE INTENT

**metrics versus other items in respective item category in Datassential's Launches & Ratings*

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BEVERAGE TREND SPOTLIGHT



Dirty soda has taken over menus this summer. So far, SONIC has released takes on dirty soda dubbed Sweet-Topped Lemonades in three flavors: Classic Lemonade, Strawberry Lemonade, and Blueberry Lavender (lavender is up 46% on beverage menus over the past 4 years, according to Datassential Menu Trends), while KFC and Mountain Dew partnered to offer Peaches and Cream Lightning Soda (pictured above) for a limited time. To discover more trending summer foods/flavors/beverages, check out our [Summer Trends 2025 Report](#)!





TREND TIDBITS FROM THE TRENDOLOGIST

Ever wonder what Datassential's Trendologists have on their radar? Well, you don't have to wonder anymore! Here are a few trends Datassential Trendologist and Senior Publications Manager Jaclyn Marks has been keeping a pulse on.

1. **Creamsicle and Dreamsicle flavors are bringing the newstalgia.** Creamsicle and Dreamsicle (both of which are typically combinations of orange and vanilla flavors) are serving as flavor inspiration for a variety of products at retail and chain restaurants. They typically pop up more in the summer. Coca-Cola, for instance, recently released a new soda flavor called Orange Cream featuring orange and vanilla flavors that harkens back to Creamsicles or Dreamsicles, while Liquid I.V. launched an Orange Vanilla Dream flavor for their electrolyte drink mix.
2. **The pickle trend is picking up steam.** Pickles are seeing a resurgence as flavor innovation for some unexpected concepts – think Popeyes' Chilled Pickle Lemonade, for example, featuring premium lemonade and pickle juice, which earned a Top Performer rating in Datassential Launches & Ratings for Uniqueness (67% of consumers found it unique).
3. **Tap into the item as flavor trend.** A number of chains recently launched LTOs that showcase how foods/dishes can inspire flavors. Think, for example, Biggby Coffee's Campfire Latte that leans into s'mores as a flavor and features espresso, graham cracker crumbs, and whipped cream, or Biggby's Black Forest coffee beverage that's inspired by black forest cake (which 46% of consumers love or like, according to Datassential Consumer Preferences) and is made with blackberries, caramel, espresso, mocha, and whipped cream.





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