

INGREDIENT TRENDS

Trending Ingredient Tips: Four Rising Stars

Where is consumer interest rising when it comes to ingredients? Four ingredient trends that are continuing to steal the limelight when it comes to inclusion in new product activity are coconut, aloe vera, algae and turmeric.

by Claire Phoenix

Every few years we see new ingredients rising up the popularity ladder in terms of consumer acceptance and ease of use in processing. Right now the big four seeing growth are coconut, aloe vera, algae and turmeric, mainly due to their inherent health benefits.

Coconut is sold in many formats including dessicated coconut, coconut acid, coconut blossom syrup, coconut butter, coconut fat, coconut milk, coconut oil, coconut water, fractionated coconut oil, fully hydrogenated coconut oil and

hydrogenated coconut oil, as well as interesterified coconut oil and partially hydrogenated coconut.

The average annual growth of new product launches with coconut as an ingredient has been reported at a substantial 22 percent globally (CAGR, 2012-17), of these 19 percent of products are within the bakery category, according to Innova Market Insights data.

Another ingredient enjoying manufacturer focus is algae with an average 20 percent annual growth of new product launches.

Around 0.3 percent of the global food and beverage launches contain algae as an ingredient, although 38 percent of the products with algae are within the supplements category.

Of relatively recent global interest is turmeric – currently tracking in launches at 14 percent (CAGR, 2012-17) with 3 percent of global food and beverage launches containing turmeric in 2017. Most products containing turmeric are in the sauces and seasonings category – around 22 percent.

Finally, aloe vera is seeing annual growth of 12 percent and increasingly appearing in soft drinks – 67 percent of the total.

Other than supplements (7 percent) the most significant areas for NPD are hot drinks (4 percent) and desserts & ice cream (2 percent).

Coconut as the Natural Oil

Alternative: When it comes to perceived healthy attributes, 51 percent of today's consumers view coconut oil as healthy, with around 25 percent now avoiding products containing palm oil and butter. Many consumers are opting for products that contain coconut oil instead. For instance, some in-house supermarket bakeries are now using coconut oil instead of palm oil, particularly when it comes to creating the sweeter fillings in donuts and cakes.

Coconut is high in healthy saturated fats which has given it some bad press. However, as long as the calorific content is accepted, it has other benefits such as raising the good HDL cholesterol in the blood. Studies based on those living in the South Pacific, who have a diet based on coconut, were found to be in excellent health, with very low rates of heart disease.

Coconut can be classified as a superfood as it contains fatty acids with medium chain triglycerides which go to the liver and are used as a quick energy boost or become Alzheimer-preventing ketones. One study found that 15-30g of medium chain triglycerides per day increased 24-hour energy expenditure by 5 percent, totaling about 120 calories per day.

Fresh coconut flesh also has antioxidant properties and is said to have anti-inflammatory healing properties. Carbon-rich lauric acid makes up around 50 percent of the fats in coconut oil and when eaten this forms the substance monolaurin, known to kill bacteria, viruses and fungi.

Product Trends

Recent product launches include plant-based Kerala Veg Pots by Bol Foods, available from Tesco, Obrigado coconut water, Rachel's coconut rice and Coco Garden canned drinks with nata de coco. Unilever has introduced a coconut and almond spread for its Flora brand and Del Monte is serving fresh coconut strips in its Hawaiian tray packaged, ready to eat snack.

The use of coconut in ice cream and ice cream alternatives, such as in Nadamoo, has been substantial, as coconut milk provides the right creamy consistency with all the requisite health credentials. Coffee too has been enlisting coconut's health halo with Coco Nespresso by Nestlé. Other contemporary drinks include Coco Joy, Broken Head coconut milk, Koh coconut from Ireland, Mokoko coconut milk and organic Drink-Bruce coconut. A winner in the Gulfood awards earlier this year was Coco Aloha with its 100



percent vegan coconut milk in Cappuccino and Kakao (chocolate) flavors. Sold in sealed, ready to go cups, the drinks contain vitamins C, B vitamins, potassium, sodium, anti-viral lauric acid and are said by the manufacturers to offer satiety.

Market Trends

Coconut milk is expected to grow at around 15 percent between 2016 and 2020.

Originally Brazil was the largest coconut supplier, but today the biggest producing markets are the Philippines, Indonesia and India.

Roxanne Sagun, Trade Manager (South East Asia) for IPS-Ingredis says: “We source, and supply coconut water concentrate for beverages as well as desiccated coconut and coconut oils for a number of different food, bakery and confectionery applications. Buyers are mainly interested in cost and ease of use, however, achieving a clean product label, offering sustainability credentials and a strong nutritional profile are important to modern day consumers.”

The challenge for manufacturers is not just in finding the perfect ingredient but also knowing which supplier to trust and the best channels through which to source. The IPS-Ingredis Digital

Platform is supported by an international team of trade experts, from sales and sourcing to logistics and finance. With a growing range of ingredients on the platform, the company foresees a dynamic shift in ingredient commodity trading, with more of it going online.

Aloe Vera in Hydrating Beverages:

Foods such as cucumber, celery, watermelon, strawberries, courgettes, and cauliflowerer may have a high water content that benefits skin hydration. But there is one ingredient that is particularly beneficial and so has seen substantial growth in the health and fruit drink arena: aloe vera. Also known as “Lily of the Desert,” this cactus-like plant contains the complex carbohydrate acemannan which nourishes skin cells and detoxifies. Rich in vitamins C, E and beta-carotene and one of the few plants to provide vitamin B12, aloe vera contains proteolytic enzymes which help repair dead skin cells.

The gel has been used for centuries as part of Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of minor cuts and sores, but it now is in beverages such as fruit juice, cold tea blends, yogurt and milk-based drinks. It meets the needs of millennials and health-conscious consumers looking for ingredients that help the skin rehydrate naturally.

The alkaline pH balance of aloe vera makes it easy to drink first thing in the morning on an empty stomach.

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Trends and Availability

Trends in aloe vera beverages include “between meals” drinks such as Healthy Choice After Breakfast Juice; OKF’s Alo Exposed: a clear, refreshing, juice drink with aloe vera pieces and honey, also available as Alo Light Refresh with cucumber and cantaloupe; and Kiki Health Organic aloe ferox juice. In Japan, Perfect the grape and aloe beauty drink is available, while others illustrative of the trend include Simplee Aloe with superberries and tea companies such as Tetley and Clipper, who are now offering green tea blends with aloe vera in a teabag format. Recent additions include T’Best, Ego Drink and Alpro co-

conut milk yogurt drink.

Roxanne Sagun, Trade Manager for South East Asia with global trade company IPS-Ingredis says: “Demand in the industry is expected to grow around 10 percent annually over the next 6-8 years. Supply for the aloe drinks business has grown about 10-15 percent each year since 2014 and is expected to have similar growth for the next couple of years.”

The demand for aloe vera products continues to grow in the northern and western hemispheres, with more research-based evidence coming to light that indicates significant health and beauty benefits from this super ingredient. Though aloe vera has a naturally bitter taste, it is usually diced and blended with honey or sweeter fruits in beverages. The growing possibility of flavor infusions like these in aloe vera drinks makes it an attractive formulation for beverage companies around the world.

IPS-Ingredis has developed one of the first online platforms for sourcing ingredients. Ross Cumming, Chief Operating Officer at IPS-Ingredis adds: “We are experiencing a global shift in consumer preferences towards healthier and alternative ingredients and the industry is becoming more accustomed to digital methods of trading in raw materials. Aloe vera is one of the popular ingredients on the IPS-Ingredis Digital Platform, where users can submit quote requests 24/7.”

Turmeric - ancient ingredient, contemporary following:

Used extensively in Chinese and Indian medicine for many years, turmeric has powerful antioxidant effects and has been one of the most popular ingredients for the health-conscious consumer this year. Golden turmeric lattes in juice bars and coffee shops hit the trend for antioxidant-rich, dairy-free and tasty options. Companies such as Arjuna in India and Applied Food Sciences of Austin, Texas, who produce PurTurmeric, a high-quality powder offering a



complex flavor and full solubility, have both enjoyed a record few years of sales.

As Sanish PB of India-based Arjuna says: "The market for turmeric in the food supplement industry has seen considerable growth in demand for the past couple of years. The curcumin market has shown growth of over 20 percent per year for the past two years. Curcumin has been proved to be very effective in dealing with the symptoms of depression and Alzheimer's and demand for bioavailable curcumin is increasing in the health segment. Since Arjuna Natural launched its water-dispersible curcumin into the market, we have seen a steady growth in demand."

According to Moju Drinks, which produces cold-pressed turmeric boosters, sold as natural shots in the chilled juice aisle at Waitrose (UK), "these little bottles add incremental value while taking up less shelf space but with high basket spend." As they sav: "Turmeric is cinnaer's pocket

rocket cousin - small but mighty having one of the highest antioxidant strengths of all spices."

Rich Goldsmith, MOJU co-founder, says: "We've seen a lot of demand from consumers wanting the functional benefits and fresher taste of cold-pressed juice but in a smaller, on the go format. HPP technology is allowing us to introduce naturally functional products in new packaging formats and flavor combinations into the UK's grocery channel."

In foods, turmeric is enjoying a wave of confidence as a healthy and efficacious ingredient. For example, innovative UK snack food company Pollen & Grace has recently released a fragrant turmeric and butter nut Daal Pot, aimed at the growing vegan market, along with a black rice and turmeric Immunity Box aimed at the on the go lunchtime sector.

Algae - The New Wonder Ingredient: Seaweed acts as a natural flavor enhancer and alainates

are often used as thickeners but algae are enjoying greater fame in both food and non-food sectors. For instance, Billerud-Korsnäs and Uppsala University in Sweden have been developing paper batteries, made using pure cellulose from algae, for use in smart packaging applications.

In food, however, seaweed and algae are enjoying a renaissance with novel products entering the market such as Dee's Vegan Sausages with Irish Dulse Seaweed, blended with roast garlic and porcini mushrooms.

This is resulting in a swathe of blue food products, not something consumers typically associate with natural, but an understanding of spirulina is growing thanks to its popularity in juice bars. We are finding products such as organic, vegan and fresh, Happy Cheese with cashews and spirulina that is blue in color.

Sofia Hoffmann De Mendonca of Allmicroalgae in Portugal explains how chlorella powder is enjoying a growth spurt, with

increasing use in products such as snacks biscuits and drinks. The snack biscuits are being made for the vegan market using rice flour and flavoring ingredients such as lemon, ginger, piri-piri and rosemary.


"From my experience working at Allmicroalgae, chlorella and other microalgae are gaining more attention from the food industry companies. Most probably you'll be able to see microalgae in more bakery, pastry products and also in healthy snacks in the near future."

Another innovative biotech company focusing on algae is Strasbourg-based Algae Natural Food Co specializing in Eco-tech, Bio-Cert, algae and spirulina.

Other Tips

Moving forward, what other ingredients should we be keeping an eye on? Charcoal, rosemary, walnuts and honey are all enjoying a growing reputation for inclusion in a healthier diet and as such are ripe for manufacturing innovation. ▼



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