

FB

FOODBYTES

YOUR FREE DATASSENTIAL
TREND REPORT

THE WHOLE PIE
from Diwali to
Day of the Dead,
see how operators
are celebrating
beyond just
Thanksgiving &
Christmas

pg. 9

PASS THE VEGGIES
plant-based takes
center stage

pg. 13

the holiday issue

COOL NEW PRODUCT TO KNOW

Portland, OR-based **Salt & Straw** is known for its kooky, creative ice cream flavors. Below is the chain's Thanksgiving-inspired Friendsgiving ice cream line with flavors like Parker House rolls with salted buttercream, caramelized turkey and cranberry sauce, and candied walnut cheesecake.



STANDOUT STATS

\$1.41



PRICE PER POUND OF SMALL (8-16 LB) FROZEN TURKEYS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

6%



TOTAL NUMBER OF TURKEYS AVAILABLE FOR SALE VERSUS LAST YEAR

HOLLA AT THESE HOLIDAYS

There's more to December than just Christmas. Here are a few more winter holidays to keep in mind as we head into the season of celebrations:

- **Hanukkah:** Nov. 28- Dec. 6 (2021)
- **Soyal** (Winter Solstice celebrated by the Hoai Indians): Dec. 21
- **Kwanzaa:** Dec. 6-Jan. 1
- **Boxing Day:** Dec.26



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A FEW OF MY FAVORITE (HOLIDAY) THINGS

Sure, turkey is great, but if I'm being honest, sides are kinda the best. It's great because I get a taste of both traditional "American" holiday dishes when I celebrate with my in-laws (green bean casserole and sweet potato casserole with the little browned marshmallows are two of my faves) and then usually have more Chinese dishes when I spend time with my family during the holidays. My mom typically does a roast chicken instead of turkey along with yummy dishes like homemade siu yuk (roast pork belly).

On the beverage side of the holidays, I'll have to say that I love me a mug of hot chocolate (spiked with peppermint schnapps or Kahlua when I'm in the mood) and sticky-sweet apple cider toned down with a splash of Fireball.

Oh, man. Can you believe the holidays are just around the corner again? As we get into the holiday spirit, the TrendSpotting team thought it was the perfect time to home in on some of our most recent insights on holiday and seasonal flavors, LTOs, and how it all fits into what consumers are planning for celebrations with COVID still in the mix. For example, in our latest [COVID-19 report](#) (yep, we're still doing those, and we're up to report #59 now!), we found that **82% of consumers are planning to spend the same amount or more on Thanksgiving compared to last year.**

There are some bright spots this year, though, such as less restrictive dining and the rollout of vaccines, but now many in the industry are battling against supply chain issues, ingredient shortages, and increasing prices of goods. As always, though, the industry has proven time and time again throughout the pandemic just how innovative and resilient it is, and there's no doubt that'll continue. In this issue, we highlight what a variety of operators are doing this holiday season — and not just for Thanksgiving and Christmas, either. As companies of all kinds move toward being more holiday-inclusive (for example, Target has Happy Diwali gift cards and a section of Diwali-dedicated decor), we explore how operators are highlighting holidays like Hanukkah and Day of the Dead.

We'll end this issue looking toward the future as 2021 comes to a close (can you believe it?) and give you a sneak peek at next month's much-anticipated *FoodBytes: 2022 Trends*. Also, since you'll probably be in the holiday spirit after reading this issue, coming up later this month, keep an eye out for our upcoming global holiday foods-themed *Trend Watch*.

Renee Lee Wege, Senior Publications Manager

CONSUMERS LOVE SEASONAL LTOS

44% of consumers look forward to ordering Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa LTOs



Appeal for winter holidays is second only to Thanksgiving: 47% of consumers say they associate the coming holiday season with flavors and special items they want to order

holiday hits

What do consumers crave during the holidays? Here's a look at two top-scoring holiday LTOS from Datassential's SCORES database and a variety of seasonal flavors that should be on your radar.



ARBY'S

DEEP-FRIED TURKEY CLUB

Deep-fried turkey breast, natural cheddar cheese, pepper bacon, lettuce, tomato, and mayo on a toasted star-top bun. It's not your aunt's Thanksgiving turkey dinner, but maybe that's a good thing.



COMPOSITE SCORE

70

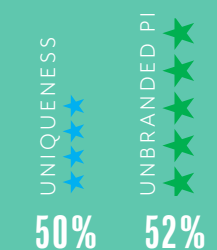
VOLUME DRIVER



ON THE BORDER

HOLIDAY SWIRL MARGARITA

Your favorite holiday beverage is back! Our frozen strawberry margarita mingles with Midori melon in this ultimate holiday drink.



COMPOSITE SCORE

99

SUPERSTAR

SEASONAL FLAVORS + LTOS

DATA DIVE

Need some inspiration for fall and winter innovation? Here's a run-down of insights from 2 Datassential reports: *Seasonality 2021* and *Seasonal LTOS*.



WHAT ARE SOME TOP FALL FLAVORS+ INGREDIENTS?

- Chestnut
- Apple Cranberry
- Pumpkin Pie
- Stuffing
- Butternut Squash
- Duck



ABOUT **TWO IN FIVE** CONSUMERS SAY SEASONALITY IS AN IMPORTANT DRAW WHEN DECIDING TO ORDER NEW ITEMS OR LTOS

WHAT ARE SOME TOP WINTER FLAVORS+ INGREDIENTS?

- Toasted Coconut
- Chocolate Almond
- Red Velvet
- Candy Cane
- Lobster Cream
- Lox

holiday INSPIRATION



FROM DIWALI TO DAY OF THE DEAD

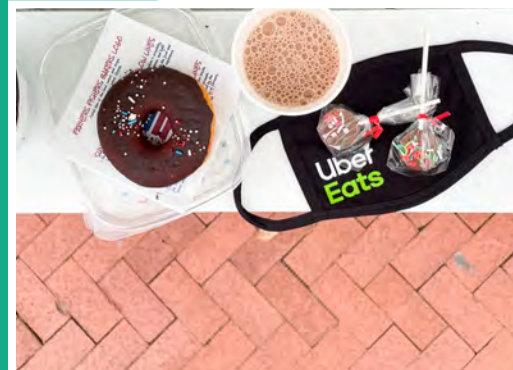
Holiday LTOs and specials aren't limited to just Thanksgiving and Christmas. Here's a look at how some operators helped customers celebrate much more:

Diwali, a festival of lights, is one of the biggest holidays celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists. The five-day festival typically happens in October or November, with celebrations usually including lots of vegetarian fare as well as sugary, ghee-laced desserts. In Chicago, restaurants like **Art of Dosa** offered specials such as rainbow dosas (pictured below left), while pop-up chef Jasmine Sheth hosted a special **Tasting India Diwali Sweets Shop** for the second year in a row.

Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, is celebrated Nov. 1 and 2 every year, and is a traditional Mexican holiday that celebrates, rather than mourns, death. Food plays a big role in the holiday, as many commemorate the holiday by offering favorite foods of late loved ones. Of course, colorful skulls and other festive decor associated with the holiday also make for great specials at restaurants looking to get in on the celebration. Below at right, for example, is the Kiss of Death cocktail that's essentially a black margarita (it's made with spicy Ghost Tequila, lime, agave nectar, activated charcoal, and finished with a crushed hibiscus and Pop Rocks rim) from Jupiter, FL-based **Calaveras Cantina's** Viva Los Muertos Halloween Party. **Casa Pública** in Brooklyn celebrated with a large-format, skull-shaped Jell-O shot, the Ghouls Night Out, that featured tequila and amaro.

Free holiday treats, meals to go, special menus, and more at **FOUNDING FARMERS**

Founding Farmers, a majority family farmer-owned chain with locations in several states including Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC, has a variety of options for customers looking to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas without lifting a pan. For Thanksgiving, the chain offers options like Roasted Turkey with black pepper-sage gravy and Butternut Squash Soup with cranberry crème fraîche for pickup or delivery, as well as a Thanksgiving Weekend at Home menu that covers more than just the main meal. For example, there's a Leftovers Kit that includes everything needed to stretch those leftovers for an extra turkey-themed meal or two. Consumers are pretty much split this year with their plans for either staying in or going out to eat for December holidays this year (according to Datassential's *COVID-19 Report 59: The Holiday Issue*, **29% of consumers say they'll stay at home with close family, while 26% say they'll visit a restaurant**), making it important for restaurants to offer both in-restaurant and at-home options. Founding Farmers does just that with a Christmas at Home menu as well as a Christmas Day Prix Fixe. As shown above, last year, Founding Farmers teamed up with Uber Eats to spread holiday cheer to everyone navigating celebrating the holidays during a pandemic with a Masks & Snacks promotion that offered folks free holiday treats and masks.



YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO VEEER TOO FAR FROM TRADITIONAL COMFORT FOODS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

62%
OF CONSUMERS SAY THEY HOPE TO STICK TO COMFORT FOODS AND CLASSICS FOR THE HOLIDAYS THIS YEAR

- COVID-19 REPORT 59: THE HOLIDAY ISSUE



three holiday trends TO KNOW

From to-go Hanukkah meals to Friendsgiving delivered to you-won't-believe-it's-not-meat roasts, we're checking in on three holiday trends to know the season.

THE HOLIDAYS TO-GO



After more than a year of restaurant pivots such as meals to-go, it should be no surprise that holiday pick-up meals will no doubt be big again this year. From Thanksgiving to Hanukkah to New Year's, keep convenience and festivity in mind when gearing up for holiday menus and take inspiration from what's been offered in the past.

Pictured above, for example, is part of the spread from a full Hanukkah menu at San Francisco's **Wise Sons Jewish Delicatessen**. Festive staples like chocolate babka and smoked brisket are available for pickup or delivery at several pop-ups with contactless pickup throughout the Bay Area and for nationwide shipping.

In Chicago, **The Goddess & Grocer** included options like potato or sweet potato-zucchini latkes, chicken matzo ball soup, braised brisket, and sweets like sufganiyot, blue velvet cake, and Hanukkah cookies for pickup or delivery.



THE NEW FRIENDSGIVING

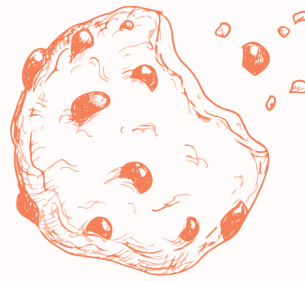
It wasn't long ago that Friendsgiving was more of an at-home phenomenon: a bunch of friends made their own dishes to contribute to one big feast, and everyone gathered at one person's home. And while Friendsgiving in general is fairly new (it was first used in print in 2007, though it only officially was added to Merriam-Webster's in 2020, crazy as that seems), the holiday meal usually shared by friends has already evolved beyond its origins. Now many restaurants have gotten in on the friends-

centric meal, putting together Friendsgiving packages that can be taken to-go (even easier than organizing a potluck, right?). Above, for example, is **Kimpton Hotels & Restaurant's** Friendsgiving spread. Those who don't want to deal with dishes can also order it at a Kimpton Restaurant. Third-party delivery apps like **Uber Eats** have also capitalized on the holiday, highlighting itself as a way to "get everything you need for the perfect celebration," including party supplies, alcohol, and of course, food.



PASS THE PLANT-BASED

The term plant-based is now on just under 5% of menus, increasing over 2,700% on menus over the past 4 years (Menu Trends). It probably goes without saying, then, that plant-based will continue to be a trend throughout the holiday season. Above are 2 examples of how veggies are starring as holiday mains: at tippy top is **Veggie Grill's** 100% plant-based, 100% pre-prepped Turkey Wellington with walnut mushroom stuffing. The wellington is just part of Veggie Grill's Holiday Feast for four they describe as "comfort food you'll feel comfortable eating." Below that is **Quorn's** Meatless Roast the company describes as a meatless turkey roast that "tastes so good you'll be back for seconds."



A FEW FINAL TREND BITES

You're not full already, are you? We hope you've got your stretchy pants on, because we have just a few more insights before all that tryptophan kicks in. Here's a look at some of the latest holiday releases from manufacturers as well as a look ahead into the future (of trends, at least).



stocking stuffers

NEW HOLIDAY RETAIL PRODUCTS TO KNOW

- **ThanksDipping sauce, anyone?** To go along with the ThanksNuggets Perdue released last year, this year, the poultry company has debuted ThanksDipping sauces that feature holiday-inspired flavors. Now fans can dip their turkey-shaped, sweet potato seasoning-coated ThanksNuggets into sauces like Spiced Apple Honey Mustard inspired by stuffing and CranBBQ sauce, which is of course inspired by cranberry sauce.
- **Bomb hot chocolate comes in hot from Dunkin'.** Dunkin' hot chocolate bombs are making it easier for customers to crank up the chocolatey heat this holiday season. The chain has teamed up with confection company Frankford Candy to bring Dunkin's hot chocolate to the candy aisle. Available at select retailers across the country are the new Dunkin' Hot Chocolate Bomb and the Dunkin' Mint Hot Chocolate Bomb. Simply drop the bombs into a mug, pour hot milk over it, and bam, Dunkin' hot chocolate right at home.
- **Turkey dinner... in candy corn form.** Brach's Turkey Dinner Candy Corn isn't technically new, having first released last year. But the candy company is back with version 2.0, and thanks to one dietitian's Twitter review going viral, this bite-size turkey dinner is back in the limelight. Flavors include green beans, coffee, stuffing, and roasted turkey.

"WHAT!!!! NO SHARING OF EACH OTHER'S THANKSGIVING EXPERIENCE ON THANKSGIVING DAY?"

This attendee probably wasn't the only one who was sad that our bi-weekly webinar won't be held on Thanksgiving Day, but don't worry: it's just to give everyone time to fill their plates. Make sure you're signed up for Datassential's webinars featuring Jack Li and a rotating panel of experts as they showcase the latest research and data on COVID-19, trends, innovation, and more.

EVERY OTHER THURSDAY, 12PM CST

REGISTER NOW

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT MONTH?

The future of trends is here. It's what you've all been waiting for: Datassential's annual trend predictions. Next month's *FoodBytes* unveils the 2022 trends that will affect menus and products for years to come. We won't give too much away, but get ready to read about what the restaurant of the future might look like and discover foods and flavors to watch like yuba noodles, black salt, and much more.



HUNGRY FOR MORE TRENDS? Check out last month's TS issues!



TW: Trends From Asia
Mandu we have the issue for you.
 In last month's *Trend Watch*, we discovered a variety of trends from Asia, including (you guessed it) mandu dumplings, brown sugar drinks, and salted egg, an ingredient some have called "Asia's answer to parmesan." We also took a look at tasso ham, veggie steaks, and uncovered butterfish.




IC: Pasta & Noodles
Don't forget the stretchy pants as we go carbo-loading across the world with a pasta and noodle-filled issue.
 Last month's *International Concepts* explored all the pasta-bilities as we toured a variety of pasta and noodle chains across the world. Twirl your fork up with insights on everything from Japanese-style pasta (carbonara with cod roe, anyone?) to laksa to tom yum ramen.



CC: Next-Gen Casual Dining
Want to know what's new with casual dining? We got you.
 This issue of *Creative Concepts* explored how independent casual operators can be a source of inspiration. We uncovered how eateertainment has innovated in light of the pandemic and how casual chains have leveraged a variety of new technologies.




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