

# Ready meals

Ambient, chilled & frozen



Smarter spending



Comforting classics



Bold flavours



Taste adventures

# Smarter Spending

## Trend Overview

Continued cost-of-living pressures are forcing consumers to make sacrifices on their everyday essentials and trade down on premium offerings.

Convenience, cost-saving and waste reduction are just some of the reasons for consumers' renewed focus on ambient and frozen products. Expect to see more creativity and innovation in tinned, dried and shelf-stable meals.

## What we expect to see in 2025-6

- Better quality and more variety of ingredients - grains, pulses
- Global cuisine inspired flavours
- More solutions for complete meals in the ambient aisle



## Flavour inspiration

### Watch List

Harissa  
Jamaican jerk

### Growing

Teriyaki  
Thai curry  
Chipotle  
Caramelised onion  
Spicy tomato

### Mainstream

BBQ  
Pesto  
Tex Mex  
Indian curry  
Cheese

# Comforting classics



## Trend Overview

Consumers are continuing to seek comfort from food amidst global uncertainty. Foods to make you smile are here to stay with a strong focus on classic dishes done better and nods to nostalgia in modern formats.

For some consumers, this means tapping into their inner child with hand-held treats like burgers, pizzas & hot dogs. On the other hand inspiration can be drawn from global cuisines by leaning into 'borrowed nostalgia' for comfort from further afield.

## What we expect to see in 2025-6

- Classic dishes 'done better'
- Addition of gourmet ingredients like truffle, named cheeses and cured meats to elevate classic recipes
- Strong influence from American, British & Italian cuisines providing a source of comfort in familiarity

## Flavour inspiration

### Watch List

Prawn cocktail  
Coronation Chicken  
Ranch

### Growing

Truffle  
Bacon  
Pepperoni  
Roasted

### Mainstream

Cheddar Cheese  
Butter  
BBQ  
Pesto  
Smoky tomato  
Mushroom

# Bold Flavours

## Trend Overview

The influence of Gen Z and social media trends are creating an appetite for bolder flavours stemming from interest in East Asian cooking. Restaurants are now also breaking the rules with mash ups of sweet, sour, bitter and umami all in one dish.

Consumer interest in hot flavours shows no signs of slowing down. Despite the existing plethora of hot sauces on the market, the sector is predicted to reach 7% CAGR market volume growth by 2030.

## What we expect to see in 2025-6

- More variety around chilli and heat flavours
- Increase in fire-based cooking and smoky notes
- Increase in umami-rich ingredients like seaweed, mushroom and tomato



## Flavour inspiration

### Watch List

Gochujang  
Kimchi  
Salted honey  
Chargrilled

### Growing

Chipotle  
Peri Peri  
Miso  
Smoked  
Jamaican Jerk

### Mainstream

Sweet chilli  
Sriracha  
Spicy tomato  
Jalepeno

# Taste adventures



## Trend Overview

In the current uncertain times, consumers are looking for food that can transport them from their worries. Many 'forever favourite' cuisines like Italian, Chinese and Indian will continue to have strong influence across mainstream launches. However, adventurous younger consumers are looking further afield to the Middle East, South East Asia and Mexico for their culinary escape.\*

Global cuisines continue to drive innovation in the ready meals category across Europe. South Asia in particular is having a strong influence on retail launches in the west with Japanese and Korean ingredients becoming store cupboard staples in consumers' homes. Ones to watch for 2025 and beyond are the comforting classics of French cuisine and the fun and sunshine that comes with Mexican dishes.

## What we expect to see in 2025 and beyond

- Japanese cuisine moving further into mainstream and exploring fusions
- Spotlight on SE Asia with a particular focus on Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia
- Korean food crazes continue - Kimchi & BBQ leading the way
- Stronger influence of French cuisine inspired by 2024 summer Olympics

## Flavour inspiration

### Watch List

Harissa  
Gochujang  
Penang  
Nasi Goreng

### Growing

Cream/wine based sauces  
Korean BBQ  
Kimchi  
Yuzu  
Blue cheese  
Jollof

### Mainstream

Butter  
Cream  
Katsu  
Teriyaki  
Tikka  
Bouillon



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2025-2026 Trends

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