

EMERGING BEVERAGES IN FOODSERVICE 2026

Coffee, Functional Beverages, Refreshers & Beverage Innovation

BACKGROUND

Beverages remain one of the most profitable categories in foodservice, but growth is increasingly being driven by premium, customizable, and functional offerings rather than traditional beverages alone. Operators are seeking ways to drive traffic, increase check averages, and create differentiated beverage programs while managing labor, equipment, and operational constraints. To better understand these shifts, Foodservice IP completed a comprehensive study examining emerging beverage trends, operator priorities, consumer behavior, and future growth opportunities across the away-from-home marketplace.

OBJECTIVES

- Assess the size and growth outlook of emerging beverage categories in foodservice
- Understand consumer motivations surrounding health, indulgence, energy, and customization
- Identify operator priorities, barriers, and investment plans
- Evaluate opportunities for functional beverages, refreshers, frozen beverages, and wellness-oriented products
- Provide strategic guidance for manufacturers seeking growth in foodservice beverage channels

APPROACH

- 500 consumer surveys among away-from-home beverage purchasers
- 230 operator surveys across eight foodservice segments
- Executive interviews with manufacturers, distributors, and industry experts
- Market sizing, forecasting, and strategic analysis

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- Functional beverage adoption
- Energy drinks and hydration products
- Refreshers and specialty beverages
- Beverage customization and premiumization
- Frozen and blended beverage opportunities
- Beverage pricing and willingness-to-pay
- Operator investment priorities
- Equipment and labor barriers
- Segment-specific beverage opportunities
- Three-year market forecasts

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