

Christmas

THERE'S A
NEW REINDEER
IN TOWN
TRY BEFORE THEY FLY!



STOCK UP NOW

Stocking up on festive classics

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KEY BRANDS

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Christmas is a key moment for confectionery, offering significant opportunities for retailers across a range of formats – from sharing and gifting to singles and adverts. It's a time when shoppers naturally gravitate towards trusted brands for moments of nostalgia and indulgence.

“Keeping ranges fresh and exciting with new flavours and formats is essential during the festive season. Innovation is where retailers can truly win, with NPD having contributed 27% of growth in Christmas 2024¹,” says Laura O'Neill, senior brand manager, Christmas at Mars Wrigley.

A year for nostalgia

“This festive season, nostalgia continues to be a powerful trend, with classic flavours such as gingerbread evoking comfort, joy, and a sense of tradition in seasonal food and drink,” adds O'Neill. “Embracing this, we're excited to introduce the latest addition to our Maltesers Reindeer range: the new Gingerbread Maltesers Reindeer,” she says.

Coated in smooth milk chocolate and filled with Maltesers' signature creamy malt centre, and combined with gingerbread flavour, this festive treat brings a trending twist to a classic favourite. Available as a single (29g), Maltesers Mini Reindeers Gingerbread pack (59g) and as part of the Maltesers Christmas Mix (240g), this launch taps into the magic of shared memories, seasonal storytelling, and festive indulgence.

The M&M's Santa range is also expanding. Building on the momentum of last year's M&M's Crispy Milk Chocolate Santa (29g) which helped drive a 55% uplift in the total singles category² – Mars Wrigley is launching M&M's Crispy Santa five pack. The sharing format is perfect for stocking fillers, office sharing or a little individual treat.

“This new multi-pack is designed to fit into Christmas rituals, offering a convenient way to share and enjoy festive treats together,” O'Neill explains.



“Consumers this year are still willing to trade up during the festive season, particularly for gifts or indulgent personal treats”

It's not just the M&M's range that will get shoppers excited this Christmas. Despite economic pressures, consumers are still willing to trade up during the festive season particularly for gifts or indulgent personal treats.

That's why, following strong demand, the Maltesers Assorted Truffles Advent Calendar (216g) will be available to the full market for the first time. Available nationally, this premium calendar offers a rich mix of indulgence and excitement, perfect for elevating the countdown to Christmas.

New look for selection boxes

Additionally this year, Mars Wrigley selection boxes will receive a cracking new look. Twix & Friends, Skittles & Friends, Maltesers & Friends, Galaxy Christmas Collection and M&M's selection boxes will return with bolder, more festive packaging designed to stand out on shelf and capture shoppers' attention, bringing fresh excitement to these much-loved seasonal favourites.

By offering a balance of nostalgic flavours, exciting innovation, accessible price points and premium options, Mars Wrigley is equipping retailers with the tools they need to drive sales, grow their audience and make the most of the upcoming festive period.



Source

¹ Nielsen IQ, Scantrack Data to w/e 28.12.24

² Nielsen IQ, Scantrack Data to w/e 28.12.24

'ooh,
you really
should have'

Contains
milk, white and
dark chocolate!



#5

Truffle SKU
in value sales
*within mainstream
special

Stock up now
on the creamiest, crunchiest,
truffliest treats this Christmas

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Analysis

Affordable indulgence

This Christmas, consumers will entertain more at home, and seek multi-sensory experiences to give their festive season that extra flair



↙ From nostalgia with a modern twist, to sweet & savoury hybrids, suppliers will be looking to satisfy the varied demands of price-conscious consumers this Christmas.

With last year's festive season proving a positive experience for many, they are excited about the opportunities ahead, and are keen to highlight the fact that Christmas doesn't simply begin in December. On the contrary, the last quarter of the year lends itself to a whole festive build-up as consumers plan, prepare and finally indulge in their Christmas celebrations.

The familiar drivers of gifting and sharing, peppered with innovation and indulgence – but at an affordable price – are all colouring suppliers' approach this year. However, given both the economic environment and global macro factors affecting

some ingredients supply – as well as consumers' outlook, the mood feels more cautious, with a tendency to build on the familiar and the comforting without going truly out into left field.

As a result, products that offer affordable quality and reflect consumers' values are likely to generate the greatest success.

Market overview

David Hebson, trade marketing director at Fox's Burton's Companies (FBC UK) notes that the sweet biscuits category performed well during Christmas 2024, worth £99m and up 3.8% year on year¹. "Of that market, seasonal biscuits, which encompasses assortment packs and festive flavours, performed particularly well, growing in value by 10.9% and in volume by 6.2%² – outperforming the rest of

the biscuit category significantly," he says. "We saw sweet biscuits performing particularly well last year as inflationary pressures continued to pose challenges for families across the UK.

"Affordable indulgences' like seasonal biscuit flavours gave shoppers a festive treat without breaking the bank, and assortment packs offered a generous yet accessible gift option for shoppers that were mindful of their spending," he adds. "Data backs this up by showing that shoppers spend 86% more per trip on seasonal biscuits³ during the festive period, compared to the rest of the biscuit category."

In the confectionery market, Christmas 2024 affirmed the season's importance, with chocolate continuing to play a central role in festive rituals, from advent calendars to last-minute

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gifting and shared moments, says Laura O'Neill, senior brand manager, Christmas at Mars Wrigley. "Despite the ongoing inflationary environment, shoppers remained engaged, with both value and unit sales increasing (+8.5% and +4.5%⁴ respectively) across the total category, highlighting that demand for seasonal confectionery remains resilient," she says.

"Last year Mars Wrigley saw strong performance across multiple segments, including singles and adverts, while sharing formats were a particular standout. Maltesers seasonal sharing bags delivered strong results, with +15% volume growth year on year (YOY)⁵," she reveals. "This growth highlights how important indulgence remains to consumers at Christmas."

In terms of value, partitions like Christmas treats and adverts make up 8% and 6% of the total Christmas confectionery category respectively⁶, she adds. These sectors continue to outperform the overall category, reinforcing the importance of treating and gifting as key occasions during seasonal moments.

For the upcoming festive season, O'Neill expects shoppers to be driven by price, seeking quality treats that offer value. "This behaviour has shaped our approach to Christmas 2025 as we focus on delivering accessible, compelling offerings from our range of brands in a variety of formats that meet evolving shopper expectations."

She also anticipates strong growth for Christmas 2025, despite global uncertainty, but observes: "As new generations enter the market and traditions evolve, product development should continue to focus on accessible indulgence, excitement, and shared experiences."

During the Christmas period, consumers tend to seek products that offer both excitement and inspiration, says Susan Nash, trade communications manager at Mondelez International. "They often gravitate towards familiar seasonal rituals and rely on established brands to deliver fresh, engaging experiences," she notes. "When we asked our consumers what Christmas means to them, they named choosing an advent calendar, spending time with family and friends, big nights in, party season, Christmas shopping and, as you'd expect, Christmas dinner. Our range



of Christmas products taps into these moments and offers something for everyone."

Despite economic headwinds and cautious consumer sentiment, the indulgence cheese category proved resilient in Christmas 2024, says Bel UK. "Shoppers might have been more selective with spend, cutting back on some events and gifting due to inflationary pressure, but trusted brands remained seasonal staples, with consumers still prioritising affordable

luxuries and distinctive experiences at Christmas."

With its products seen as affordable indulgences, Forest Feast says it saw growth of 55% YOY during the eight-week Christmas period last year⁷. "Our consumers are willing to invest in little moments of luxury," says marketing director Bronagh Clarke. "This year, we anticipate that while some consumers will be more mindful of their spending, it will also heighten the emotional need to connect and celebrate, as well as treating themselves to small indulgences."

Consumers are still prioritising quality and indulgence, especially when it comes to gifting and special seasonal moments, confirms Karen Crawford, marketing director at Lily O'Brien's. The company saw 15%

“Affordable indulgences like seasonal biscuit flavours gave shoppers a festive treat without breaking the bank”



£99m

Value of the sweet biscuits category during Christmas 2024¹

Nielsen IQ

+8.5%

Value growth of seasonal confectionery in 2024⁴

Nielsen IQ

£748m

Value of the beer & cider category during the festive trading period¹⁰

Nielsen IQ

73%

of incremental spend in seasonal biscuits is made up by assortments¹⁵

Nielsen IQ

value and 10% volume growth during Christmas 2024⁸, which she says was in stark contrast to the overall market, which declined by -1.1% in value and -10.5% in volume⁹.

And despite global and economic uncertainties, she is upbeat about Christmas 2025, believing it to be a time when consumers prioritise small luxuries and moments of togetherness. “We expect people will continue to seek indulgent gifts and treats, looking for premium products that feel special yet remain accessible.”

On the drinks front, Christmas and New Year continues to be one of the biggest trading periods for the beer and cider category, worth a huge £748m¹⁰, of which £588m are grocery sales and impulse sales are £159m¹¹, says Alexander Wilson, category

& commercial strategy director at Heineken UK. “While all beer segments are valuable in the run-up to Christmas, it’s worth noting that premium lager and world lager contribute to 62% of sales¹² and those categories are strongly associated with celebrations, providing an alternative to prosecco and gin as people look to trade up to elevate festivities... while still looking for good value for money.”

Even with the challenges consumers have been exposed to in the last few years, Wilson reports consistent growth in the beer and cider category around the festive season. This year, “shoppers will still be looking for quality as well as accessible pricing options, so stocking a mix of mainstream and premium will help stores cater for this demand,” he adds. “Retailers should

also keep moderation, wellness and inclusivity at the forefront of category resets in the lead-up to the festivities.”

Key flavours and textures

Suppliers are extending their repertoire into flavour and texture sensations that offer consumers new experiences during the festive season.

Consumers are craving multi-sensory experiences – all in one bite, says Forest Feast’s Clarke. “We’re seeing a rise in hybrid profiles like sweet & spicy, sweet & salty, luxurious textures like crisp coatings, and of course trending flavour profiles like pistachio. Our Christmas range this year builds on that: our Gift Cubes come in classics like Salted Dark Chocolate Almonds as well as limited editions like Blonde Caramelised Hazelnuts. We have also

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launched new Salted Caramel Dates and Pistachio Crisp Dates which offer something different this Christmas.”

Indulgent and comforting flavours continue to resonate, with favourites like salted caramel, chocolate orange, and dessert-inspired layers leading the way, says Lily O’Brien’s Crawford. “Consumers are also increasingly interested in multi-textural experiences: creamy ganache, crunchy inclusions, and layered fillings,” she confirms. “Our returning Desserts Collection and Luxury Collection are both crafted to deliver these moments of surprise and delight.”

In confectionery, nostalgic and seasonal flavours like gingerbread are growing in popularity, driven by their comforting and familiar associations with the holidays, says Mars Wrigley’s O’Neill. “We’re tapping into this trend for Christmas 2025 by expanding our Maltesers Reindeer range with the launch of a Gingerbread variant. This NPD is also going into our Maltesers Mini Reindeers Gingerbread pack (59g) and the Maltesers Christmas Mix (240g), allowing consumers to enjoy or share a new festive twist in a favourite format.”

Consumer expectations around festive food are evolving, notes Bel UK. “We’re seeing growing interest in more playful, layered flavours, from sweet-savoury hybrids to richer, more adventurous notes, including truffle and garlic. Snacks and foods are also increasingly seen as sensory experiences and the source of small indulgences, meaning brands are free to experiment with flavours more so than in the past¹³.

“The Boursin Trio, which combines three bold flavours and a classic crumbly-meets-creamy texture, continue to be a seasonal favourite,” adds the company. “In 2025, we’re introducing a revamped Trio, complete with a new flavour and premium festive design, building on the success of last year’s Garlic & Herbs, Cranberry & Pepper, and Shallot & Chive varieties, which drove 13% YoY value growth and sold 75 tonnes in 2024¹⁴.”

Bel UK has also taken a former limited-edition flavour, Boursin Truffle, and made it a permanent SKU following positive festive take-up. And the company points to strong interest in plant-based formats, such as its Boursin Plant-Based, catering to “flexitarian



and plant-based grazing boards and recipes alike”, it says.

As for drinks, the search for an elevated experience and exploration drives demand for crisp continental lagers, says Heineken’s Wilson. “Mainstream premium lager, in particular, is growing, through the offering of a mix of smaller, medium and larger pack sizes and strong innovation. Meanwhile, stout’s malty flavour lends itself well to the festive season, with sales spiking in December last year, he adds. “This will be the first Christmas since we introduced the new Murphy’s 4x440ml and 10x440ml multipacks into the off-trade. The

brand’s well-fired, toasty and earthy taste, with notes of toffee, coffee and chocolate, is perfectly matched with cheese fondue or a Black Forest gateau, making the perfect festive serve, while still providing shoppers with strong value for money.”

Purchase drivers

Suppliers also point to a range of motivations that drive consumers to purchase, but say Christmas remains a time when they are willing to trade up for treating and gifting, in particular.

Indulgence and variety are two key trends due to drive Christmas sales, says Mondelez’s Nash. “Christmas is a time when shoppers are looking to treat themselves and try something new or unexpected,” she says. “At the same time, shoppers also seek out those familiar products from their favourite brands that signal the start of the festive season.”

Following the success of its

“Products that bring people together or evoke a sense of fun are resonating on social media”



Home inspiration, ingredients challenge

As more shoppers look to host family and friends at home, partly driven by the financial squeeze on dining outⁱ, they're seeking products that feel special, something they're proud to serve, says Bel UK. "Younger consumers in particular are making staying at home the new going out; dinner clubs are the new nightlife, which range from more intimate supper clubs for friends to 'pot-luck parties' (where each guest brings a different dish)."

At Forest Feast, Clarke says the cost of eating out has driven many back to the joy of eating and entertaining at home – but with a

strong preference for great taste, talkability and visual impact. She adds that her company plays directly into that, by elevating snacking with innovative snacks.

"Home entertaining remains a big focus, as people continue to enjoy hosting friends and family as the cost of living drives up prices for dining and drinking out," says Lily O'Brien's Crawford. "Our chocolates are designed to bring a touch of theatre to these occasions, whether that's showcasing our Desserts Collection at the end of a dinner or sharing our indulgent truffles over a glass of wine," she says.

"Our gift-wrapped versions of the Luxury Collection and Ultimate Collection are also a convenient solution for choosing a gift for a host – they come pre-wrapped with an elegant bow, so there's no need to worry about Sellotape or wrapping paper."

Since the Covid pandemic, hosting at home is a trend that hasn't gone away, says FBC's Hebson. "However, families are time-poor during the festive season, so it's important for retailers to offer products that make hosting convenient across all categories, which is where we see assortment boxes like our Fox's Classic 550g Assortment shine."

Sourcing solutions

Both Forest Feast and Lily O'Brien's are working proactively to tackle the challenges of ingredients supply. Clarke says Forest Feast is closely monitoring the challenges around cocoa and, as a brand that carefully sources chocolate to meet its ethical and quality standards, is used to working flexibly with its supply chain.

Meanwhile, Crawford says Lily O'Brien's strong relationships with its partners and a robust sourcing strategy help to protect quality and availability. It remains "fully committed to using the finest ingredients without compromising taste or presentation".

partnership with Lotus Biscoff, Mondelez is introducing the new Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Advent Calendar this year, containing 24 Cadbury Dairy Milk Chunks, 12 of which have crunchy Lotus Biscoff pieces and Biscoff spread – described by Nash as "an indulgent way to count down to the big day". The company is also introducing a Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff 350g block to tap into the sharing occasion.

Despite economic pressures, consumers are still willing to trade up to something special, says Mars Wrigley's O'Neill. "To meet this demand, we'll see the Maltesers Assorted Truffles Advent Calendar roll out nationally for the first time," she says. "It provides a more elevated, luxurious take on the traditional advent, catering to those seeking a more indulgent Christmas countdown experience."

Affordable indulgence, meaningful gifting and sharing continue to

define the Christmas food and drink category, according to Lily O'Brien's Crawford. "Consumers want high-quality, beautifully presented products that feel personal and thoughtful. Nostalgia continues to play a powerful role, with some chocolate brands reviving discontinued flavours to spark fond memories. At Lily O'Brien's, we embrace this trend with flavours like Banoffee Pie and Key Lime Pie in our Desserts Collection, inspired by classic desserts."

For Christmas 2025, shoppers are looking for products that balance indulgence with value, deliver versatility, and help them create memorable moments at home, observes Bel UK. "The festive table remains a space where consumers are willing to trade up, especially in categories like cheese, where premium, flavour-led products play a central role in entertaining and gifting," notes the company.

"Despite ongoing pressure on household budgets, shoppers are prioritising affordable luxury. During Christmas 2024, we saw strong performance from brands like Boursin and Maxi Babybel, showing that consumers are still spending in categories that deliver quality and emotional reward.

"Sharing and nostalgia are also influencing baskets," it adds. "Products that bring people together or evoke a sense of fun, like Maxi Babybel's playful, supersized format, are performing well and resonating on social media. These kinds of SKUs drive both footfall and trade-up, especially when positioned as gifting or impulse lines."

At Heineken, Wilson says part of the reason its stout brand Murphy's has done so well is that it plays on the consumer trend for nostalgia by demonstrating authenticity and credible heritage. "Retailers can tap

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into this with other brands by creating nostalgia around the classic choices, such as John Smith's, through festive display," he says.

Also, exploration of new flavours and a range of taste profiles will be a key trend impacting Christmas drink development, as people look to create that experience-led discovery, he adds. "This is where innovation sales are key, with a huge opportunity to tap into the thirst for crisp continental beers and exciting new no- and low options among UK consumers." In fact, "health and moderation will also be key for retailers to acknowledge this Christmas, and there is huge support from Heineken UK to amplify no- and low-alcohol options and responsible consumption."

At Forest Feast, Clarke outlines the key trends as: indulgence with purpose – treats that feel special but aren't overly excessive; nostalgia – familiar flavours realigned with a modern twist; sharing and grazing – especially as more people host at home; cost-consciousness – premium is still in demand but has to earn its place; and sustainability.

Meanwhile, Mondelez's Nash points out that while new products on-shelf drive excitement in the aisles, there remains a place for those nostalgic items that evoke memories of Christmases past and drive emotive purchases. "In the run-up to Christmas, we see the big night in occasion increasing as the weather begins to turn," she says. "As shoppers spend more nights at home, their purchases are focused on sharing formats, tablets and self-eat treats. This is when products such as the Cadbury Mini Snowball table, as well as Cadbury Roses and Cadbury Heroes start to appear on shelves and act as the first indicator of Christmas to shoppers, beginning to drive seasonal excitement."

FBC UK's Hebson says he expects shoppers to remain cautious with their spending this festive season, despite inflationary pressures easing slightly for households. This means a continuation of the 'affordable indulgence' trend, particularly in gifting, he notes. "To capitalise on this trend, we're launching the Thomas Fudge's Mixed Florentine Selection which features 12 Florentines with three flavours, including milk



chocolate, dark chocolate, and blonde, for an MRSP of £6.

"Nostalgia is another trend we expect to continue being prevalent for Christmas 2025 and ... our Paterson's and Fox's assortments offer family-favourite tradition, with our Party Rings Yard offering the perfect nostalgic gift for fans of the brand."

What retailers need to know

As Christmas 2025 approaches, suppliers have a variety of recommendations on how retailers can improve the in-store experience. Key

among these is ensuring that they cater for the festive season right throughout the extended run-up – known as the golden quarter – to maximise the sales opportunity and fulfil shopper expectations.

Make room for meaningful indulgence, suggests Forest Feast's Clarke. "Shoppers are looking for more than just treats – they want products that feel thoughtful, taste amazing, and reflect their values. Whether it's a beautiful presentation, innovative flavours or great gifting formats, the brands that deliver on both heart and taste will win the season."

At Lily O'Brien's, Crawford says retailers have made great strides, but notes there's always room to create even more inspiring, immersive experiences. "Carefully curated in-store displays and strong storytelling help shoppers find that 'extra special' gift or treat," she says.

“Christmas isn't a single shopping moment, it's a series of distinct missions, from early gift-planning to last-minute top-ups”



“Focus on creating excitement and emotional connection in-store,” she advises. “By championing quality, standout design, and meaningful gifting, retailers can inspire customers to trade up and make their festive moments unforgettable.”

The biggest opportunity for retailers to win with seasonal biscuits this Christmas is making sure that they are offering the right range, at the right time, says FBC UK’s Hebson. “Seasonal biscuits can play multiple roles across the golden quarter and provide retailers with lots of opportunities to maximise sales,” he says.

“Retailers should ensure they’re offering the relevant ranges and brands to suit these different seasonal shopping missions as well as merchandising them effectively in impulse sites to drive basket spend.

“While assortments remain the main driver of incremental spend across the

season, making up 73% of sales¹⁵, early in the festive season (pre-Halloween) is when we see smaller seasonal packet lines, like our Fox’s Winter Spiced Cookies, perform particularly well as shoppers look for a first taste of Christmas. Assortments then ramp-up significantly throughout November and December, reaching their peak in the week before Christmas as shoppers look to stock-up on at-home sharing products and last-minute gifts.

“As we get closer to the big day, we also see an increase in tins – solidifying seasonal biscuits as a must-stock, gifting opportunity,” he adds.

At Mondelez, Nash agrees that the Christmas sales opportunity for chocolate confectionery starts well before Christmas, and it’s important for retailers to be prepared from as early as September. However, in December, shoppers are making their final purchases in the lead-up to Christmas Day. As such, she echoes Hebson’s advice, saying: “What that means is it’s important to be stocking the right products to meet the needs of shoppers at the right time.

“December remains a key sales period for retailers to drive sales through gifting and sharing formats, including selection boxes such as the Cadbury Medium Selection Box... as well as Cadbury Dairy Milk Tray,” she says. “There’s also a nationwide rollout of a Cadbury Dairy Milk Mixed Chunks sharing tin, featuring individually wrapped chunks of Cadbury Dairy Milk, Cadbury Dairy Milk Whole Nut and Cadbury Dairy Milk Caramel, as well as a 360g Cadbury Mini Snowballs bar.”

Make it easy for shoppers to trade up, advises Bel UK. “In an environment where consumers are being more selective with spend, Christmas is still the moment where they’re willing to pay more for quality, indulgence, and products that elevate entertaining, especially in categories such as cheese, which plays a starring role in so many festive food occasions,” it says.

“Retailers can unlock incremental value by curating fixtures that spotlight premium, versatile products, clearly signposting usage (e.g. cheeseboards, sharing, gifting), and grouping complementary SKUs that help shoppers build a festive moment, not just buy a single product. Think beyond individual SKUs; it’s about creating a journey through the fixture that

inspires, encourages discovery, and makes it easy for shoppers to upgrade their baskets, whether they’re hosting, gifting, or simply treating themselves. Done well, this can drive both basket spend and brand loyalty, while giving shoppers the confidence they’re creating something special without going over budget.”

Mars Wrigley’s O’Neill emphasises that convenience is key for consumers, as they want to be able to enter a store and easily find what they are seeking. “Retailers can help shoppers navigate the store more easily by clearly signposting different festive occasions and seasonal offerings,” she says. “This not only helps customers find what they are looking for, but also introduces them to new and exciting products that they may not have considered – unlocking opportunities for inspiration and impulse purchases.

“Christmas isn’t a single shopping moment, it’s a series of distinct missions, from early gift planning to last-minute top-ups and indulgent treats,” adds O’Neill. “Retailers who cater to these shifting missions with tailored ranges, relevant promotions, clear signposting, and in-store activations that guide and inspire shoppers will be best placed to drive conversion and maximise sales throughout the entire festive period. Success will come from aligning the offer with what customers need, when they need it, while making it easy to find and enticing to buy.”

Meanwhile, to optimise festive offering in drinks, retailers need to consider stocking a choice for all occasions, providing new and exciting SKUs, catering for mindful consumption, all underpinned with brand credibility and value for money, says Heineken’s Wilson. “Having choice for consumers across brands and pack sizes to match this will be key to catering for shoppers, whatever the budget and celebration traditions.”

Sources

¹ Nielsen IQ, Total Coverage, Total Sweet Biscuits, 16 w/e 28.12.24

² Combined Read Nielsen IQ 17 w/e 28.12.24 & Kantar 16 w/e 29.12.24

³ Kantar MWP, Total Market, 16 w/e 29.12.24

^{4,5} Nielsen IQ, Scantrack Data to w/e 28.12.24

⁶ Nielsen IQ, Scantrack Data, 24 w/e 28.12.24

⁷ Forest Feast, internal company data

^{8,9} Nielsen IQ, 12 w/e 28.12.24

¹⁰⁻¹² Nielsen IQ, Value Sales, 5 w/e 28.12.24

¹³ LS:N Global, Flavour Frenzy Market, <https://tinyurl.com/3pxrt5a>

¹⁴ Circana IRI, All Outlets, 52 w/e 28.12.24

¹⁵ Nielsen IQ, Seasonal Biscuits & Assortments, Total Coverage, 16 w/e 28.12.24

Home inspiration

¹ LS:N Global, Homely Hospitality report, <https://tinyurl.com/2paa3etv>

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The advertisement features a central purple hexagon with the text 'Christmas SALES' in a gold script and white sans-serif font. Below this is 'START WITH' and the 'Nestlé Quality Street' logo. The background is a vibrant purple with a golden starburst pattern. Various Quality Street chocolates are scattered around the hexagon, including a green triangular one, a blue rectangular one, a pink rectangular one, and several round ones in yellow, orange, and brown wrappers. Some chocolates are unwrapped, showing their creamy fillings.

Christmas SALES

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*Source: OnePoll, 2024

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'Tis Boursin time

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(Babybel® and The
Laughing Cow®)

KEY BRANDS

Boursin®
Babybel®
Port Salut®

 Boursin is gearing up for another record-breaking Christmas with exciting NPD and its biggest marketing push this year. After delivering a standout festive season in 2024, Boursin is preparing to make Christmas 2025 its most indulgent yet, with a refreshed line-up of seasonal flavours, versatile formats and a major marketing investment.

Boursin retained its crown as the UK's No.1 indulgence cheese brand last year, delivering +47% more sales than its nearest competitor¹. Almost one in 10 households bought into the brand during the final quarter², enjoying it as part of tempting grazing boards or as an indulgent addition to home-cooked dishes, helping value sales jump +27.2% in those final four weeks alone³, clear proof that for many shoppers, there's simply no Christmas without Boursin.

And it wasn't the only Bel showstopper. Maxi Babybel's return in its iconic festive wrap fuelled a social media buzz and +28.6% value growth to £682k⁴. Back for 2025, this limited-edition novelty has firmly established itself as a festive favourite.

Elevating home entertaining

As more shoppers look to host family and friends at home, partly driven by the financial squeeze on dining out⁵, they're seeking products that feel special, something they're proud to serve.

"That's where Bel's portfolio shines," says the company. "From Boursin's indulgent flavours to Port Salut's smooth, crowd-pleasing taste and distinctive orange rind, perfect for photogenic cheeseboards, these French favourites offer retailers a strong line-up for key seasonal sales."

To inspire even more unforgettable gatherings, Boursin has partnered with celebrated maître d' Fred Sirieix. With his signature charm and French flair, Fred brings hosting expertise that perfectly complements Boursin's role at the heart of elevated entertaining.



“As more shoppers look to host family and friends at home, they're seeking products that feel special, something they're proud to serve”



Serving up innovation

Building on the success of last year's festive trio, which sold 75 tonnes and grew +13% in value⁵, Boursin is unveiling a new Trio Gourmand for 2025. Featuring an exciting new flavour and refreshed premium design, it promises even stronger shelf appeal.

Boursin Truffle, a festive favourite since its 2023 debut, now holds a permanent place in the range. Meanwhile, versatile formats such as Boursin Velvety Garlic & Herbs, ensure hosts have every occasion covered from dips to canapés.

And with more guests embracing plant-based diets, Boursin Plant-Based makes sure no one misses out on the grazing board.

Extraordinary marketing

"With indulgence on the menu, Boursin is set to make its biggest marketing investment this year, keeping the brand front of mind with festive shoppers and helping retailers drive standout seasonal sales," notes the company. "Together with Port Salut's crowd-pleasing appeal and Maxi Babybel's limited-edition excitement, Bel's portfolio gives retailers all the ingredients to make their seasonal cheese fixture the destination for premium, playful and inclusive entertaining."

Source

¹ Circana IRI, All Outlets, 4 w/e 28.12.24

² Kantar, 12 w/e 29.12.24

³ Circana IRI, All Outlets, 4 w/e 28.12.24

⁴ IRI, Value Sales, 16.11.24 to 28.12.24

⁵ LS:N Homely Hospitality report, LS:N : Markets: Homely Hospitality

⁶ Circana IRI, All Outlets, 52 w/e 28.12.24

⁷ IRI, 52 w/e 28.12.24



Boursin®

Stock Up this Christmas in all formats & flavours!



#1 BRAND

IN PENETRATION & VALUE SALES¹

70%

AWARENESS, HIGHEST IN THE CATEGORY²



1. In indulgence category Kantar penetration & IRI value sales 52 w/e 28.12.2024

2. IPSOS brand health tracking FY 2024

Forest Feast

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Grazing, gifting and great taste

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Chocolate Dipped Nuts
Chocolate Dipped Fruits
Slow Roasted Nuts
& Trail Mixes
Premium Dried Fruits
Seasonal & Gifting

➔ This Christmas, Forest Feast is once again redefining festive snacking with a premium line-up of award-winning snacks and innovation. From beautifully boxed gifts to perfectly crafted sharing bags, the range is designed to meet consumer demand for treats that feel both thoughtful and deliciously decadent, says marketing director Bronagh Clarke.

“At Christmas, people want something a little special – whether that’s to gift, share or enjoy for themselves,” she says. “Our range delivers indulgence with real ingredients, rich textures, and a strong visual appeal that makes them stand out both on shelf and at the table.”

New for 2025: a Feast of innovation

Tapping into the growing appetite for permissible indulgence and elevated snacking, Forest Feast is introducing several new and returning favourites that are perfectly timed for the festive season, reveals Clarke.

At the heart of the 2025 range are the Forest Feast Gift Cubes – a beautifully presented collection of best-loved treats designed for stocking fillers, gifting and impulse purchases. The compact yet eye-catching cubes feature a selection of chocolate nut combinations, including the limited-edition Blonde Caramelised Hazelnuts.

This year also sees the launch of Forest Feast’s Praline Milk Chocolate Hazelnuts – combining crunchy whole roasted hazelnuts, generously wrapped in rich praline and crispy feuilletine wafer, and finished with smooth layers of white and milk chocolate. “They’re incredibly moreish and add a touch of luxury to any snacking line-up,” says Clarke.

Also joining the seasonal range are two crowd-pleasing classics: the Dark Chocolate Almonds and Milk Chocolate



“At Christmas, people want something a little special – whether that’s to gift, share or enjoy for themselves. Our range delivers indulgence and a strong visual appeal”

Brazils in larger share bags – perfect for entertaining, gifting or enjoying with family and friends.

And for those seeking festive twists, returning favourites like Peppermint Cream Dark Chocolate Almonds and Valencia Orange Chocolate Almonds bring together the richness of chocolate with seasonal flavours to capture the nostalgic magic of Christmas.

Forest Feast’s festive offer is inspired by key consumer trends shaping the season, including strong demand for premium treats that balance indulgence with quality and integrity, explains Clarke. “People want snacks that deliver on taste and texture but are also made with care – to reflect the gifting moment,” she says.

Driving discovery and spend

Forest Feast is backing its festive collection with a comprehensive marketing and merchandising strategy designed to drive discovery and boost basket spend. “We’re supporting retailers with strong seasonal POS, off-shelf placement recommendations, and digital assets that bring the brand’s festive personality to life,” says Clarke. Campaign activity will span social media, influencer partnerships, PR and gifting guides.

Clarke adds: “From stocking fillers to snack boards, Forest Feast helps retailers offer something truly special this season.”



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Optimise the golden quarter

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David Hebson
Trade Marketing Director

KEY BRANDS

Fox's Classic Assortments
– £17.4m over the last year¹ with the Fox's Classic 550g the biggest selling seasonal assortment over the 16 weeks to Christmas 2024.

Paterson's Shortbread
– Britain's No.1 shortbread brand (volumes four times the size of our nearest branded rival). The impressive performance of Paterson's & Fox's continued over the 16 w/e 28.12.24 and saw FBC UK&I the biggest branded manufacturer of seasonal & assortment sweet biscuits by value sales for the third Christmas in a row in 2024².

Source

- ¹ NIQ, Total Coverage and Kantar Variety Retail, 16 w/e 28.12.24 and two prior years
- ² Kantar MWP, Sweet Biscuits, Total Seasonal & Assortments + Total Sweet Biscuits ex S&A, 16 w/e 29.12.24
- ³ NIQ, Total Coverage, Total Shortbread, 16 w/e 28.12.24 & 52 w/e 28.12.24
- ⁴ NIQ, Total Coverage, Total Shortbread, 16 w/e 28.12.24 & 52 w/e 28.12.24
- ⁵ Kantar, Total Sweet Biscuits, Total Market, 16 w/e 29.12.24
- ⁶ NIQ, Total Sweet Biscuits, Total Seasonal & Assortments, Total Coverage, 16 w/e 28.12.24
- ⁷ NIQ, GB, 52 w/e September 2024
- ⁸ NIQ Total Sweet Biscuits, Total Seasonal & Assortments, Total Coverage L16 w/e 28.12.24 + Kantar MWP Variety Retail, Total Seasonal & Assortments 16 w/e 29.12.24

 Fox's Burton's Companies (FBC), the UK's No.1 seasonal biscuit manufacturer for the past three years¹, is gearing up for another bumper Christmas in 2025 as it works to ensure retailers stock the right range at the right time with the right brands.

Timing is everything

Seasonal biscuits can play multiple roles across the golden quarter and provide retailers with lots of opportunities to maximise sales.

“While assortments drive the most value across the entire period, early in the festive season (Sept–Oct) is when smaller seasonal packet lines, like our Fox's Winter Spiced Cookies, Fox's Classic 275g, Fox's Favourites 300g and Paterson's Shortbread Fingers 300g perform particularly well as shoppers look for a first taste of Christmas,” says trade marketing director David Hebson. “This year, we're adding Fox's Dark Choc Ginger Cookie, our latest limited-edition flavour. Each ginger-flavoured cookie is packed with dark chocolate chunks and half coated in Fox's Fabulous Dark Chocolate.”

Assortments then ramp up significantly throughout November and December, reaching their peak in the week before Christmas, he notes. “As we get closer to the big day, we also see an increase in tins – solidifying seasonal biscuits as a must-stock gifting opportunity. “Assortments are a must-stock for any retailer looking to trade shoppers up and increase basket spend, with 75% of seasonal biscuit sales in November and December coming from packs priced £3 and above.”

Paterson's is Britain's No.1 shortbread biscuit brand, far outselling its nearest branded rival³. With over 50% of shortbread category sales taking place in the festive season⁴, Paterson's presents a major opportunity for retailers. The Paterson's range is led by the Classic Shortbread Fingers 300g carton, supported by a delicious range, including its 400g Shortbread & Biscuit Assortment and 1kg Shortbread Selection, baked with fresh Scottish cream.



“Seasonal biscuits can play multiple roles across the golden quarter and provide retailers with lots of opportunities to maximise sales”



Brand loyalty

Stocking brands that shoppers can trust and that have played a major role in families' festive traditions for many years is important for retailers. 24% of category shoppers said they bought FBC products exclusively during the 2024 festive season⁵, so retailers should make the most of this brand loyalty by engaging with the breadth of the FBC UK range to ensure they are meeting shoppers varying needs, he adds.

“Fox's seasonal range offers shoppers fabulous assortments including Fox's Classic 550g Assortment – the UK's No.1 branded sweet biscuit assortment at Christmas⁶ – as well as Fox's Viennese Assortment of indulgent butter biscuits and the Fox's Chocolatey Assortment of Milk, Dark and White chocolate biscuits; perfect for sharing with family and friends or ideal for gifting.

This year, FBC has also taken over UK distribution of Royal Dansk Butter Cookies, which, sporting their iconic blue tins in seasonal variations, are a Christmas classic. The total butter cookies market in the UK trades at £3.2m RSV per annum but is growing by 45% YoY⁷. “FBC's ambition is to double the market in the next few years through premium-yet-affordable tins, with Christmas the perfect opportunity to capitalise on this growth,” he concludes.



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*Combined Read NIQ & Kantar Worldpanel 16we 29.12.24 vs YA

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Cheers to Christmas sales

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Cruzcampo®
Foster's
John Smith's
Desperados
Murphy's
Inch's
Strongbow
Old Mout

 Christmas is one of the biggest trading periods for beer and cider. Last Christmas, category sales were worth £588m in the grocery channel¹ so, it's incredibly important for retailers to pay close attention to their ranges over the festive season.

A broader range brews bigger sales

Retailers can boost their beer and cider sales by stocking a broad range of formats and variants, which tap into the varying shopper trends and occasions we see over this period.

“Our portfolio covers every segment of the category, and is well-placed to help them do so,” says Alexander Wilson, category & commercial strategy director at Heineken UK. “Maintaining a varied range of small-, mid- and large-sized packs – including classic favourites such as Heineken, Foster's and John Smith's – will ensure shoppers' needs are met, whatever the occasion,” he explains. “Larger packs do incredibly well as people stock up for Christmas parties and big gatherings, and smaller packs are ideal for more intimate evenings at home.

“While the cider category may predominantly be associated with the summer, it performs well all-year round, including at Christmas. Having a strong range in place, with Strongbow, Old Mout and Inch's, will help retailers maximise this opportunity.”

The stout category is also performing well, with volume growth of +11.3% in volume across the off-trade², notes Wilson. “We relaunched our classic Irish stout brand, Murphy's, back into the channel in 4x440ml and 10x440ml multipacks, so retailers can give their shoppers a trusted and authentic alternative,” he says.

Trading up to top tier tastes

While all beer segments are valuable in the run-up to Christmas and New Year, premium lager and world lager really come to the fore – contributing to 62% of sales³. “Those categories are strongly associated with celebrations, providing an alternative option to prosecco and gin as people look to elevate festivities and explore new taste profiles, while



“Retailers can boost their beer and cider sales by stocking a broad range of formats and variants, which tap into the varying shopper trends”

still looking for good value for money,” says Wilson. “Brands like Birra Moretti L'Autentica and Cruzcampo also make great gifting options, boasting a range of formats. Last December, Birra Moretti was the festive season's shining star, with its 10x330ml multipacks up 104%.”

With the launch of Birra Moretti Sale di Mare last year, drinkers are now given even more choice when looking to purchase premium beers, he notes. “This flavourful twist on the popular lager encourages incremental purchases over the festive season.”

Moderation maintains momentum

Demand for no- and low-alcohol generally stays the same throughout the year, but like other alcohol categories, peaks over Christmas and New Year, so there is a massive opportunity for retailers, he adds. “The trend for moderation is here to stay, and category growth can be achieved by broadening the appeal of low-ABV and 0.0% options. There has been growth across all our no- and low-alcohol variants – including Heineken 0.0, the UK's No.1 0% lager brand⁴, as well as Birra Moretti Zero and Old Mout Alcohol-Free Cider. We have also just introduced Inch's 0.0 – the UK's first dealcoholised cider – to help offer even more choice this Christmas and beyond.”



Source

- ¹ Nielsen IQ, Value Sales, 5 w/e 28.12.24
- ² Nielsen IQ, off-trade, full year 2024 to 28.12.24 and on-trade CGA to 28.12.24
- ³ Nielsen IQ, Value Sales, 5 weeks to 28.12.24
- ⁴ Nielsen Scantrack, to 03.08.24

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Crafting indulgent gifts

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KEY BRANDS

Lily O'Brien's range
– Desserts Collection
– Ultimate Collection
– Luxury Collection
– Milk Chocolate Truffles
– Salted Caramel Truffles

“At Lily O'Brien's, chocolate has always been more than a sweet treat. It's an expression of care, passion, connection and celebration – sentiments that come alive during the festive season,” says marketing director Karen Crawford. “Following a record-breaking Christmas 2024, which saw us become the fastest-growing inlaid chocolate brand (+15% value and +10% volume growth)¹, we're delighted to bring back our most-loved festive collections in 2025.

“Our Christmas Desserts Collection continues to lead the market as the most successful Christmas box², delighting with a tempting range of dessert-inspired flavours such as Banoffee Pie, Lemon Posset and Berry Eton Mess. Its enduring popularity saw it grow +6% year-on-year last Christmas³, underlining its position as the perfect centrepiece for festive gatherings or a thoughtful gift for someone special.

“Also returning this year is our celebrated Luxury Chocolate Collection. Launched in 2024 and quickly embraced by consumers, this exquisite assortment features 27 chocolates across nine signature recipes, including velvety raspberry ganache and rich coffee & almond biscotti. With three of each creation, it offers indulgence in abundance – whether enjoyed as a luxurious personal treat or shared with loved ones.”

Beyond boxed collections, Lily O'Brien's indulgent truffle range – including Salted Caramel and Milk Chocolate truffles – continues to answer the growing demand for accessible yet luxurious sharing formats, she notes.



“Our mission is to deliver premium quality at accessible price points, ensuring that everyone can enjoy a little luxury during the festive season”

“With value growth of +31% last year⁴, this range has become a key choice for token gifting and self-treating moments alike,” she says.

The company remain dedicated to using the finest ingredients and crafting chocolates with care and attention to detail, adds Crawford. “Our mission is to deliver premium quality at accessible price points, ensuring that everyone can enjoy a little luxury during the festive season.

“This commitment is supported by our ongoing ‘For the ones you really know’ campaign, which will run again this Christmas across national media, digital platforms and in-store activations. Our focus is to deepen emotional connection with our audience, inspiring consumers to choose Lily O'Brien's when they want to make festive moments truly memorable.

“With strong retailer support, elegant packaging, and a range that continues to excite and delight, Lily O'Brien's stands ready to help make Christmas 2025 a season to embrace and remember,” she concludes. “From signature dessert-inspired chocolates to indulgent truffles, there is a perfect gift or treat for every festive occasion.

“This Christmas, make it extra special with Lily O'Brien's – chocolates specially crafted for the ones you really know.”



Source

¹⁻⁴ Nielsen, 12 w/e 28.12.24

Lily O'Brien's

For the ones you really know.



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customers
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these!

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*Data source: Nielsen Total GB, 52 w/e 28.12.24

Unwrapping seasonal sales

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belVita
Cadbury Biscuits
Mikado
Toblerone
OREO
Ritz
Barney

 Mondelez International, the No.1 confectionery supplier¹, is unwrapping its 2025 festive range, including new treats and returning favourites from Cadbury, Toblerone and Oreo, that are set to help retailers drive seasonal sales.

“We’re in a great position to spruce up retailers’ ranges this winter with our much-loved seasonal range, and some exciting new additions,” says Susan Nash, trade communications manager.

Counting down with Biscoff

Mondelez International is bringing something unique to shoppers’ advent countdown with the new Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Advent Calendar, featuring 24 Cadbury Dairy Milk chunks, 12 of which have crunchy Lotus Biscoff pieces and Biscoff spread. “It’s a great option for those looking to trade-up this year and make the countdown ritual even more special,” says Nash.

The Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Advent Calendar joins an extensive range of advent calendars, including the No.1 90g advent calendar².

In addition, the successful Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff bar is now available in a larger 350g block to help retailers tap into the gifting occasion with this iconic flavour combination. Gifting blocks are also important to winter confectionery sales, so are highly recommended for retailers.

Mondelez International is also extending its Toblerone diamond-shaped truffle offering, by adding two new premium Toblerone Diamond Truffle gift boxes: Golden Caramel and an Assorted pack featuring Milk, Dark, White and Golden Caramel.



“As shoppers get into the festive spirit, self-eat products such as Cadbury Puds are key”



Returning festive favourites

“As shoppers start to get into the festive spirit, self-eat products such as Cadbury Puds are key,” says Nash. The Cadbury Puds range expanded last year with Cadbury Mini Puds, a bitesize bag format for the first time, appealing to shoppers looking for a stocking filler or a treat to enjoy themselves. Cadbury Dairy Milk Coins are also returning. In 2024, it was the No.1 gifting novelty product across the market³.

From Oreo, the world’s favourite biscuit brand⁴, the limited-edition Oreo Gingerbread is back for a second year this Christmas – one of 2024’s biggest branded seasonal launches⁵.

Also new for 2025 are sharing formats for Cadbury Dairy Milk and Oreo. These include a Cadbury Dairy Milk Chunks 270g sharing pouch and an Oreo Assortments pouch, featuring Original, Golden and Double Crème Oreo biscuits. Nash adds: “Perfect for sharing on winter evenings and for festive gatherings, Cadbury Roses and Cadbury Heroes ranges feature stunning new designs.”

Meanwhile, the successful Cadbury Secret Santa campaign is back again this year. “Since 2022, our Secret Santa campaign has engaged 1m consumers, building a Christmas ritual that shares the joy of chocolate,” says Nash.



Source

- ¹ Nielsen, Total Coverage including discounters, L52 w/e 15.06.24
- ² Nielsen, Total Coverage 23 wks data to 28.12.24
- ³ Nielsen, Total Coverage 23 wks data to 28.12.24
- ⁴ Euromonitor, Snacks 2023 ed. Sweet Biscuits, brand share 2022, retail value sales
- ⁵ Nielsen IQ, Total Market, Total Coverage incl discounters, w/e 28.12.24

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Tasty Vibes
The Flan Co
Kuchenmeister
Mars Croissants
Milkyway Croissants
Galaxy Croissants
Oreo Fresh Milk-Snack

Christmas 2024 marked a milestone for British households, delivering record-breaking take-home sales of £13.8bn, an increase of £0.5bn or 3.4% versus the previous year¹. With festive indulgence firmly back on the agenda, United Food Brands (UFB), the UK's No.1 supplier of branded stollen², is seizing the moment with bold new innovations and a premium seasonal bakery brand set to capture consumer excitement and drive retail growth.

New seasonal bakery brand

In partnership with Kuchenmeister GmbH, the world-renowned stollen manufacturer, UFB delivered exceptional results last year, achieving a 28% uplift in distribution and reaching over 23,000 retail outlets across grocery, discount, and wholesale channels³, says UFB CEO Richard Reeves. "Building on this momentum, UFB is proud to unveil Hallo Deutsche Bäckerei, a new seasonal bakery brand bringing authentic German indulgence to UK shoppers," he reveals.

Launching in Tesco and Sainsbury's for Christmas 2025, Hallo Deutsche Bäckerei blends heritage baking with category-leading innovation. The Kuchenmeister brand will also expand nationwide in Asda. Ranges will include Stollen Cookies, Bites, and Loaves, crafted to meet growing demand for premium festive treats that balance tradition with novelty.

"At United Food Brands, we're constantly evolving our range and investing in innovation," says Reeves. "Our record-breaking year has given us the confidence to diversify our seasonal offering. With Hallo Deutsche Bäckerei, we're reinforcing our leadership in festive bakery and bringing something truly distinctive to UK retail."

Convenience without compromise

The company's seasonal innovation doesn't stop there. Two standout NPD launches for 2025 include the Marzipan Stollen Slices 250g, a pre-sliced festive marzipan



“With Hallo Deutsche Bäckerei, we’re reinforcing our festive bakery leadership and bringing something truly distinctive to UK retail”



loaf that is perfect for gifting, grazing, or enjoying with coffee, he reveals. Designed for convenience without compromise, the pre-sliced loaf taps into the consumer trend for ready-to-serve indulgence.

UFB is also introducing Irish Cream Baumkuchen Bites, inspired by Germany's iconic layered tree cake. The Baumkuchen Bites are infused with Irish cream flavour and enrobed in rich milk chocolate – launching exclusively in Tesco.

True category differentiation

"Christmas is about indulgence, discovery, and giving shoppers a reason to trade up," adds Manraaj Rai, sales controller at UFB. "Our 2025 range brings premium quality, genuine excitement and true category differentiation, helping retail partners drive incremental sales."

With a proven track record, including the success of Waffle Amour, the UK's No.1 Belgian waffle brand⁴, UFB continues to lead the way in seasonal bakery.

"By fusing our brand-building expertise with insight-led NPD, UFB is helping retailers unlock the full potential of the UK's most lucrative trading period," concludes Reeves. "This enables our retail partners to bring festive joy to millions of households nationwide."

Source

¹ Kantar, L4 w/e 29.12.24

² Nielsen L4 w/e 29.12.24

³ UFB Internal Sales Data, L4 w/e 29.12.24

⁴ Nielsen, Total Category, Total Brands, GB Grocery Multis, 4 w/e 18.01.25



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