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The Grocer Guide to...

The Grocer

Christmas



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With retail strategies for the Christmas season already planned for September, suppliers are gearing up to what they hope will be an extraordinary festive season despite the continuing woes of the cost-of-living crisis. Their focus this year is on the concepts of affordable indulgence, gifting and sharing, with a firm nod to nostalgic flavours.		Adding festive products with warming, nostalgic flavours	
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Analysis



Tradition and innovation

While suppliers are aware consumer budgets continue to be tight, they are still pushing the boat out to attract festive shopper spend

“Christmas is like candy; it slowly melts in your mouth sweetening every taste bud, making you wish it could last forever.”

These are the words of US writer Richelle E. Goodrich, but they appear very appropriate in the context of the food and drink industry at Christmas and are evocative of consumers’ need for indulgence and affordable self-treating at a time when recent times have seemed incredibly tough.

According to a blog from Mintel, 38% of UK consumers spent more than they had planned to for Christmas 2023¹, while KPMG reported food as a clear category winner in the UK retail aisles in December last year, up 6.1% vs December 2022². “Christmas saw a large food volume increase, likely helped by retailers cutting the prices of essential

Christmas dinner vegetables,” it noted.

Yet with food and energy bills high across last year, disposable income remained a real issue, having fallen 2.4% across 2023³. Although inflation has now softened from its shocking highs, consumers are by no means out of the woods yet when it comes to the cost-of-living crisis, meaning that expenditure will be continue to be curtailed. However, supplier reports from Christmas 2023 suggest that shoppers are still willing to invest in the sheer joy of the season and splash out on family and friends. The supplier focus in this year’s Christmas supplement is very much on sweeter treats and home baking, whether for sharing or gifting, and there is a clear emphasis on nostalgia, tradition, product quality and brand strength.

So, what were the main experiences of Christmas 2023 for suppliers and how do they plan to take that forward into this year’s festive celebrations?

Christmas is always a key time for sales of confectionery, says World of Sweets head of marketing Kathryn Hague. “Statistics highlight that 97% of UK households buy confectionery in the run-up to Christmas, spending an average of £55 per person across the season⁴,” she says.

“And despite the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and inflation, Christmas performed well in 2023, with the most significant growth during the mid- and late season⁵,” she adds

“There has been a significant ‘lipstick effect’ on consumer behaviour, brought on by the cost-of-living crisis. It means that affordable luxuries are in demand,

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while other product sales struggle, which benefits the confectionery sector,” she notes.

Hague also reports that World of Sweets saw significant sales increases in chocolate cartons, boxed products and in sugar pouches. “Low-cost and impulse novelty and self-eat ranges were also popular among shoppers,” she adds.

The chocolate category performed well during Christmas 2023 and, despite some concerns that the wide economic picture would have an impact, consumer spending was robust, reports Lydia Stubbins, group marketing director for Divine Chocolate. “Most people spent the same amount as they did in 2022. However, with prices across the board going up, this meant retailers saw volume declines, even if value sales were strong.”

Two of Divine’s stocking filler treats – its Joyful Bar and Chocolate Coins – were a sell-out, she says. “We believe this was down to their affordable price point, and the fact they still offer consumers a little bit of luxury without breaking the bank.”

Lily O’Brien’s marketing director Karen Crawford says the boxed chocolates brand experienced “an exceptional festive period” in 2023, with its Desserts Collection (210g) seeing 13% growth⁶. The launch of its Limited Edition Christmas offering in the Desserts Collection sub-brand drove a further £1.5m+ growth in retail sales, enhancing the sub-brand’s value which now stands at £11m⁷, she reveals, adding: “Despite inflationary pressures consumer are still willing to trade up for luxury chocolates at Christmas.”

It was a similar story for the biscuits category, which had a “roaring success” last Christmas despite tough market conditions – a demonstration of how important the market is to seasonal sales, says Colin Taylor, trade marketing director at Fox’s Burton’s Companies (FBC UK). “Sweet biscuits saw the highest levels of uplift of any seasonal category in the four-week December window, with growth of 16% vs 7% across total seasonal products⁸,” he notes. “Total seasonal sweet biscuits grew by 7% in the 16 weeks to 12.12.23, taking total seasonal and assortment biscuits to £179m⁹.”

FBC UK saw its seasonal and assortments grow by +40% year on year (YOY)¹⁰, including its Fox’s Classic 550g



Assortment, which took £17.7m over a 16-week period¹¹, he reveals. “This demonstrates a definite appetite from consumers who want to share and make the most of the Christmas spirit with family and friends during the holiday season,” he says.

In terms of home baking, Christmas is the biggest event of the year, says Jennifer Johnson, head of marketing – cake at Dr Oetker. “We are seeing retailers get behind seasonal events more and more, expanding ranges with new innovation and giving more space in-store to these seasonal SKUs,” she says. “The home baking category over Christmas 2023 grew by 7% in value and 4% in units¹² as inflation returned to more normal levels, with the average price up 2% YOY¹³. From a total grocery point of view, shoppers left the bulk of the buying until the

final week before Christmas, allowing those with bigger budgets to make more savvy decisions¹⁴. However, 2023 was record-breaking with a value of +7.1% to £13.8bn (+£0.9m)¹⁵. Therefore, for 2024, we expect Christmas to grow with retailers going big again.”

How will Christmas 2024 play out?

With suppliers already gearing up early for this year’s festive season, there’s a sense of optimism, although they acknowledge the financial constraints still faced by the nation’s consumers.

Despite some easing in inflation, the cost-of-living crisis is continuing to affect consumer behaviour, says Alana Stewart, trading director at Southeast Traders. “Many families are likely to prioritise budgeting and spending more cautiously,” she says. “Food and drink companies



97%

of UK households buy confectionery in the run-up to Christmas⁴

Kantar Worldpanel

+7%

growth in seasonal sweet biscuits over a 16-week period in 2023⁹

NIQ + Kantar

73%

of shoppers agree that tough times call for delicious snacks¹⁸

Mondelez International

are expecting a demand for affordable yet festive options. There will likely be a focus on value-for-money deals, with consumers looking for promotions and discounts.”

Due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, 84% of shoppers are conscious of how much money they spend¹⁶ and this shows no sign of abating prior to the festive period this year, says Rachel Austerberry, UK retail sales director at Grenade. “Christmas is a time for luxury, however 40%¹⁷ of shoppers are cutting back on luxury items due to the current economic climate,” she says. “Despite this, 73% of shoppers agree that tough times call for delicious snacks¹⁸, meaning a seasonal protein bar is an opportunity for consumers to enjoy a little luxury that they don’t need to cut back on.

“Since the cost-of-living crisis began,

seasonal holidays have been celebrated for less time than usual, as shoppers look to reduce their expenditure – and out-of-home spend is reducing. 58% of consumers are looking for promotions¹⁹, so brands can look to offer products on deal to attract shoppers,” she adds.

Lily O’Brien’s wants to maintain affordability at a time when increased cost-of-living and financial implications of the economy are having a real impact on consumers, says Crawford. “With Lily O’Brien’s there is an option for all budgets and a taste of luxury at an attainable price point for everyone,” she says. “Christmas is a time when consumers seek real comfort in moments of indulgence with close friends and family – and chocolate is well placed to offer this and to lift spirits even in times of challenge.” As such

affordable indulgence will be a key trend in 2024, especially across inlaid boxed chocolates and gifting, she notes.

Treats remain a ‘must’ that consumers do not wish to compromise on even in more challenging times, especially during the Christmas period as consumers look to protect their spending to have the best Christmas possible with friends and family, says Susan Nash, trade communications manager at Mondelez International. “Rituals and traditions play a key part in consumer spending habits, and the chocolate category is fundamental here, particularly through gifting and sharing formats,” she says.

However, she acknowledges that recent economic circumstances have seen shoppers increasingly look to enjoy evenings at home as a more cost-effective way to spend time together.

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“And we can anticipate this continuing into this year’s festive season. Chocolate is the top choice of product for the ‘Big Night In’ occasions²⁰ so our gifting and sharing formats are well placed to help retailers tap into this ever-growing consumer trend.”

Despite the confectionery sector experiencing a wealth of challenges over the past few years – be it from Brexit, Covid-19, HFSS or the cost-of-living crisis, the perception of chocolate as an affordable treat, even during challenging times, has meant Divine has remained resilient throughout the economic downturn, navigating through cost pressures to maintain the quality and ethical integrity of its products, says Stubbins. “The lipstick effect – when consumers still spend money on small indulgences during recessions, economic downturns or when they, personally, have little cash – means that despite these challenging times, quality chocolate is still seen as an affordable treat by many,” she says.

“Consumers may well be more careful with spending in 2024. However, our Christmas range delivers on indulgent treat moments at an accessible price, so we’re optimistic they will still make space in their basket for quality chocolate.”

Events and occasions are often seen as a way to treat ourselves, with less concern for health and sugar, particularly in home baking, says Dr Oetker’s Johnson. “We see shoppers trade up and make more incremental purchases at this time of year, whether it’s baking with children, gifting or baking for those larger family occasions. Therefore, despite the cost-of-living challenges, we expect Christmas 2024 to see growth as people look to this time of year to treat themselves. However, it is worth noting that there are areas where inflationary pressures remain, such as chocolate.”

Flavours and taste sensations

So what are the key trends in terms of flavours predicted for this year’s festive celebrations?

This Christmas, consumers are looking for the perfect blend of traditional yet innovative flavours in their food and drinks, says Grenade’s Austerberry. “Classic spices, indulgent chocolates and aromatic herbs will dominate,” she says. “The emphasis on nostalgia, using flavours such as



gingerbread, cinnamon and nutmeg will bring a feeling of warmth and comfort during the colder months. Plus, novelty promises a more memorable and delightful culinary experience this festive season.” Grenade is introducing a limited-edition Christmas offer in the shape of a triple-layered Gingerbread Protein Bar, she reveals.

There has been a rise in nostalgic and traditional flavour profiles across other categories such as chilled desserts, beverages and sweets, with consumers increasingly searching for ‘edible escapism’, says Divine Chocolate’s Stubbins. “As such, we identified a gap in the block chocolate market for a range of bars that bring these flavours to life in and indulgent and premium way.” The launch of the company’s range of Dessert Bars in February this year features the flavours of popular puddings, including Tiramisu, Cherry & Almond Bakewell, and Lemon Cheesecake in a “fuss-free and

shareable” take on desserts, she says. For Christmas, it plans to tap into the nostalgia trend with classics including its Giant Chocolate Coins an advent calendars, while its Joyful Bar take inspiration from the traditional flavours of Christmas.

The pursuit of novelty in taste and experience, especially among younger adults, drives the ever-evolving renaissance of chocolate flavours and snacks, says Mondelez’s Nash. “Mint is an incredibly popular flavour among shoppers as one of the top five flavours for standard chocolate²¹. With the mint chocolate category as a whole worth £66m²² RSV, it presents a significant opportunity for retailers,” she says. To tap into this shopper trend, Mondelez is bringing back Cadbury Dairy Milk Winter Mint Crisp to shelves this year, a 360g bar to help retailer further expand in the sharing category, she reveals.

FBC UK’s Taylor notes that white chocolate grew by 11% YOY²³ last

Key trends: sustainability and health

In a climate where consumers are increasingly concerned about the ethical implications of their purchasing decisions, the chocolate industry finds itself at the crossroads of sustainability and transparency, says Mars Wrigley senior brand manager, Christmas, Laura O'Neill. "As cocoa production remains integral to the global chocolate market, the ethical aspects of the supply chain have come under scrutiny," she says. "Galaxy has set a standard with its ambitious commitment to help one million people, particularly women within cocoa-growing communities and

its retail markets, thrive by 2030. This demonstrates a dedication to driving change beyond the realm of mere monetary transactions."

At Divine Chocolate, group marketing director Lydia Stubbins says: "To compete effectively in the chocolate category, being price competitive is crucial, but giving consumers a reason to believe and trust in a brand is even more important. Sustainability is important to us and to our customers. Our packaging is eco-friendly, using recyclable materials wherever possible. We are also committed to ethical sourcing, ensuring

our ingredients are responsibly sourced."

The company is seeing a rise in consumers caring about how the products they purchase are produced, the ingredients used and the treatment of all in the supply chain, she adds. "Divine is the highest-scoring food and drink B-Corp in the UK and only uses Fairtrade-sourced ingredients, so sustainability is at the heart of our ethos. We haven't had to pivot our business model to make our proposition more attractive for consumers, we've just had to ensure we're effectively communicating our credentials in this area," she says.

On the health front, meanwhile, Grenade does not believe that health-conscious consumers need to make compromises on taste, explains UK retail sales director Rachel Austerberry. "Protein bars offer consumers the option to continue to snack easily during the busy Christmas time, and allow consumers to maintain their health goals ... yet still enjoy indulgent flavours. Grenade is offering a key seasonal flavour with its Gingerbread variant, making protein bars a popular choice for health-conscious individuals looking to navigate through Christmas without compromising their dietary habits."

Christmas and reveals that the company is tapping into this trend for 2024 with the launch of its Merryland White Chocolate Chip Mini Cookies, available in a 150g sharing carton. "This year we are also optimising on the popularity of spiced flavours during the seasonal period with our Fox's Fabulous Winter Spiced Cookies," he adds.

In home baking, chocolate is one of the key flavours that over-index due to people looking to bake indulgent treats and desserts, says Dr Oetker's Johnson. "We also see over-index in festive flavours like gingerbread – more so for biscuit mixes – and vanilla, which is used in cakes and homemade custard, as well as spices used for traditional Christmas cakes and mince pies."

"Sour flavours have been key throughout 2024, and Christmas shows signs of the unseasonal sour flavourings being a popular choice," says World of Sweets' Hague. "Industry forecasts have revealed that the sour

candy market is estimated to reach US\$2.7bn by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 7% during the period between last year and 2030²⁴." The company's Toxic Waste brand offers super sour sweets with a wide selection of gifting products for Christmas, including a Christmas Stocking, Truck, Money Bank, Tower of Sour and Gift Set.

For families, World of Sweets has launched a range of Elves Behavin' Badly confectionery, a fun novelty line with budget-friendly prices, making it a cost-conscious stocking filler, says Hague. Included in the range is the Naughty Elf Mix Candy Cup filled with sugar-coated strawberry & vanilla and apple & vanilla flavour mallows, fruit flavour liquorice and crème candy canes, as well as caramel and vanilla flavour gummy elves and fruit flavour jelly.

This Christmas consumers are expected to crave a mix of comforting traditional flavours and innovative new

tastes, says Southeast Traders' Stewart. "In sweet foods, classic flavours like spiced cinnamon, gingerbread, and rich chocolate will be popular, but the classic mint flavour profile is always a top contender," she says. "Additionally, there is a growing trend for unique combinations such as salted caramel with a hint of spice or festive fruit blends featuring cranberry and orange.

"In savoury foods, expect to see a demand for hearty, robust flavours such as roasted chestnuts, sage & onion and smoked meats," she adds. "There is also rising interest in plant-based options that incorporate festive flavours, appealing to both vegetarians and flexitarians. Meanwhile, for drinks, traditional choices like mulled wine, spiced cider and eggnog will remain favourites, she adds. "However, there is also a trend towards craft cocktails featuring seasonal ingredients such as pomegranate, rosemary and spiced pear."

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To cater to these Southeast Traders is offering a range of chocolate gifting sets and hot chocolate products under the Poppets brand, that capture the essence of the festive season, she says. These include a new flavour combination of Salted Caramel & White chocolate “which is yet to be seen in the market”.

Chocolate orange and salted caramel have really made their mark across the year and into the festive season, alongside some more quirky flavours such as savoury ingredients, exotic fruit flavours and infusions, says Lily O’Brien’s Crawford. “We have also seen growth in sharing formats.”

Home baking and entertaining

Children play a key role at this time of year, as they are off school, says Dr Oetker’s Johnson. “This means there is an opportunity for baking as a way to pass the time, have fun and even incorporate education in to the activity. Home baking can provide a cost-conscious way of doing this through cake kits and decorations. Family occasions play a big role at Christmas; shareable bakes such as cookies and brownies are perfect for these moments, whether these are made using a cake mix or made from scratch.”

Baking innovation is highly important at Christmas, she adds. “Shoppers go down the baking aisle looking for inspiration, which means we see themed displays in order to drive excitement and inspire shoppers to purchase, both from the regular baking aisle and in the seasonal aisle. This helps to drive sales over the event.

Although consumers are clearly spending more time socialising out of home, economic implications mean that, for many, socialising at home is a more cost-effective model, says Divine Chocolate’s Stubbins. “Chocolate plays a key role in at-home entertaining with the ‘after dinner/dessert’ moment being a popular occasion for chocolate consumption.

Perhaps even more so with the current climate of the cost-of-living crisis and the turmoil that is going on in the world, Christmas is a time that allows consumers to be close with their loved ones and take their minds off any hardships,” says Southeast Traders’ Stewart. “We believe our products add indulgence and will make home cooking a fun experience for all households. Our Poppets home baking



kits are great for all ages from young children with grandparents to families and lovers of baking.”

On-shelf standout

With the plethora of festive products on-shelf in grocery retailers at this time of year, making brands stand out amid the competition is challenging, to say the least.

“There is an element of difficulty in trying to make sure brands stand out, but we believe our choice of colours in packaging, fitting with the iconic Poppets branding, are both bold and eye-catching,” says Southeast Traders’ Stewart. “We understood that we had to make a point of difference against much-loved classic brands that are already established in the market and have been for many years. With this in mind, we have focused on premium packaging for both our chocolate bombs and chocolate powders. For us, it made complete sense to transition the

Poppets brand into other categories and hot chocolate was the perfect fit. We were aware there was quite a big gap in the hot chocolate category in terms of innovation, and a lot of feedback we received when doing market research, was the need for new flavours and products. We can see a lot of cross-category with other brands, but this is a category we feel has been neglected.”

When it comes to chocolate options at Christmas, 72%²⁵ of shoppers rate brand as being an important factor in their purchasing decision, reveals Mondelez’s Nash. “We’re tapping into the power of our brands this year by bringing back the striking redesigned Cadbury Roses tin to shelves,” she says. Meanwhile, Oreo is launching a limited-edition Oreo Gingerbread, a festive snack “to help shoppers get into the spirit of the season with its embossed gingerbread-flavoured cookies”.

For premium confectionery, ensuring

Key trends: gifting and sharing



During the festive season, the act of gifting and sharing remains a significant tradition, encouraging consumers to seek indulgent delights to offer their loved ones, says Mars Wrigley senior brand manager, Christmas, Laura O'Neill. "Gifting is worth £1.8bn of total chocolate value salesⁱ," she notes. "While consumers remain conscious of their spending, they continue to seek out well-known and loved brands and products. The appeal of these is expected to stay relatively strong, due to their ability to provide moments of indulgence and connection during the festive period."

Sharing novelty formats are the highest repeat buy at Christmasⁱⁱ and we tapped into this last year with a new 296g sharing bag format for our Cadbury Mini Snowballs range," says Mondelez trade communications manager Susan Nash. "When it comes to gifting and sharing, tablets make up a key part of total winter confectionery sales for this occasionⁱⁱⁱ, so these are a must-stock for retailers in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day.

"Cadbury offers a wide range of gifting blocks, including the classic Cadbury Dairy Milk 360g bar, as well as this year's 200th anniversary limited-edition tablet, adding

a touch of nostalgia to retailers' shelves."

Christmas is all about coming together with loved ones, says Alana Stewart, trading director at Southeast Traders. "Our chocolate gifting sets are perfect for sharing, whether at family gatherings, with friends, or as thoughtful gifts. The variety in our sets ensures there's something for everyone to enjoy."

"The key considerations this Christmas are around products that are suitable for gifting and sharing among family and friends," says FBC UK trade marketing director Colin Taylor. "We want to

ensure we have the right products for the right occasions when shoppers will be getting together for celebrations," he says. "Our assortment range is perfect for gifting as well as sharing."

At Lily O'Brien's, marketing director Karen Crawford says the brand's seasonal Christmas Desserts Collection will return to shelves across the Christmas period. "Featuring festive flavours and best-selling classics, this is the perfect gift for those looking for something special," she notes. "Our range of chocolate truffles, offer a £4 entry price point, catering for the cost-conscious and perfect for sharing."

the fixture is as visually appealing as possible is integral to driving sales, says Divine Chocolate's Stubbins. "This is particularly the case during seasonal or gifting occasions, when consumers will be looking for a product that not only tastes great but also looks great. "As part of our recent product launches there has been a particular emphasis on ensuring the packaging communicates our premium credentials, without compromising on our sustainability standpoint," she notes. "However, the restrictions on HFSS promotional space in-store have led us to pivot into finding other ways to gain shopper attention, be it through stronger on-shelf communications or a greater focus on driving awareness of availability with digital and print media spend."

Making an impact in-store during the Christmas season is undoubtedly challenging due to high competition, limited shelf space and established

consumer preferences, says Grenade's Austerberry. "However, Grenade will be bringing the noise with stand-out packaging, strategic marketing plans, a clear value proposition, and a disruptive suite of stand-out POS to enhance visibility and appeal," she says. "By understanding and addressing key challenges, products can stand out and successfully attract shopper attention amid the festive abundance. The limited-edition nature of festive products also drives demand."

With Christmas a key time of year for all gifting brands, the marketing activity leading up to and across the festive period must achieve cut-through at a very busy time of year, says Lily O'Brien's Crawford. "Our strategy this year has been to capture consumers' attention on every part of their purchasing journey, from sofa to store, balancing investment in promotions alongside innovation, and ensuring we're able to adapt to meet customer

needs. We've therefore invested in a full brand campaign which covers quality national press, weekend supplements, specialist foodie magazines and radio. This is backed by a strong digital and social media presence to support the brand across the festive period and build a real community and sense of connection among our target audience to make Lily O'Brien's stand out from the crowd."

It's key for retailers to make their seasonal lines stand out on-shelf, whether this is in the regular baking aisle or in the seasonal one, says Dr Oetker's Johnson. "Blocking seasonal SKUs together can make these ranges stand out, as well as helping to make the process of finding items easier for shoppers. We see some retailers use coloured/Christmas-themed shelf stripping, header boards, recipe inspiration and POS to help catch the shopper's eye and drive the path to purchase."

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Exciting food and drink NPD

Of course, when asked what they believe is the most exciting food and drink NPD to have emerged in the past couple of years, suppliers are likely to cite their own brands. However, the thinking behind their innovation reveals how in tune they are with both consumers' moods and the overarching trends in the market.

"Everyone is looking for indulgent and nostalgic products to really elevate that Christmas celebration," says Divine Chocolate's Stubbins. "This is being responded to with more decadent luxury and familiar flavour twists than ever before. At Divine, we have embraced this with our Joyful Bar;; its on-trend chunky format and nostalgic Christmas flavours are paired with a joyful pack design with added foiling. It feels like an indulgent treat without the premium price tag."

"We saw that placements grew the most value in 2023 at Christmas as they are easy and effective to use on a variety of bakes," says Dr Oetker's Johnson. "People like to bake cookies and biscuits with children over the festive season as they are a convenient format that allows kids to be creative. This has led to us developing our two new mixes: Dr Oetker Christmas Pudding Chocolate Chip Cookies Baking Mix; and Dr Oetker Biscuit Christmas Tree Baking & Decorating Kit."

Southeast Traders' Stewart notes that one of the most exciting Christmas food products that has emerged recently is the rise of premium hot chocolate bombs. "These fun interactive treats have captivated consumers with their visual appeal and indulgent experience," she says. "The combination of high-quality chocolate, creative fillings and the dramatic reveal when the bomb melts into hot milk has set a new standard for festive treats."

This, she notes, has significantly influenced the company's own NPD. "Recognising the appeal of interactive and indulgent experiences, we have incorporated similar elements into our own range. Our new hot chocolate products feature sumptuous flavours from the traditional Poppets salted caramel, orange and mint flavour profiles, to the new innovative flavours of toffee popcorn and white chocolate & salted caramel, combined with high-quality ingredients.



"Moreover, our chocolate gifting sets are designed to be both luxurious and shareable, reflecting the consumer desire for both indulgence and social connection during the festive season."

At Mars Wrigley, senior brand manager, Christmas, Laura O'Neill says that, with the self-eat category growing by +2% YOY²⁶ and 36% of Christmas sales coming from small shapes²⁷, its new release of M&M's Crispy Santa Shapes – featuring a milk chocolate Santa shape filled with creamy vanilla, crispy surprised and M&M's minis – is the ideal permissible treat, "meeting multiple consumer needs while bringing the brand's signature fun to the festive season". "We continually look to innovate and bring new products to market that not only cater to evolving consumer demand, but also drive category growth and excitement."

Eating good food and treating oneself or others will always be part of the Christmas experience. However, as Southeast Traders' Stewart point out: "This year, traditional holiday spending may be more restrained with

people opting for smaller gatherings and fewer luxury items." That said, the spirit of Christmas is impossible to dampen – and suppliers will be aiming to ensure it still brings sweet news for festive shoppers.

Sources

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Gifting and sharing

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Make it Divine this Christmas

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KEY BRANDS

Limited Edition
Joyful Gift Bar
Milk Chocolate Coins
Dark Chocolate Coins
Milk Chocolate
Advent Calendar
Dark Chocolate
Advent Calendar
Giant Chocolate Coins
Mint Thins

Category shoppers are demanding more from the chocolate category, says Divine Chocolate group marketing director Lydia Stubbins. “They’ve always wanted delicious treats to indulge in but are setting the bar ever higher and, in tandem, shoppers are also becoming more ethical with their brand choices,” she notes. “By offering products that tap into these two trends, retailers can grow category sales and win this Christmas.”

Divine Chocolate offers delicious chocolate, without compromising on ethics, reveals Stubbins. It is the highest-rated food and drink BCorp in the UK, with every ingredient in Divine’s product range 100% Fairtrade and ethically sourced. The high cocoa percentage in Divine’s dark chocolate makes for indulgent treats, while all cocoa used is single origin.

“At Christmas 2023, a demand for indulgent and nostalgic products that deliver on luxury, combined with familiar flavour twists was evident and looks set to continue into 2024. At Divine, we have embraced this with our Joyful Bar. Its on-trend chunky format and nostalgic Christmas flavours are paired with an impactful pack design. The product feels like an indulgent treat – without the premium price tag.

“By stocking these products this year, retailers can seize an opportunity to drive trade up within the category and move shoppers away from cheaper equivalents with Divine products that consumers are willing to pay more for.”

UNWRAP PROFITS THIS CHRISTMAS

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SOLD OUT IN 2023

SOLD OUT IN 2023

COINS

JOYFUL BAR



ADVENT CALENDARS

SOLD OUT IN 2023



CHOCOLATE THINS

STOCK UP NOW

- ✓ Affordable luxury
- ✓ Tap into nostalgia trend
- ✓ Ethical & 100% Fairtrade



Dr. Oetker (UK)

Bringing baking magic to Christmas

DETAILS

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KEY CONTACTS

Jennifer Johnson
Head of Marketing
– Cake, UK

KEY BRANDS

Dr. Oetker

Pricing details

- ¹2 MRRP £2 each
- ³ MRRP £1.50
- ⁴ MRRP £2 each
- ⁵ MRRP £1.85
- ⁶ MRRP £2.75
- ⁷ MRRP £5.50

“This Christmas, Dr. Oetker’s versatile NPD is bringing the magic of baking to British homes,” says Jennifer Johnson, head of marketing – cake. “Perfect for decorating seasonal bakes to enjoy while entertaining, or to gift as an edible present, our latest offerings add a touch of festive flair to any creation,” she says.

“Our Christmas launches include:

- Deck the Halls Christmas 4 Cell Sprinkles and Snowy Christmas 4 Cell Sprinkles¹: festive shapes and colours to add a sprinkle of Christmas to any bake.
- Glittery Christmas Decorating Icing²: popular Christmas coloured piping tubes filled with soft icing.
- Christmas Baking Cases³: patterned and plain cases for festive cupcakes.
- Chocolatey Christmas Decorations: including chocolatey Santas, Christmas trees, reindeers and gingerbread men; and 3D Chocolatey Christmas Trees⁴: suitable to top any festive cake bake.
- Christmas Chocolate Chips⁵: a bake-



“Our latest offerings add a touch of festive flair to any creation”

stable mix of white chocolate chips, gold pearls, sugar flakes and chocolate cocoa beans that can be baked in or sprinkled on to bakes.

- Christmas Pudding Chocolate Chip Cookies Baking Mix⁶: to create soft chocolate Christmas Pudding cookies with white icing and holly decorations.
- Christmas Tree Baking & Decorating Kit⁷: a showstopper 3D biscuit tree kit, complete with icing and sprinkles.



DECK YOUR SHELVES WITH

The UK's #1 Home Baking Brand*



*Source: Circana 52 w/e 15th June 2024 Value Share of Total Market Cake Decorations, Ingredients and Sweet Mixes.

Swizzels Matlow

Bringing new elves to the shelves

DETAILS

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KEY BRANDS

Squashies
 Mallows
 Love Hearts
 Drumstick
 Refreshers
 Choos
 Rainbow Drops
 Parma Violets
 Fruity Pops
 Double Lollies
 Sweet Tubs
 Fizzers
 Chew Bars

↙ This year, Swizzels is excited to be able to launch the brand new Naughty & Nice Squashies, reveals trade marketing manager Clare Newton.

“The seasonal period is the best time to stock themed products, and so our elf-shaped Squashies with the delicious Strawberry & Ice Cream and Apple Pie flavours are sure to tick those festive boxes,” she says.

“Swizzels has listened to customer feedback about how important it is to be stocking seasonal lines, so we’ve invested heavily into innovation for the 2024 festive season,” adds Newton. “We also realise just how strong the ‘sharing’ aspect is around Christmas time, so our Sweet Shop Favourites and Sweet Treats tubs will also be featured heavily throughout our Christmas offering.

“Another key focus area is around the ‘gifting’ element of the holiday celebrations, so along with our Sweet Shop Favourites carton, we have also



“We’ve invested heavily into innovation for the 2024 festive season”

introduced our Squashies Gift Carton into our seasonal offering.

“Swizzels is also working closely with customers in all sectors to ensure that they are being equipped with digital assets for those retailers who have a strong online presence, along with providing eye-catching physical displays for those who have the space to activate.”

SEASON'S TREATINGS

NEW



Swizzels
 Loved since 1928

MAKING CHRISTMAS SWEET SINCE 1928

Forest Feast

Boosting seasonal selections

DETAILS

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KEY BRANDS

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

 Snacking innovator Forest Feast has tapped into ongoing seasonal flavour trends of Orange and Peppermint with an extension to its signature chocolate dipped nuts range.

Deirdre Burns, marketing manager, says: “We know UK consumers continue to enjoy chocolate along with orange and peppermint flavours, especially during seasonal celebrations, so we paired these key trends with rich Belgian Milk or Dark Chocolate to create a delicious festive treat.”

Adding to the line-up in 120g resealable bags are:

- Valencia Orange Milk Chocolate Almonds: oven-roasted whole almonds, smothered with rich Belgian milk chocolate, and with a burst of Valencia orange for a gorgeous creamy, zesty treat (vegetarian, gluten-free);
- Peppermint Cream Dark Chocolate Almonds: whole oven-roasted almonds, layered with a cool creamy peppermint-infused white chocolate, studded with crunchy sugar crystals, and wrapped in rich Belgian Dark Chocolate (vegetarian, gluten-free).

Options for sharing and gifting

The brand has also taken two of its best-selling chocolate dipped nuts into larger 270g packs, perfect for sharing on cosy Christmas nights in or for parties. Award-winning salted Dark Chocolate Almonds sit alongside thick Belgian Chocolate Milk Chocolate Brazil Nuts.

“Consumers trade up in the lead-up to Christmas, so providing a larger bag helps tap into the trends of sharing and gifting,” says Burns. “We use a traditional artisan panning process for all our chocolate range, a continuous



“Gifting will remain an important purchase driver in the food and drink sector from 2024-2027¹, with chocolate remaining by far the most popular food or drink product to gift”

layering of chocolate around the centres, resulting in a deliciously thick outer on top of our whole roasted nuts.” According to Mintel¹, gifting will remain an important purchase driver in the food and drink sector from 2024-2027, with chocolate remaining, by far, the most popular food or drink product to gift.

“Forest Feast has the perfect, locally sourced and sustainable option with three beautiful gift cubes, filled with Great Taste Award-winning Salted Dark Chocolate Almonds, Salted Caramel Milk Chocolate Almonds or Limited-edition Blonde Chocolate Caramelised Hazelnuts,” reveals Burns. “These gift cubes are ideal to accompany a bottle or as a last-minute stocking filler.”

Meanwhile, the brand’s Slow Roasted Savoury Nuts also enjoy a seasonal uplift as the ideal party nibble. Forest Feast has introduced the popular trending seasonal flavour of a Truffle & Pecorino Roasted Nut Mix to the range. The nuts are all made in-house, using local and artisan ingredients in small batches for maximum taste and flavour, she notes.

Forest Feast has all the elements needed to ensure the party season is a success whether catering for family, friends or looking for the perfect gift.



Source
¹ Mintel, Food and Drink Gifting UK, 2022

MERRY FEASTMAS



The most wonderful time of the year deserves
the most wonderful treats to give, to share and to enjoy.

Fox's Burton's Companies

FBC UK leads the celebrations

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 Trade Marketing Director-
 Fox's Burton's Companies

KEY BRANDS

- Maryland Cookies
- Fox's Cookies
- Jammie Dodgers
- Fox's Chocolatey Rounds
- Thomas Fudge's Florentines
- Rocky
- Wagon Wheels
- Fox's Crunch Creams
- Fox's Classic Assortments
- Paterson's Shortbread

“Fox's Burton's Companies has been the No.1 branded seasonal & assortments biscuits manufacturer in the market for the past two years¹,” says trade marketing director Colin Taylor. “As we approach the festive season, we urge retailers to cater for shoppers’ diverse needs by engaging with the breadth of the FBC UK range, from the nation’s favourite Classic Assortment to Paterson’s as the biggest volume shortbread brand in Britain² and real treats like Fox’s Cookies and Chocolatey.”

“Almost one in three seasonal biscuits are enjoyed during informal sharing occasions with family and friends³ as consumers get into the festive spirit by enjoying time together and relaxing with their loved ones,” he notes. “Our Fox’s Classic Assortment 550g, Fox’s Viennese Assortment 365g and Fox’s Cookies Assortment 365g ensure there is something for all shoppers.

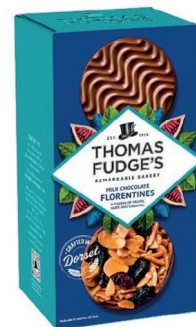
“There is a need to evolve to keep shoppers engaged each festive season. For 2024, we have refreshed the packaging across our range of seasonal assortments to bring more festive cues to the packs. Our Snowman Tin taps into this demand, bringing the nostalgia of Christmas to retailers’ shelves.

“At Christmas shoppers want to trade-up and treat one another. Thomas Fudge’s Florentines, one of the ultimate treats in the biscuit aisle, are now available in a 6-pack format with a more accessible price point (£3.50 MRSP) for the same delectable blend of caramel, almonds, fruits and smooth chocolate.”

Appeal to all the family

FBC UK’s research has highlighted the importance of suiting everyone in the family, adds Taylor. “Our range has retailers covered with our Party Ring Yard returning to offer nostalgic favourites in novelty packaging. Plus, our Where’s My Elf Minis in portion-controlled packs means parents can manage festive treating.

“Seasonal flavours are essential to building excitement in the run-up to Christmas. Last Christmas, white chocolate grew by +111% YoY⁴. To meet this demand, we are launching Merryland White Chocolate Chip Minis,



“As we approach the festive season, we urge retailers to focus on catering for shoppers’ diverse needs by engaging with the breadth of the FBC UK range”

a box of crunchy mini cookies, packed with smooth white chocolate chips and available in a 150g sharing carton (MRSP £1.75) – perfect for sharing across the Christmas period.

“Our Fox’s Winter Spiced Cookies (MRSP £2.50) – under our No.1 Fox’s Fabulous brand⁵ – also bring festive flavours to the range. The delicious milk chocolate chunk cookies will be half enrobed in smooth milk chocolate, with warming winter spiced flavours making it the perfect sharing treat.”

FBC UK is working with retail customers on visibility plans to help drum up festive spirit in-store and ensure the company’s brands are front of mind, says Taylor. “We will be supporting this with an upweighted digital campaign across our social media pages. Christmas 2024 will be another challenging time for many families’ spending, so we will have competitions and opportunities to win across our social media to truly ‘Share the Festive Joy with Fox’s’, and bring smiles to shoppers’ faces.”

Source

¹ Combined Read – NIQ, Total Coverage, 16 w/e 23.12.23 & Kantar Worldpanel, Hard Discounters & Variety Retail, 16 w/e 24.12.23 & Combined Read – NIQ | Total Coverage, 16 w/e 24.12.22 & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Hard & Variety Retail, 16 w/e 25.12.22
² Combined Read – NIQ, Total Coverage | 16 w/e 23.12.23 & Kantar Worldpanel, Hard Discounters & Variety Retail, 16 w/e 24.12.23
³ Toluna & FBC UK: Seasonal Biscuits Segmentation Research January 2022
⁴ NIQ, Total sweet biscuits, 16 w/e 23.12.23
⁵ NIQ, Total sweet biscuits, 16 w/e 23.12.23



No.1
Seasonal biscuit
supplier for the 2nd
year running!*

No.1 branded
seasonal biscuit
sku!*



UK's No.1
Shortbread
Brand*



+19%
Value Growth
year on year*

NEW



Party in the snow

SHARE THE FESTIVE JOY WITH

SINCE 1853
FOX'S

Stock Up This Season!



* Combined Read - NIQ | Total Coverage | 16w/e to 23.12.23 & Kantar Worldpanel | Hard Discounters & Variety Retail | 16we 24.12.23
Paterson's No.1 based on volume sales

Grenade

Bursting with festive flavour

DETAILS

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Marketing Director

KEY PRODUCTS

Grenade OREO Protein Bars
Protein Bars
Protein Shakes
Sports Nutrition

↙ The festive period is all about giving, and Grenade is the gift that keeps on giving, says UK retail sales director Rachel Austerberry. “2024 brings consumers not one, not two but three festive products from Grenade – the UK’s best-selling protein bar brand¹,” she reveals.

“Grenade Gingerbread Protein Bar is layered with a deliciously soft gingerbread-flavoured nougat centre, gooey caramel and dark chocolate chips, all smothered in rich milk chocolate and decorated with an iconic white chocolate drizzle. It boasts 20g of protein and less than 2g of sugar, so consumers do not need to choose between delicious tasting products and healthier options this Christmas.”

During the festive period, consumers are looking for warming, nostalgic flavours, such as gingerbread and cinnamon, making this year the perfect time to relaunch this seasonal limited edition, she says. “Grenade Gingerbread Protein Bar, back by popular demand from Grenade brand loyalists, has not landed on shelves since 2021.

The Gingerbread Protein Bar offers those already familiar with Grenade the chance to explore a new seasonal flavour within the range, as well as introducing completely new consumers into the brand and category. Retailers should not miss the incremental sales opportunity as this limited edition (RRP £2.85) launches mid-September and is only available until mid-December.”

In a festive twist on Grenade’s Fan Favourites multipack, the Gingerbread variant joins a Festive Favourites 5-pack, launching in November, reveals Austerberry. “This offers shoppers a



“During the festive period, consumers are looking for warming, nostalgic flavours, such as gingerbread and cinnamon, making this year the perfect time to relaunch our seasonal limited-edition Gingerbread Protein Bar”

chance to use it as a gifting pack for friends and family or simply trade up and benefit from value for money with their favourite bars (RRP £10.50),” she notes. “In addition to the Gingerbread flavour, the pack includes Oreo Milk Chocolate, Oreo White Chocolate, Chocolate Chip Salted Caramel and Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough.”

The final NPД launch from Grenade this Christmas is its Advent Calendar (RRP £35), featuring 23 of the brand’s best-selling flavours in a snack-size variant (35g) and rewarding consumers with a 60g Gingerbread Protein Bar on the 24th day. “The unique design of this ‘Gymgerbread House’ plays on Grenade’s heritage as the perfect snack for shoppers who look to maintain their health and fitness goals despite it being the season to indulge,” she says. “This novelty advent calendar lends itself to the more memorable experiences consumers are seeking this Christmas.”

Grenade will support this season’s NPД with wide-ranging activation, as well as bringing the festivities to life in-store via bold POS material to ensure its Gingerbread bar is the festive flavour on everyone’s lips this Christmas.



Source

¹ EXT IRI MarketPlace MAT To 09.06.24

GRENADE[®] GINGERBREAD

20G
protein



less than
2G
sugar



Catch me if you can...

SEASONAL FLAVOUR

Lily O'Brien's

Festive flair drives high sales

DETAILS

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Karen Crawford
 Marketing Director

KEY BRANDS

- Lily O'Brien's
- Desserts Collection
- Ultimate Collection
- Luxury Collection
- Exquisite Collection
- Milk Chocolate Truffles
- Salted Caramel Truffles

“Since being founded in 1992, Lily O'Brien's has seen consistent growth to become a household name known for crafting high-quality chocolate recipes,” says marketing director Karen Crawford.

“In 2023, Lily O'Brien's was the stand-out performer in inlaid boxed chocolates, with the brand seeing a 31% increase in value at Christmas, outperforming the market average which was 2% across the same period¹,” she says. “The exceptional festive period saw growth across all Lily O'Brien's 2023 Christmas product ranges. The Desserts Collection (210g) rose by 13% across the Christmas period and the highly anticipated launch of the new Limited Edition Christmas offering in the Desserts Collection sub-brand drove a further £1.5m+ growth in retail sales. This enhanced the sub-brands value which now stands at £11m².

“At Lily O'Brien's, we stand for indulgence, quality and luxury, making those moments of connection extra special,” says Crawford. “Our best-selling Desserts Collection is inspired by some of the world's most popular dessert flavours. Following successful innovation in 2023, we expanded the Desserts Range to build on growing demand for seasonal flavours and launched our Christmas Desserts Collection, which brought in £1.6m of sales over the last 13 weeks of 2023³.

“This popular 24-piece collection will make a return to shelves for the 2024 festive season, including festive flavours and best-selling classics with four limited-edition flavours for the season: Spiced Latte, Zesty Orange,



“At Lily O'Brien's, we stand for indulgence, quality and luxury, making those moments of connection extra special”

Triple Chocolate Shot and Berry Eton Mess, the perfect gift for those looking for something special.

“This Christmas, we continue to innovate in premium boxed chocolates, introducing our all-new Luxury Chocolate Collection for 2024. This features 27 exquisite chocolates from nine of our signature recipes, including raspberry ganache and coffee & almond biscotti.

“Affordable indulgence, especially across inlaid boxed chocolates and gifting is a trend we have seen grow across 2024. Our festive product range offers something for all gift-giving requirements and budgets, bringing the taste of luxury at an attainable price point for everyone, from the statement gifts of the Desserts Collection range through to our indulgent range of chocolate truffles. We have seen growth in sharing formats, and our Truffles and Share Bag Range are perfect for this.

“Our ongoing marketing campaign – ‘For the ones you really know’ – shines a spotlight on Lily O'Brien's as the very best chocolates for gifting or sharing with close friends and loved ones,” she adds. “As a first for the brand in 2024, we will be running a truly integrated brand campaign with ATL media, PR, sampling and social media, bringing to life the brand positioning of extra special chocolates for those special people in your life – for the ones you really know.”



Source
^{1,3} Nielsen, 13 w/e 30.12.23

Lily O'Brien's

For the ones you really know.



A NEW LUXURY collection
and a festive favourite just
in time for Christmas.



Stock our limited edition Christmas Desserts Box and brand new Luxury Collection this Christmas.  so delicious chocolates, perfect for gifting.

For more info contact sales@colian.co.uk

Mars Wrigley UK

Driving festive innovation

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Christmas

KEY BRANDS

Bounty
CELEBRATIONS®
Extra
Galaxy
M&M'S®
Mars
MALTESERS®
Skittles
Snickers
Starburst
Twix

Christmas is a key occasion within the confectionery market, and a highly competitive time of year. So, retailers should stock a mix of innovative new products from household brands alongside traditional festive favourites that consumers know and love to drive consumer choice, engagement and sales.

Mars Wrigley continually looks to bring new products to the market that both cater to evolving consumer demand and drive category growth and excitement, says Laura O'Neill, senior brand manager, Christmas. "To delight consumers this Christmas, brand new M&M's Crispy Santa Shapes will be available nationwide. These comprise a milk chocolate Santa shape, filled with creamy vanilla, crispy surprises and delicious M&M's minis – the ideal permissible treat at Christmas."

With the self-eat category up 2% year on year¹, and 36% of Christmas sales coming from small shapes², the new product will bring the brand's signature fun to the festive season, while driving incremental sales, she notes.

Stocking up on festive favourites

Chocolate plays an important role during many key seasonal rituals, from small festive gifts to the daily delights of an advent calendar. In fact, data shows that seasonal and gifting is worth £1.8bn of total chocolate value sales³.

"During the festive season, consumers look to purchase their favourite brands and products," says O'Neill. "That's where the value of stocking a well-known portfolio of brands at the fixture really comes in. Retailers should consider household names and products that are synonymous with the season, including Celebrations, to capture the attention of shoppers and drive sales.

"Celebrations for example, has performed well over the last few years, seeing +16% MAT value sales growth vs YA⁴ and delivering +7.2% value sales between October and December 2023 versus 2022⁵," she adds. "This underlines the brand's position as a firm favourite with consumers. As for individual products, Celebrations Tub is the No.1 gifting SKU in the total UK



“During the festive season, consumers look to purchase their favourite brands and products”



gifting category and the No.1 full-year Twistwrap brand⁶.”

Tapping into shopper behaviours

In the run-up to Christmas, consumers exhibit distinct behavioural patterns that evolve with each passing month. From September, the holiday spirit begins to emerge, and shoppers start to engage in early-season impulse purchases as they are drawn to eye-catching products that invoke a sense of anticipation, including the Celebrations Tub, says O'Neill.

“By November, shoppers begin to shift their attention towards planning and stocking up ahead of Christmas. This is a prime opportunity for retailers to introduce their full range of Christmas SKUs and strategically arrange displays in a way to encourage browsing and purchase. Advent calendars, such as those from Celebrations and Maltesers, play an important role during this time.

“The final few weeks before Christmas provide an opportunity to capitalise on the emotional connection shoppers have with the holiday season by showcasing hero SKUs and inspiring shoppers to make last-minute additions to the holiday preparations. This year, Mars Wrigley is bringing back Maltesers Assorted Truffles by popular demand, as the total Maltesers Truffles range grew by 11% in 2023.”

Source

¹ NielsenIQ Scantrack Data total GB Coverage, to w/e 23.12.23
² NielsenIQ Scantrack Data total GB Coverage, to w/e 23.12.23
³ NielsenIQ Scantrack Data total GB Coverage, 52 w/e 30.12.23
⁴ NielsenIQ Scantrack. Total Gifting (Tins/Tubs + Choc Boxed), Latest 52 weeks, w/e 15.06.24
⁵ NielsenIQ Scantrack, Total Gifting (Tins/Tubs + Choc Boxed), OND 23, w/e 30.12.23
⁶ NielsenIQ Scantrack. Total Gifting (Tins/Tubs + Choc Boxed), Latest 52 weeks, w/e 15.06.24
⁷ NielsenIQ Scantrack Data total GB Coverage to w/e 23.12.23

'ooh, you really should have'

Contains
milk, white and
dark chocolate!



Total
Maltesers Truffles
brand grew by
+11% in X23
(from £6.4M to £7.1M
driven by core &
assorted growth)

Creamy, Crunchy, Truffly.

#5

Truffle SKU
in value sales
within mainstream
special

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

Mondelēz International

Sprucing up seasonal sales

DETAILS

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 Trade Communications
 Manager

KEY BRANDS

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Cadbury Dairy Milk
Green & Black's
Trebor
Maynards Bassetts
Halls
belVita
Cadbury Biscuits
Mikado
 Toblerone
OREO
Ritz
Barny

↙ Mondelez International – the No.1¹ confectionery supplier – has unwrapped its new festive range for 2024, set to help retailers drive seasonal sales this year with much-loved brands Cadbury and Oreo. “The run-up to Christmas begins in September with a ‘fast start’, so make sure to kick off the season towards the end of summer to prepare for the increase in Big Night In occasions as the weather gets cooler and shoppers look to spend more nights at home,” says trade communications manager Susan Nash.

Getting into the festive spirit

In October, shoppers start to get into the festive spirit. Cadbury Puds are the No.1 SKU² in the self-eat segment, and the range is expanding this year with the launch of Cadbury Mini Puds, bringing this festive favourite into a bite-size bag format for the first time, says Nash. “The 73g bags feature Puds’ iconic festive design and are set to appeal to shoppers looking for a stocking filler gift or even as a treat to enjoy themselves.

“For biscuit fans, Oreo is unveiling new Oreo Gingerbread, with embossed gingerbread-flavoured cookies, wrapped in the brand’s new-look packaging to improve shelf stand-out.”

Counting down to Christmas

When November comes around, the countdown to Christmas ramps up as shoppers begin to stock up on their festive essentials, she notes. “We’re bringing something unique to shoppers’ advent countdown this year with the launch of the Cadbury Dairy Milk Creamy Advent Calendar, featuring 24 Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolates with a soft creme filling – a great option for those looking to trade up this year and make the countdown even more special.

Gearing up for a gifting finish

“As December arrives, shoppers will be looking to make their final purchases in the run-up to the big day,” she adds. “This is a great opportunity to drive sales through gifting and sharing



“The run-up to Christmas begins in September with a ‘fast start’, so make sure to kick off the season towards the end of summer to prepare for the increase in Big Night In occasions as the weather gets cooler”

formats, including selection boxes. The Cadbury Buttons Selection Box returns to shelves this year following its successful launch in 2023, and new for 2024 is the inclusion of White Buttons, which appears alongside Cadbury Dairy Milk Buttons, Cadbury Dairy Milk Orange Buttons, and Cadbury Dairy Milk Caramel Nibbles.

Returning festive favourites

“Of course, the season is not all about new products, and some exciting festive favourites are returning this Christmas,” says Nash. “Cadbury Dairy Milk Coins ended the season last year as the No.1 NPD across the whole market, with over 1.4 million packs sold³. Bringing a touch of nostalgia and magic, Cadbury Dairy Milk Coins are a great stocking filler, set to drive incremental sales.

“Finally, Cadbury Dairy Milk Winter Mint Crisp also returns this year. This 360g bar combines the nation’s favourite chocolate⁴ with festive mint flavouring for a seasonal twist to drive shopper excitement this Christmas.”



Source

¹ Nielsen, Total Coverage including discounters, Latest 52 weeks to 15.06.24
² Nielsen, Xmas Tracker incl. discounters: includes weekly data starting from w/e 22.07.23
³ Nielsen, Read Total Market incl. discounters; Nielsen IQ Scantrack, Trad Xmas + seasonal share, Full season data from 23 weeks to 23.12.23
⁴ Nielsen data, Cadbury Dairy Milk brand, Total Chocolate, UK total Coverage MAT to 16.09.23

Cadbury
DAIRY MILK
COINS
ARE BACK



#1 NEW PRODUCT*
OF CHRISTMAS 2023

Southeast Traders

Festive boost for Poppets

DETAILS

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Trading Director
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National Account Manager
Amie Pearson
National Account Executive

KEY BRANDS

Poppets Hot Chocolate Bombs
Poppets Hot Chocolate Powders
Poppets Hot Chocolate 8pk Assorted Variety Set
Poppets Cookie/Brownie Mix Kits

↙ This year, Southeast Traders is thrilled to introduce a new range of hot chocolate products under its licensed brand Poppets, reveals trading director Alana Stewart. “It was a natural transition for the brand to move into this category from confectionery, as we were aware there was quite a market gap in the hot chocolate category in terms of innovation and a need for new flavours and products. We were also conscious of keeping to the brand’s iconic flavour profiles when choosing which products to launch at Christmas,” she says.

“Our new range features a great stocking filler gift with Hot Chocolate Bombs in the traditional flavours of Orange, Salted Caramel & Mint. There are also take-home Powders in tub and Sachet formats, which include the new Toffee Popcorn flavour recently launched this year. “Meanwhile, our Home Baking and Variety Hot Chocolate Sachet gift sets are great gift additions for Secret Santa presents and Christmas gifting in general. We were aware of hitting value for money but also offering high quality in both our packaging and ingredients, with most products having natural flavourings, but our main aim was to ensure a homely, ‘hug in a mug’ experience to share with loved ones.”

Youthful appeal

“Tik Tok has been a massive influence on Gen Z, with the newest food trends being sought-after and influencers reviewing new and exciting products,” says Stewart. “And we expect that, at Christmas, this won’t slow down any time soon as Tik Tok directs a lot of traffic into brands featured in videos. We hope our modern take on packaging will appeal to the younger generation.”

Quality and value

In preparation for the festive season, the company has observed a significant trend of shoppers gravitating towards supermarket own-label products, likely due to recent raw material price hikes, especially in cocoa, she notes. “Consumers are keeping a close watch on their spending this year as traditional holiday spending may be more restrained, with people opting for



“Our new range features a great stocking filler gift with Hot Chocolate Bombs, as well as take-home powders, which include the new Toffee Popcorn flavour”



smaller gatherings and fewer luxury items. To address this, Southeast Traders has emphasised offering value without compromising on quality. This involved meticulous planning and tight teamwork to ensure our Poppets products met consumer expectations. Also, by securing our supply chains early and diversifying our sources we hope to minimise any potential impact. Christmas is a time for indulgence, with shelf appeal and sensory delights taking precedence over the usual everyday eating choices. We hope to be at the forefront of shoppers’ choices this year.”

Building the festive excitement

To support its Christmas products, Southeast Traders plans extensive promotional activities in the run-up to the holiday season; this includes advertising in retailer brochures and building excitement through online and social media campaigns to create a buzz around its new SKUs. “We’re very excited as this will be our first official launch of Christmas goods in the ambient category and, hopefully, the first of many exciting NPD launches to come,” she concludes.

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United Food Brands

Kicking off Christmas early

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- Waffle Amour**
 - Sugar Waffles
 - Chocolate Waffles
 - Toasting Waffles
 - Chocolate and Hazelnut Waffles
- Kuchenmeister**
 - Marzipan Loaf
 - Marzipan Bites
 - Marzipan Cookies
- The Flan Co**
 - Large Sponge Flan Case
- Mars Croissants**
- MilkyWay Croissants**
- Oreo Chilled Fresh Milk Snack**

 United Food Brands is thrilled to announce its second season as the exclusive UK distributor for the world-renowned Kuchenmeister Stollen range.

Kuchenmeister, a family-owned bakery with a rich 140-year history, is based in Soest, Germany. This bakery giant employs over 1,000 people and produces more than 500 different products. Across several production sites, they blend traditional baking methods with cutting-edge food manufacturing technology.

“Through our partnership, we aim to establish Kuchenmeister as the premier Stollen supplier for both branded and own-label products across the UK,” says United Food Brands managing director Richard Reeves.

“The Kuchenmeister brand is globally recognised as the largest Stollen manufacturer in the world. With an exceptional product range made from the finest ingredients, we are excited to see the Stollen range make its way into more consumer shopping baskets this Christmas.”

Positive forecast

United Food Brands has seen remarkable growth since the initial Stollen launch in 2023. With Christmas 2024 approaching, we are forecasting a 28% increase in distribution, reaching approximately 23,000 stores across the UK. These stores will all feature the symbolic yellow branding associated with Kuchenmeister’s seasonal range.

“Despite a promising outlook for 2024, it has not been without challenges this year, including a 150% increase in raisin prices on the commodity markets, which has significantly impacted our manufacturing costs,”



“We aim to establish Kuchenmeister as the premier Stollen supplier for both branded and own-label products across the UK”

explains Reeves. “However, we remain confident in achieving strong volume and value growth due to our extensive distribution gains.

“The Christmas season kicks off early for us this year, with our core range launching in grocery stores in September, followed by a broader rollout into additional retailers and discounters shortly after,” he adds.

Meeting consumer expectations

“We are continuing to meet the expectations of our consumers, who are seeking innovation during Christmas,” says UK account manager Manraaj Rai. “Our new Stollen Cookies achieve this and more, and our improved recipe will debut in the UK’s largest grocery retailer for the first time with secured listings in thousands of other stores this Christmas. This reflects consumers’ confidence in the brand and our success in 2023. After all, consumer trends continue to indicate that, during key occasions like Christmas, people are increasingly willing to spend big on indulgent and permissible seasonal treats to share with loved ones.

“Looking ahead, we have plenty of new product development in the pipeline for 2025. Stay tuned for more exciting updates.”





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Luxury Marzipan Stollen



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World of Sweets

Celebrate with Anthon Berg

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Partner Brand Manager

KEY BRANDS

Anthon Berg
Bonds of London
Pez
Warheads
Vimto
Zed Candy

 Exciting new gifting and sharing product launches from premium confectioner Anthon Berg will be taking centre stage this Christmas. The Danish confectionery range, distributed in the UK by World of Sweets, the authorised partner supplier, will feature a new collaboration with the UK's leading cream liqueur brand, Baileys, which has around 4.25m consumers in the UK¹, reveals World of Sweets partner brand manager Chris Smith.

“The confectionery specialist has a 140-year stronghold in marzipan production and has created the Anthon Berg Baileys Marzipan Treats,” he says. “Each marzipan round is covered in Anthon Berg milk chocolate, with a swirl of dark chocolate as decoration and the taste of Baileys cream liqueur. The eight individually wrapped pieces come in a well-designed dual branded gift box*.”

Meanwhile, Anthon Berg Chocolate Cocktails are expected to be popular among shoppers looking for a special, on-trend Christmas gift, notes Smith. “The premium dark chocolate bottles are filled with smooth liquids featuring cocktails from around the globe,” he says. “The Espresso Martini is a popular flavour alongside other classic tipples including Vodka Mule, Lemon Drop, Cosmopolitan, Piña Colada and Mojito. The brightly coloured packaging stands out in-store to tempt customers into making a purchase.

“Whisky remains a top-selling spirits category with a third of retailers mentioning it as a bestseller. There’s also a growing trend towards higher-priced whisky offerings with a consumer shift towards a premium product³,” adds Smith. “Anthon Berg is



“This Christmas, a new collaboration sees the confectionery specialist introduce Anthon Berg Baileys Marzipan treats”

globally recognised for its bottle shaped premium dark chocolates filled with some of the world’s most renowned whisky brands. Its Single Malt Whisky Collection features five of the best whiskies. The beautifully presented gifting and sharing chocolates are offered in three pack formats**.

“Anthon Berg Chocolate Liqueurs are a popular choice for customers during Christmas, with beautifully packaged, luxurious and delicious chocolates,” he says. “The bottle-shaped premium dark chocolates are filled with a diverse selection of spirits, including vodka, whisky, rum, cognac and tequila, with recognised brands such as Southern Comfort, Famous Grouse, Rémy Martin and more.

“Christmas is a key time of year for premium gifting and the Anthon Berg range is a very popular choice among consumers,” concludes Smith. “The on-trend flavours including the cocktail and whisky ranges, the premium products and high-end packaging makes them an obvious choice for customers looking for a quality gift.

“The new Anthon Berg Baileys Marzipan Treats are expected to be a popular draw for retailers and their customers. Nothing says Christmas more than Baileys.”

Pricing notes

*RRP £8.49
** Five-, 10- and 15-piece gift boxes ranging in price from £4.99 to £13.49

Source

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/304504/leading-brands-of-liqueurs-in-the-uk/>
² <https://drinksretailingnews.co.uk/drinks-retailing-trends-report-2024-indie-trends/>
³ <https://thewhiskystock.com/blogs/news/whiskies-of-the-world-trend-for-2024>



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