

The 8 big emerging food trends revealed by global opinion leaders

AUSTRALIAN  MACADAMIAS



A new approach to exploring macro trends





The Australian Macadamias marketing program has long been developed on a foundation of consumer insights, trends and innovation research to understand how consumers feel about macadamias, other nuts, food and health more broadly.

In 2023 and beyond, we're continuing to uncover new insights to optimally support manufacturers investing in macadamias as an ingredient and communicate the multi-layered macadamia story to consumers globally in ways that are both compelling and relevant.

Our most recent research project examined emerging macro food trends. It followed on from our work in this space in 2020 and 2017, but for the first time the research was conducted in conjunction with a panel of key opinion leaders from the international food industry. The panel comprised a mix of experts including chefs, food innovators, food influencers, food authors, broadcasters and journalists located in both Asian and western markets.

During in-depth one-on-one interviews conducted by independent research agency FiftyFive5, these food leaders discussed the trends and cultural developments they believe have shaped the current state of play and what they're predicting will disrupt and impact the world of food in the future.

The seismic shifts of recent years

In the three years since we last examined macro trends, the world has experienced massive change, creating ripples across many aspects of human life and impacting consumer needs. Several key tensions set the backdrop for the exploration of emerging food trends.

1. Global pandemic

COVID-19 put the world on pause, creating huge disruption to global supply chains and forcing many to re-evaluate how they live, work and consume.

2. Climate crisis

As the consequences of a lack of action loom, consumers are seeking civically minded brands to drive sustainability leadership in the absence of government action.

3. Slowing economies

Rising inflation, little real wage growth, consumption pain and impending recessions are being felt across markets.

The 8 emerging macro trends

The research revealed eight emerging macro trends that our experts predict will shape the world of food in the coming years.





Sustainable solutions



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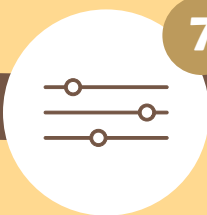
Home economics



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The internet of food

Future-proofed foods



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Less is more



Multi-Dimensional Health

Health has been on consumers' radars for many years now, but the specifics of how it is driving their behaviour continue to evolve. In 2023 and beyond, this trend is predicted to see health reach new heights, as its meaning continues to manifest across markets and consumer knowledge keeps expanding.

This trend is playing out in several ways:



Inner versus outer health

There continue to be differences in how Asian and western markets view and pursue health. In Asia, external factors such as weight, skin and hair remain markers of health, however there is some movement towards western views on the importance of inner health.



Balance seeking

There is movement away from restriction in pursuit of perfection, and instead embracing a more holistic and balanced approach to healthy eating. The notion that eating well can involve treating yourself and allowing some indulgence is gaining traction.



Benefit trade-up

Growing interest in understanding the specific functional benefits of foods is being accompanied by an appetite amongst consumers to pay more for products and ingredients which offer the benefits they are seeking.

Looking further ahead, our opinion leaders predict the search for functional benefits will reach new heights, with mainstream adoption of foods offering hyper-specific benefits, such as nootropics, adaptogens, and intense food fortification.

EXPERT OPINION

“People are willing to pay more for foods that are high quality, and better for them, like natural wine or proteins. There’s the new ‘breed’ of chicken for example that’s all about the environment in which it lives, how it’s raised, and people will pay more for it because it’s better quality.”

Chef, Taiwan

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Australian macadamias offer a host of powerful functional health benefits that can support both inner and outer health.



Re-discovering local

The pandemic and its supply chain issues have forced us all to look inwards and rediscover what's in our own backyard. Consumers have amassed a new appreciation of what's available to them locally and this is being amplified by mainstream and social media.

The hallmarks of this trend include:



Old is new

In an era where social capital and knowledge is the new 'cool', consumers are educating themselves on previously forgotten classics. Indigenous ingredients and traditional dishes are being re-born, and mainstream media is helping to throw them into the limelight.



Traditional with a twist

Consumers and chefs are revelling in the nostalgia of historical throwbacks, adding contemporary twists to create new versions. For example, using local ingredients to make cuisines from other cultures, or adding new flavours to legacy dishes.



Craft and care

There's a growing desire to support local producers, and admiration of their craft which is seen to signify better quality compared to mass production. Artisan products and traditional processes provide a sense of comfort due to their 'tried and tested' nature.



Farm to fork

The rise of direct to consumer services is providing high quality fresh foods and pantry staples to consumers' homes, removing the need to frequent the supermarket.

EXPERT OPINION

"There's a huge wave of native food usage in top restaurants but also at home. Indigenous foods are being used authentically though; it's appreciation, not appropriation and that's the most important thing."

Broadcaster, Australia

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Australian macadamias have a powerful origin story. This could be leveraged by pairing with other native ingredients specific to your market and building a compelling ingredient sourcing story.



Conscious consumption

Consumers are showing a growing level of care and consideration for what they're eating and where it has come from. Amid a craving for transparency, provenance is being flagged on menus and on pack.

This trend is characterised by:



Knowledge is power

Consumers are demanding transparency more than ever. It's becoming increasingly important to know where your food has come from, with desire for greater awareness across provenance, process and production.



Quality first

There's increasing emphasis on quality of ingredients as a way to address food safety concerns, but also to maximise the benefits on offer.



Environmental eating

Growing interest in locally produced and seasonal products is creating a greater sense of security. Reducing food air miles is seen to improve quality and there's reviving interest in local delicacies and produce.

EXPERT OPINIONS

"Conscientious eating and drinking are the call of the hour. People are actually wanting to learn more about what they are eating – if it's coming from a good facility, if it's organic."

Chef, India

"The companies that are growing now are not in the city but in the countryside, where they grow a particular vegetable(s) known for that area. In the city when you go to the supermarket there's a lot of cheap vegetables that are mass produced. But the quality doesn't taste as good so people in the city are looking for food that is better quality even if they pay more."

Food Planner + Business Owner, Japan

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

When using Australian macadamias as an ingredient, connect consumers with the story of how they're grown and (minimally) processed.



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Home economics

With living costs surging, consumers are returning to their kitchens to create their own delicious and nourishing food.

This trend comprises three key features:



Hands-on cooking

A reinvigoration around cooking at home and embracing hands-on techniques over technological short-cuts (e.g. microwaves) is seeing consumers getting creative, discovering new and different ways of using foods and hunting for new ideas.



Eating out, but in

In some markets, frequency of dining out is yet to reach pre-pandemic levels, with many consumers having discovered ways to recreate their favourite restaurant and food experiences in the comfort of their own home.



Recipe hacks

Consumers are arming themselves with recipes and building their personal bank of DIY meals and snacks so they can easily create delicious foods themselves.

EXPERT OPINION

“It’s becoming more apparent that people need more ideas about things they don’t know how to cook very well. They’ve been very habitual cooks, but when lettuce is 10-12 dollars more, they think, “What else can I do?”... It’s forcing them to be more creative.”

Broadcaster, Australia

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Empower consumers with simple, but interesting ways to use Australian grown macadamias, and products that contain them, in their own kitchens.



Sustainable solutions

Focus on the climate crisis is intensifying and people are considering their individual impact more than ever. Eating trends that were once considered extreme are undergoing a normalisation as consumers strive to eat more sustainably.

It's a trend that's playing out in three ways:



Mainstream alternatives

What were once seen as extreme diets have now firmly infiltrated the mainstream. Rises in vegetarianism, veganism and flexitarianism have seen alternative meat and dairy products become the norm in supermarkets, restaurants and home kitchens.



Waste not

Continued emphasis on reducing waste wherever possible is seeing consumers and food creators finding ways to use every part of an ingredient, or creative ways to use leftovers. Packaging that enables circularity is increasingly sought out.



Small batch

There is heightened concern for the impact of mass production. Smaller methods of production are being increasingly seen as safer and more viable for a long-term future.

EXPERT OPINION

"It used to be that any alternative milk like almond or soy would cost the customer more than regular milk but we don't charge more, and a lot of other places don't either... alternatives have become and are becoming even more mainstream, around 40% of our customers now would opt for an alternative milk."

Food Entrepreneur, Japan

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Manufacturers can embrace Australian grown macadamias knowing they're a powerful and versatile plant-based ingredient produced by an industry with a deep commitment to sustainable production and waste minimisation.



The internet of food

Technology has dramatically changed the way consumers see and access food, opening up unlimited, border-agnostic possibilities and creating a legion of new food influencers.



It's a trend that's playing out in three ways:



Food virality

The democratisation of creativity via social media and an endless stream of food inspiration means online food trends can come and go in the blink of an eye. One minute something's hot, the next it's not, so brands and manufacturers need to move fast to keep on trend and take advantage of 'ingredient heat' in the moment.



New food heroes

Where once chefs and celebrity cooks could shape food trends, in the age of the influencer, the digital content creators hold the power. Local market influencers inspire and excite their followers with food recommendations, hacks and how-to's, creating authentic and relatable content that consumers trust.



Visual consumption

Younger consumers especially are eating with their eyes. Food must look as good – or better – than it tastes. Packaging has become an artistic medium. Instagram/TikTok-ready, attention-grabbing colours and bold, yet simple designs are key.

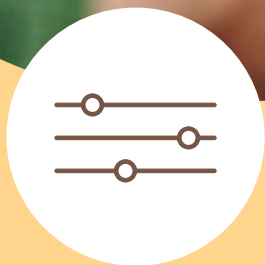
EXPERT OPINION

"It's all about the shareability, the 'braggability' of food, the unveiling of food... the goal is for someone to ask for your recipe!"

Food Editor, Australia

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Harness influencer marketing to speak to the benefits of having macadamias in your product and look for opportunities to utilise fast-moving viral food trends.



Future-proofed foods

Increasing macro-pressures, especially economic, are impacting food availability, and forcing consumers to re-think how they access and use the foods available to them.

This is playing out in three ways:



Self-sustenance

A growing desire amongst consumers to take control of their own sustenance and find ways to grow their own fresh food, even in heavily urban environments, also offering a way to connect more to nature.



Accessible inspiration

Price-conscious consumers are looking for accessible ways to create their favourite foods – whether substituting in more affordable ingredients, discovering alternative recipes or finding new ways to make their food last longer.



Adaptive ingredients

After restricted access to some foods through the pandemic, there's an emphasis on ingredients which can be used in multiple ways to make many different things, maximising what you can create with one product, and ensuring you always have options.

EXPERT OPINION

"It's partly about quality of food but also the ethical side of growing food. People seem more interested in that now. When COVID-19 hit, everyone wanted to grow their own tomatoes and become self-sufficient, and then realised how difficult it actually is to grow it on their own, so growers gained a bit more respect. In the area where I live there was recently a 'food trail' event where farmers opened their farms to the public and it attracted thousands of people, all farm-hopping from strawberry to mushroom to macadamia farms. It's evidence that it's something people are interested in."

Chef, Australia

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Macadamias are a great example of an adaptive ingredient. Embrace the versatility of Australian macadamias and how they can enhance a broad range of product formulations.



Less is more

Complexity is being replaced by clarity as consumers re-evaluate what is most important and seek a less 'noisy' life, and cleaner, simpler food.



It's a trend that's playing out in three ways:



Simplification

There's a move away from overly complicated processes and long lists of ingredients. Consumers are more interested in quick, simple dishes, easy food elevations and products which are minimal in nature.



Hero ingredients

There's an appetite for products, dishes and recipes that hero one or two key ingredients and allow the taste, textures and benefits of those ingredients to take centre stage and be fully appreciated.



Purity

Especially in Asian markets, there's emphasis on the importance of minimally processed food and avoidance of unnecessary chemicals and pesticides. In western markets, this trend is also seen in a desire for more locally sourced, sustainable food options.

EXPERT OPINION

"There will be more interest in unprocessed foods and food products without harmful packaging."

Food Influencer, South Korea

How macadamias can help manufacturers leverage this opportunity

Reassure consumers of minimal processing and the stringent food safety standards that Australian grown macadamias are subject to, particularly in Asian markets.

5 powerful innovation territories for manufacturers using macadamias

Based on the learnings from the expert interviews and the trends they uncovered, researchers have developed a series of innovation territories to showcase new ways to use Australian macadamias in manufactured food and beverage products.



1. Mac-powered health

Australian macadamias offer a host of health benefits that have the potential to feature in modern manifestations of health. Consumers globally are actively seeking ways to maximise their food's health credentials, and the healthy fats, antioxidants and nutrients of macadamias make them an ideal addition to a range of food and beverage products. Macadamias can support brain, gut, heart, skin, weight management and mood, offering scope to play to more granular functional benefits by highlighting key, super-nuanced health benefits.

RELEVANT TO

 **Multi-Dimensional Health**



Innovation inspiration

BREAKFAST HEROES

- Bircher muesli
- Granola
- Chia pots/puddings
- Acai bowl topping/mix
- Macadamia cereal bars

PRE/POST WORKOUT

- Ready-made smoothie mix
- Protein powders
- Macadamia protein bars

HEALTHY SNACKS

- Yogurt covered macadamias
- Macadamia bliss balls
- Smaller sized bags/snack packs (e.g. 15/20gs)

DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

- Cheese replacement
- Butter/dairy replacement
- Combine with nutritional yeast (parmesan alternative)
- Macadamia pastry casing

Macadamia Mind Food Bars




2. Savoury swaps

This territory is all about harnessing the true versatility of Australian macadamias through inspired upgrades to savoury snacks and products. While consumers are familiar with different ways that Australian macadamias can feature in sweet products, savoury products remain an untapped opportunity that can open up a series of new innovation spaces and showcase the true versatility of the Australian macadamia nut. Macadamias hold potential to be a new food hero, especially in Asian markets where salience is lower.

RELEVANT TO

 **The Internet of food**

 **Home economics**



Innovation inspiration

SAUCES & PASTES

- Pasta sauces
- Curry pastes
- Chili pastes

DIPS

- Macadamia hummus
- Macadamia pesto
- Blended macadamia dip, e.g. with lemon & herbs

STUFFINGS, CRUSTS AND FLOURS

- Herbed macadamia stuffing mix
- Pre-made fish/ chicken with macadamia & citrus crumb
- Ready-made macadamia & panko crumb mix
- Macadamia zaatar/dukkah
- Macadamia meal

SALAD BOOSTER

- Pre-made salad ingredient/topping
- Salad dressing

CRACKERS/CHIPS

- Gourmet macadamia crackers
- Macadamia, chicken & herb infused chips
- Macadamia wafer crackers

Smoked Trout and Macadamia Dip



3. Local infusions

Across the world consumers are rediscovering their local and traditional cuisine, but with an openness to modern tweaks that can elevate and excite. The versatility and unique texture of macadamias can add a new dimension to well-known classics and locally loved foods, helping to re-energise traditional favourites in a contemporary way.

RELEVANT TO

 **Rediscovering local**



Innovation inspiration

NEW ADDITIONS

- Rice dumplings replacing peanuts/ chestnuts with macadamias
- Puree in gravies (India)
- Hotpot ingredients

NATIVE PAIRINGS

- Macadamia and wattle seed (Australia)
- Macadamia and lemon myrtle (Australia)

ASIAN TREATS

- Macadamia mooncakes
- Macadamia infused bubble teas
- Macadamia candy replacing traditional peanuts (Taiwan)

SWEET TOPPINGS

- Soy whip (Japan) made from macadamias rather than soy. Vegan, used in hot chocolates, matcha drinks, berry pots.

Macadamia Tonkatsu Sauce
(served here on a Japanese cabbage pancake)



4. Indulgent escape

Against a backdrop of macro-economic pressures and tensions, consumers are seeking ways to distract from the negativity and indulge their senses in moments of joy. The deliciously creamy taste of macadamias provides the perfect platform to amplify desserts and sweet treats and create mini moments of escape. Additionally there is scope to play with the fact that Australian macadamias own the unique mix of purity (natural, authentic, original) and indulgence. Inspiring product packaging can bring the visual 'wow' needed to optimise premium and indulgent positioning.

RELEVANT TO

 **The internet of food**

 **Less is more**

Mango Macadamia Popsicles



Innovation inspiration

CHOCOLATE

- Chocolate macadamias with chocolate coated coffee beans
- Chocolate covered macadamia selection (white, milk, dark, salted caramel)
- Macadamia milk chocolate with macadamia nuts and macadamia butter

ICE-CREAM

- Macadamia and mango Ice-cream
- Hokey pokey ice-cream with macadamias
- Ice-cream toppings (pre-made mix)

BRAND COLLABS

- Macadamia Snickers
- Cadburys Rocky Road w/macadamias

GARNISH/TOPPINGS

- Caramelised macadamias
- Salted caramel macadamias
- Hot chocolate with macadamia crunch/ brittle
- Slivered/crushed/sliced/ powdered macadamias
- Toffee slabs
- Chocolate bark with macadamias

FESTIVE FAVOURITES

- Macadamia and wattle seed pavlova (Australia)
- Macadamia panna cotta

5. Liquid gold

Consumers are seeking ways to easily enhance their food and transform simple ingredients into show-stopping dishes. The high concentration of heart-healthy fats in macadamias allows them to function particularly well in a liquid form, adding depth and richness, but also creating a natural plant base for a range of dairy-free products.

RELEVANT TO



Future-proofed foods



Sustainable solutions



Innovation inspiration

MILKS/CREAMS

- Plant-based macadamia milk
- Macadamia cream
- Super thick macadamia dessert cream

SMOOTHIES / SAUCES

- Freeze dried fruit/vegetable and macadamia smoothie mix
- Macadamia flavoured smoothies
- Plant-based bechamel with macadamias

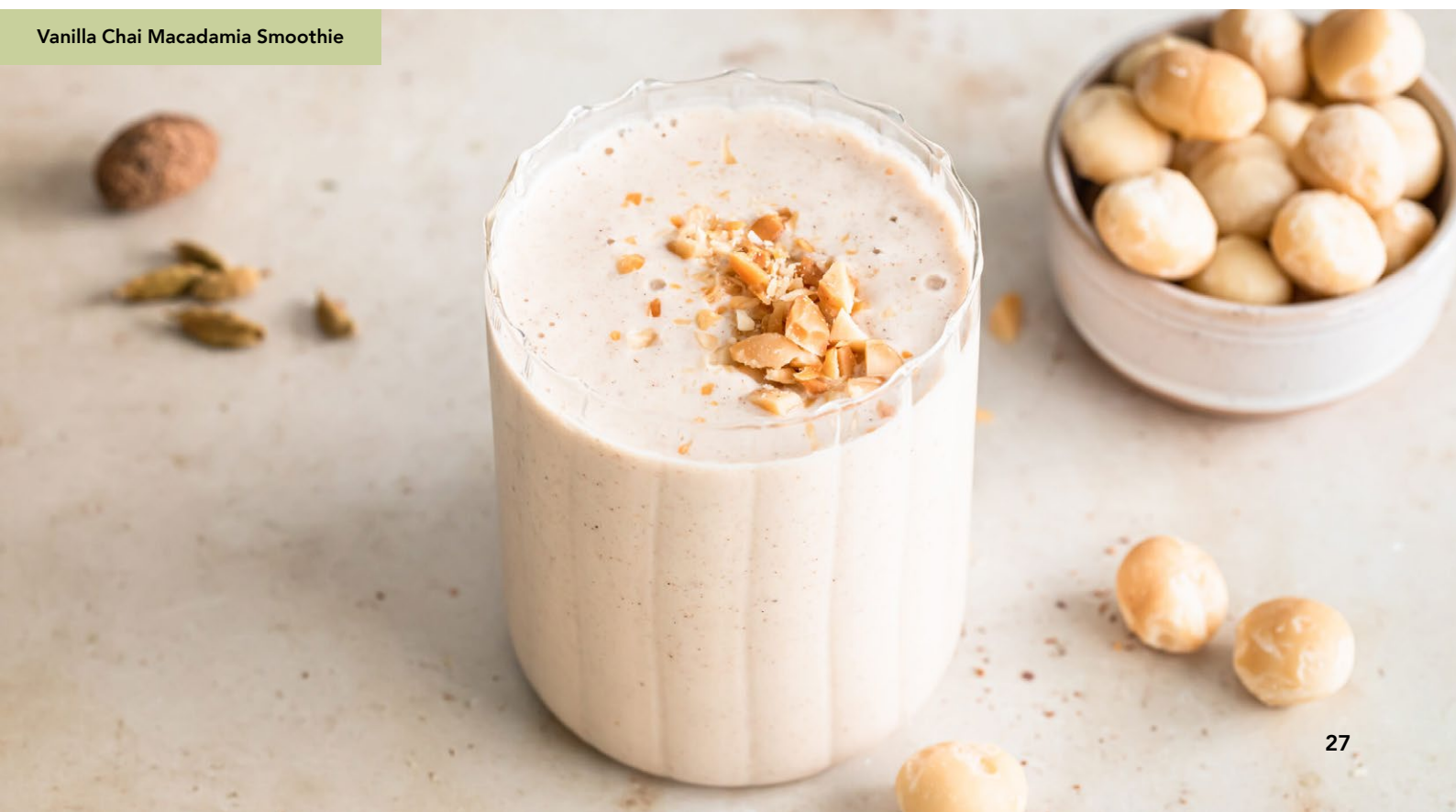
SPREADS/BUTTERS

- Plant based macadamia butter
- Healthy heart macadamia spread

OILS/INFUSIONS

- Macadamia oil/cooking spray
- Macadamia, lemon & herb infused oils

Vanilla Chai Macadamia Smoothie



Want to discuss how to tap into these trends using macadamias as an ingredient in your next product?

For further information please contact:

Jacqui Price

Australian Macadamias Market Development Manager

T: +61 2 6622 4933

E: jacqui.price@macadamias.org

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