Asian Noodles: U.S. Market Trends and Opportunities

Description:
Asian Noodles: Trends & Opportunities assesses how food and foodservice industry participants are adding—and can add—to product development and marketing strategies of Asian noodles. Four primary themes emerge: variety, healthfulness, authenticity, and innovation. With respect to each of these themes, this report trends related consumer preferences and attitudes over time; ties each theme to pertinent foodservice (restaurant and prepared foods) menu trends supported by a wealth of examples; assesses related foodservice marketing strategies; and identifies implications and applications for the packaged groceries segment of the market.

In doing so, the report addresses a wide range of noodle trends and opportunities. Primary data sources include metrics from our consumer surveys and from menu item analysis, as well as hundreds of menu item examples and related visual images. By section:
The report begins with an overview of foodservice and food retail noodle usage in the past 30 days, including at-home usage and restaurant usage. We also analyze usage by demographic, provide comparisons between Asian noodle usage and Italian noodle usage to provide context as well as shedding light on noodle knowledge and attributes desired.
In the Variety section, we analyze consumer attitudes toward variety in Asian noodle dishes as reflected by the nuances of ingredients, shape, texture, preparation, and culinary application. We also assess variety on the menu with consideration of these same attributes, and highlight a restaurant operator that is leveraging variety via customization. Finally, we present implications and applications for the grocery aisle, focusing on how packaged goods marketers are increasing variety of Asian noodles for at-home consumption by leveraging convenience attributes (time/speed and package size) as well as flavor expansion. By doing so, these companies and brands are better positioned to compete against mainstream Asian takeout.
In the Healthfulness section, we trend and analyze consumer attitudes toward health and diet, and provide applications to the Asian noodle market with a focus on health attributes that prove to be a decision influencer. We also assess health on the menu with consideration of these same attributes with the understanding that Asian noodle dishes strike a strong alignment as being inherently healthy, and in most cases, positive health associations are simply a secondary benefit. In addition, we highlight a restaurant operator that is successfully applying health to its Asian-focused menu. Finally, we present implications and applications for the grocery aisle, focusing on how health and wellness trends are causing some consumers to eschew heavily processed foods, carbs and gluten—making the category vulnerable to stagnant sales.
In the Authenticity section, we trend and analyze consumer attitudes toward willingness to try new foods/recipes. Then, we provide applications to the Asian noodle market with a focus on the impact of authenticity, and more specifically heritage/culture of noodles, as a decision influencer—both at home and at restaurants. We also assess authenticity on the menu with consideration of these same attributes with the understanding that Asian noodle dishes at restaurants are often the first exposure many Americans have to this cuisine. In addition, we highlight a restaurant operator that has had success mainstreaming Asian cuisine from an authentic position. Finally, we present implications and applications for the grocery aisle, focusing on how authenticity becomes an important distinction for differentiation in the competitive package noodle category.
In the Innovation section, we trend and analyze consumer attitudes related to innovation—whether on the menu or in marketing. We begin by assessing overall attitudes relating to culinary experiences and food adventurousness. In addition, we explore culinary innovation with consideration to noodle crossing boundaries. We also consider innovation as it applies to marketing strategies and leveraging online and social media as applied by leading Asian-centric chains. Finally, we present implications and applications for the grocery aisle.

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