

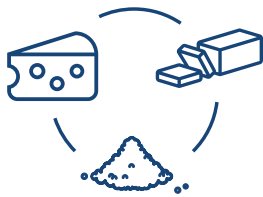
# DAIRY UNLOCKS THE POTENTIAL OF DIPS, DRESSINGS AND SOUPS





## WHAT WE'RE SEEING

For food manufacturers, dips, dressings and soups are growing categories with new inspiration and demand. Delivering what consumers are interested in can be a moving target, but that's where DFA Ingredient Solutions thrives. With the right insights, flavors, ingredients and partners, you can deliver winning products that help grow sales. Knowing the landscape is key to developing the next big offering or optimizing current solutions. Here we'll examine a few of the key drivers in these delicious, dynamic categories.



Without a doubt, dairy is ideal for dips and soups. Cheese ingredients provide flavor and texture, while concentrates impart bold flavors and richness to all kinds of dishes. Our ingredients are customizable and can achieve a more natural approach to the emulsification properties of finished products while also providing a specific flavor target and enhancing color. Elevating the overall experience of dips, dressings and soups will go far in helping food manufacturers deliver what consumers are looking for.

— Chad Mitchell, DFA Ingredient Solutions R&D

## A QUICK LOOK AT SNACKING

Though dinner is relatively constant, breakfast and lunch are continually being replaced by snacking.<sup>1</sup> While snacks are primarily defined by item type and whether these items are consumed during nontraditional meal hours, shifts have occurred since 2018 with consumers increasingly defining snacks as small or inexpensive items.<sup>2</sup> Dips, soups and dressings play into this transition perfectly by offering ways to enjoy smaller dishes throughout the day.

When there's a variety of dips, dressings and soups on the market, consumers are able to enhance main and side dishes or easily create new snacks. Dairy products are frequently key ingredients in these creations. Food manufacturers can meet the needs of increasingly experimental consumers who seek to duplicate the tastes and modern versions of foods found in restaurants.

Sesame Parmesan Reggiano Dressing gives consumers an easy way to update their salads as well as provides a delicious dip for breadsticks, pretzels or other snacks.



## DIPPING INTO ETHNIC FLAVORS

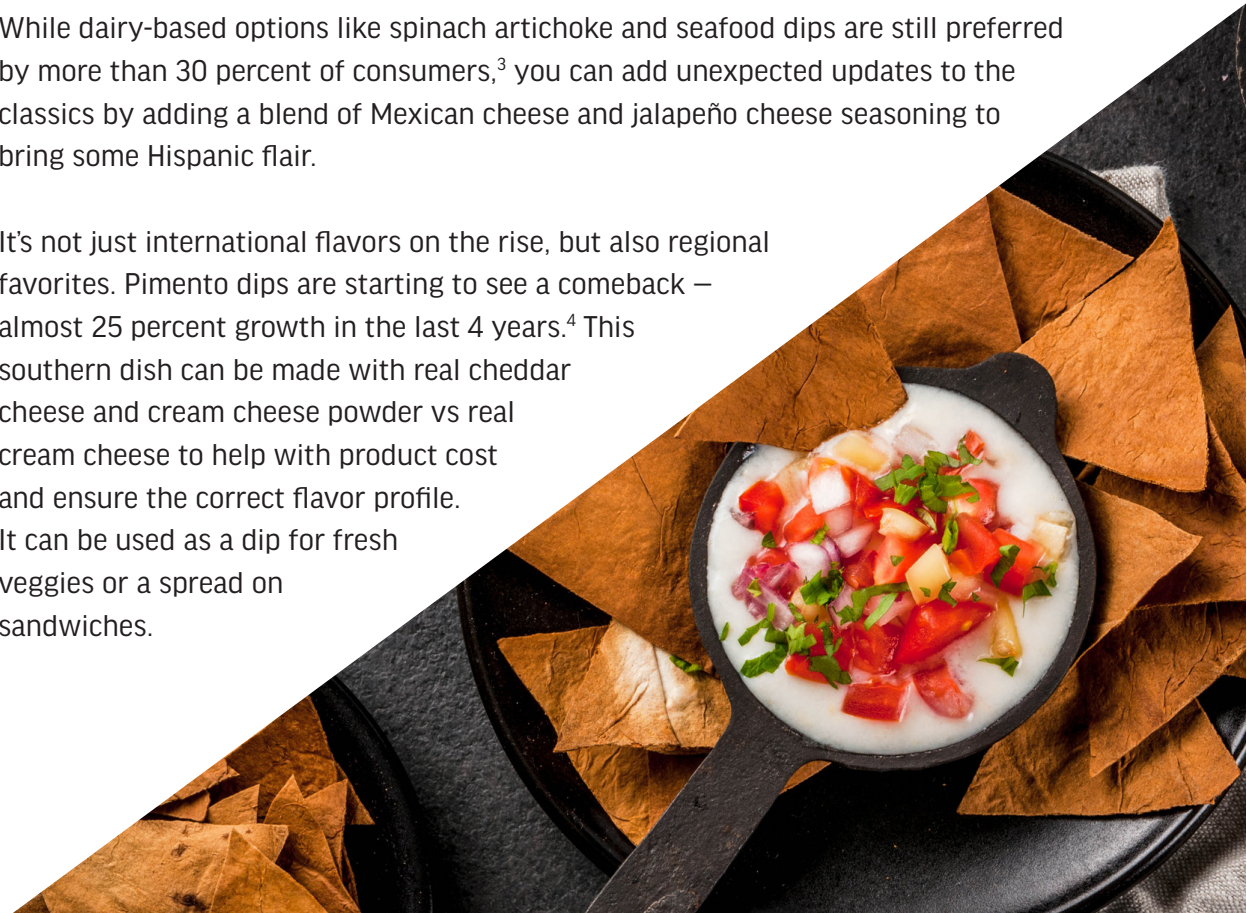
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Tastes from around the globe are driving innovation in dips. Consumers are gravitating toward global flavors and ingredients from Mexican to the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> This trend is likely driven by decreased travel over the past year, resulting in people wanting to replicate the missed experiences through food.

Though cheese offerings still top the list of preferred dips at 38 percent,<sup>3</sup> Latin inspired dips like guacamole and salsa are also growing in popularity. Adding top note flavors like chipotle chile, BBQ or jalapeño to your cheese dips or salsas can give consumers something new and exciting to try.

While dairy-based options like spinach artichoke and seafood dips are still preferred by more than 30 percent of consumers,<sup>3</sup> you can add unexpected updates to the classics by adding a blend of Mexican cheese and jalapeño cheese seasoning to bring some Hispanic flair.

It's not just international flavors on the rise, but also regional favorites. Pimento dips are starting to see a comeback – almost 25 percent growth in the last 4 years.<sup>4</sup> This southern dish can be made with real cheddar cheese and cream cheese powder vs real cream cheese to help with product cost and ensure the correct flavor profile. It can be used as a dip for fresh veggies or a spread on sandwiches.



## DRESSINGS GET AN UPDATE

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Bold, herb-forward choices are leading the growth in the dressings category. The earthy nature of herbs pairs well with dairy flavors like butter and cream bases. These kinds of options are also supporting the quality, freshness and healthfulness trends.



However, dairy-based choices like ranch and Caesar are still the most preferred and considered “American classic” dressings.<sup>3</sup> Since they’re so well loved by consumers, they provide a great starting point for new, on-trend flavors. Ranch is finding its way into spicy pairing combinations like chipotle, buffalo and jalapeño.

When it comes to heat, the functional properties of dairy pair well with peppers and hot spices because dairy naturally balances the heat of those ingredients, giving consumers a way to try spicy flavors without going over the top.

Older consumers (those 35 years old and older) prefer a wider variety of dressing options than younger consumers. Offering a variety of new dressings like vinaigrettes or spicing up other consumer favorites is an easy way to provide some customization and flavor appeal.

## SOUP GOES INTERNATIONAL

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Soup is able to function as both an in-between meal option and a meal, especially with protein-forward or heartier options such as cheesy baked potato, chilis and cream-based soups like chowders. Varieties that draw inspiration from different regions are trending with consumers – ranging from gazpacho to pho to matzo ball.<sup>3</sup> Try incorporating cheeses like queso fresco to infuse a little Latin flavor into your soups. Other ingredients such as roasted chicken and fresh cilantro can help you easily craft a deliciously on-trend Soup de Queso.



Older consumers lead the interest in soup, while younger consumers (18-34 years old) are trending toward Asian inspired options with the Vietnamese soup entrée, Pho, growing 9.2 percent over the last year.<sup>3</sup> Also try turning classics like Chicken Alfredo, the ultimate Italian comfort food into a hearty, comforting soup that's filling enough to be a meal. As we know consumers are turning to familiar tastes in the past year, but also want exciting flavors or twists on their favorite dishes.

## WHAT'S DRIVING GROWTH

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As many consumers are looking for new ideas for the growing number of their at-home meals, it's important to keep pace with their evolving tastes and interests. 31 percent of people reported having tried new recipes while almost ¼ tried new cooking techniques when cooking at home since the start of the pandemic.<sup>5</sup> We know that almost half of people are cooking more at home since stay at home orders were put into place and favorite restaurants were closed so consumers found themselves starting to experiment with different cuisines, ingredients or flavors.

Variety and experimentation are prevailing. Consumers are looking to spruce up their endless at-home meals. All areas, from meal ingredients to meal solutions have gained in new buyers and increased purchases—driven by dinner, snacks and breakfast.<sup>7</sup>

Many consumers are seeking fresh foods, healthfulness and variety in their new at-home cooking experiences. Dips, dressings and soups are perfect ways to provide customization and variety in their lineup of meals. Dairy-based dips and dressings pair well with salads as well as fresh snacks, making them more interesting.

## FROZEN HELPS WITH AT-HOME DINING

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While fresh foods remain important, the categories of frozen and dairy grew 58 percent in 2020.<sup>7</sup> Over half of consumers say they are still purchasing more frozen food since the pandemic to help keep food on hand longer and to make fewer shopping trips.<sup>6</sup> Food manufacturers can leverage these new habits by making combos of fresh dips and soups for complete meal kits for consumers.



Frozen snacks and appetizers like egg rolls or jalapeño poppers pair great with fresh dips and dressings like spicy ranch or a 3-cheese queso dip. Fresh dressings can also be used to flavor or marinate frozen proteins like chicken, pork and seafood.

## THE TAKEAWAYS

DFA Ingredients Solutions offers a wide variety of dairy products that can enhance your current portfolio or help create your next big offering. Whether you're looking for a concentrate that makes a bolder blue cheese buffalo dip or butter flavor for your perfect buttery lemon dressing, we can partner to make your plans a reality. We'll work with your teams to bring new items to market quickly so you can stay ahead of the competition.

[Keep exploring the ways we help food manufacturers like you find success.](#)



### **EXPLORE MORE INSPIRATION WITH THESE RECIPES AND APPLICATIONS.**

Our culinary and R&D teams can create great-tasting applications that deliver on customer demand. View examples here and take the next step by ordering samples for experimentation.