



FROM CONVENIENCE TO HIGH-END PLEASURE PRODUCTS



The international innovating offer of frozen products of manufacturers' brand, is built around a request of Pleasure and Practicality, at the origin of numerous food trends, more or less represented depending on various geographical areas. Understanding these tendencies enables a clear decoding of the response of manufacturers to a customer who is becoming increasingly demanding, always requiring innovations.

Food is first of all a question of pleasure. Even if frozen products are historically connected to the notion of practicality, manufacturers must never disregard this dimension of pleasure the consumer systematically searches for.

THE PLEASURE FACTOR

Several trends declining the pleasure structure the innovation of the frozen pro-

ducts offer. Le Petit Plaisir Quotidien (Little Daily Pleasures) starts from the finding that food is a means of obvious possibility to allow oneself little daily luxuries in this crisis period. It is easier to pay a little more for allowing oneself to enjoy a premium product once in a while than to buy the latest fashionable smartphone. In terms of innovation in the frozen products category, this is illustrated by gourmet foods in individual format for reaching an af-

fordable face value with a premium location which is justified by the use of ingredients in demand. The packaging promotes this idea of little food luxury: individual ceramic holders, glass recipients, small casseroles, small wooden or wicker cups are a few response packaging accompanying the idea of top pleasure.

PLAYING WITH TEXTURES

Since the economic crisis, food has become one of the main vectors of the consumer's experience, being approachable and multi-daily. The innovation will then play with the new tastes, the new textures, the new flavors or the new food concepts. All these products are grouped under the tendency that XTC calls Le Plaisir sans Limite (Pleasure Without Limits): ice-cream with giant pieces of cookies, salty pancakes with insertions of eggs and bacon or frozen doughnuts filled with salmon eggs being some examples. Always in a dynamic Pleasure, the innovation also

plays with the exotic and invites the consumer to escape by the discovery of (the new tastes) and the new association of flavors and ingredients coming from various countries and cultures. There are two strong tendencies organizing the exotic the tendency Food Fusion and the tendency Origine & Garanties (Origin & Guarantee).

FUSION AND CLEAN LABEL

The tendency Food Fusion is inspired by gastronomy and renown international recipes and adapts them to the tastes of the local consumer. In North America, we also find spring rolls inspired by the Vietnamese gastronomy, but with a side dish of cheeseburger (a mixture of veal, cheddar and gherkin). The Food Fusion rejects the international recipes in order to respond to a request of "controlled" escape, proving that globalization is not a source of culinary homogeneity.

The tendency Origine & Garanties focuses on the exceptional or rare character of a certain product. An exotic product can no longer be anonymous: the consumer must understand why he/ she pays an additional value in order to buy a "different" product. For example, the recipe of the Asian soup will have more exact variants from now on: the Ramen soup of Japan, Pho soup of Vietnam or the Thailand soup Kao Soi.

is sometimes difficult for the offer of Frozen Products to frankly appeal to the gustatory Pleasure. Certain manufacturers have started to cherish the criterion of time, highlighting the time they have dedicated to the product in order to make it as good as possible. This argument of "time" concerns the products whose fabrication process involves complex stages of maturation, aromatization, stewing etc. where the manufacturer has given the product the necessary time to make it as good as possible. How does this translate in terms of product innovation? Beef short ribs cooked slowly in a sauce whose taste is not altered by freezing. Or a pizza where the dough has been left to mature for 22 hours, guaranteeing an authentic taste that is equivalent to the one of a fresh product. Being a major argument of gastronomy and artisan cuisine, time becomes a criterion adopted by manufacturers, presenting it as a quality guarantee. In parallel, if the pleasure is essential in food, it cannot be whole if it is not supported by a promise of comfort made possible by practicality.

SIMPLIFYING OPERATIONS

The innovation of Frozen Products has also adapted to a consumer who cooks more and more in his/ her home and who claims to be a chef. A great number of practical products which simplify the most complex cooking operations leaving the creative part to the consumer have appeared, such as cubes of pre-cut vegetables, focaccia with side dish to be cooked directly into the oven or the bread dough to be cooked in its own bag.

It is also about practical products which help create genuine works of art inspired directly from the tendency Food Art. The consumer does not only want the product to be good, he/she also wants it to be beautiful. Beyond the aesthetic glass, we also find the spoons to go with them, the mini-casseroles, the star-shaped surprise pieces of bread for the celebrations at the end of the year, small pieces on sticks to share or starters accompanied by sauce pipettes. The innovation by means of practicality means modifying the manipulation of the product in order to increase its dimension of pleasure. ■

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PRACTICALITY - THE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC

Let us dwell on the axis of Pleasure in order to discover the new structuring tendency of the innovating offer of the frozen products category: L'éloge de la Lenteur (Controlling Time). The frozen products, which are practical par excellence, have gained a bad reputation as freezing was considered to alter the product. Thus, it

