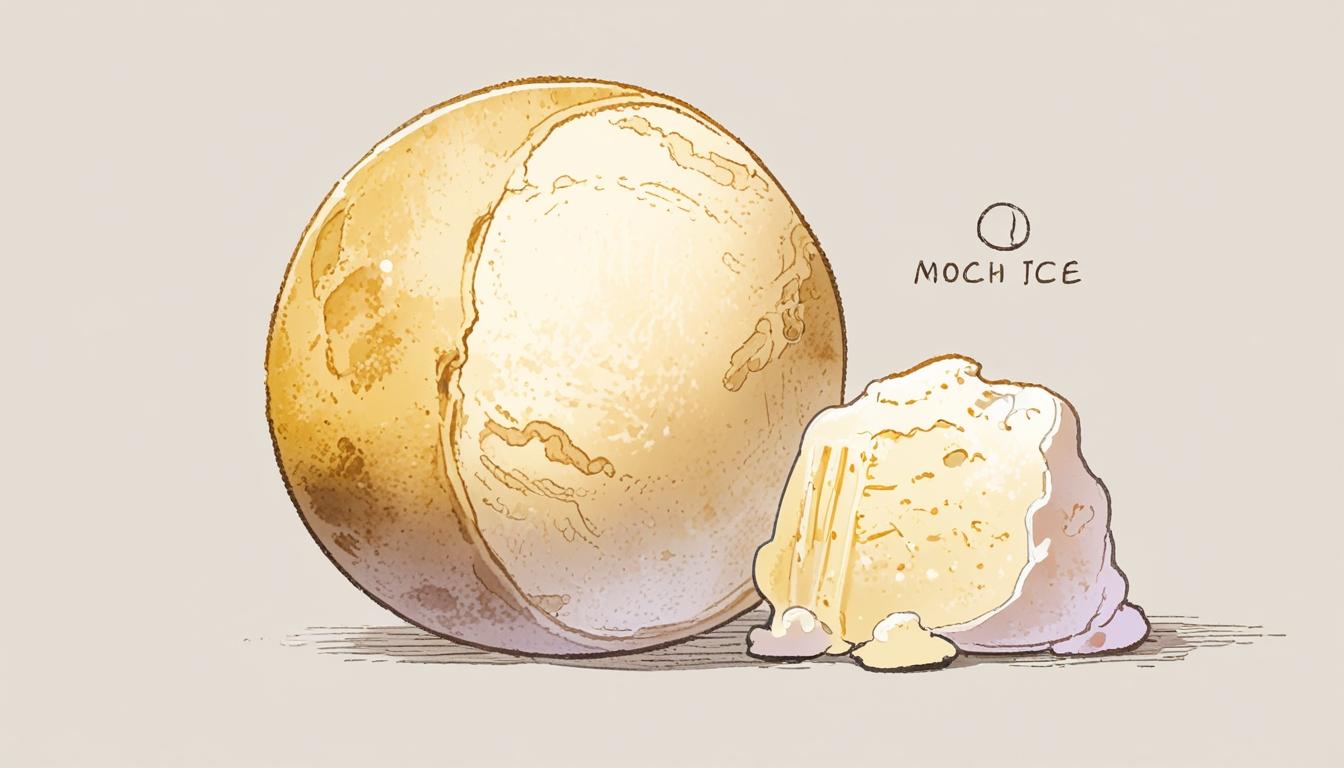
# Little Moons eyes international growth amid UK market challenges



London-based mochi ice cream maker Little Moons is focusing on international markets as a key driver of future growth while navigating challenges in its home market amid increased competition and cost pressures. Founded in 2010 by siblings Vivien and Howard Wong, the company has grown into a £50 million business known for its signature mochi balls—bite-sized ice cream wrapped in soft, chewy rice dough.

The brand surged to prominence during the Covid-19 pandemic when viral videos on TikTok propelled demand for the dessert, which led to production challenges and a rapid expansion of the company’s manufacturing capabilities. Speaking to the PA news agency, co-founder Vivien Wong described this period as “the best of times and the worst of times,” highlighting the “huge risk” involved in scaling up quickly to meet this unexpected surge.

Little Moons is widely available across UK supermarkets, including Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, Ocado, and Asda, and exports to roughly 35 countries worldwide, excluding the United States. Despite this broad reach, the company is facing a “tougher” sales environment in the UK, where consumers continue to feel the impact of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. “The UK has been hit harder than any other country that we supply,” Ms Wong said. “It’s really hard out there for consumers.”

Increasing competition from supermarket own-brand versions of mochi balls presents another challenge for the brand. Discount retailers Aldi and Lidl, along with Marks & Spencer, have all launched their own versions of the product following Little Moons’ success. However, Ms Wong noted that these competitors have not attempted to copy the company’s branding, making legal recourse impractical. “It would be a fool’s errand” to pursue trademark disputes, she remarked.

Little Moons currently retails at about £4.50 per box, with the portion size remaining unchanged since entering supermarket shelves. Ms Wong revealed that, unlike some ice cream brands, Little Moons has not been able to benefit from practices such as product shrinkage, which are sometimes used by larger multinational manufacturers to manage costs. The company also faces increased ingredient expenses resulting from rising milk prices and chocolate shortages, factors that have complicated its pricing strategy. “I think a lot of difficulty is getting consumers to understand what a really good quality product is and why it costs so much,” she explained.

Originally self-funded by its founders, Little Moons sold a “significant” minority stake to US private equity firm L Catterton in 2022. The company has also brought in Joanna Allen, formerly the boss of the snack brand Graze, as its new chief executive last year.

Ms Wong’s leadership has been recognised through her recent nomination as one of three finalists for this year’s prestigious Veuve Clicquot Bold Woman Award, underscoring the brand’s continued prominence in the UK’s food sector. As the business manages domestic headwinds, its expansion into international markets remains a core pillar of its growth strategy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://fastgrowth50.com/2024/01/little-moons-the-global-rise-of-bite-sized-gelato-innovators/> - This article highlights Little Moons' international revenue growth and its innovative approach to gelato products. It supports the claim that the company has experienced rapid growth and is expanding in global markets.
* <https://fabnews.live/little-moons-to-double-international-business-by-2024-as-it-secures-distribution-in-28-countries/> - This piece details Little Moons' plans to double its international business by 2024, focusing on distribution in multiple countries. It backs the statement about the company's aggressive expansion strategy abroad.
* <https://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Article/2024/09/23/little-moons-sets-sights-on-premium-ice-cream-consumers-middle-east-markets-on-the-back-of-tiktok-success/> - The article covers Little Moons' expansion into the Middle East, highlighting its presence in 35 countries and the impact of TikTok success. It supports the claims about international growth and popularity in diverse markets.
* <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/little-moons-partners-with-l-catterton-europe-to-accelerate-growth-and-expansion-301498903.html> - This press release discusses Little Moons' partnership with L Catterton Europe to accelerate growth and expansion, aligning with the company's strategic moves to enhance its presence globally.
* <https://www.just-food.com/news/little-moons-invests-in-second-mochi-ice-cream-production-facility/> - The article mentions Little Moons' investment in a second production facility and its expansion into additional markets like Australia. This supports the claims about manufacturing growth and market expansion.