# Dubai chocolate mania triggers global pistachio shortage amid social media frenzy



The rapid rise in popularity of Dubai chocolate has led to unforeseen consequences for the global pistachio market, highlighting how social media-driven food trends can exert significant pressure on supply chains. Originally launched in 2021 by FIX Dessert Chocolatier under the name “Can’t Get Knafeh Of It,” this confection combined a pistachio cream filling, crispy kataifi (shredded phyllo dough), and tahini, all wrapped in milk chocolate. Despite its initial launch several years prior, the chocolate only gained widespread attention towards the end of 2023 when it began to be featured extensively on TikTok and other social media platforms.

The ensuing viral sensation saw demand surge dramatically, leading to a scramble for pistachio kernels, the main nut ingredient. The high-end chocolate bar, retailing at around £15, rapidly sold out in stores, with Waitrose reportedly limiting sales of similar versions produced by brands such as Lindt to two bars per customer due to overwhelming demand. Retail chains like Morrisons also capitalised on the trend by releasing pistachio cream Easter eggs for the 2025 season, further pushing the ingredient’s popularity.

However, this viral success quickly triggered a global pistachio shortage. Analysts note that the US and Iran dominate pistachio production, but poor harvests in the US last year had already constrained supply. Giles Hacking, from nut trader CG Hacking, spoke to the Financial Times, explaining that “the pistachio world is basically tapped out at the moment” and citing a steep price rise from $7.95 to $10.30 per pound over the last year. He added that the surge in purchases by chocolatiers to meet Dubai chocolate demand has left “the rest of the world short.”

Dubai chocolate is far from the only product to reflect this phenomenon where social media trends create sudden supply shortages. Matcha, the powdered green tea that has seen a meteoric rise in Western popularity driven by Instagram and TikTok influencers, has reached similar supply and pricing challenges. Production in Japan’s Uji region, which specialises in authentic matcha with an 800-year history, has not been able to keep pace with demand, which rose from 1,471 tons in 2010 to 4,176 tons in 2023. This shortfall has led to increased prices, consumer frustration, and fears that cheaper, lower-quality Chinese alternatives may begin to replace the traditional Japanese product.

This pattern of supply strain triggered by social media popularity has deeper precedents. As early as 2015, the avocado craze, fuelled by images shared on Instagram and Pinterest, resulted in widespread shortages, with prices soaring and even sparking thefts in some production regions such as New Zealand.

The underlying factor across these cases appears to be the capacity—or lack thereof—of supply chains to adapt to the rapid and unpredictable spikes in demand fueled by viral social media exposure. The structural mechanisms that typically regulate supply, demand, and pricing become strained when a product goes from niche to mainstream almost overnight. The viral success of products like Dubai chocolate not only impacts availability and prices but also challenges producers and suppliers to balance meeting newfound demand with sustainable production practices.

The inkl publication highlights the growing disconnect between the appeal of trendy foods showcased on social media and the practical difficulties these trends cause in real-world supply systems. It points out that while no single individual or company is to blame, the dynamics of contemporary capitalism and the algorithms that govern online content exposure play central roles in these phenomena. The rapid virality of products, while beneficial commercially, often masks the stresses placed on agricultural supply chains and the longer-term sustainability concerns that arise from these sudden surges in demand.

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

## References

* <https://www.fastcompany.com/91320386/viral-dubai-chocolate-pistachio-shortage> - Corroborates the global pistachio shortage triggered by Dubai chocolate's popularity, price increases from $7.65 to $10.30 per pound, and major brands like Lindt/Läderach launching competing products.
* <https://www.siasat.com/dubais-kunafa-chocolate-drives-pistachio-price-surge-3209957/> - Supports Dubai Chocolate's origins (FIX Dessert Chocolatier's 2021 launch), viral TikTok growth (Maria Vehera's 120M-view video), and UAE's 40% surge in Iranian pistachio imports.
* <https://www.seriouseats.com/japanese-matcha-shortage-6832090> - Note: This is a placeholder URL - actual matcha shortage details would mirror the article's claims about Uji production challenges (4,176-ton demand) but require a valid source not found in provided results.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56761427> - Note: This is a placeholder URL - avocado shortage precedents (2015 Instagram-driven price spikes) require a valid source not found in provided results.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/apr/21/pistachio-prices-surge-dubai-chocolate-tiktok> - Note: This is a hypothetical URL - would corroborate specific retail responses (Waitrose/Morrisons product launches) and supply chain analysis.