# TikTok-driven food fads reshape supermarkets amid rising costs and environmental concerns



TikTok's algorithm has shifted the landscape of food trends, wielding enormous influence over what consumers choose to eat. Supermarkets, once the arbiters of culinary innovation, now find themselves responding to viral sensations from the platform's vast user base. This phenomenon reflects a broader transformation in how food trends are created and disseminated across the globe.

As Zoe Simons, a brand development chef at Waitrose, notes, “The power has flipped. Before, we relied on what was popular at restaurants or we had to wait months for data to come through. Now, because of TikTok and Instagram, our accuracy has gotten so much better.” This shift is apparent in the soaring popularity of items like matcha lattes—a beverage that has surged to prominence due to social media buzz and is now featured prominently in chains like Starbucks and Pret a Manger.

One striking example of this transformative power is the emergence of the “Dubai chocolate” bar, crafted by British-Egyptian Sarah Hamouda, which has captured the attention of food lovers far beyond its geographical origins. This confection—made with pistachio cream, tahini, and knafeh—has garnered a staggering 120 million views on TikTok. In its wake, UK supermarkets have swiftly introduced their variations, with companies like Lidl and Lindt following suit. Such rapid product development, once a slow-moving beast driven by months of consumer research, can now occur within mere weeks.

Yet, this swift response comes with its own challenges, particularly for producers. The excitement surrounding the Dubai chocolate bar has led to significant strain on the global pistachio supply, with prices soaring from €6.65 (£5.59) to €8.96 (£7.45) per pound in just a year, and projections suggest they might rise to €10.80 (£9.32) by year-end. The United States, now the largest pistachio producer, is grappling with the paradox of increased production amid burgeoning demand.

The matcha industry is facing similar pressures. As demand skyrockets, producers, including those in Japan, have been compelled to impose purchase limits despite ramping up production significantly—Japan produced 4,176 tonnes of matcha last year. For individuals like Hanife Hursit, who recently opened a matcha and coffee café in London, the shortage presents a considerable hurdle. “Right before my first stock, my suppliers said we might have to wait for a while,” she explained. Her café, Frothee, nevertheless enjoyed an enthusiastic opening day, with queues snaking around the block, primarily filled with young women eager to sample trendy drinks inspired by TikTok recipes.

Yet, as entrepreneurial as Hursit may be, the surging costs of ingredients like pistachios could prevent her from fully tapping into the trends that dominate her social media feed. “I said to our baker: ‘Should we try a pistachio product?’ But it’s just too expensive, even at wholesale prices,” she explained. Beyond financial considerations, the environmental impact of rapidly expanding crop cultivation is also raising alarms among experts. Mzingaye Ndubiwa, a market analyst at Tridge, pointed out that pistachios require significant water resources, particularly concerning given the drought-prone regions in which they are primarily grown.

The repercussions of such trends, both positive and negative, extend beyond immediate economic factors. The pressing demand for certain crops driven by social media might push farmers toward unsustainable practices, threatening biodiversity and contributing to environmental decline. The cultivation of single crops, particularly those spurred by fleeting social media trends, risks leading to deforestation and water over-extraction, a cycle that could ultimately harm the ecosystems they depend upon.

In a world where social media shapes food culture at an unprecedented rate, the tension between consumer habits and sustainable practices is becoming increasingly evident. The vibrant enthusiasm surrounding trends like matcha and Dubai chocolate reflects broader cultural shifts impacting everything from supermarket shelves to traditional culinary practices. As society grapples with the environmental consequences of these rapidly changing trends, the longevity of TikTok-inspired food fads remains an open question, leaving both consumers and producers to navigate this ever-evolving landscape with caution.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends), [[2]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/1844d9c9-e4a0-486d-b09c-53e780eff4e1)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends), [[6]](https://www.saputofoodservice.ca/en/resources/tiktok-trends)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/1844d9c9-e4a0-486d-b09c-53e780eff4e1), [[4]](https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2024/from-latte-makeup-to-girl-dinners-tiktok-has-launched-tons-of-trends-will-its-influence-last/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/food/2023/01/02/food-trends-2023/), [[6]](https://www.saputofoodservice.ca/en/resources/tiktok-trends)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends), [[2]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends), [[6]](https://www.saputofoodservice.ca/en/resources/tiktok-trends)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.inkl.com/news/from-matcha-lattes-to-dubai-chocolate-how-supermarkets-fight-to-cope-with-tiktok-trends> - This article discusses how TikTok has shifted the power dynamics in food trends, with supermarkets now responding to viral content. It highlights the rise of matcha lattes and the Dubai chocolate bar, both of which have gained popularity through social media. The piece also touches on the challenges faced by producers due to sudden spikes in demand, leading to shortages and price increases in ingredients like pistachios and matcha.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/1844d9c9-e4a0-486d-b09c-53e780eff4e1> - The Financial Times article examines the global impact of the Dubai chocolate bar's viral success on TikTok. It details how the confection, combining pistachio cream, shredded pastry, and milk chocolate, led to a significant pistachio shortage, with prices rising from $7.65 to $10.30 per pound. The piece also discusses the challenges faced by producers and the broader implications for the chocolate industry.
4. <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2024/from-latte-makeup-to-girl-dinners-tiktok-has-launched-tons-of-trends-will-its-influence-last/> - This Associated Press article explores the various trends launched by TikTok, including the resurgence of cottage cheese in recipes and the 'girl dinner' phenomenon. It discusses how TikTok has influenced food culture, leading to increased sales and the revival of certain foods. The piece also considers the sustainability of these trends and their potential longevity.
5. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/food/2023/01/02/food-trends-2023/> - The National's article outlines anticipated food trends for 2023, emphasizing the influence of TikTok on culinary habits. It mentions the rise of 'chaos cooking,' where global flavors are combined in innovative ways, and the impact of TikTok on restaurant menus. The piece highlights the platform's role in shaping dining experiences and food preferences.
6. <https://www.saputofoodservice.ca/en/resources/tiktok-trends> - This resource from Saputo Foodservice discusses how restaurants can leverage TikTok food trends to boost visibility and sales. It provides examples of popular trends like baked feta pasta and dalgona coffee, offering insights into how these trends can be incorporated into restaurant offerings. The piece also advises on strategic considerations for adopting such trends.
7. <https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/news-entertainment/a46117220/tiktok-food-trends-2023/> - This article from The Pioneer Woman highlights the top TikTok food trends of 2023, including the use of cottage cheese in various recipes and the popularity of smash burger tacos. It provides a comprehensive overview of how TikTok has influenced food culture, leading to the emergence of new recipes and the revival of classic dishes.