

Millennials embrace coconut as a healthy food ingredient

Once shunned for its high saturated-fat content, coconut has been reborn as a star ingredient of better-for-you foods and beverages.

Today Millennials largely perceive coconut as a naturally healthy food, and say it's one of the main reasons they purchase coconut-based food products, new research by *New Nutrition Business* shows.

In a series of focus groups, people aged 24-33 from 13 different countries tasted several coconut-based milks, yoghurts, snacks and an ice-cream, and discussed their opinions.

Most of the participants liked the taste of coconut, with many expressing surprise at how much they enjoyed coconut-based products. The overwhelming opinion was that coconut was best combined with other flavours, preferably sweet ones.

The most appealing categories for coconut were bakery and confectionery, while coconut-based yoghurts were the least well-received. These results reveal a gap in the market and an opportunity for companies to develop coconut yoghurts.

Coconut-based dairy alternatives were popular among both dairy-avoiders and regular milk consumers, indicating that companies should target dairy-free products with coconut at a wider audience than dairy-avoiders, and highlight taste as a benefit.

The research findings add to a growing number of factors lining up in favour of coconut, such as:

- A 318% increase in the number of products launched with coconut from 2010 to 2016
- A steady growth of scientific studies on coconut
- Google searches for “coconut” and “health”¹ that show consumer interest in coconut's health benefits has been growing globally since 2010.

Mikaela Lindén, market analyst at *New Nutrition Business*, says: “The results show that coconut is cemented as a healthy food in consumers' minds, and reveal several possibilities for food and beverage companies to connect to the coconut trend.”

“Companies should leverage the naturally healthy message, and use social media to communicate the potential benefits of coconut,” Lindén adds. “Coconut-based dairy alternatives are a great opportunity because they enjoy widespread popularity among consumers, while yoghurts still need to be improved, particularly in relation to flavour and texture.”

¹ See chart in attachment.

NewNutrition Business

The analysis of the coconut consumer research is available at new-nutrition.com, and a video about the coconut trend here: <https://youtu.be/WRaqKUg0A-Q>.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Nutrition Business is a research and consultancy company with an expert focus on the business of food and health since 1995. It has offices in the United States and Europe, and affiliates in Japan and South Korea.
2. For more information about New Nutrition Business contact Marta Matvijev at marta@new-nutrition.com.