



# SPOTTED... APRIL 26

A sneak peek into consumer demands, flavours, and future trends, spotted in April 2026.

Affordable Indulgence. Back to basics. Regional Spice.

[www.sleafordqf.com](http://www.sleafordqf.com)

Tel: +44 (0) 1529 305000



# AFFORDABLE TREATS



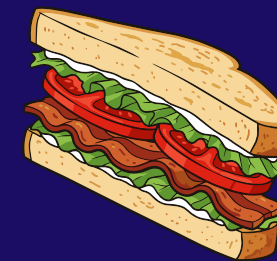
## PREMIUM EVERYDAY TREATS.

In a cost-conscious climate, shoppers are still finding room for small luxuries. The growth of premium chocolate, elevated biscuits, and dessert hybrids shows how affordable indulgence continues to evolve. These products offer a moment of escape—delivering high-quality ingredients, richer flavours, and more refined branding at a price point that still feels justifiable.

This trend reflects a balancing act at the heart of current consumer behaviour: cutting back in some areas while trading up in others. For brands, the opportunity lies in creating products that feel special without being out of reach—whether through flavour innovation, texture, or premium cues like provenance and craftsmanship. It's not about everyday extravagance, but about making everyday moments feel a little more indulgent.



# A CHANGE IN FOOD TO GO

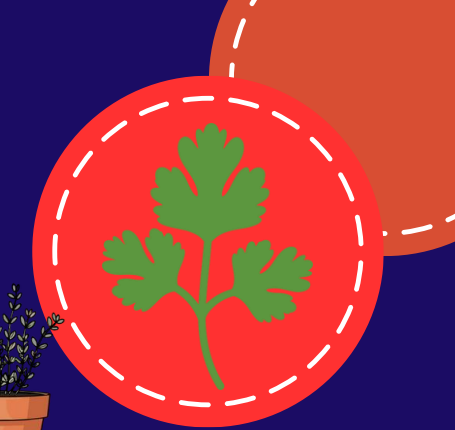


## DRIVEN BY QUALITY, NOT JUST VALUE.

The UK food-to-go market continues to expand, but the key driver is shifting. While price remains important, consumers are increasingly prioritising quality, freshness, and overall value when making quick food decisions. From upgraded meal deals to better ingredients and more considered menus, expectations of food-to-go are rising across supermarkets, convenience stores, and QSR.

This change signals a deeper shift in mindset: even for everyday, on-the-go purchases, consumers want food that feels worth it. It's no longer enough to be quick and cheap — products need to deliver on taste, satisfaction, and perceived quality. For operators and retailers, this creates an opportunity to stand out by elevating core ranges and rethinking how convenience can meet higher expectations.

# BACK TO BASICS HERBS AND SEASONINGS



As bold, global flavours continue to dominate headlines, a quieter counter-trend is emerging across the UK: a return to simple, herb-led seasoning and back to basic flavouring.

Chefs and brands are increasingly stripping dishes back, using fresh herbs like parsley, mint, dill and chives to enhance core ingredients rather than masking them with heavy sauces or complex spice blends. The focus is on clarity and balance—letting high-quality produce speak for itself, supported by clean, familiar flavours that consumers recognise and trust.

Diners are becoming more interested in what goes into their meals, favouring shorter ingredient lists and more natural flavour profiles. In practice, this translates to dishes finished with herb oils, fresh garnishes, citrus, and light seasoning—delivering freshness and brightness without overcomplication. For operators and product developers, the opportunity lies in elevating the basics: sourcing better ingredients, refining execution, and proving that simplicity, when done well, can be just as compelling as more trend-led, complex flavour combinations.

# GLOBAL SPICE PASTES & REGIONAL CONDIMENTS GO MAINSTREAM

The UK food scene is seeing a huge shift in the move from generic international flavour profiles to regionally authentic ingredients — especially spice pastes and condiments.

Instead of broad “global” flavours, consumers are now reaching for more specific, authentic ingredients like gochujang, harissa, miso, chilli crisp, preserved lemons and other regional flavour bases. These products are no longer seen as specialist or exotic—they’re increasingly treated as essential pantry staples that can instantly add depth, heat, or complexity to a dish.



Take it up a notch with a sprinkle of Chef William flavour fusions to bring your dishes to life...

-  Shawarma
-  Creole
-  Harissa
-  Korean BBQ
-  Adobo

