

Tantalizing Textures

FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD LAYERS OF CRUNCH, CREAM AND INDULGENT RICH TEXTURES TO YOUR BAKED GOODS AND TAKE OFFERINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

From the crunchy-smooth dynamic of caramel and nuts to the gooey-crumblly mix of an apple crisp, texture can play a big role in baked goods' appeal. And it doesn't just please taste buds. Mintel recently identifies unique textures as a top trend since they can boost the appearance of foods—key for social media. Some bakeries get extra creative with textures, using ingredients like puffed rice cereal, sesame seeds, malted chocolate and marshmallows. Flavor Cupcakery in Bel Air, Maryland, for example, tops Cracker Jack cupcakes with popcorn and peanuts, and its chocolate peppermint cupcakes feature crushed candy canes. “There’s definitely something to be said for flavors that are visually and texturally appealing and a little bit different,” says owner Shelley Stannard. “It registers with people that this place is doing some neat things.”

PROCESS MAKES PERFECT

Unique textures may require extra testing time, as bakers have to ensure not only that flavor combinations work but that any contrasting crunchiness, chewiness and fluffiness offer a pleasant eating experience. Items also have to work within existing operations. Stannard makes sure her team has enough time to make textured components—such as torch-caramelized sugar for creme brulee cupcakes—by offering only one complicated item each day. The bakery also makes smaller batches of these intricate treats, positioning them as limited-time offers. “We make limited quantities because it’s something that excites people we can promote online,” Stannard says. Another way to minimize extra labor requirements is to avoid relying solely on scratch ingredients for texture. Candy, like Pop Rocks, and nuts can add that component without a lot of extra work on bakers’ part.

KEEP DISPLAY AND SHELF LIFE TOP OF MIND

The final product also has to be structurally sound; overloading baked goods with too many trimmings—no matter how interesting—can cause issues, says Aaron Surman, executive chef at Lucky’s Doughnuts. The Vancouver, Canada, bakery offers seasonal donuts with toppings like shaved coconut and torched meringue. “When it comes to texture and timeline, you do look at what you’re putting on, and will it stay or [will the donut] become too soft within an hour or two [because] you have too much stuff on top,” Surman says.

— Erin Brereton

INNOVATION
STATION

