

# Fusion Flavors



## What is so new about fusion blends?

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Fusion flavors, or blends, have been around since the cavemen discovered fire and found out that a cooked, crusty, smoky leg of dinosaur had a much better taste than the raw version. The ancient Romans and Greeks used all the spices and herbs available to make food taste pleasant as well.

Today's marketplace is always looking for something new and exciting to tantalize the palette of the consuming public. The flavor industry is constantly being pursued for new concepts, new flavors and new taste sensation ideas.

The discovery of superfruits and their nutritional content gives us something new to work with! These fruits include Mangosteen, Acai Berry, Aronia, Lychee, Goji and many more. Unfortunately, the superfruits are expensive, hard to get, not very tasty, not too stable and difficult to ship from places such as South East Asia and South America, where most come from. Because of the difficulties in handling them (with the exception of pomegranate) they are used in blends or fused with the more common fruit juices and flavors. Thus, the term, "fusion flavors".

If we go back in history we can say that the monks, back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were the first flavor blenders and masters of fusion technology. They made blends using herbs, flowers, seeds, barks, roots, fruits, coffee, tea, peels, sugar, brandy, water, vegetables, and in some cases, wine.

The liqueurs and cordials (both are the same with different names) are still consumed today and extremely difficult to duplicate with the essential oils and natural chemicals we use today. Look at, or better yet, sip Benedictine, Chartreuse, Claristine, Curacao, Drambuie, Grand Marnier, Parfait Amour or Southern Comfort. You get a true example of what a fusion product is.

Reaction products are probably the only scientifically produced fusion flavors. Some people still call them cookbook chemistry, and they are. If you take an amino acid, a sugar, water or oil, some enzymes and other magical secret ingredients, adjust the pH, put in a reactor, heat it to a specific temperature either under vacuum or at room pressure for a specific duration of time, you end up

with a flavor completely different from the starting materials. We can make meat, chicken, chocolate, malt, etc. in this fashion.

Thus, a fusion flavor.

The beverage industry is always looking for a new cola flavor – something different and unique, yet recognized as a cola drink. Cola flavors usually consist of fluid extracts of kola nut, coca leaves, vanilla, cinnamon or cassia. The essential oils of orange, lemon, lime, nutmeg, cinnamon, cassia, plus other essential oils are usually blended together and added to the fluid extracts. Caramel color, sugar, phosphoric acid and small amounts of caffeine are added. Mix well, carbonate and put in a container, ready to drink.

It is very difficult to say what a cola flavor tastes like. It is sour, sweet, citrus, vanilla-like, and sometimes has a spicy cinnamon nuance. It all depends on the manufacturer. This is a true fusion flavor. The original cola flavors had cocaine in them, which came from the coca leaf extract. It has been removed (the cocaine) in the modern cola drinks.

Other examples of fusion flavors that have been around for decades are:

**Chinese Five Spices** – a blend of star anise or anise seeds, cloves, cinnamon, fennel and Szechuan pepper corns.

**The Holy Trinity** – used in Cajun foods and is a blend of chopped up bell peppers, celery and onions.

**Mirepoix** – a non-Cajun blend of vegetables consisting of carrots, onions and celery.

**Caramel Candy** – a blend of sugar, butter and cream, heated to a paste-like, semi-soft candy, which after cooking, develops a mouth-watering caramel taste we all like. This could also be considered a reaction flavor.

**Tres Leches** – a white cake soaked with a blend of three different milk products – milk, evaporated milk and condensed milk. The milks are heated together to create a new milky, creamy taste.

**Citrus beverages** like lemon-lime blends – they have been around for years and when properly blended, it is difficult to pick out the lemon or lime. A perfect fusion.

**Chai Tea** – made with a blend of spices (clove, cinnamon, nutmeg and coriander) and tea. We taste mainly the spices and hardly any tea. This is not a good fusion flavor.

**Ketchup** – it has been around for years and is a blend of tomatoes and spices, such as clove, cinnamon and others. This is a very good fusion.

The popular **tomato-based juice drink** that has celery and lots of other vegetable juices blended together is a very good fusion drink.

Fusion food blends have been around for centuries. The concept is an old one that is being reintroduced and revised every day. The excitement today is over superfruits and how to make them acceptable taste-wise and price-wise and available to the public.

Actually, with the help of reality TV and the numerous cooking shows featuring “top” chefs, the culinary world has brought to light new ingredients as well as previously known ones, but found novel ways to cook with them.

Flavorists are always looking at different industries to see what and where the next “new cross-over flavor” will come from. It is then up to us to use our creativity to make it happen in our industry.

GSB Flavor Creators has come up with its own versions of fusion flavors. **Tom mango** is a new flavor developed by combining a tomato flavor and a mango flavor. The fresh, subtle notes of a tomato blend perfectly with the ripe, sweet notes of a mango.

More GSB fusion flavors include:

**The Ugly Dragon**  
(Uglifruit and Dragonfruit)

**Zingin’ Kaffir Kudzu**  
(Kaffir Lime and Kudzu)

**Black Orange Berry**  
(Blackberry, Bilberry and Blood Orange)

**Rambutan White Tea**  
(Rambutan fruit and White Tea)

**Guaranaberry Cream**  
(Guarana, Goji, Acai and Paw Paw)

Prickly Pear-themed fusions:

**Prickly Pear Peanut**  
(Prickly Pear and Peanut)

**Thistly Pear Tequila**  
(Prickly Pear and Tequila)

**Perplexing Prickly Melon**  
(Prickly Pear and Melon)

**Spiny Sesame Pear**  
(Prickly Pear and Sesame)