

Make Innovation HAPPEN

**MIH Knowledge Article:
Could your food and drink business benefit
from a marshmallow makeover?**

Scotland
A LAND OF
food and drink

SCOTLAND
IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE

The logo consists of the word 'CAN DO' in a stylized font. 'CAN' is written vertically in white on a green rectangular background, and 'DO' is written vertically in white on a yellow rectangular background.

Nothing escapes innovation in the food and drink sector and marshmallows are no exception, so what can we expect from this little fluffy treat?

Marshmallows are traditionally made from egg white, gelatine and sugar, and they're usually available in two colours, pink and white, and offered to the consumer in big family packs in the supermarket.

But the marshmallow scene has seen a shake-up of late, and new flavours, new concepts and new packaging have been used to revitalise the old fairly staid formula.

So, how's the sector breathed new life into this pillowy goody, and what's the knock-on effect all this innovation is having on the confectionery industry at large?

Guilt-free sweets

Consumers want to be able to enjoy sweets, but they want to enjoy healthier versions of their old favourites.

The development of sugar and fat-free alternatives are becoming important to future confectionery success. According to Mintel, sugar confectionery and gum reported the highest growth rates in stevia based product development, up by 125% in 2017.

The free-from trend is also proving popular. With the rise in the number of vegans in the UK, the demand for vegan sweets is growing steadily, and this has led to the industry developing a broad range of gelatine-free, egg and dairy-free confectioneries.

The Vegan Marshmallow Company

This company uses agar-agar, made from red seaweed, as a gelatine alternative, in their marshmallows, while aquafaba, made from chickpea water, is a common egg white replacer used to make vegan sweets.

Due to the rise of plant-based products generally, it's predicted that more lentils, puffed amaranth and quinoa, beans and seeds will be added to confectioneries and chocolates in the future. This means there's likely to be a wider availability of this kind of product, offering more choice to consumers.

The clean label movement

Clean labelling has become a big player in the food and drink industry. The 'less and more natural ingredients the better' approach is driving sector change.

Customers don't want to see synthetic preservatives and artificial flavourings and colourings listed as ingredients on the products they buy. Many companies are trying to eliminate refined sugar, looking to replace it with sugar alternatives such as agave and honey.

So, the likes of The Naked Marshmallow Company, who categorise its marshmallows as being clean label because they're made with only natural ingredients, have innovated themselves into a strong market position.

Confectionery visionaries

Gourmet marshmallow brands as well as the wider confectionery sector are making use of innovation in flavours and format to stand out from the crowd. Confectioners who bring unique flavours and handmade designs to market in small batches and limited editions are using gourmet innovation to please the consumer.

This gourmet innovation comes in many guises. Seasonal offerings like marshmallow pumpkin spice, gingerbread and summer berries, or the use of floral ingredients, such as lavender, roses and hibiscus are all trends being seen.

Get boozy with it

Appealing to the more premium and adult target group, through booze-infused confectionery is another avenue some confectioners are exploring. Gin and prosecco infused sweet treats are proving a bit hit, with gin infused fudge and prosecco gummies already supermarket staples.

The Marshmallowist, was the first producer of gourmet marshmallows in the UK. The company has recently launched a 'bloody Mary' marshmallow with spiced tomato and vodka, as well as a gin and passion fruit and ginger marshmallow.

While the Naked Marshmallow Company joins the boozy marshmallow crowd with raspberry and prosecco, elderflower and London gin, espresso martini and beer and salted pretzel.

Marshmallow marvels

If you can't go all out when it comes to delivering the wow factor in the confectionery sector, when can you?

Just some of the creative reinventions include: chocolate marshmallow pizza and s'mores doughnuts, marshmallow wedding cakes, marshmallows as cocktail decorations, and a marshmallow moonshine from the Sweet Potato Spirit Company.

Marshmallow products such as Crispycakes, from The Crispery, meld marshmallows into a crispy rice cake. While marshmallow gift kits, including bamboo toasting skewers and marshmallows, are exciting customers looking to make their social get-togethers more fun.

Scotland's marshmallow makers

Scotland has a couple of gourmet marshmallow producers already. There's the Marshmallow Lady shop in Edinburgh and Katy Cloud Marshmallows based in the Scottish borders.

They both offer high-quality, handmade and premium marshmallows selling through their own premises as well as delis, farmers markets and food services outlets. But even with these two successful marshmallow makers already in operation, there's definitely potential to capitalise on the growing craze for marshmallows and that's where we can help.

Innovation support for Scottish food and drink companies

Make Innovation Happen is a single source of innovation support for businesses involved in the Scottish food and drink supply chain.

Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise work in partnership across academia, the public sector and the industry to deliver a comprehensive innovation support service.

Make Innovation Happen can help your business by providing:

- [Access to 'connectors'](#), who can offer support, advice and mentoring, as well as direction to appropriate support
- Ideas and insights on how to innovate through articles and events
- Funding through the [Collaborative Innovation Fund](#)
- Help to access other innovation services provided by Scottish Government, [Scottish Enterprise](#), Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Interface and others

To find out more about the support available, please get in touch with the Make Innovation Happen team:

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