

# Flavor and appeal: Why *color* matters in seasonings



# Spice it up: The *colorful* secrets behind seasonings

**Seasonings** play a pivotal role in the food industry, enhancing the flavor, aroma, and overall appeal of a wide range of products. From spices, herbs, and salts to complex seasoning blends, these ingredients not only elevate taste but also cater to regional and cultural preferences, offering manufacturers endless possibilities for product differentiation. As consumer demand for bold, authentic flavors rises, the use of seasonings has become a crucial factor in creating both traditional and innovative culinary experiences.

A lot of thought is given to the flavor of seasonings, but what about the color?

A seasoning's role is to provide both taste and visual appeal. A consumer sees the product long before they taste it, so how can color be used to excite the customer and drive a purchase? In this white paper, we will explain the consumer's thoughts on colored seasonings and how they can be harnessed.

# Unlocking color preferences: What do *consumers* really want?

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In 2024, Oterra commissioned a survey into the color preferences of consumers from around the globe.

The study surveyed 10,000 consumers across 10 countries in four regions, exploring their reactions to product colors in savory foods: Asia Pacific (China, India, Indonesia), Europe (France, Germany), Morocco, the United Kingdom, Latin America (Brazil, Mexico), and the United States. These respondents represented a range of ages, genders, and influence on purchasing decisions. The questions covered all aspects of the products from overall appeal, to associated flavor expectations, and even the emotions they triggered.

This yielded thousands of data points giving fascinating insights into consumers thoughts and expectations regarding colors of seasonings.

This data can be used to:

**Optimize**

Reformulate existing products to reinforce consumer loyalty and meet their expectations.

**Inspire**

Create new products to venture into new markets and reach new ones.

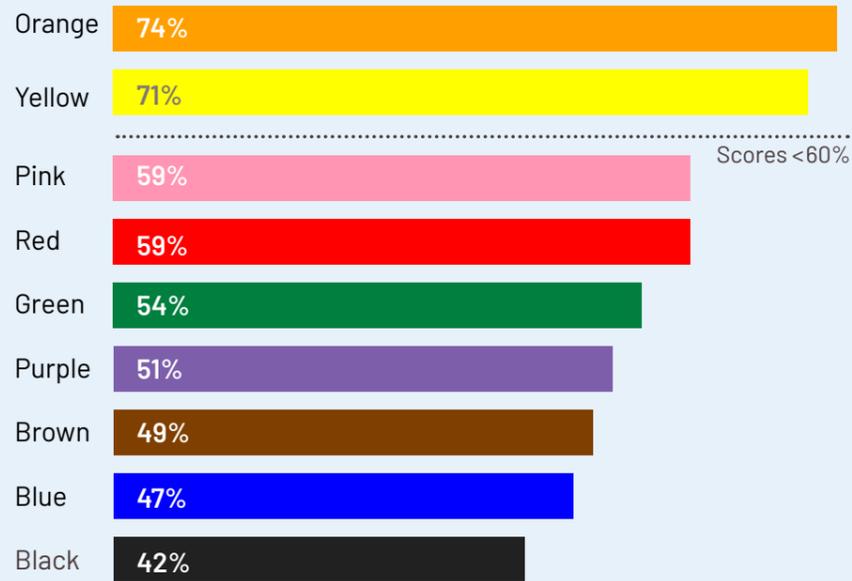


# Seasoned opinions: The *color* rankings you didn't know you needed!

# It's a feeling: The *emotions* behind the bite



## Global Favorites: Top-Ranked Colors for Seasonings



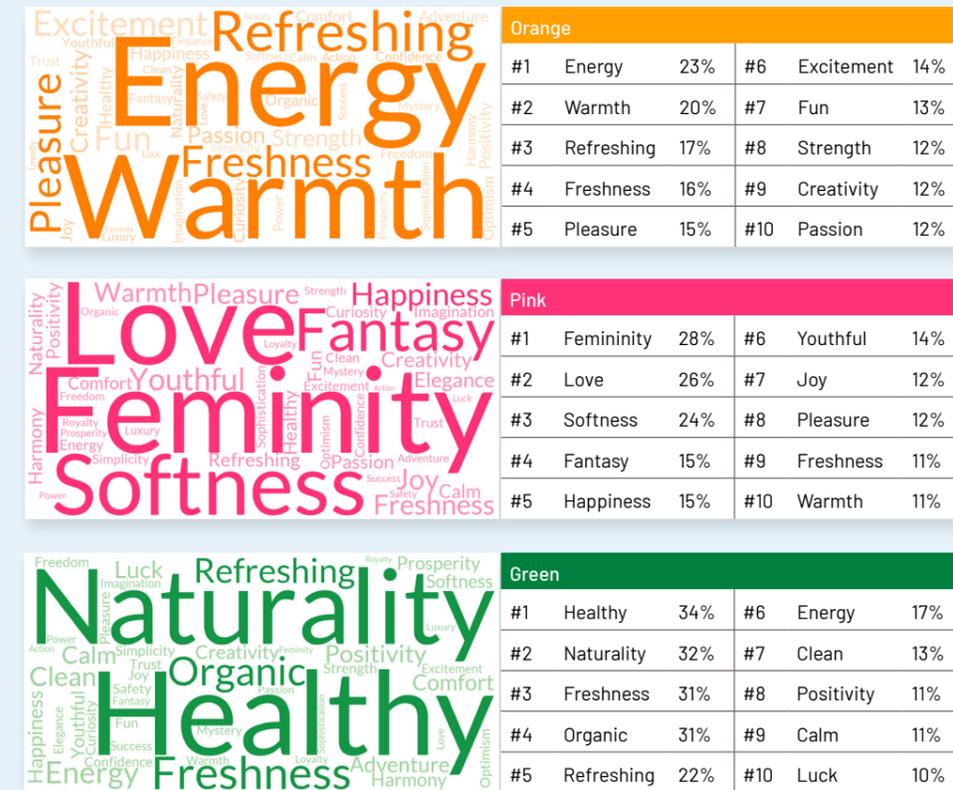
### Key Findings

**Orange** was found to be the most appealing color for seasoning worldwide, closely followed by yellow and pink.

**Yellow** was rated the most appealing in Brazil, France, and India.

**Black** ranked at the bottom, with many considering it unappealing for seasonings, though they acknowledged its elegance and sense of mystery.

Color psychology in food examines how different colors influence our feelings, perception of taste, and overall dining experience. Understanding these associations helps developers and marketers create appealing products for the consumer. By leveraging the power of color, we can elevate seasoned products from a mere snack to a moment of delight.



# The *universal* appeal of orange

Consumers worldwide love orange seasonings. That's why it is the most appealing color globally. Consumers cite it as:

- Looking delicious/tasty
- Being visually enticing/attractive
- Standing out and catching attention

When it comes to color intensity, there is no strong preference for bold or pastel shades as both are popular.

The majority of consumers who find orange appealing are aged 25-44 with females showing greater interest in orange color seasonings compared to other colors. Orange seasonings particularly appeal to those who consider health-consciousness a priority and are adventurous when it comes to food.

Globally, orange seasonings are associated with salty, savory flavors such as cheese, but there are regional variations. Some areas of Europe such as Germany associate the color more with spicy flavors such as paprika.

The use of orange does not have to be limited to reflecting a flavor. Orange can be used to inspire emotions within the consumer, appealing to them on a subconscious level. Energy and warmth are the most common associations for the shade globally, but in China, passion was the most common response.



# The *curious* appeal of pink

Above all factors, pink seasonings inspire a sense of curiosity in the consumer. When they see the distinct shade, they want to know how the product tastes. They think the product looks delicious and find it appealing. Curiously, even in savory seasonings, the key flavor associations with pink are sweet. Strawberry comes out as the most common 'named' flavor, appearing top for India and China. German consumers were the only ones not making the association.

Globally, 59% of consumers find foods with pink seasonings appealing. More than half are aged between 25 and 44, with a slightly higher appeal to males than females.

Combining the best of both worlds, consumers balance dining out with home cooking, with around 40% following dietary plans such as Halal, low-carb, or vegetarian. They often consider themselves to be 'adventurous eaters', are open to experimenting with diverse cuisines and enjoy trying new and unfamiliar foods.

Looking at the emotional connections, it's no surprise that pink's youthful shade has strong associations with softness and femininity.



# The natural appeal of green

In contrast to the other regions, Asia Pacific has a high acceptance of green seasonings (70%). The lowest acceptance was seen in the U.S. (37%).

Green seasonings are somewhat of a contradiction, on one hand, there is interest from consumers due to their fresh, natural and healthy look. On the other, they receive low scores for not looking attractive and/or tasty.

There is a stronger preference for green among men than women. This group is particularly health-conscious, favoring fresh, natural, and organic options. Approximately 48% of those surveyed are meticulous about assessing the nutritional value of their food—such as calories, sugar levels, and vitamins.

The natural and healthy connotations of green seasonings are reflected in the flavors associated with them. Worldwide, the most associated flavor is 'vegetables', but within this there are regional variations. In Latin America, the association is specifically with pepper, for Europe and India it is herbs, and for China, mustard.

Across the globe, the emotional connections to green seasonings are rooted in naturality with health, freshness and organic all ranking highly.



# Taste the rainbow: How color speaks flavor

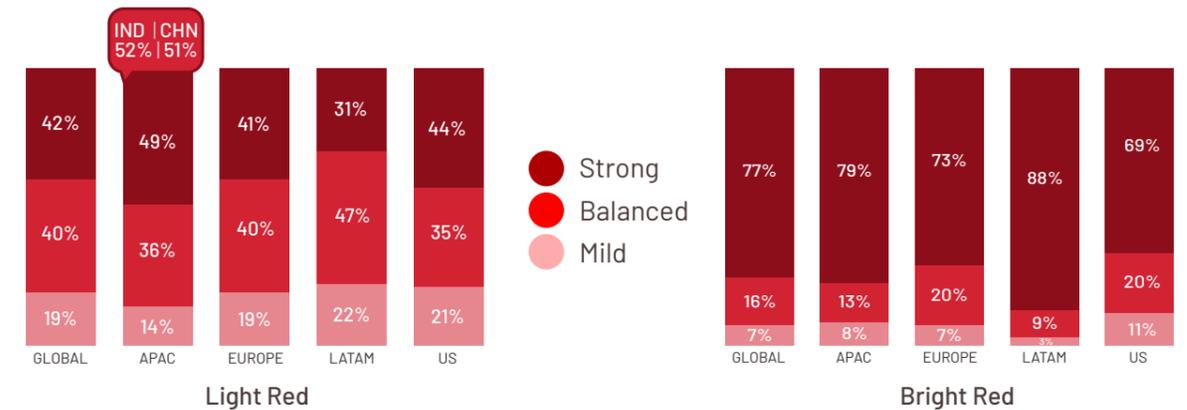


We eat with our eyes first, and bold colors reflect bold flavors. Use vivid, Intense shades to emphasize the strength of the flavor of your product. Conversely, pastel shades are a great reflection of softer, delicate, more subtle flavors. Give the consumer an idea of what they can expect with the intensity of the color.

Lighter red seasonings are perceived to have a milder, more balanced flavor while brighter reds give the impression of stronger flavors, particularly in Latin America.

## Seasonings: Flavor intensity impression – lighter vs. brighter

49% of APAC consumers associate a pastel red with strong flavor perception and this is especially so for India and China.



# Unlock colorful flavors—*contact* us to learn more

## Create excitement with fantastical colors!

Using clashing combinations of colors and flavors can bring excitement and intrigue to a product. Black Strawberry? Blue Apricot? A simple palette swap to a product can generate excitement in consumers. The perfect solution for seasonal limited editions or limited time offers (LTOs).

Across the world, mystery, fantasy, and creativity dominate the emotions associated with purple seasonings.

Use the fantastical side of purple to create a mysterious flavor and intrigue consumers. Adding a purple color to a spicy seasoning elevates the products from everyday chili, to mystical and exciting Dragon's Breath.



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