

# Forward Thinking: Mint Condition

The flavor staple for toothpaste and chewing gum continues to emerge in the marketplace.

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**O** Trendincite's "Forward Thinking: It's Mint To Be" article, which appeared in the March 2012 issue of *Perfumer & Flavorist* magazine, explored activity in mint flavors and fragrances. Over a year and a half later, mint remains a staple in toothpaste and chewing gum as well as a seasonal favorite. It also continues to emerge in flavored vodkas, and it's trickling into e-cigarettes, the newest alternative to tobacco cigarettes. Although not new, mint and chocolate is a popular flavor combination, and continues to be widely used in new sweet treats, chocolate, ice cream and yogurt introductions.

## Craving Chocolate

Chocolate manufacturers and bakeries are capitalizing on the combination of chocolate and mint, which never gets old. In 2012, Nestlé launched a limited edition *Crunch Girl Scout Candy Bars Thin Mints* with dark chocolate cookie wafers, mint chocolate crème, topped with chocolate covered crispies. Dove added *Promises Silky Smooth Mint & Dark Chocolate Swirl* to its lineup, while Ghirardelli created *Mint Cookie*, which features a mint chocolate filling blended with crunchy cookies surrounded by slow-melting milk chocolate. *Chocolate Mint* pretzels are Flipz's newest flavor, which the company describes as "cool mint flavor paired with rich chocolate [that] creates a fresh new flavor!" R.M. Palmer *Candy Cane Cups* are new for the holiday season, which highlight chocolate cups with a white mint crème center and candy crunch. *Klondike Mint Chocolate Chip: The Candy!* is an extension of the novelty ice cream and contains a mint center with mint chocolate chips and is covered in a dark chocolate coating.

Bakeries recognize the classic combination and are creating unusual textured sweet treats. Treat House, a new Upper West Side New York bakery known for unusual flavored rice crispy treats, offers *Chocolate Mint* made of green mint marshmallow with dark chocolate chips topped with chocolate ganache and a Peppermint Pattie. L'Artisan, the online macaron store, offers a new *Choco-Mint* macaron that combines cool and refreshing mint with a creamy chocolate filling. Sheila G's *Mint Chocolate Chip Brownie Brittle* snacks are new and only contain 120 calories an ounce.

Although not directly chocolate, a novel new product is



Theodent, a cocoa-based fluoride-free toothpaste. Formulated with Rennou, a proprietary blend of cocoa extract and minerals known to promote oral health, the products are available in three variants: *Theodent Classic Whitening Crystal Mint*, *Theodent 300 Whitening Crystal Mint* (extra-strength version) and *Theodent Kids*. The adult toothpaste is mint flavored, while the kids toothpaste is chocolate flavored and not harmful if swallowed.

## The Scoop on Mint

When it comes to ice cream, mint and chocolate combinations are wildly popular. According to The Harris Poll, which surveyed 2,242 adults online between July 17 and 22, 2013, mint chocolate chip ice cream is a favorite flavor for one in five Americans.

Last year, Häagen-Dazs launched *Mint Leaves* and *Chocolate* with natural mint essence infused into a smooth, creamy ice cream base with chocolate chips. At the beginning of 2013, Blue Bell Ice Cream introduced *Mint Cookies 'n Cream* made with mint ice cream combined with mint crème-filled chocolate cookies and semi-sweet chocolate chips. Dove launched *Mint Chocolate Chunk* ice cream made with Dove dark chocolate chunks. In July, The Farmer's Cow and Sweet & Simple bake shop, local Connecticut brands, collaborated and introduced Naturally New England Ice Cream Sandwiches in five natural flavors such

as *Chocolate Sugar Cookies & Fields of Mint Chocolate Chip*. Breyers Blasts! *Girl Scout Cookies Thin Mints* is new and highlights pieces of Girl Scout Cookies Thin Mints, blended into mint and fudge swirl ice cream.

Inspired by a Canadian dessert, Amanda Cohen of New York City's Dirt Candy restaurant, created the Ice Cream Nanaimo Bar with sweet pea, mint, and chocolate. Brooklyn's The Good Batch bakery and Blue Marble Ice Cream teamed up and crafted *Mint Brownie Magic* using a brownie cookie with cocoa nibs, peppermint white chocolate and mint chip ice cream. Itizy, a New York City gourmet ice cream truck, sources local ingredients, including fresh cream, milk and eggs from Hudson Valley farms, and offers *Mint Stracciatella* made with fresh mint leaves and dark chocolate flakes.

Arctic Zero launched a line of frozen treats that are 150 calories per pint and 85 calories per bar, which the company describes as "guilt free ice cream." The non-GMO products are kosher and formulated with whey protein and sweetened with a proprietary blend of monk fruit concentrate and organic cane sugar. *Mint Chocolate* is one of the seven flavors offered, and is described to taste just like a thin mint cookie. Turkey Hill introduced *Cool White Mint* limited edition, a low fat ice cream with dark chocolate chips and chocolate fudge with no sugar added, while Skinny Cow launched *Mint To Be* limited edition, a low fat mint ice cream with chocolate chips. Blue Bunny added *White Mint Chocolate Chunk* All Natural Frozen Yogurt to its range.

Yogurt manufacturers are also exploring mint flavors. Chobani added *Mint with Dark Chocolate Chips* to its Bite range, and Pinkberry introduced *Cucumber Mint* as one of the company's new Greek yogurt smoothies. The smoothies are made with fresh fruit, milk, ice, agave nectar and 11 g of protein.

Two related and notable new limited edition products are Nestle's *Coffee-Mate Girl Scouts Thin Mints* creamer, which is described as "out of the box and into your coffee cup" and Dunkin' Donuts' *Mint Chocolate Chip Iced Coffee*, which was inspired by sister brand Baskin-Robbins ice cream. Another example is *Mint Chocolate Coconut Milk*, the dairy alternative by So Delicious.

## Vodka & E-Cigarettes

Mint is an emerging profile in vodka, which continues to be the trendiest application for new flavors. Last year, the Mid Oak Distillery launched *CD Chocolate Mint Flavored Vodka*. For this year's fall/winter season, Pinnacle Vodka debuted *Peppermint Bark* limited edition, which is described as "a delicious mint flavor that blends white and dark chocolate creamy notes with a refreshing peppermint finish."

Ivanabitch recently introduced the "world's first" tobacco-flavored vodka to target smokers in the United States. It's available in two flavors: *Traditional Tobacco* vodka, which is described as "tasting of smoky vanilla and sweet caramel," and *Menthol Tobacco* vodka, which also contains a hint of mint. A recent non-alcoholic beverage is MINTA, a carbonated mint-flavored soda available in *Original* (natural sugar) and *Diet* (sugar-free) variants.

E-cigarettes, the newest technology to replace tobacco cigarettes, are launching a variety of interesting flavored cartridges including mint. Vapor Couture, "the world's only electronic cigarette designed exclusively for women," launched single-use disposable electronic cigarettes and features a flavor cartridge in *Fresh Mint* (menthol). Meanwhile, PrimeVapors offers several mint and menthol flavored cartridges such as *Triple Mint*, which is a menthol blend that combines peppermint, wintergreen and spearmint, and *Alpine Chill*, a "crisp, cool menthol experience with a mild tobacco blend."

## Timeless Mint

Mint continues to be a tried-and-true flavor. It will remain a staple in toothpaste and chewing gum because it connotes freshness. As technology advances, mint flavors will trickle into new alternative applications such as vodka and e-cigarettes. Consumer product manufacturers will continue to capitalize on the popularity of mint and chocolate combinations and develop new sweet treats, chocolate, ice cream and yogurt products offering opportunities for flavor and fragrance suppliers.

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