THE 8 **BEST** (AND **WORST**) FOOD AND BEVERAGE BRANDS OF 2024

Tracking the year's biggest
brand rises and falls

Consumer tastes are always evolving, and each year brings its own surprises. Some brands are able to capture—even influence—the cultural zeitgeist, while others struggle to keep pace with shifting preferences. Understanding these dynamics offers a fascinating glimpse into how trends take shape—and what drives people to connect with certain brands over others.

At Qloo®, we measure these cultural shifts with our popularity score, a metric that captures how a brand ranks amongst its peers on overall interest and engagement. Derived from aggregated, anonymized data capturing consumer interest across cultural domains, the popularity score offers an objective lens to understand which entities are gaining traction and which are losing relevance. Measured on a scale from 0 to 100, the percentile-based score reflects an entity's signal—how much interest it generates within its category. A higher score indicates greater popularity compared to others in the same group. The brands featured in this report are ranked based on the magnitude of their changes in popularity, showcasing the most dramatic rises and falls of the year.

Brands* with the biggest popularity gains:

1. **BUTCHERBOX**

2. SALT & STRAW

3. CELESTIAL SEASONINGS

4. SARGENTO

5. jeni's

6. SUNNYD

7. THE ORIGINAL OATLY!

8. Smartfood

> **Both Salt & Straw and Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams grew their popularity in 2024 by expanding into new markets in ways that felt authentic to their brand identities. These moves introduced their distinctive ice cream offerings to more consumers while staying true to the craft and creativity that set them apart.**

> SunnyD's rise in popularity in 2024 highlights the brand's ability to build on the momentum of its 2023 launch of SunnyD Vodka Seltzer, which bridged the gap between childhood nostalgia and adult indulgence. By continuing to tap into the "kidult" trend with new flavors and creative marketing, SunnyD has managed to stay relevant to both long-time fans and a younger audience looking for playful, unexpected options.

Qloo's take:

The brands that saw significant popularity increases in 2024 distinguished themselves by executing strategies that resonated deeply with evolving consumer values. Through geographic expansions, sustainability initiatives, and unexpected collaborations, these brands found ways to stand out while staying true to their identities. They understood what their audiences cared about—be it quality, creativity, or nostalgia—and delivered it in ways that felt relevant and compelling.

A common thread among these successes is their ability to adapt thoughtfully to cultural and market trends. By tapping into priorities like environmental consciousness, indulgence, or the blending of nostalgia with reinvention, these brands captured attention and loyalty. Insights by Qloo™ is designed to surface exactly these kinds of audience dynamics, helping brands uncover what truly drives consumer behavior. With this level of audience intelligence, businesses can make smarter, more impactful decisions that align with what their customers value most.

Brands* with the **most substantial fall** in popularity score:

1. gardein.

2. JOLLY RANCHER

3. shakeology

4. RXBAR

5. Kellogg's RICE KRISPIES

6. Trolli

7. WARHEADS

8. IMPOSSIBLE™

RX Bar's decline in 2024 reflects the challenges of staying relevant in a highly competitive and fast-changing protein bar category. As new brands enter the space with updated formats, flavors, and benefits, RX Bar's minimalist approach may no longer feel as fresh to consumers. For brands in crowded markets, understanding what truly resonates with their target audience can uncover opportunities for differentiation.

Gardein and Impossible Foods both faced headwinds in 2024 as the plant-based market navigated increased competition and shifting consumer preferences. While the demand for sustainable food options remains strong, consumers are becoming more discerning, with a growing focus on taste, ingredient transparency, and product innovation.

Qloo's take:

The challenges faced by these brands in 2024 highlight how misalignment with consumer expectations or execution missteps can significantly impact popularity. For some, like Gardein and Impossible Foods, increased competition and evolving consumer preferences for plant-based products have created a more demanding marketplace. When brands fail to adapt or differentiate effectively, they risk being overshadowed by competitors that offer fresher or more transparent options. This underscores the importance of staying ahead of consumer trends and delivering products that feel relevant and resonant.

For others, controversies and missteps in branding or innovation may have damaged trust or diluted their appeal. Jolly Rancher and Warheads, for example, experienced setbacks tied to safety concerns or polarizing product launches that conflicted with their core identities. Even beloved staples like Rice Krispies and RX Bar show how stagnant offerings or misaligned ventures can lead to waning interest. With tools like Insights by Qloo, brands can uncover critical audience insights to anticipate shifts in preferences, course-correct quickly, and ensure their strategies are designed to maintain relevance in a competitive market.

*The information in this report is based on the data from Qloo's proprietary Insights by Qloo tool which can be used to summarize general public opinion output. Qloo and the authors of this article disclaim any rights to the third party trademarks used herein.
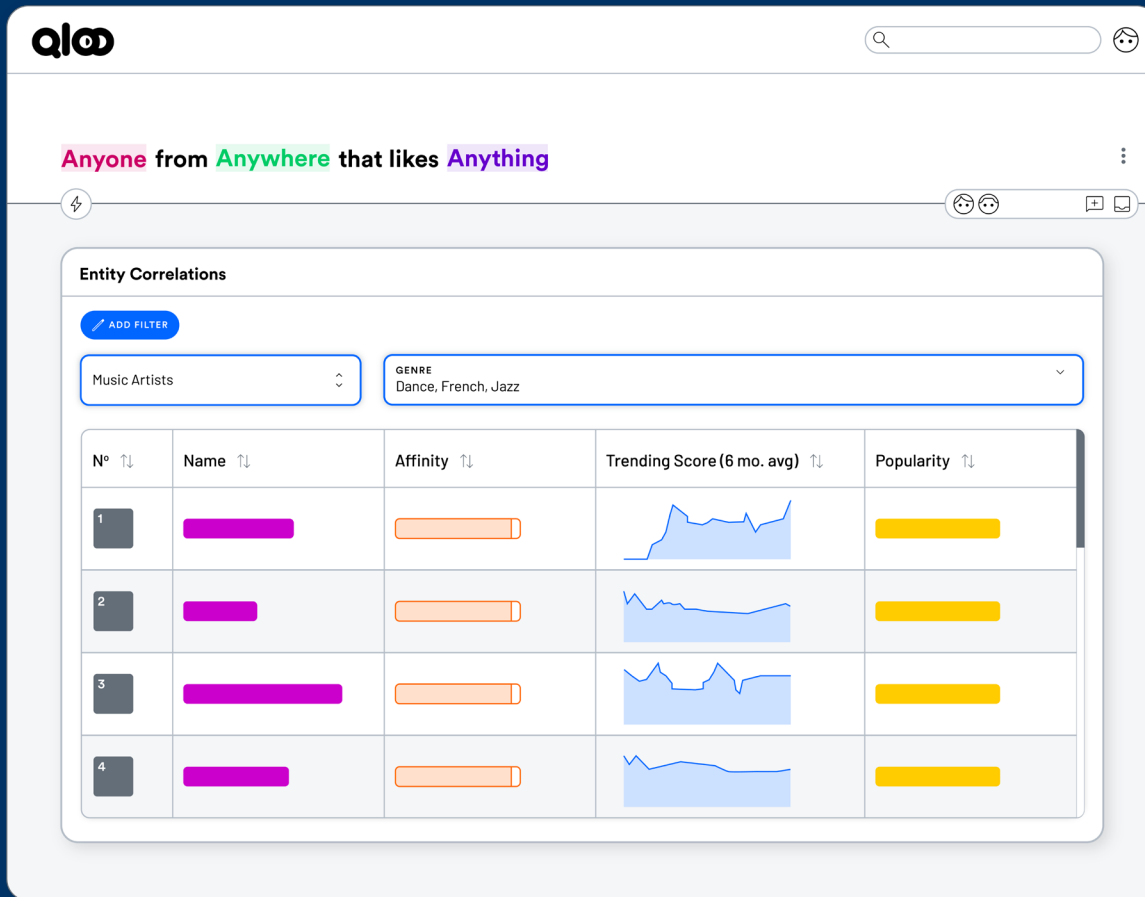
ABOUT QLOO

Qloo is the leading AI company dissecting the intricacies of global tastes and preferences. The company operates one of the world's most robust catalogs of notable people, places, and things, coupled with a consumer behavior and sentiment database containing more than 10 trillion unique signals and zero Personally Identifiable Information (PII). By leveraging cutting-edge AI models, Qloo unlocks the value of these databases to understand and predict audiences' interests and affinities with unrivaled accuracy. Since 2012, Qloo's award-winning Taste AI technology has helped multinational companies — including Netflix, Starbucks, JCDecaux, and Michelin — drive growth by powering personalized customer experiences and large language models, superior recommendations, data-driven marketing strategies, and advanced audience intelligence.

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