

January 5, 2026

“Valentine’s Day spending is shifting from splurges to smart, affordable choices. As dining-out dollars and away-from-home experiences shift home, the real opportunity isn’t in luxury—it’s in practicality. Brands that help shoppers create meaningful, at-home celebrations with thoughtful options and cleaner ingredients they trust will win hearts and baskets. After all, it’s not how much you spend—it’s the thought that counts.”



Chris Costagli
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The takeaway...

- Price increases can’t sustain dollar growth indefinitely
- Dollar reallocation for savings can create an opportunity for CPG categories
- Transparency wins trust, especially when buying for loved ones

Your next move...

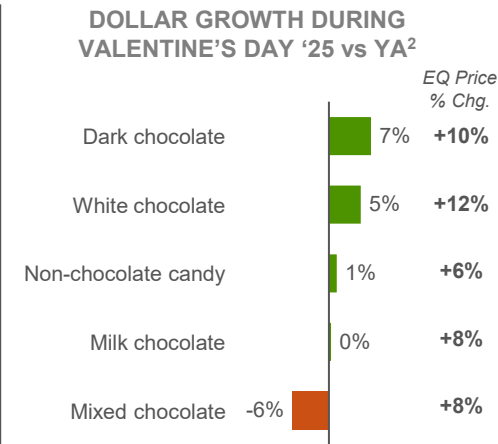
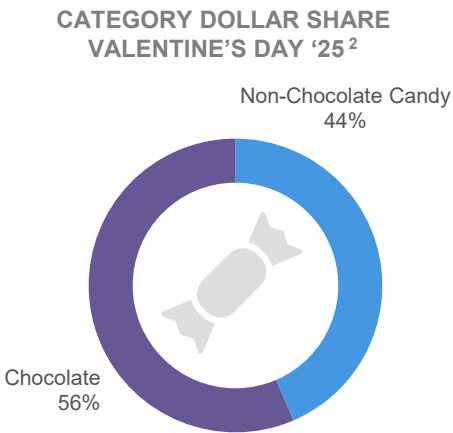
- Optimize promotional timing and messaging to capture cost-conscious shoppers and drive incremental sales
- Merchandise for the full holiday occasion to capture shoppers reallocating celebration away-from-home dollars
- Have BetterFor™ products in your Valentine’s Day portfolio? Make sure shoppers know...

Valentine’s Day ‘26:
Love Re-Budgeted

Implications for the Food & Beverage Industry

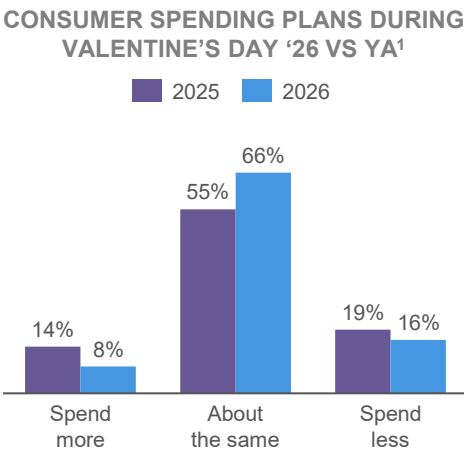
Sweet growth needs more than higher prices

Last Valentine’s Day, chocolate and non-chocolate candy dollars grew—but only because prices climbed. With shoppers feeling the squeeze from inflation, rising health costs, and tighter SNAP benefits, price-led growth is running out of runway. The next big shift for CPG will be unit-led growth that drive bigger baskets and repeat trips, not just higher tickets.



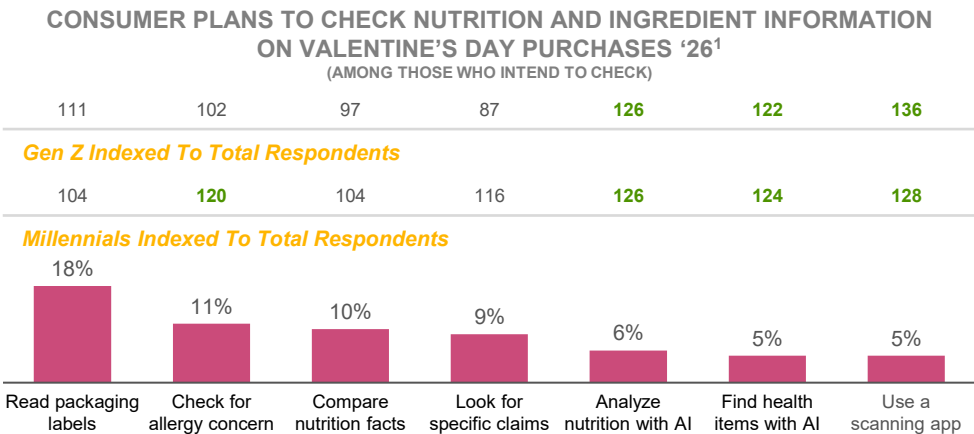
It’s the practical thought that counts

While most plan to keep spending flat, 16% intend to spend less—presenting risk and reward for CPG. Their saving strategies shift dollars from restaurants to retail, creating room for growth. Expect gains in at-home meal components—proteins, sides, bakery, beverages—and “practical candy” that shows thought without overspending.



Nutrition and ingredients could be a real heart-breaker this year

This Valentine’s Day, 80% of people say they will check nutrition and ingredients before deciding what treats to buy. Attractive packaging alone won’t cut it anymore. Expect shoppers with phones in hand, scanning and searching for treats that feel thoughtful—and come with a cleaner label.



Industry Analysis Sources: ¹NIQ, BASES Quick Question Omnibus Survey, December 2025, n=1,002; ²NIQ, Retail Measurement Services, Total Full View, Valentine’s Day 2025 7 w/e 02/15/2025
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