

Satisfying cravings, supporting wellness, Arla Foods Ingredients' innovative dessert solutions

11 March 2025 | News

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Arla Foods Ingredients is transforming the South American dessert market with its innovative high-protein dessert toolbox. As health-conscious consumers increasingly seek indulgent yet nutritious options, this initiative aims to bridge the gap between taste and wellness. By offering solutions that enhance texture, flavour, and nutritional value, Arla Foods Ingredients empowers manufacturers to create desserts that satisfy both cravings and health goals. Ignacio Estevez, Application Manager for South America at Arla Foods Ingredients, shared his insights on this topic with NUFFOODS Spectrum.

What inspired Arla Foods Ingredients to develop this high-protein dessert toolbox for the South American market?

As elsewhere, dessert consumers in South America are increasingly health-conscious. Latin America accounted for 10 per cent of global dessert launches in 2024, with retail sales reaching \$12.7 billion. In Brazil, the region's largest market, value growth in the sector is rising by 9 per cent CAGR. [\[1\]](#) However, in a 2024 survey, 18 per cent of Latin American consumers said they had decreased their consumption of desserts over the past year. Among this group, nearly four in ten (39 per cent) overall, and over half in Brazil, cited "because it's unhealthy" as a reason for cutting down.¹ Furthermore, 79 per cent of Latin American consumers say they wish healthier options were available to them in indulgent food categories. [\[2\]](#) Research by Arla Foods Ingredients has found that 38 per cent of consumers in Brazil want to see high-protein dessert

options in supermarkets. [3]

How does the Nutrilac® ProteinBoost range enhance the texture and quality of desserts while maintaining their health benefits?

The Nutrilac® ProteinBoost range of whey proteins is not only rich in all essential amino acids, it's also based on our patented microparticulation technology, which enables smooth protein addition with no technical challenges. That gives producers ultimate control over taste and texture and their processes.

Consumers associate protein with muscle and bone health and weight wellness. With Nutrilac® ProteinBoost, brands can meet the growing demand for nutrient density and much more: complete protein source, indulgent texture, mild dairy taste and easy processing. In acidified desserts or desserts processed traditionally, Nutrilac® ProteinBoost can improve sensorial profile (i.e. creaminess and texture), which can't be achieved using standard WPC (whey protein concentrate) or MPC (milk protein concentrate) ingredients.

In gelatines either ready to eat or ready to mix our Lacprodan® whey protein isolate is clear in solution and offers a range of benefits for active and performance nutrition.

With the growing demand for high-protein options, how do you see this trend shaping the future of indulgent foods in Latin America?

Protein ranks number one in importance as an ingredient for Latin American consumers. It's also the top nutrient for Millennials (born 1980-1994) and Generation Z (1995-2010). As in other continents, we see protein everywhere being claimed front of pack, or used to differentiate products. As consumers are increasingly educated and health-conscious, we can only conclude that healthy indulgence is here to stay.

What challenges do manufacturers typically face when balancing indulgence with healthier formulations, and how does this toolbox address those challenges?

Winning back health-conscious consumers by reformulating to combine sensory pleasure with a healthy positioning has become a common strategy, with the permissive indulgence trend now apparent across a range of categories. Increasingly, balancing indulgence with health means the addition of functional ingredients such as protein and more nutrition, rather than just reducing fat, sugar or salt. We hope our toolbox will inspire innovative manufacturers to meet this need by creating high-protein desserts that don't compromise on the all-important qualities of delicious taste and indulgent texture.

Most of the recipes (cheesecake, flan, acidified dessert, ready-to-eat gelatine, pasteurised dessert) can be reproduced with a standard yoghurt production line, without the need for UHT technology or additional machinery, which allows dairies to produce more using their current setups.

Can you share any feedback or early reactions from brands or consumers about these high-protein dessert concepts?

Our objective is to inspire dairy, health and performance brands to create indulgent high-protein desserts. Initial feedback has been very positive, with customers and prospects wanting to find out which solutions could work best for their markets and processing setups.

Looking ahead, does Arla Foods Ingredients plan to expand this concept to other regions or explore new product categories with similar high-protein innovations?

This concept was launched in South America, but it has a worldwide reach thanks to our global network of application specialists and high-tech application centres. Other regions will have different needs in terms of preferred taste profiles and maybe production lines, but they all have health-conscious consumers who don't want to give up on indulgence.

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[1] Innova Market Insights

[2] Health Focus Global, 2024

[3] Arla Foods Ingredients, Proprietary Protein Consumption Study