Tempting Taste Buds.

Tempting the taste buds of the world’s most populous nation is the aspiration of food and beverage brands, big and small, worldwide. Urban Chinese are spending more year on year on the consumption of food and they are looking for variety and choice to satisfy their need for new food experiences and a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, food and beverage is “hot” and the taste for new things is driving imports.

Globally, the consumer’s relationship with food is changing, no more so than in China, where the populace has become obsessed with natural and healthy food products, with provenance. Although super brands are stepping up in their efforts to reposition to meet the evolving tastes and lifestyles of Chinese consumers (and address declining profits), the real opportunity is for artisanal, gourmet and ethnic foods, imported ingredients, and grower direct stores. It is now common to find imported food shops, foreign-food sections in supermarkets, and authentic international restaurants in third and fourth-tier cities.

The increasing diversity and sophistication of products has resulted in a broader spectrum of brands appearing on shelves and tables across China. Even staple foodstuffs, such as meat, fish, and fruit and vegetables, have become more sophisticated, and consumers now look for more options and convenience. Consumers are making choices that are much more premium and have nutrition, health and wellness arguments:

- Growing resistance to processed food in their bid for healthier lifestyle choices.
- Chasing more exciting and authentic food choices and experiences.
- Seeking convenient on-demand delivery modes, eg. food in a box, ‘Uber’ logistics.
- Preference for fresh and natural ‘real’ food.
- Increased awareness of food safety, ingredients and traceability, eg. the rise of aps, diligent label checking.
- Integrating new foods into diets.
- Continued drive for culinary innovation in food service industry and home kitchens.
- Rising new retail paradigms, such as small format stores, experiential shopping, online shopping for staples, and active retailers who promote new products with amazing passion and speed.

Contact shanghai@rareHQ.com to build your brand strategy for China.