

Can Chocolate Replace Pills? Syren Spreads Thinks So

01 December 2025 | News

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Indulgence is emerging as the next frontier in wellness and few brands embody this shift as boldly as Syren Spreads. Co-founded by former pastry chef Megan Castellon and pastry R&D expert Georgios Mouzelis, the company is redefining “beauty-from-within” with a category it calls beauty chocolate. As consumers increasingly reject clinical supplement routines in favour of pleasurable, food-like formats, Syren Spreads stands out with its spoonable chocolate hazelnut spread infused with 2,400 mg of adaptogens, including Tremella Mushroom, Astragalus Root, Gotu Kola and Bamboo Silica.

Ahead of the brand’s December 1, 2025, launch, in an exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum Co-Founder & CEO Megan Castellon to explore the inspiration behind Syren Spreads, how confectionery science is reshaping nutraceutical experiences, and why she believes “pleasure-forward wellness” is the next major evolution in beauty nutrition. In this candid interview, Castellon shares the journey from pastry kitchen to wellness innovation, the science behind edible beauty,

and what's next for the brand, aiming to make daily supplementation something consumers truly crave.

What inspired the creation of Syren Spreads, and how did the idea evolve from a general wellness concept into an indulgent, spoonable beauty product?

The inspiration for Syren Spreads came from a very personal place. At 50, I was discovered on Instagram and offered a position as Head Pastry Chef at an upscale Chicago restaurant despite having no professional culinary experience. There, I met my co-founder, Georgios Mouzelis, a pastry R&D developer. We spent our days creating desserts people absolutely craved, yet we both were taking supplements we genuinely disliked.

I was spending over \$150 monthly on beauty supplements—collagen powders, adaptogen capsules, beauty vitamins—that I had to force myself to take. The disconnect was striking: I could create chocolate experiences that made people close their eyes in pleasure, yet the wellness industry insisted that effective supplementation had to feel clinical and taste medicinal.

We realised the industry had it backwards. Traditional supplement companies start with efficacy and try to mask the taste. We started with taste and built efficacy into it. That's why Syren Spreads is formulated by pastry chefs, not pharmaceutical consultants. We applied confectionery science to create something that's genuinely indulgent while delivering 2,400mg of research-backed adaptogens per serving. The result isn't a supplement trying to taste like chocolate—it's actual premium chocolate designed from the ground up to deliver botanical benefits.

The concept of "edible beauty" is rapidly gaining traction globally. How do you see Syren Spreads differentiating itself within this fast-growing "beauty-from-within" category?

We're not just participating in the beauty-from-within category—we're creating an entirely new subcategory within it: beauty chocolate. This distinction matters enormously.

The current "edible beauty" market is dominated by products that still feel like work: powders you have to mix into smoothies, handfuls of capsules you choke down, or gummies that taste artificial. Even when brands try to improve the experience, they're still fundamentally asking consumers to tolerate something unpleasant for the sake of results.

Syren Spreads takes a radically different approach. We address what the industry won't admit: the supplement industry faces a significant retention challenge, with data showing consumers struggle to maintain consistent use of products. The problem isn't efficacy—it's experience. If a product doesn't feel good, it won't become a habit.

Our differentiation is threefold. First, format innovation: we're the only spoonable chocolate beauty supplement on the market. Second, our culinary expertise: we use professional pastry R&D techniques to eliminate the grittiness and herbal aftertaste common in functional supplements. Third, our positioning: we're a chocolate company that happens to be a supplement, not a supplement company making chocolate-flavored products.

This allows us to compete in a space between luxury skincare and traditional supplements—what we call "pleasure-forward wellness." We prove that the most powerful wellness practices can also be the most pleasurable.

Syren Spreads combines adaptogens like Tremella Mushroom and Astragalus Root with a chocolate hazelnut base. How did you approach balancing efficacy with indulgence during the formulation process?

Balancing efficacy with indulgence required us to completely reverse-engineer the traditional supplement development process. Instead of starting with active ingredients and trying to make them palatable, we started with the sensory experience we wanted to create and built the efficacy into it.

Our formulation process focused on several key principles. First, we selected our botanical actives—Tremella mushroom, Astragalus root, Gotu Kola, and Bamboo Silica—based on both their traditional use in beauty and wellness practices and emerging research supporting their benefits for skin health and resilience. Each serving delivers 2,400mg of these adaptogens and botanicals.

The real challenge was achieving a genuinely premium chocolate experience while maintaining these active levels. We leveraged confectionery science techniques typically reserved for high-end chocolate production. The hazelnuts provide healthy plant fats that enhance both nutrient absorption and mouthfeel. The cacao contributes antioxidants while creating that rich chocolate base. Everything had to work together—no single ingredient could compromise the taste.

We spent months perfecting the texture to ensure it's silky and smooth with no grittiness or herbal aftertaste. The result is a product where you can't separate the indulgence from the efficacy—they're completely integrated. When customers taste

Syren Spreads, they experience pure chocolate pleasure first. The fact that it's delivering powerful botanical benefits is almost secondary to the sensory delight.

This approach means our customers don't have to choose between effectiveness and enjoyment. They get both in every golden spoonful.

With increasing "pill fatigue" among consumers, do you believe food-like formats are the future of nutraceuticals? What does this shift mean for the wellness industry at large?

Absolutely, and the data supports this dramatically. The supplement industry faces a fundamental retention crisis, with [a retention rates averaging only 19-23](#) per cent according to recent e-commerce data. This means the vast majority of customers don't maintain consistent use—and this isn't a minor issue, it's a crisis for the nutraceutical industry.

The problem is that traditional formats—pills, powders, and even gummies—treat wellness as a clinical checklist rather than a pleasurable ritual. Many consumers invest \$100 or more monthly across multiple supplements—multivitamins, collagen, beauty-focused formulas—yet they're not maintaining consistent use. Research clearly shows that people want rituals they look forward to, not regimens they forget.

Food-like formats address the primary barrier to supplement adherence: poor taste and inconvenient formats. But I believe we need to go beyond just "food-like"—we need formats that people genuinely crave. This is where the wellness industry needs to learn from luxury sectors like premium skincare, which has long understood that the ritual and sensory experience are inseparable from efficacy.

This shift means the nutraceutical industry must embrace what I call "pleasure-forward wellness"—the rejection of deprivation culture in favour of self-care that feels like self-love, not self-punishment. It means investing in sensory science, culinary expertise, and understanding that compliance is just as important as clinical efficacy.

The future belongs to brands that make wellness feel indulgent. The broader implication is that the wellness industry must prioritise the human experience. No amount of research-backed ingredients matters if consumers don't actually use the product consistently.

Can you share a bit about the research or testing that went into ensuring both the beauty benefits and the desirable sensory experience of Syren Spreads?

Our development process was unique because we approached it from both sides simultaneously—culinary excellence and botanical efficacy—rather than treating them as separate considerations.

On the efficacy side, we selected our core ingredients—Tremella mushroom, Astragalus root, Gotu Kola, and Bamboo Silica—based on both extensive traditional use in wellness and beauty practices and science-supported research on their roles in supporting skin health and resilience. These ingredients have been celebrated for centuries in traditional medicine for their properties related to skin hydration, balance, and radiance. We formulated at meaningful dosages, delivering 2,400mg per serving to ensure potential effectiveness.

On the sensory side, we leveraged confectionery science—understanding how ingredients interact at a molecular level to create specific textures, flavours, and experiences. This is fundamentally different from traditional supplement development. We studied the relationships between ingredients: how fats carry flavour, how particle size affects mouthfeel, how temperature influences texture, and how different compounds either complement or compete with each other on the palate.

The integration of these two approaches was iterative. We tested numerous formulations to understand how the botanical ingredients would behave within the chocolate matrix. The hazelnuts provide healthy plant fats that not only support nutrient delivery but also create the smooth, creamy texture and help carry the chocolate flavour. The cacao contributes its own antioxidant benefits while providing the rich foundation that masks any potential bitterness from the adaptogens. Every ingredient had to work synergistically—both nutritionally and sensorially.

What makes our testing unique is that we measured success by a different standard than traditional supplements. Yes, we wanted to deliver meaningful amounts of beneficial ingredients. But equally important was whether people would actually look forward to taking it every day. Our goal was to create something where taste compliance drives nutritional compliance—and that required understanding the science of how ingredients relate to each other, not just their individual properties.

What is next for Syren Spreads? Are you exploring new flavours, formulations, or collaborations to expand the brand's presence in the beauty nutrition space?

We're officially launching on December 1, 2025, and our immediate focus is on establishing Syren Spreads as the definitive product in the beauty chocolate category we're creating. We're building strong foundations with our direct-to-consumer model at www.syrenspreads.co, offering both one-time purchase and subscription options.

In terms of product development, we're exploring expansion in thoughtful ways. Our vision includes additional formulations that maintain our core philosophy—that wellness should be indulgent, not clinical. We're considering different botanical profiles that could address complementary wellness goals while maintaining the same sensory-first approach that defines Syren Spreads.

We're also excited about building our community around what we call the #SyrenRitual—the daily moment when women choose themselves. This isn't just about a product purchase; it's about validating a new approach to self-care where pleasure and efficacy aren't opposites.

The broader mission is to prove that "pleasure-forward wellness" can become the new standard. We want to demonstrate that when you start with culinary artistry and build functionality into it, rather than starting with functionality and trying to mask it, you create products that people genuinely integrate into their lives.

We're building something bigger than a single product—we're championing a fundamental shift in how the wellness industry thinks about consumer experience and ritual formation.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share the Syren Spreads story with your readers. I truly enjoyed answering your questions and appreciate the chance to discuss the future of beauty nutrition. As we approach our December 1st launch, accuracy is particularly important to us—if your editorial workflow permits, I'd welcome the opportunity to fact-check any technical product details or quotes before the article goes live. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any additional information, clarification, product samples, or imagery.

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