

= Flavas =

Flavas is an American line of fashion dolls created by Mattel in 2003 . They are multi @-@ ethnic and have an urban , hip hop style with " bling @-@ bling " jewellery and stick @-@ on tattoos , described as " ghetto @-@ fabulous " by Newsweek . They were designed to appeal to tweens (8- to 12 @-@ year @-@ olds) and compete with the widely successful Bratz dolls . They were marketed as " reality @-@ based " and " authentic " and have more points of articulation than traditional fashion dolls for more expressive posing . Flavas were criticized for being stereotypical , bad role models , and a misrepresentation of hip hop culture . Their multiculturalism was described as positive , and British analysts expected their " risqué nature " to translate to high sales . But following sales that were described as " disastrous " they were discontinued within a year .

= = Doll design = =

The six Flavas dolls , Kiyoni Brown , Happy D , Tika , Liam , P. Bo , and Tre , are ethnically diverse and portray Hispanic , black and white people . They have an urban sensibility and are dressed in hip hop fashions . Their accessories include ghetto blasters , cell phones , " bling @-@ bling " jewellery and stick @-@ on tattoos . The packaging , which doubles as a doll stand , is designed as a wall painted with graffiti . Instructions on the box say : " Pull my street stand from the box , so I have a spot to hang out . " Newsweek described them as " edgy " and " ghetto @-@ fabulous " . Marketed with a focus on self @-@ expression and individuality , the Flavas dolls have more points of articulation than traditional fashion dolls . This allows for a wider range of posing and , according to Mattel , to express more " attitude " . Each doll has a unique face sculpt and a different height , ranging from 10 inches to 11 @-@ 5 inches . They were each released in two different styles and each style was packaged with two different outfits . The complex jointing and individual molds made the Flavas dolls more difficult to manufacture than most other fashion dolls .

= = Background and launch = =

By the late 1990s Mattel had dominated the fashion doll market since the 1959 release of their Barbie doll . At the 1997 peak they held more than 90 % of the market . MGA Entertainment released Bratz in 2001 . With big heads and pouty lips they appealed to the 8- to 12 @-@ year @-@ old tween market group . Bratz achieved great success and gradually took over some of the more wholesome Barbie doll 's market share . Meanwhile , the market for Barbie grew younger . By 2003 the main market was 3- to 6 @-@ year @-@ olds and Barbie 's share of the fashion doll market had dropped to about 70 % . In fall 2002 Mattel released My Scene , a line of redesigned Barbie dolls , in a bid to appeal to tweens and compete with Bratz . But they failed to reverse the company 's faltering sales . Less than a year after the My Scene release , Flavas were launched in summer 2003 in a second attempt to appeal to the tween market and offer competition to Bratz . Production began only three months after Flavas were designed , and The New York Times described their launch as being rushed . The New York Times said that Flavas " appeared to be heavily inspired " by Bratz while Newsweek described Bratz as the " anti @-@ Barbie " and Flavas as Mattel 's " anti @-@ Barbie of its own . " Wall Street Journal commented that the Bratz success pushed Mattel to release Flavas in direct competition with its own Barbie dolls .

Flavas , which per Mattel should be pronounced FLAY @-@ vuhz , were marketed with the slogan " What ? s Your Flava ? " Mattel described them as " the first reality @-@ based fashion doll brand " with " authentic style , attitude and values . " Jerry Bossick , a Mattel senior vice president said : " Older girls want a doll that represents realistic aspirations . " Mattel representative Julia Jensen said : " Our research told us that a lot of young girls are now aspiring to the world of rap and hip @-@ hop music . " The song " What 's Your Flava ? " from R & B artist Craig David was used in Flavas television commercials , which aired during teen @-@ targeted programming . Jensen said that " by aligning with a real song by an incredible artist like Craig David " they strengthened their position of " authenticity and reality . " Coinciding with the US release , the Flavas brand sponsored Christina

Aguilera 's 2003 summer tour . In the UK Flavas were launched by the British hip hop group Mis @-@ Teeq .

= = Reception and discontinuation = =

Kyra Kyles from the Chicago Tribune described the Flavas dolls as out of touch and questionable role models for children , calling them " unimaginative stereotypes " and saying that one of the dolls looks like a " drug @-@ dealing pimp . " Toy industry analyst Sean McGowan said that they look like " hip @-@ hop as designed by committee . " Raquel Wilson , editor in chief of hip @-@ hop e @-@ zine Verbalisms said : " They completely misrepresent the culture . " Dr John Richer , a clinical child psychologist in Oxford , England said : " This has the same sort of flavour as beauty contests in America where little kids get dolled up as teenagers . " Miriam Arond , the editor in chief of Child described the dolls ' multiculturalism as positive : " a very nice way of helping children all over the country realize that people look many different ways . " Several British toy industry analysts expected the Flavas dolls to sell well , one of them saying that " the risqué nature of these dolls would guarantee their success . " But they sold poorly ? Wall Street Journal described their results as " disastrous " . According to AP some analysts believed Flavas were just " too edgy . " Businessweek said that the " clunky jewelry and graffiti on the packaging ... scared away mothers and left kids cold . " They ended up being taken off the market after less than a year . Several Mattel executives were let go following the discontinuation . Moe Tkacik of Slate described Flavas as " ridiculous , but in a cute way " and questioned if their hasty withdrawal had been premature , suggesting they could have found a niche market .