

# TRACKING SNACKING

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPACE

### 2023 TREND REPORT BITE



### THE STATE OF SNACKING

Sure, the events of the past few years have spurred some major stress eating and comfort food noshing, but snacking has been an upward trajectory for the better part of a decade. Instead of just eating between meals, snacking has become a lifestyle as consumers are driven by their need for convenience, their adventurous palate and their move away from three daily square meals. The wild cards of inflation, cultural shifts, holistic health concerns, sustainability and social media inspiration are adding new innovations – and flavor – to foods and drinks that fall under the snacking umbrella. Read on to see how this snacking umbrella is getting bigger and more colorful and how snack flavor trends can enhance your brand.



**45%**

*of people eat three or more  
snacks per day*

**FLAVOR**

*remains by far the most  
important selection driver  
for snacks*

# Hey, Partner

Inventive combinations and sometimes-unexpected layers of flavor are taking snacks to a new level of taste. Consider the rise of “swicy” snacks that fuse savory spices with sweet ingredients or the mashup of savory and salty snacks with ingredients typically used for sauces, like pasta chips with Alfredo dip or truffle-infused popcorn.

Developers are mixing it up with comforting pairings by adding indulgent entrees and even desserts into snackable formats. This surprise-and-delight approach takes many forms, from incorporating birthday-cake flavors into nut mixes to lending chicken-and-waffle taste to chips. At the center of this trend is a sense of nostalgia and enjoyment for enjoyment’s sake.

*Versatile textures and formats will continue to add an element of fun and surprise to everyday snacks.*

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**GENERAL MILLS CINNAFUEGO TOAST CRUNCH SWEET AND SPICY BREAKFAST CEREAL SNACK** is a limited edition snack with sweet cinnamon heat sold in a resealable pouch.

43% of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**BLAKE'S SEED-BASED CRISPY TREATS VARIETY PACK** includes chocolate chip, birthday cake and original flavors. The treats are sprinkled with seeds and are free from gluten, peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy and sesame.

53% of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product.



### 37% OF CONSUMERS

enjoy flavors that offer a twist on the familiar.

### 46% OF CONSUMERS

say they like sweet flavors that remind them of childhood, like birthday cake.

### 1/3 OF GLOBAL CONSUMERS

agree that interesting/exotic combinations influenced their flavor choices in food and beverages.

# Going BIG on Flavor

Today's snackable foods and beverages are big on flavor, ranging from nuanced to extra-extra bold. The clamor for spicy profiles specifically has shown no sign of abating, as consumers are ratcheting up the heat in salty snacks and adding a kick to traditionally sweet snack formats like candies and frozen desserts. As consumers and product developers alike pursue more interesting flavors, specific chills are being used to lend different variations of spiciness to snacks including Er Jin Tiao Chili, Sichuan Pepper, Habanero and Carolina Reaper varieties.

Other bold flavors are moving to the top of the label in snacks as well. The embrace of globally-inspired ingredients is a potent example, with Asian Fusion and classic Latin flavors incorporated into nut mixes, crisps, chips, nuts, coffee drinks and other snack types. Bold citrus flavors are also making a mark in the snack category, with vibrant jackfruit, dragon fruit, guava and other fruits imparting brightness in taste and sometimes color.

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**MELISSA'S HATCH PEPPER KETTLE CORN** is a small-batch snack flavored with hatch pepper seasoning.

32% of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product.



**DORITOS TWISTED SOUTHWEST RANCH FLAVORED TORTILLA CHIPS** provide a desert heat with a tangy twist.

63% of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product.



### 43% OF ADULTS

who eat chips are motivated to try new products if they have unique flavors.

### 93% OF CONSUMERS

of consumers prefer some type of spiciness in their food.

### INGREDIENTS & FLAVORS

According to Datassential, spicy maple and salsa matcha are among the 10 ingredients and flavors that will be everywhere in the near future, while flavors to watch include savory granola and pickled strawberries.



# Balancing Act

While today's snacking takes place all day and is increasingly widening to include a variety of novel flavors and forms, the formerly narrow view of "healthy versus indulgent" snacking is becoming outdated. Consumers approach snacking with an attitude of balancing their craving and priorities of the moment.

The past few years has affirmed consumer interest for indulgent snacking. At the same time, the emergence of plant-based snacks and snacks with other kinds of health halos underscores the simultaneous interest in having better-for-you options. And the use of the term "permissible indulgence" reflects product developers' efforts to deliver both attributes in one snack.



**If nothing else, these parallel trends show that snacking is open ended in more ways than one, which benefits brands looking to expand their portfolios.**

## PRODUCTS OF NOTE



**TARGET'S PRIVATE LABEL FAVORITE DAY BROWN BUTTER INDULGENT SNACK MIX** is naturally flavored and includes popcorn, pretzels and potato chips tossed with real butter.

**48%** of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product



**STORCK WERTHER'S ORIGINAL CARAMEL BLISSFUL BITES CHOCOLATE COOKIE CARAMEL BITES** are part of a new line of "poppable" snacks from the brand.

**68%** of consumers said they likely or definitely would buy this product.

### TREAT YOUR SELF

Rewards, indulgence and treating recently outpaced wellness and permissible indulgence, showing the balancing act between emotions and eating a bit healthier.

**64% OF CONSUMERS IN 2022** indulge themselves when snacking, up 3 points from the previous year.

**88% OF CONSUMERS AGREE** that a balanced diet can include a little indulgence.

# THE TAKEAWAYS

The boundaries are expanding in the state of snacking, as consumers continue to snack throughout the day – averaging at 2.7 snacks per day - and reach for foods and drinks that fulfill their taste for bold and often spicy flavors, small indulgences in stressful times and forms that increasingly include plant-based options. One of the more noteworthy trends is the layering of different flavors and ingredients in snacks, which delivers interesting eating and drinking experiences as well as provides opportunities for developers to get creative – and stay competitive. And with 76% of “super snackers” and 63% of “average snackers” saying they enjoy trying new snacks, the potential for innovation and consumer is looking good for developers. Want to figure out your “what’s next?” We can help.



## SOURCES

- Datassential
- Franks RedHot
- Innova Market Insights
- IRI
- Market Research Future
- McCormick
- Mintel

## YOU DESERVE MORE. LET'S GET STARTED.

What does true partnership look like? You deserve a flavor partner ready to turn these trends into the tangible.

Let FONA's market insight and research experts get to work for you. Translate these trends into bold new ideas for your brand. Increase market share and get to your “what’s next.” Our technical flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here for you – every step of the way. Contact our sales service department at [630.578.8600](tel:630.578.8600) to request a flavor sample or chat us up at [www.fona.com/contact-fona/](http://www.fona.com/contact-fona/)



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