

FOODLINK

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SNACKING GOES MAINSTREAM



Focus On Healthy Snacks But Sweets A Perennial Favorite

Undoubtedly, we have evolved into a nation of snackers! Snacking has moved beyond a trend and is now a way of life. U.S. consumers have adopted, and are comfortable with, an eating style of nibbling and noshing on small bits of food 24/7. Unlike the traditional three meals per day of yesteryear, there are no rules or set schedule for snacking. These unstructured eating occasions can happen anytime or place with many on-the-go consumers toting portable snacks for when such a moment arises.

An astonishing 94% of Americans snack at least once a day, according to a report from research specialist Mintel. Furthermore, half of adults snack two to three times per day.

Research conducted by confectionery giant The Hershey Company found that some people snack “10 times a day,” reported ABC News.

Today’s consumers have shifted their focus to seeking out healthy snacks. This is a key priority since often snacks are just not supplementing, but replacing entire meals. Consumers are looking for snacks with ingredients such as protein, fiber and grains, which are generally part of the traditional meals that are disappearing from the current eating landscape.

Approximately one-third (33%) of U.S. consumers say they are snacking on healthier foods vs. a year ago, according to Mintel. Similarly, 30% of parents are serving healthier snacks to their children, influencing the newest generation’s habits. Sixty percent of snackers wish there were more healthy snack options, including 70% of households with children, added Mintel food analyst Amanda Topper, according to *Snack Food & Wholesale Bakery*.

Although healthy is currently the major trend, that doesn’t mean consumers are giving up indulgent snacks. Americans love their sweets, especially chocolate! Negotiating a balance between healthy and indulgent is the big challenge.

WHAT ARE CONSUMERS SNACKING ON?

Protein-packed bars and shakes, yogurt, fruit, cookies, cheese, seeds, sushi, guacamole and popcorn are a slight sampling of what consumers are snacking on. Today, the definition of a snack has expanded to include anything and everything.

“The tradition of a piece of fruit or a handful of nuts as a snack—those are still there, but overall the definition of a snack has

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SNACKING *Continued*

dramatically changed,” said Darren Tristano, president of Technomic.

Regardless of the type of snack, food manufacturers are working feverishly to launch products that meet a growing list of consumers’ demands including: healthy, simple ingredients, natural, portable, portion-controlled, organic, flavorful, gluten-, preservative- and allergen-free, non-GMO, no artificial colors and fun.

Despite the enormous assortment of snacks available in today’s market, chips continue to be at the top of consumers’ list of favorites. This segment is sizzling with activity!

The chip category has experienced a proliferation of flavor explorations, growing more artisanal, bold and occasionally borrowing from other categories, according to *State of the Industry Snacks 2015*, outlined in *Snack Food & Wholesale Bakery*. Potato chips have posted growth across the board, with consumers attracted to classic products, along with formats that include multigrain chips and fruit chips (i.e., apple and banana).

Some trendy chip launches include: Pinto Bean Multigrain and Black Bean Multigrain fiber-enriched chips from Food Should Taste Good, a General Mills brand; meaty flavored chips such as Kansas City Prime Steak and Baby Back Ribs from Herr Foods; Hotter ‘N Hot Jalapeno from Zapp’s, an Utz Quality Foods brand; veggie chips from Diamond Foods’ Kettle Brand in two varieties, Sweet Potatoes, Beets and Parsnips, and Sweet Potatoes, and baked lentil chips in Sea Salt, Moroccan Barbecue, Garlic Parmesan and Cucumber Dill varieties from Saffron Road, a unit of American Halal Co.

Bars, a frequent meal replacement, continue to soar in popularity! With the healthy “better for you” focus making an especially strong impact on this category, coupled with the convenience factor, two trends are being addressed. The nutritional bars segment is basically carrying the category’s overall success, according to the report.

Among the slew of innovative bar launches are Paleo Protein Bars from Julian Bakery, containing 20 grams of protein, according to *Food Business News*. Glazed Donut and Chocolate Mint flavors are included in the line. Savory meal bars, made with cricket flour, are being market by Exo. The bars, featuring 11 grams of protein, are available in Mango Curry, Barbecue and Mediterranean flavors. Thrive, a nutrition and wellness line introduced by GoMacro, is touted as including ingredients that support digestive and heart health and cognitive wellness. These bars, in flavors such as Curry Apricot and Blueberry Lavender, are organic, soy-,

dairy- and gluten-free, non GMO and vegan.

On a sweeter note, consumers are still reaching for snack cakes when they desire an indulgent treat. While innovation, quality ingredients and intriguing flavors are major priorities among product developers, there is also a “mini” trend underway that is driving the market. In conjunction with



the overall consumer demand for portion control, many manufacturers are turning out mini/bite-size versions of existing products as well as launching new ones. Mini snack cakes, Danish, doughnuts and muffins offer consumers the opportunity to indulge without significantly disrupting a health-focused diet.

Included among the mini trend are: Tastemaker Red Velvet Mini Donuts and Salted Caramel Mini Donuts from Flowers Foods, and the Donettes (small donuts) brand from Hostess in flavors such as Pumpkin Spice and Maple Glazed. J&J Snack Foods Corp. teamed up with General Mills to roll out Pillsbury Mini Pies. The portioned frozen dessert squares, in Apple Cinnamon, S’mores and Chocolate Lava come with a flavored icing packet.

Many bakers are also driving sales by catering to specific dietary needs. For example, The Piping Gourmets’ Whoopie Pies, found in grocers’ refrigerated section, are certified gluten-free and vegan, Non-GMO Project verified, dairy-free, kosher and pareve, according to *Snack Food & Wholesale Bakery*. “That collection together makes a unique dessert,” said Leslie Kaplan, co-founder of the Florida-based company. Muffin Revolution, California, features several varieties that are gluten- and grain-free, high protein (i.e., Banana Bam Bam Muffin—banana, blueberry and chia seeds).

Clean labels, favorite classics and novel launches are powering the cookie category. Health-conscious consumers are seeking recognizable ingredients and free-from

products. Small is also a big trend with many bite-size options hitting the market.

“Today’s consumer is educated and conscientious,” says Joanne Adirim, founder, CEO and executive pastry chef, HannahMax Baking, Gardena, CA. “They read labels and they care about what they eat. They want to eat products that are made with good ingredients—names you can pronounce—and, of course, they want them to taste good, too. And they still want an indulgent cookie with simple ingredients.”

HannahMax developed its Cookie Chips to have only 120-130 calories per serving, no trans fats, GMOs, artificial flavors, colors or preservatives. To satisfy gluten-free concerns, select Cookie Chips are made with gluten-free, whole-grain oats. Flowers Foods is marketing 7 Grain Cookies with 12 grams of whole grains per snack.

Chocolate is a hot category as Americans have an insatiable craving for the sweet indulgence. Nearly all U.S. consumers (85%) buy chocolate, and 53% enjoy the treat once a week or more, according to Mintel. Nearly three-quarters of chocolate buyers look for chocolate with mix-ins, such as fruit and nuts, as opposed to plain/unflavored varieties.

A novel superfood chocolate bar infused with CoffeeFlour has been unveiled by Seattle Chocolate Company. Nutrient-dense CoffeeFlour, made from dried coffee cherry pulp, is incorporated in the company’s jcoo Arabica cherry espresso in dark chocolate bar.



Dark chocolate is especially popular, and the trend is shifting to darker chocolate. Some 70% of shoppers will at least occasionally switch to dark chocolate as a better-for-you alternative to milk chocolate, according to a National Confectioners Association (NCA) survey.

Chewy candy, the largest sub-segment within non-chocolate, is experiencing significant levels of innovation in terms of new and bold flavors (particularly sour), fun shapes and packaging, noted NCA.

The confectionery market is strong and growing. Approximately 123 million households purchase chocolate, non-chocolate candy, gum and mints each year, reports NCA.

RETAIL TRENDS:

RETAILERS DIFFERENTIATING TO GAIN COMPETITIVE EDGE

The battle for Americans' food dollars is escalating rapidly. Intense competition in the grocery retail landscape has attentive players fine-tuning their operations, and launching new formats, as they listen to consumers' evolving demands.

The playing field, overshadowed by retail giant Walmart, is complex with so many more options available than supermarkets to purchase groceries. For instance, a consumer might go to a warehouse club to stock up on paper goods and bottled water, a convenience store to pick up a container of milk, a drugstore to buy snack bars, a supermarket for cereal and frozen vegetables, a specialty store for fresh pasta and cheese, an online retailer for canned goods and pet food, and the list goes on.

“There’s just so many places you can buy food these days, and it’s gotten very, very competitive on both the upscale end, as well as the value-oriented end,” stated **Jim Hertel, a managing partner at Illinois-based Willard Bishop, a grocery consultancy, reported Crain’s Chicago Business.**

Here’s a look at how some retailers are strategizing to differentiate their operations and rise above the sea of competition:

Roundy’s, a Milwaukee, WI-based subsidiary of The Kroger Co., recently opened a two-story, 90,000-sq. ft. Metro Market in Shorewood, WI. The new store is designed specifically to attract Millennials and urban professionals who favor fresh prepared food offerings. This concept addresses the dramatic shift in the habits of U.S. consumers for whom pantry-stocking of long shelf-life food is obsolete, having been replaced for many by multiple weekly, and occasionally daily trips, to the grocery store, according to the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*.

The Metro Market features a rolled-to-order sushi bar, an oyster bar, seafood market, pizzeria, barbecue smoker, deli, bakery, make-your-own trail mix bar, spice shop and a bar with a dozen beers on tap—all in an environmentally friendly green building. There’s also a sit-down café, live piano music and a fireplace.

The new store, according to Metro Market’s director Tony Kuchinsky, is more of a culinary experience than it is a grocery store.

Wegmans, a Rochester, NY-based supermarket chain, is celebrating its 100th anniversary and keeps expanding. Plans for two new store openings in the Richmond, VA



area—the first during this year’s anniversary—include a 115,000-sq. ft. supermarket in Midlothian (May 22) and a 120,000-sq. ft. supermarket in Short Pump (Aug. 7).

This on-trend retailer, with nearly 90 stores in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and Massachusetts, commits to: “Every day you get our best.” In 2015, the company said it received more than 4,000 requests from people asking for a Wegmans store in their community.

Wegmans describes its stores as being similar to a European open-air market. There are dazzling displays of fresh produce, artisan breads and other baked goods popping out of the oven several times a day, fresh-caught seafood, deli products and imported cheeses, meat, international foods and all the grocery items and other products usually found in a supermarket. With a selection of 50,000 to 70,000 products (in the largest stores), it offers more choices than the average of just over 40,000 (according to the Food Marketing Institute) in most supermarkets. More than 3,000 organics products can be found throughout the store.

Sushi is made fresh daily, in a variety of vegetables, cooked, and raw made-to-order. There’s an organic salad bar, veggie bar, Asian bar, pizza shop, and a Market Café with take-out or in-store dining with seating for several hundred. Wegmans also features Nature’s Marketplace—natural and organic foods, supplements, premium teas, and foods for special dietary needs, including gluten-free. The pharmacy offers free home shipping, automated refills and even pet medications.

Special events are also part of the Wegmans experience. In March, the company hosted “Flavors of the World” in all stores. There were cooking demonstrations and tastings of Asian, Mexican and Italian foods.

Whole Foods Market, an Austin, TX-based natural and organic foods supermarket chain, is gearing up to open a new concept, 365, in Silver Lake, CA, in May. The new chain, catering to Millennials, will be “fun and convenient,” noted Jeff Turnas, president of the 365 division, according to bloomberg.com. “A modern, streamlined design with innovative technology and a carefully curated product mix will offer an efficient and rewarding way to grocery shop,” noted the executive.

Thus far, Whole Foods Market has signed 13 leases for 365 in several states.

Shubie’s Marketplace, a family-owned business in Marblehead, MA, has been successfully weathering all types of competition for 68 years. The 10,000-sq. ft. store, which keeps evolving, features a prepared foods case with 35 to 40 entrees and sides that are made fresh daily, hand-crafted sandwiches and salads, specialty foods, hundreds of cheeses, deli and charcuterie section, vegan, paleo and free-from offerings, craft beers, gift baskets and more. A master pastry chef prepares elegant treats such as chocolate mousse cups and elaborately designed cupcakes, as well as gluten-free desserts.



There’s a strong focus on local products throughout the store. For example, consumers will find cheese from Westfield Farm (MA), sweets from Lake Champlain Chocolate (VT) and honey from Boston Honey Co.

Shubie’s brings the community together for free tastings and special events almost every weekend. There is even a summer cooking camp for kids, reported *The Gourmet Retailer*. Shubie’s has become a gathering spot, emphasizes George Shube.

Calendar of Events

MAY

2-5: APAS

São Paulo, Brasil
Feiraapas.com.br
Expo Center Norte

5-7: SIAL China

Shanghai, China
www.sialchina.com
New International Expo Centre

9-13: Seoul Food & Hotel

Seoul, South Korea
www.seoulfoodnhotel.co.kr/
Korean International Exhibition Center

SEPTEMBER

5-7: Feria Alimentaria

Guatemala City, Guatemala
www.feriaalimentaria.com
Expocenter La Inmaculada Hotel

6-8: Seafood Expo Asia

Wanchai, Hong Kong
www.seafoodexpo.com/asia/
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

OCTOBER

16-20: SIAL Paris

Paris, France
www.sialparis.com
Paris Nord Villepinte

29-31: Busan International Seafood & Fisheries Expo

Busan, South Korea
www.bisfe.com
BEXCO Exhibition Center

NOVEMBER

2-4: China Fisheries & Seafood Expo

Qingdao, China
chinaseafoodexpo.com
Qingdao International Expo Center

FEATURED PRODUCTS:

Koeze Company – Grand Rapids, MI

Founded in 1910, the Koeze Company has been crafting Cream-Nut, all-natural, peanut butter since 1925. This iconic American brand of peanut butter is made with only the finest and most flavorful Virginia peanuts and a dash of sea salt. There are no added ingredients of any kind, just peanuts and salt. Crafted with the fourth generation family's commitment to exceptional taste and quality, Cream-Nut peanut butter, either in smooth or crunchy continues to gain popularity the world over. Cream-Nut is made on vintage equipment, one small batch at a time. One taste and we are sure you will agree that you've just found the best tasting, all-natural, classic American peanut butter available! <http://koeze.com/>



Clabber Girl – Terre Haute, IN

During more than 160 years in business Clabber Girl has evolved into a leading baking industry expert both in retail and industrial ingredients. Best known for its iconic Clabber Girl brand of baking powder, available on almost every grocery shelf in the USA, Clabber Girl is also well versed in creating customized baking powder formulas for highly diverse baking requirements. They continue to innovate by capitalizing on unique technologies such as encapsulation as well as sourcing high quality ingredients including non-gmo corn starch. Clabber Girl has been providing non-gmo products to their valued export customers for many years already. In fact, their Rumford brand of baking powder began incorporating non gmo ingredients as early as 2002. <http://www.clabbergirl.com>.



SCD Probiotics® – Kansas City, MO

SCD Probiotics® is a Kansas City life-sciences company that was established in 1998 by Mathew Wood. Inspired by his mother who died of leukemia, cause unknown, Wood theorizes there were many factors to blame, such as the volatile organic compounds found in paints and the DDT widely used in the 1950s and 60s on commercial crops, in gardens, for urban mosquito eradication, and even for domestic pest control.

The global distribution of SCD's innovative products has earned it government recognition. And in 2013, SCD Probiotics received the Missouri Governor's Exporter of the Year Award.

With a focus on harnessing beneficial microbes, our top human-health seller SCD Essential Probiotics® stemmed from the company's emphasis on human health. Designed to satisfy the body's need for healthy bacteria, while restoring balance in the digestive tract and supporting a healthy immune function†, SCD Essential Probiotics® survives in otherwise hard-to-thrive-in stomach acid environments. <https://www.essentialprobiotics.com/>





STATE SPOTLIGHT
Vermont

- Over 7,300 farms in Vermont steward 1.2 million acres or 21% of the total land.
- Vermont is well known for high quality cheeses, grass fed beef, cranberries, and many other food products.
- Vermont also produces substantial crops of Macintosh apples, potatoes, eggs, honey, vegetables, Christmas trees, lumber, and green house nursery products.
- Vermont is the biggest producer of maple products in the United States producing more than 40% of the nation's total output.
- Dairy is the primary farm industry in Vermont, producing more than two billion pounds of milk annually, more than 75% of the state's agricultural output.
- Ice cream, butter, yogurt, and other popular dairy foods are produced from Vermont's rich milk.
- Made in Vermont specialty foods include breakfast cereals, sauces, chocolates, fudge, mustard, mints, salsas, crackers, breads, beverages, and salad dressings.
- In 2015 Vermont exported over \$208 million worth of processed food products with top markets including Canada, Mexico, China, Switzerland, Indonesia and Peru.

2015 TOP AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS:

Foods Preparations for Infants	\$38.8 million
Chocolate Preparations in Blocks Over 2 Kilos	\$35.1 million
Cocoa Preparations Not in Bulk Form	\$23.9 million
Milk & Cream, Low Fat, Concentrated	\$20.9 million
Whey Products	\$13.6 million
Milk Albumin, Including Concentrates	\$12.8 million
Coffee, Roasted, Not Decaffeinated	\$10.7 million
Mixes & Dough's for Bakery Products	\$9.4 million
Sugar Confectionery	\$8.9 million
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	\$8.2 million
Cocoa Powder Not Sweetened	\$7.3 million
Malt Extract: Flour Meal, Milk	\$6.9 million



STATE SPOTLIGHT
Ohio

- Ohio is one of only four U.S. states in which over 50% of its land is classified as prime farmland.
- Ohio is a diverse agricultural region that produces more than 200 crops.
- Ohio is a leading producer of tomatoes, corn, soybeans, lettuce, specialty foods, Swiss cheese and eggs.
- Much of the raw material produced on Ohio's 74,000+ farms is the basis for the state's more than 1,000 food processing businesses and other manufacturers.
- Ohio operates the world's largest pizza plant, has the largest soup factory in the world, and makes more ketchup than anywhere else in the world.
- Ohio also ranks 1st in the United States in frozen food shipments. Ohio's frozen food industry accounts for over 20% of the United States' frozen food processing.
- Ohio's roads, rail, waterways, and international airports provide many viable and reliable options for moving products to their global destinations.
- In 2015, Ohio exported over \$938 million of processed food products, the top markets including Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, Australia and South Korea.

2015 TOP AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS:

Soybeans for Oilstock or Consumption	\$1.6 billion
Pork Meat, Prepared & Preserved	\$101.7 million
Dog & Cat Food Put Up For Retail Sale	\$91.7 million
Eggs of Chicken, Fresh	\$83 million
Distiller's Grains	\$80.8 million
Baked Goods & Snack Foods	\$71.8 million
Animal Feed Preparations	\$70.7 million
Corn, Other Than Seed Corn	\$65.7 million
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	\$57.7 million
Bovine (Bull) Semen	\$56.4 million
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	\$49.2 million
Sauces, Mixed Condiments & Seasonings	\$48.2 million

NEWS BRIEFS

Influential Food Themes in 2016: Cooking with fire and serving more authentic Thai and French cuisine in restaurants will be top food trends this year, according to Campbell's Culinary & Baking Institute. Homestyle Thai dishes like khao soy curry noodle soup, a revival of French food and pastries, innovative vegetable dishes and bold ice cream flavors are on the menu.

Consumer values are impacting food decisions. Taste, price and convenience are no longer sole deciding factors when consumers purchase food and beverages, according to a new study from Deloitte, Food Marketing Institute and Grocery Manufacturers Association. Half of Americans surveyed (51%) weigh "evolving drivers"—health and wellness, safety, social impact, experience and transparency—in their purchasing decisions, in addition to the "traditional drivers" of taste, price and convenience.

Cheese Trends: Authenticity, flavor, convenience and freshness are among the top cheese trends for this year, according to the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. Bold and uniquely flavored chesses will be especially popular. New cheese launches will include jalapeno, herbs, garlic, berries and other innovative inclusions. More portable products for snacking and shreds for convenience will hit store shelves.

Unique restaurant takes 'sustainable' to new heights! The Perennial, a new San Francisco, CA restaurant, is going to extremes to be green. For example, kitchen scraps are sent to an aquaponic greenhouse where worms compost the food waste. The worms are then turned into fish food and are fed to fish that help fertilize a crop of greens that are in turn sent back to the restaurant, outlined *Fast Company*. In one corner of the restaurant, there is an aquarium growing a crop of cardamom to demonstrate aquaponics. On the menu, a new bread recipe is touted using Kernza, a carbon-sucking grain. The Perennial, designed with reclaimed construction materials, boasts extra-efficient appliances, pots that heat up rapidly, and all-LED lighting system. Even the menus are compostable.

What's the next superfood? Moringa, algae and purple corn are among those vying for superfood status, leaving kale, acai berries, blueberries, and chia and flax seeds trailing, according to *Food Dive*. Moringa, a tropical tree native to Asia and Africa, produces nutrient-dense pods. The plant is touted as having two times the protein of yogurt, three times the potassium of bananas, four times the vitamin A of carrots, four times the calcium of milk and seven times the vitamin C of oranges. Presently, moringa is available in

the U.S. mostly in supplements, energy bars and teas. Algae, another protein source, is also high in nutrients. Purple Corn is packed with antioxidants.

Technology revs up restaurant ordering. In the fiercely competitive U.S. restaurant industry. "Connected" customers are seeking out restaurants that integrate innovative technology to elevate the total restaurant experience. The Domino's Pizza chain, a leader in delivery and digital ordering platforms, is now making it possible for customers to order and track pizza delivery via Apple Watch.

Restaurant sales projected to rise in 2016. Restaurants will post sales of \$782.7 billion in 2016, according to The National Restaurant Association's *2016 Restaurant Industry Forecast*. In addition, the industry will see its seventh consecutive year of real sales growth. The trend of quick-service sales is outpacing table service.

Update on dining frequency: Eating out is no longer reserved for special occasions, as it has now become a daily habit among U.S. consumers, according to the The Hartman Group. Consumers eat out, on average, approximately nine times in a typical month. Millennials tend to eat out more frequently than any other generation.



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