

SNACKING MOTIVATIONS & ATTITUDES – US – 2024

Current snacking behavior represents a cultural shift. Brands are tasked with balancing comfort and newness, and satisfying both emotional and physical needs.



Michele Scott, Associate Director, US Research - Food and Drink



Snacking Motivations & Attitudes - US - 2024

This report looks at the following areas:

- Snacking frequency
- Changes in snacking behavior and the corresponding reasons
- Snack types consumed in the past three months
- Snack occasions and dayparts
- Important snack attributes
- Attitudes about snacking

Overview

Consumers are engaged in a snacking boom, with many consumers snacking on par with "regular" meals. As food culture shifts towards snacks, consumers are needing to stave off boredom (eg, getting sick of what they're snacking on), find some BFY option, satisfy cravings and quell hunger. Unlike meals, snacks tend towards craving fulfilment and treating, but with the sheer preponderance of snacks, not every snack can err on the side of indulgence.

At least some familiarity is key as well, as 51% of consumers want snacks to be something they know they like. Yet, this doesn't necessarily mean that every snack should be a copy/paste of the snack they ate the day before. Instead, small changes to classic flavors, formats and brands prove to win consumers over and reduce the apprehension that comes with trial.

The good news, is that no single snack has to do it all. Consumers are snacking more, leaving lots of opportunity for all categories to win. Balance is key, and exists on multiple planes



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Report Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Market predictions
- Opportunities
- Cobranding trends are not slowing
- Straightforward messaging cuts through the noise
- Put produce front and center

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

The snacking consumer: fast facts

Profile of the snacking consumer

- Scoot over, meals: snacks are here!
 - Graph 1: snacking frequency, 2023
- Demo differences (and similarities) show snacking is here to stay
 - Graph 2: snacking frequency, by gender, 2023
 - Graph 3: Snacking frequency, by generation, 2023
- Finances may force snacking
 - Graph 4: snacking frequency, by region, 2023
 - Graph 5: snacking frequency, by financial situation, 2023

Changes in snacking frequency

- Snackers keep on snacking, even more
 - Graph 6: changes in snacking by snacking frequency, 2023
 - Graph 7: changes in snacking, 2023
- Parenthood will only fuel Gen Z's snacking fire
 - Graph 8: changes in snacking, by generation, 2023
- Regional differences support snacks on the rise
 - Graph 9: changes in snacking, by region, 2023
- Opportunities to satisfy and satiate; struggling consumers fuel some price flexibility
 - Graph 10: changes in snacking, by financial situation, 2023

Reasons for changes in snacking

- Emotional and practical needs fuel snacking increases

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- Graph 11: reasons for snacking more, 2023
- Ease is a universal driver; innovation, less so
 - Graph 12: reasons for snacking more, by region, 2023
- New snacks shine with BFY attributes
 - Graph 13: reasons for snacking more, by snacking frequency, 2023
- Rewrite the snacking script (not the snacks themselves)
 - Graph 14: reasons for snacking less, 2023

Important snack attributes

- Most consumers aren't demanding entirely new snacks
 - Graph 15: important snack attributes, 2023
- Consumers in Western states are putting a finer point on nutrition
- More snacking doesn't mean strong opinions
 - Graph 16: important snack attributes, by generation, 2023

Consumption of specific snacks

- Indulgent and BFY create the perfect snack mix
 - Graph 17: snacks eaten in the past three months, 2023
- Gen Zs and Millennials share snack format patterns
 - Graph 18: snacks eaten in the past three months, by generation, 2023
- Small tweaks, big payoff
- High- and low-volume snackers share some consumption habits
 - Graph 19: snack consumption by snacking frequency, 2023

Reasons to snack

- Satisfying snacks are craveable treats
 - Graph 20: reasons for snacking, 2023
- Snacks are stepping up to meet emotional needs
 - Graph 21: reasons for snacking, by financial situation, 2023
- Don't discount the need to treat with age
 - Graph 22: reasons for snacking, by generation, 2023

Snack consumption habits

- Salty and sweet have big range; fresher snacks shine with time
 - Graph 23: snack consumption habits, 2023
- Millennials take their sweet tooth on the go
 - Graph 24: sweet snack consumption habits, by generation 2023
 - Graph 25: salty snack consumption habits, by generation 2023
- Gen Zs are developing BFY morning habits alongside a little indulgence
- Poor financial health increases snacking, whether sweet or salty

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- Graph 26: salty snack consumption habits, by financial situation, 2023
- Graph 27: sweet snack consumption habits, by financial situation, 2023
- Struggling consumers need to get more out of their snacks

Attitudes about snacking

- Moderation wins attitudes, not behaviors
 - Graph 28: attitudes about snacking, 2023
- The future of snacks is limitless as Gen Z ages up
 - Graph 29: agreement that a few snacks paired together can be more satisfying than a traditional meal, by generation, 2023
- Salty vs sweet: spotlight on Millennials
- Total satisfaction is greater than the sum of its parts
 - Graph 30: salty vs sweet snack attitudes, by region, 2023
- Midwesterners go for 'old faithful' snacks

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

- Mintel Flavourscape AI explores the future of flavour and flavour combinations using data science
- Keep it fresh; consider the brand(s)
- Fruity, gummy and delicious in all its iterations
- Chamoy crosses the border into US snacks
- Kind of a big dill

Launch activity and innovation

- Keep fruit fresh, experientially
- Ready for the remix to drop
- Portable portioning offers easy protein

Marketing and advertising

- Not healthy? No question, no problem
- Opopop puts the 'fun' in 'dysfunctional'
- Pop culture moments are fleeting, but work for socials
- Carnivore snax doesn't mince words

Opportunities

- Bring fruit and veg out of the produce aisle and into snacks (and vice-versa!)
- Made Good has far reach, with specific claims that underwrite the whole portfolio
- Make new snacks, but keep the brands
- Cobranding is hot, hot, hot
- Girl Scouts brings nostalgia into indulgent and BFY snack options

THE MARKET

Market context

- Rise in snacking tide raises all categories

Market drivers

- Snacking attitudes and behaviors are at odds
- There's room for snacks in BFY goals
 - Graph 31: actions towards goals for the year, 2023

APPENDIX

- Market definition
- Consumer research methodology
- Generations
- Abbreviations and terms

Disclaimer

This is marketing intelligence published by Mintel. The consumer research exclusively commissioned by Mintel was conducted by Kantar Profiles ([See Research Methodology for more information](#)).

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