

TRENDING FLAVORS AND INGREDIENTS IN SALTY SNACKS – US – 2024

As the purpose of snacking continues to evolve, flavor remains the central motivator. Innovation that pairs flavor with function can extend occasions even further.



Sydney Riebe, Analyst -
US Food and Drink



Trending Flavors And Ingredients In Salty Snacks – US – 2024

This report looks at the following areas:

- Interest in preparation-inspired snack flavors
- Associations with indulgent and satisfying snacks
- Experience with and interest in flavors and ingredients in salty snacks
- Salty snacks behaviors and attitudes
- Flavor and ingredient product development in salty snacks
- The salty snack market

Overview

While salty snack dollar sales have been largely dependent on inflation, consumption continues to rise, especially among younger consumers. Extended occasions, including those that carry over into mealtimes signal that the purpose of snacking is evolving, with one-quarter of consumers in agreement that snacks and meals are interchangeable.

Flavor remains a key to snacking motivation, particularly when it comes to indulgence, but it does not have to stop there. Satisfying snack associations show that flavor is just a part of the equation, particularly among younger consumers as they seek satiety from tangible flavors but also healthy ingredients and functionality like increased energy.



As the purpose of snacking continues to evolve, flavor remains the central motivator. Innovation that pairs flavor with function can extend occasions even further.

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While price is a deterrent, concern for health is the biggest factor for snacking attrition, however, an increasingly holistic view of a snack's ability to serve as both a treat and provide BFY nutrition may shift outdated perceptions.

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Report Content



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Category outlook
- Opportunities

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Consumer fast facts

Interest in snack flavor preparation

- Bold, indulgent flavors balance BFY aspirations
 - Graph 1: interest in snack flavor preparation, 2021-23
- Changing tastes call for brands to look forward, and honor classics
 - Graph 2: interest in preparation method inspired snack flavors, by generation, 2023

Indulgent snack associations

- Indulgence means the best of both worlds
 - Graph 3: indulgent snack associations, 2023
- When in doubt, add cheese
- Gen Z seeks versatility when indulging

Satisfying snack associations

- Ahh, the power of cheese
 - Graph 4: satisfying snack associations, 2023
- Leverage the relationship between satisfaction and health
- Millennials are looking for the complete package when snacking

Experience with and interest in flavors and ingredients in salty snacks

- Sweet is a familiar but versatile touchstone
 - Graph 5: experience with and interest in flavors and ingredients in salty snacks, 2023
- Use texture as a gateway to flavor expansion, education
 - Graph 6: experience with and interest in flavors and ingredients in salty snacks, 2023
- Help Gen Z travel with their taste buds
 - Graph 7: Gen Z experience and interest in international snack flavors – NET – any interest, 2023

Salty snacks behaviors and attitudes

- Snack purchases are equally planned and spontaneous
 - Graph 8: salty snacks attitudes, 2023
- Versatility may be table stakes, but it means more flavor(s), pairings and applications
 - Graph 9: salty snacks attitudes, by generation, 2023
- Use fuzzy lines to create a sense of versatility
 - Graph 10: salty snacks attitudes, 2023
- Younger adults need more than flavor from snacks
 - Graph 11: salty snacks attitudes, by generation, 2023

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

Marketing and advertising

- Surprising pairings make snack occasions limitless
- Getting the most out of a bag of chips

Opportunities

- Snacks can step up when consumers are dining solo
 - Graph 12: frequency of food behaviors, 2023
- Fun and functional top younger consumers' interest in innovation
 - Graph 13: interest in salty snack innovation, by generation, 2023

Product development – Now – What's trending

- Flavorscape AI salty snack landscape
- Cheese moves beyond cheddar
- Emerging cheese types in snacks
- Tangy adds an edge to familiar favorites
- Tangy flavors in snacks
- Sweet and spicy make the perfect couple
- Sweet and spicy snacks
- Light textures can hold heavy flavors
 - Graph 14: textures of salty snacks, 2021-23
- Snacks with light textures and bold flavors

Product development – Near – What to watch for

- Mexican cuisine growth on menus inspires next level of street food flavors
- Mexican street food snack flavors
- Korean flavors bring versatility

Product development – Next – What's in the pipeline

- Snacks are getting "all dressed" up, American style
- Snacks with dressing flavors
- Functional can add value without subtracting flavor
- Functional claims in snacking

THE MARKET

Market context

State of the market

- Dollar sales driven by inflation and steady consumption
 - Graph 15: total US retail sales and forecast of snacks, by segment, at current prices, 2021-23
- Younger consumers lead increase in snacking
 - Graph 16: changes in salty snack consumption, by gender, generation and financial situation, 2023
- Snacks and curiosity go hand in hand

Market drivers

- Salty snacks are more than double total food inflation...
- ...but health is the main driver for attrition
 - Graph 17: reasons for snacking less, 2023
- Staying home still benefits snacking

APPENDIX

- 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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<u>US</u>	<u>+1 (312) 932 0600</u>
<u>Australia</u>	<u>+61 (0)2 8284 8100</u>
<u>China</u>	<u>+86 (21) 6386 6609</u>
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