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Snack Category Trends

Food For Thought for Snack Brands.

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Introduction

The U.S. snack market has slowed down over the past couple of years after seeing robust growth immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic. Tariffs, rising producer costs, regulatory complexity, and changing consumer habits provide both challenges and opportunities for snack categories. According to Euromonitor, “Intentionality in snack consumption, influenced by wellness considerations, budget constraints, and social media trends, is a defining characteristic of US consumer behavior in 2025.” Brands must leverage the latest trends impacting consumer habits — including active snacking, experiential snacking, mealtime snacking, healthy snacking, and sustainable snacking — to win in the snack aisle.

*The brands mentioned in this report are trademarks of their respective owners. Inclusion of these brands in this report is not meant to imply an association with or endorsement from the respective trademark owners.

Food as Fuel

Snacks designed to fuel active lifestyles are expected to grow over the next year. According to GlobalData, “With growing awareness of fitness and wellness, active snacking is set to surge in 2025. This rise is fueled by a demand for healthier, purpose-driven snack options, as consumers increasingly integrate functional foods into their daily routines to complement their active lifestyles.” This trend is driven by younger consumers, with 24% of Generation Z consumers saying they are extremely concerned about their physical fitness and health, compared with just 10% of Boomers.

“Partnerships with influencers and experts help build trust in product claims and ultimately drive overall growth in this market” (GlobalData).

Many consumers snack following workouts to refuel their bodies with nutrient-dense functional foods. Portable pack formats can support on-the-go snacking to and from the gym. Today’s consumers are highly educated and informed about what they put in their bodies. Brands should be transparent with prominent on-pack claims, ingredient information, and scientifically validated benefits. Studio One Eleven® developed branding for Once Again Nut Butter. Gael Orr, Marketing Communications Director for Once Again, said, “They took written words on paper and then created a visual masterpiece for our brand. It became really clear to me that they were the right company for us to use because of their brand expertise, and they really gave me a lot of comfort and reassurance that they knew what they were doing.”





Experiential Snacking

Today's consumers want more than just great flavor when it comes to their snacks; they want unique and exciting experiences. According to GlobalData, people are “willing to pay more for products that satisfy them on a more experiential level.” A 2024 Euromonitor Voice of the Consumer survey found that 22% of consumers snacked out of boredom, up from just 12% in 2023. Euromonitor notes, “As consumers increasingly seek out snacks for mood occasions, companies are responding by offering multisensory experiences that blend unique flavors and textures.” This includes sweet & spicy and sweet & savory flavor combinations, as well as more unique and specific spice ingredients. New snack product launches with a spicy attribute grew 45% from 2023 to 2024. While many consumers are interested in unique experiences, some still favor the familiar. Brands can appeal to a broad audience by combining unexpected and recognizable flavors to create something special but accessible.

**“The value of experience continues to shape opportunities for new flavors and tastes”
(Euromonitor).**

Brands are collaborating on co-branded product fusions that are unexpected and interesting. These products can generate media buzz and drive social media engagement. Packaging can also play a key role in creating a unique consumer experience. Custom pack forms, unique bottle shapes, and Insta-worthy brand design can help brands create unique and memorable snacking experiences. Studio One Eleven's team of structural designers, engineers, and branding experts develops engaging, impactful, and exciting packaging solutions that elevate snack brands and win with consumers.

Snacks as Meals

People are increasingly turning snacks into meals. According to GlobalData, “This trend is gaining traction as busy lifestyles, flexible work schedules, and health-conscious behaviors drive demand for quick, convenient, and balanced food options. Snacks are no longer just indulgent treats, they are evolving into versatile, meal-like products designed to fuel various parts of the day.” Today’s consumers want more satisfying snacks that fit into their busy lifestyles, including protein-packed, nutrient-rich, and plant-based options. As younger generations move away from cooking, they are also seeking snack alternatives for traditional meals.

**“The return to the workplace is driving consumer demand for meal snackification”
(GlobalData).**

Pack design can help consumers enjoy snacks as meals. Single-serve sizes and individually packaged snacks help preserve freshness until they are ready to be enjoyed. Portable formats designed for eating on-the-go — including packages that are smaller (or right-sized), lighter weight, easily resealable, spillproof, and more — make it easy for people to enjoy snacks in their office, at the park, in the car, and everywhere in between. With over 50,000 components available and a vast network of global suppliers, Berlin Packaging can find the perfect packaging solution for any snack product.





Healthy Snacking

There is no doubt that health and wellness are key trends influencing every food category, including snacks. The rise of GLP-1 drugs is altering people's diets, with Euromonitor noting, "Foods that are typically consumed as a 'permissible indulgence' – often low in nutritional value – may be less appealing to those using GLP-1 medication." A focus on holistic wellness is also playing a role. According to GlobalData, "Consumers now seek snacks that promote relaxation, mental clarity, or mood enhancement." And functional benefits that promote gut health, heart health, immune support, and other health concerns remain popular. While health-consciousness is on the rise, snack brands can't lose sight of product enjoyability and must balance health benefits with appealing tastes and textures.

62% of consumers are always / often influenced by how a food / drink product or service impacts their health and wellbeing (GlobalData).

Clean label package design supports a health-focused positioning. A recent Journal of Marketing [study](#) of 1,300 packages in the largest supermarket chain in the U.S. found that consumers often associate minimal package design with premium or "clean" products with higher quality or fewer ingredients. However, there is an art to maximizing the impact of your minimal design. It is essential to work with brand and structural designers who understand the nuances of minimal design. Smart technology, like on-pack QR codes, can help inform consumers about a product's health benefits, directing people to a company's website where they can learn more about ingredients, claims, and credentials.

Sustainable Snacking

Sustainability remains one of the most significant trends impacting the CPG industry, including food categories. According to NielsenIQ, 92% of consumers say sustainability is important when choosing a brand today. Consumers want eco-conscious snacks that have responsible ingredient sourcing, sustainable ingredient alternatives, environmentally friendly packaging solutions, and more. GlobalData notes, snack brands have struggled recently because “key ingredient prices, such as cocoa, sugar, and olive oil, have experienced extreme fluctuations due to factors like climate change, global supply-demand imbalances, and policy changes.” This volatility has added to the urgency for sustainable practices within the snack industry.

**“Guilt-free indulgence means not only healthier snacks but also more sustainable ones”
(Euromonitor).**

Demand for sustainable packaging is as high as ever, including containers and closures made with recycled or recyclable materials, refill models, and lightweight solutions with reduced carbon footprint. Innovations are being introduced in mono-material pouches and recyclable plastic films. Transparency and tangible sustainability claims and metrics can aid confused consumers. Berlin Packaging’s sustainability team conducts lifecycle analyses (LCA) to help our customers quantify their product’s environmental impact over the course of its entire lifecycle.





Summary

It takes more than great taste to appeal to today's consumers. Snack brands must address changing consumer behaviors and attitudes with products that incorporate health and fitness benefits, unique flavors, satiety, and sustainability.

Food as Fuel - Growing awareness and concern about physical fitness, especially among younger consumers, is driving demand for snacks that support active lifestyles. Brands should utilize on-the-go packaging formats to capitalize on this growing trend.

Experiential Snacking – Consumer demand for unique product experiences is influencing product innovation in the snack industry, including unexpected flavors and textures. Custom packaging, unique forms, and Insta-worthy brand design can help brands create special and memorable snacking experiences.

Snacks as Meals – Busy lifestyles, flexible work schedules, and health-conscious behaviors have consumers seeking fulfilling snacks as an alternative to traditional meals. Single-serve sizes, individually packaged snacks, and portable formats allow snacks to be enjoyed as meals anytime, anywhere.

Healthy Snacking – Increased consumer focus on health – including the rise of GLP-1 drugs and a more holistic approach to wellness – is impacting how people snack. Minimal package design can suggest a “clean” product with fewer, healthier ingredients.

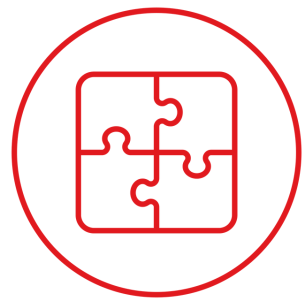
Sustainable Snacking – Consumers want to live more sustainably, driving demand for eco-conscious snacks that have responsible ingredient sourcing, sustainable ingredient alternatives, and environmentally friendly packaging solutions. This includes recycled or recyclable materials, refill models, and lightweight solutions with reduced carbon footprint.

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**Best Elements of
a Manufacturer**

+



**Distribution
& Logistics**

+



**Value-Added
Specialty Services**

Value-Added Specialty Services

Our compelling suite of solutions addresses your needs and unlocks profit.

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- Quality Service Management
- Global Sourcing & Services
- Inventory Management Services
- Sustainable Packaging Solutions
- Customer Portal Efficiency

