

SNACKS



“Shifted routines and added daily stresses brought on by the pandemic caused many to seek snacks as a source of comfort, resulting in boosted sales in recent years. To maintain momentum, brands will need to keep ties to the familiar, while also addressing consumer shifts surrounding reemerging health priorities, interest in ethical claims and cravings for adventure.”

— Anna Fabbri, Flavor and Ingredient Trends Analyst

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

CONSUMERS SEEK TIES TO THE FAMILIAR

Almost half of consumers (47%) enjoy snacks that are a twist on the familiar. Weaving in emerging flavors with well-established ingredients will allow consumers to seek adventure while still having ties to familiar comforts. Both are highly coveted after extended periods of pandemic-induced lockdowns, mandates and financial uncertainties.

2

HEALTH PRIORITIES POINT TO INGREDIENT INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

More than two in five consumers are seeking more snacks with functional benefits. However, flavor is the most important attribute for consumers when choosing a snack. Branding snacks as BFY may initially attract consumers; however, quality flavors will be essential to repeat purchases.

3

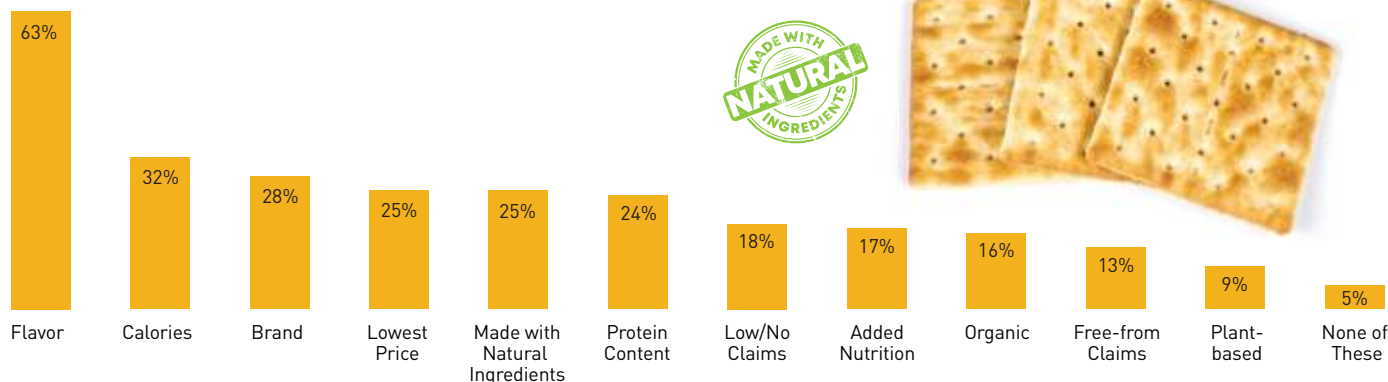
CONSUMER AWARENESS LAGS FOR MANY EMERGING FLAVORS AND INGREDIENTS

While the majority of consumers are interested in snack flavors from well-established international cuisines, awareness of authentic international ingredients remains relatively niche. Utilize clear terminology and draw analogies to familiar flavors to boost awareness and encourage ingredient trial.

INCORPORATE INDULGENT FLAVORS IN BETTER-FOR-YOU SNACK FORMATS

The global pandemic has highlighted the importance of both physical and mental health, and companies across industries have begun innovating to deliver at-home health solutions for consumers. Formulating with ingredients associated with wellness will attract the growing health-conscious consumer base. While health is growing in importance, the majority of consumers indicate that flavor trumps health-related attributes when it comes to snacks. Pairing familiar flavors, like cheese, with alternative snack bases will help to ensure that the snack delivers on consumers' favorite flavors and contributes toward their health goals.

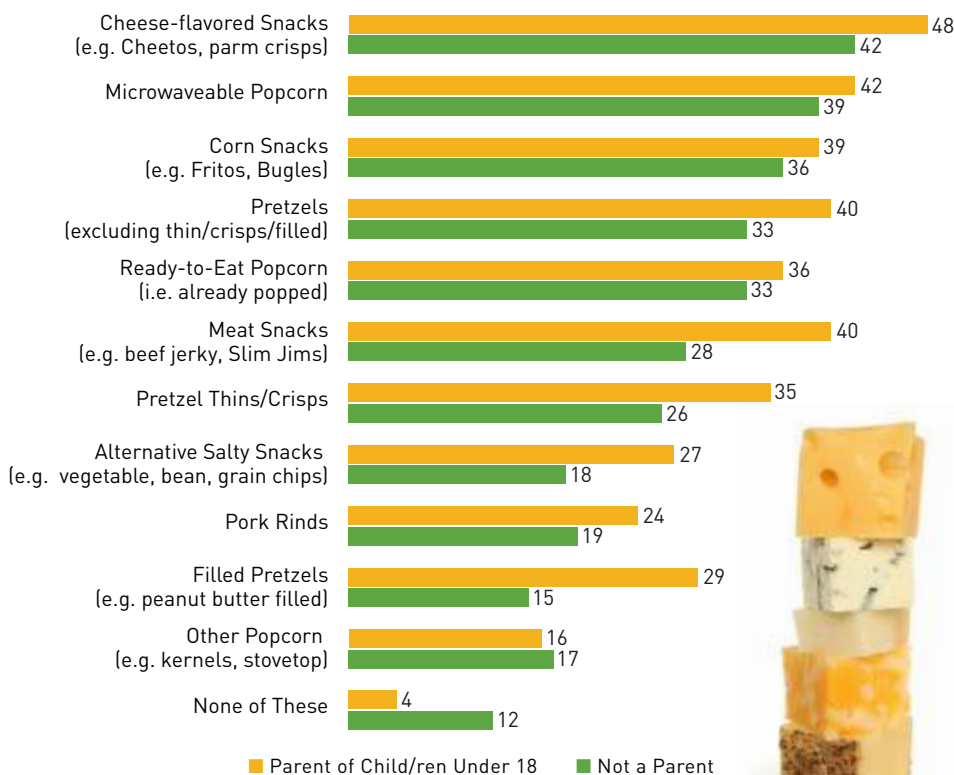
“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN CHOOSING A SNACK?
PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.”



PARENTS SEEK PREMIUM SNACKS THAT SERVE A PURPOSE IN THEIR BUSY LIFE

Parents are highly engaged in the snacking category, and they are consumers of a broad variety of snacks. Parents significantly overindex in the consumption of meat snacks, alternative salty snacks (e.g. chips/puffs made from vegetables) and filled pretzels (e.g. peanut butter filled). These snack types offer convenience, function and enjoyment to help fuel busy parents throughout their day. Incorporating elevated flavor preparations, like roasted or grilled, can help entice parents by merging gourmet cues with on-the-go convenience.

"WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SALTY SNACKS HAVE YOU EATEN IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." *In percent*



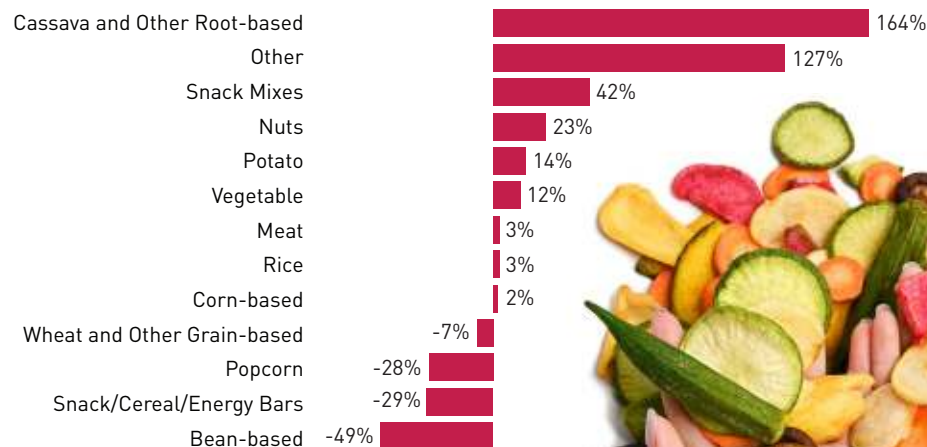
Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

ALTERNATIVE INGREDIENTS SOAR IN SNACK LAUNCHES

Alternative snack ingredients, like cassava, are skyrocketing within new snack launches.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN SNACK PRODUCT LAUNCHES

By snack subcategories, 2017-21



Source: Mintel GNPD.



14%

of nonparents hold the "super snacker" title—those who snack more than four times per day. But parents tend to be some of the most engaged snacking consumers.

25%

of parents are considered "super snackers," and many consumers, especially moms, are drawn to snacks with a twist on the familiar.

43%

of nonparents want more snacks with functional benefits (e.g. improves heart health).

58%

of moms—given the high frequency in which they snack—want snacks that provide function, like satiation, immunity and gut health. High interest in alternative snack ingredients, including real cheese, avocado and chickpea, suggest an innovation opportunity to market toward this consumer group.



CLASSIC SALTY SNACKS LEAD IN CONSUMPTION

When examining consumers' salty snack consumption, well-established salty snacks (e.g. cheese-flavored snacks, corn snacks, pretzels, popcorn) still top the charts. Familiar snacks can be used as launch points for new flavors and ingredients. For emerging ingredients, growth opportunity may also lie in offering comforting flavor profiles to encourage consumer experimentation with new snack types.

"WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SALTY SNACKS HAVE YOU EATEN IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." *Top five, in percent*



44%

Cheese-flavored



37%

Corn



36%

Pretzels



34%

Ready-to-Eat Popcorn



32%

Meat

Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

Avocado, which grew 10% as an ingredient on U.S. menus from Q2 2018-21, is an appealing snack ingredient for many consumers. Millennials and Gen X consumers outpace the general population in avocado interest. Avocado and avocado oil are nutrient rich and have a relatively neutral flavor profile, which has encouraged innovative ingredient pairings.



INTERNATIONALLY INSPIRED CHEESES HAVE POTENTIAL TO SUCCEED IN SNACKS, BUT INGREDIENT EDUCATION IS NEEDED

Real cheese as a snack ingredient resonates with the majority of consumers and especially with consumers over 45 years old. Although interest is high, a knowledge gap currently exists amongst different cheese varieties. By leveraging enticing, relatable product descriptions, brands can encourage consumers to explore less-frequently known flavors and ingredients. Many consumers are seeking a twist on the familiar that international cheeses offer, but it is vital that brands draw a clear connection to the "familiar" when utilizing new flavors and ingredients.



While cheese flavors like cheddar have long been popular within the snacking category, specialty cheeses are beginning to become mainstream with consumers.

Thanks to online social media trends, specialty cheeses like feta have been hurled into the spotlight.

61%

OF CONSUMERS ARE INTERESTED IN TRYING REAL CHEESE IN A SNACK.

5%

GROWTH OF FETA CHEESE ON U.S. MENUS FROM Q2 2018-Q2 2021.



55%

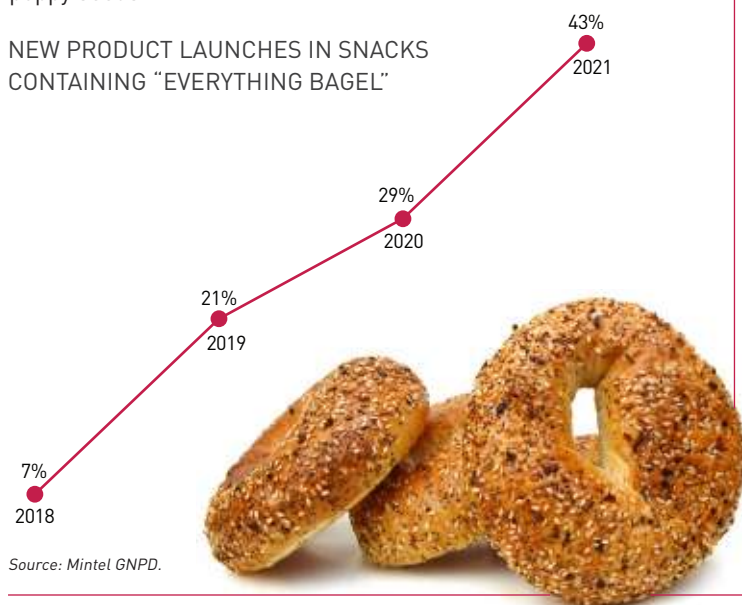
HAVE EITHER TRIED OR ARE INTERESTED IN TRYING HOT HONEY AS A SNACK FLAVOR. THIS FLAVOR HAS GROWN DIRECTIONALLY ON U.S. MENUS FROM Q2 2018-Q2 2021 AND OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR SNACK BRANDS TO INCORPORATE TRENDY FLAVORS FROM DISHES. MORE THAN HALF OF CONSUMERS SEEK SNACKS WITH FLAVORS FROM OTHER FOODS. CONSUMERS APPRECIATE FAMILIAR FLAVORS AND ENJOY SNACKS WITH WELL-ESTABLISHED AND OFTENTIMES NOSTALGIC FLAVORS, LIKE FRENCH ONION AND PIZZA. CO-BRANDING IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMBINE UNIQUE OR SPECIFIC FLAVORS FROM POPULAR DISHES.



ALTERNATIVE SNACK BASES TAP INTO FAN FAVORITE FLAVORS

Many brands have integrated a fan favorite flavor—everything bagel—to elevate healthier snack bases. As the name implies, everything bagel mimics the multidimensional bagel variety, consisting of sesame seeds, sea salt, garlic, minced onion and poppy seeds.

NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES IN SNACKS CONTAINING “EVERYTHING BAGEL”

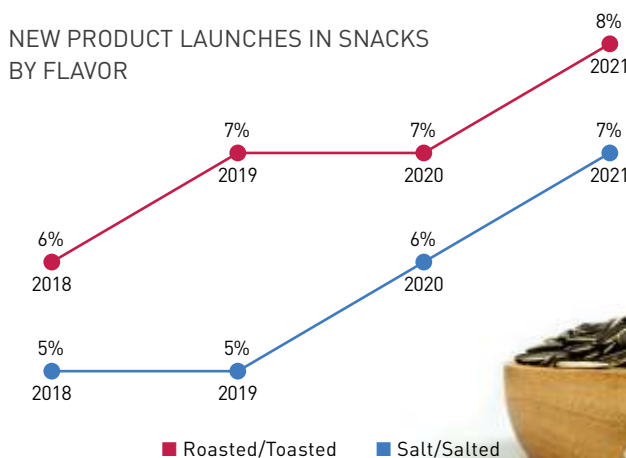


Source: Mintel GNPD.

ELEVATED PREPARATIONS CUE ELEVATED QUALITY

Specifying the preparation method communicates quality and adds excitement to familiar flavors. Analysis of GNPD snack launches by flavor from 2018-21 reveals the growing share of launches with roasted/toasted and salted claims. Intermingling emerging ingredients with gourmet preparations creates ample opportunities to create sophisticated, dynamic snack flavors.

NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES IN SNACKS BY FLAVOR

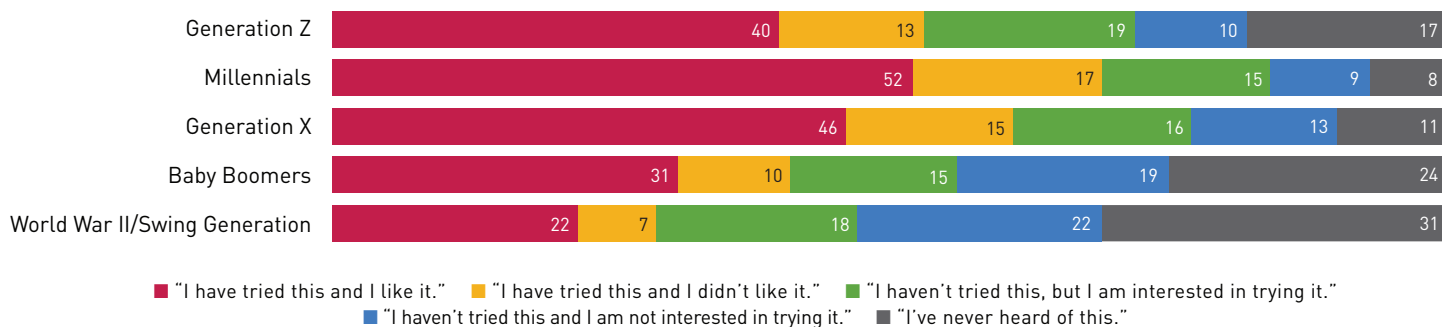


Source: Mintel GNPD.

THE SNACK AISLE IS HEATING UP

Younger consumers lead consumer interest in many extreme flavor profiles. Hot pepper challenges, which consist of consumers filming themselves eating chili peppers rated high on the Scoville scale, have been trending on social media, highlighting consumers' excitement around bold, daring flavors. 60% of Gen Zs and 67% of Millennials have either tried and liked or would like to try chile lime, demonstrating opportunity for both trial and long-term adoption.

EXPERIENCE AND INTEREST IN CHILE LIME AS A FLAVOR IN SNACKS In percent



Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

SNACK FOODS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL STREET FOOD FLAVORS

Mexican cuisine represents the top international cuisine consumers are interested in trying as a snack flavor, aligning with overall international cuisine consumption.

Category players have begun tapping into this large consumer base by launching elote-flavored snacks. Elote, or Mexican street corn, consists of grilled corn smothered in a creamy mayo sauce, then sprinkled with cotija cheese, lime juice, chile powder and cilantro.



Brands can resonate with Gen Z and Millennial consumers by encapsulating the flavor of popular street foods in a snack food or by focusing on specific ingredients within popular street foods. Specific ingredients popular in Japanese street food have also been emerging, like sesame, miso and nori. Incorporating authentic Japanese essences into snack foods will allow consumers to enjoy some of their favorite international flavors within their home. Snacks inspired by street food from emerging cuisines, like South African biltong, are popping up in new product launches too.



58%

OF CONSUMERS ARE INTERESTED IN TRYING MEXICAN CUISINE AS A SNACK FLAVOR.

45%

GROWTH IN "MEXICAN" AS A MENU ITEM CLAIM ACROSS DIFFERENT CUISINE TYPES FROM Q2 2018-Q2 2021.

33%+

OF CONSUMERS AGREE THAT SNACKS ARE A GOOD WAY TO TRY INTERNATIONAL CUISINES, WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF INTEREST COMING FROM GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL CONSUMERS, AND INTEREST TAPERING OFF WITH EACH OLDER GENERATION.

BRANDS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF CONSUMER INTEREST IN MEXICAN CUISINE BY IDENTIFYING VARIETIES OF MEXICAN CHILE PEPPERS, LIKE ARBOL AND MORITA CHILES. YOUNGER MEN ARE HIGHLY INTERESTED IN SPICE-PACKED FLAVORS AND EXTREME SNACKS.

YOUNGER CONSUMERS ARE KEY TARGET FOR INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS

The younger, digitally native generations tend to be more privy to social media trends, allowing them to connect globally and gain interest and awareness in authentic international cuisines. The widespread interest in Mexican cuisine has caused many Mexican staples, like tacos and nachos, to become commonplace in the U.S. Younger generations are growing up in an era where certain international cuisines are widely known, accessible and mainstream, and there is comfort and familiarity in commonplace international cuisines. Brands should look to African, Jamaican and Indian cuisines. Despite a tumultuous past few years for the restaurant industry, these international cuisines grew in menu item cuisine type mentions on U.S. menus from Q2 2018-Q2 2021. Popular African ingredients, like biltong and cassava, are popping up in U.S. snack launches.



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POPULAR FLAVOR OFFERINGS

ASIAN

Baobab
Black Sesame
Bulgogi
Cherry Blossom
Edamame
Ginger
Gochujang
Kimchi
Korean BBQ Sauce
Miso
Seaweed
Sesame
Shiitake Mushroom
Sichuan Pepper
Sriracha
Thai Chili
Ube
Wasabi
Yuzu

LATIN

Adobo
Black Bean
Carne Asada
Chile Lime
Chipotle
Chorizo
Elote
Guacamole
Guajillo Chili
Habanero
Hatch Chili
Jalapeño
Lager
Mole
Piquillo Chili
Plantain
Salsa Verde
Sweet Chili

INDIAN

Curry – Red, Green, Yellow and Coconut
Garam Masala
Lentil
Tikka Masala

REGIONAL

Avocado
BBQ Sauce – Alabama Carolina, Bourbon, Mesquite and Applewood
Buffalo
Cajun Spice
Corn Bread
Nashville Hot
Sweet Potato

ITALIAN

Balsamic Vinegar
Italian Herb
Olive Oil
Pancetta
Parmesan
Prosciutto
Provolone
Romano
Salami

MEDITERRANEAN

Apricot
Baharat
Cassava
Dates
Figs
Harissa
Kalamata Olive
Pine Nut
Pistachio
Tahini

HERBS AND SPICES

Basil
Black Pepper
Cayenne Pepper
Cilantro
Dill
Green Onion
Sea Salt
Smoked Garlic
Smoked Paprika
Turmeric

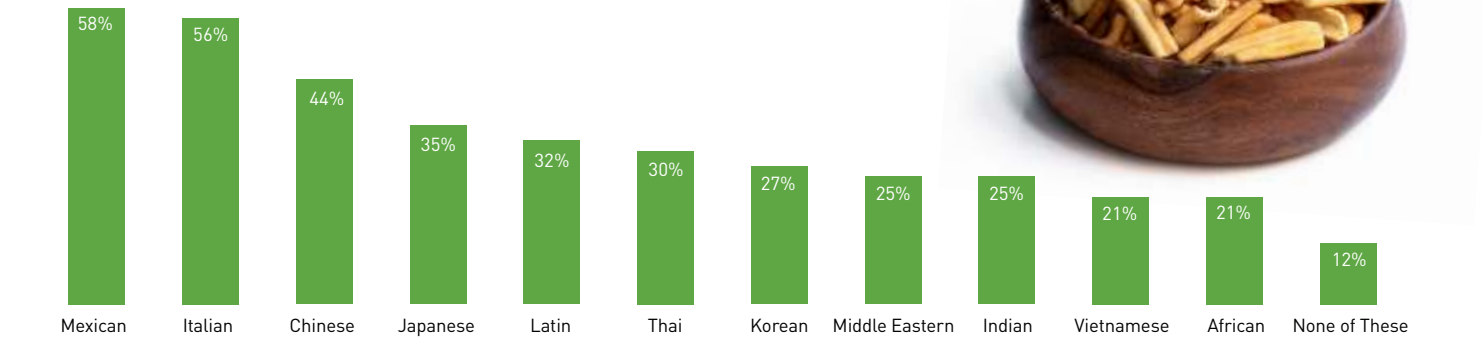
SWEET

Agave
Almond Butter
Apple
Brown Sugar
Cinnamon
Espresso
Honey
Lemon
Maple
Milk Chocolate
Peanut Butter
Strawberry
Vanilla Bean

COMMONPLACE INTERNATIONAL CUISINES GARNER WIDESPREAD INTEREST BUT CONSUMERS ARE BROADENING THEIR PALATES

The international cuisines with the highest consumer interest for snacks mirror the consumption trends in the U.S.—Mexican, Italian and Chinese. Innovations around these well-established cuisines should be focused on infusing authentic flavors to provide differentiation in the category. Given the widespread interest of Italian food, snack innovation opportunities exist with authentic, regional Italian ingredients like truffle or burrata. 64% and 34% of consumers, respectively, have tried and liked or are interested in trying these ingredients in snacks. More than one third of consumers are interested in Japanese snack flavors, and Japanese cuisine consumption, both at home and away from home, has grown 3% from November 2019-21. By fusing a popular Japanese ingredient (i.e. seaweed) with well-established ingredients (i.e. potato chips and salt), consumers have the opportunity to explore unique new flavors within mainstream snacks they know and trust.

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL CUISINES WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN TRYING AS A SNACK FLAVOR? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.” *In percent*



Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

To maintain excitement around these cuisines, brands can appeal to consumers by taking the familiarity of well-known international cuisines (e.g. Mexican, Italian, Chinese) and innovating with regional flavor varieties (e.g. Oaxacan, Sicilian, Szechuan).

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE INTEREST MIRRORS CHIP CONSUMPTION VARIETIES

More than two in five consumers of popped potato chips are interested in Japanese cuisine snacks. Popped potato chips have connotations with being lighter and healthier snack options, which is in line with the reputation of traditional Japanese dietary habits. When incorporating Japanese flavors and ingredients, brands should avoid highly processed snack bases to maximize their appeal to those who are interested in Japanese cuisine. The majority of consumers of plain or flavored tortilla chips are also interested in Mexican snack flavors.

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL CUISINES WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN TRYING AS A SNACK FLAVOR?” AND “WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CHIPS HAVE YOU EATEN IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS?” “PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.” *In percent*

Cuisine	Regular Plain Potato Chips	Regular Flavored Potato Chips	Plain Tortilla Chips	Flavored Tortilla Chips	Kettle Cooked Potato Chips	Stacked Potato Chips	Baked Potato Chips	Popped Potato Chips	None of These
Mexican	64	66	70	69	69	66	67	65	31
Indian	27	29	31	31	30	30	30	35	14
Korean	30	33	31	34	36	35	34	38	16
Chinese	50	50	51	53	54	54	52	51	28
Italian	63	64	66	66	67	64	64	63	28
Middle Eastern	27	28	31	30	32	30	30	35	13
Thai	33	34	36	36	39	36	34	39	20
Vietnamese	23	25	26	27	28	25	26	29	9
African	22	25	25	25	27	26	24	30	9
Latin	36	38	40	40	42	38	39	45	10
Japanese	39	42	40	41	43	42	41	46	24
None of These	11	8	7	7	8	7	7	5	46

Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

FERMENTED SNACK FLAVORS CAN DRIVE GUILT-FREE SNACKING OCCASIONS

The pandemic has piqued consumer interest in health and immunity, and immune-boosting foods can entice health-conscious consumers, especially Millennials. 54% of Millennials want more snacks with functional benefits, and 41% of consumers are interested in a snack innovation that supports gut health. While fermented preparation methods may not be widely accepted yet, some of the flavor profiles produced by fermentation are incredibly popular. For example, pickles can be produced by the process of fermentation. The current interest level for pickle as a snack flavor is incredibly high, especially amongst Millennial consumers. 67% of Millennials have either tried and liked or would like to try pickle as a flavor. Miso is also a product of fermentation that has grown on U.S. menus—14% from Q2 2018-Q2 2021. While 29% of consumers have not yet heard of miso, this fermented soybean paste is a staple in Japanese dishes and is expected to rise as Japanese cuisine gains popularity in the U.S.

“HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH, AND INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING FLAVORS IN SNACKS?” *In percent*



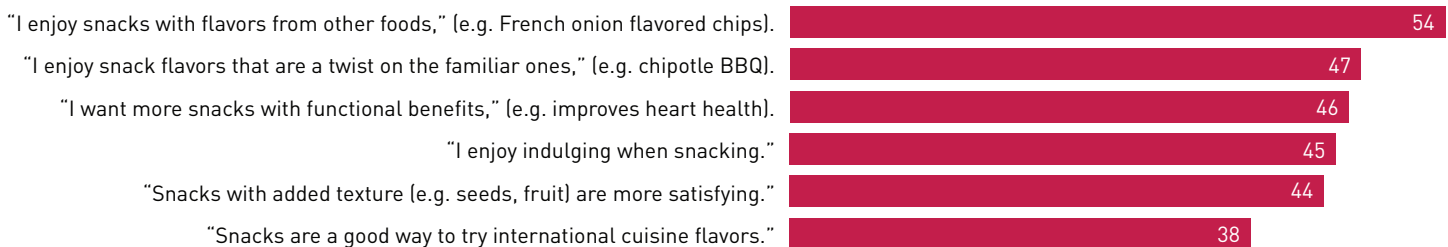
Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

CONSUMERS GRAVITATE TOWARD EASY-TO-RECOGNIZE FLAVORS

Pandemic circumstances have caused consumers to feel less in control of many aspects of their life. Familiarity has a strong pull on consumers and more than half are interested in flavors inspired by other foods, indicating a trend focused on trustworthy flavor combinations. Brands can address flavor trial barriers by fusing in an aspect of the familiar: pair new flavors with well-established snack ingredients or, vice versa, opt for familiar flavors in alternative snack ingredients.

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT SNACK CHOICES DO YOU AGREE WITH? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.”

In percent



Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

Altered routines and increased time at home have boosted snacking occasions, as consumers seek comfort, convenience and culinary exploration from their snack foods. With the time it takes to cook and clean up at home, many are seeking ready to eat snacks that offer convenience and functionality. Segments that offer satiety and bold flavor, such as meat snacks, have grown aggressively during the pandemic. Going forward, brands will need to innovate with bold, international flavors and alternative, BFY ingredients in order to stay relevant amongst Gen Zs and Millennials.

The pandemic brought upon financial woes for many consumers. Almost a quarter of consumers who earn under \$25K per year indicated they are eating salty snacks more often compared to last year. To avoid wasting money, lower-income consumers will opt for flavors that they are confident they will enjoy. As the pandemic-era relief programs wind down and inflation soars, value products should be versatile and familiar to offer a sense of reassurance in times of financial uncertainty.

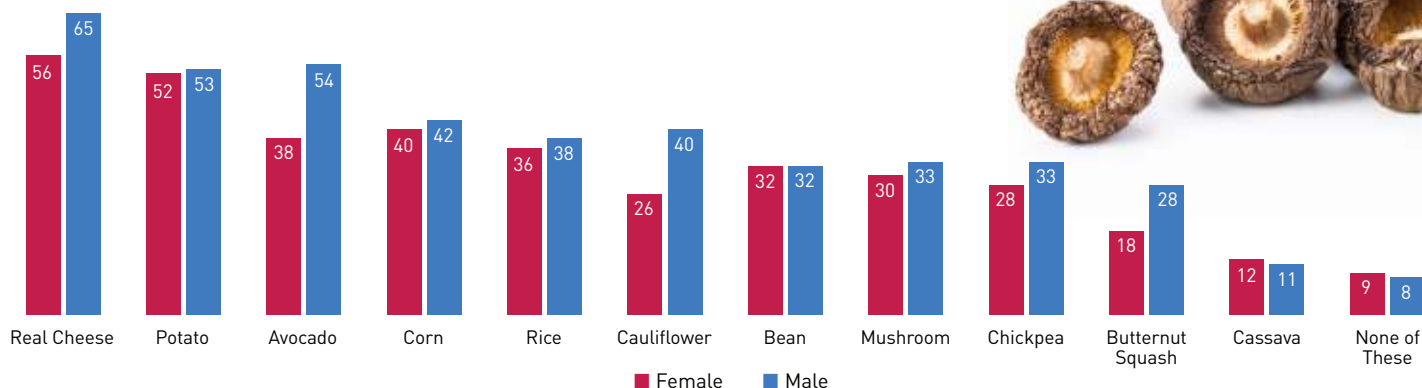


INTEREST IN WELL-ESTABLISHED INGREDIENTS SOARS; HOWEVER, CONSUMERS ARE SEEKING VARIETY TOO

The majority of consumers are interested in known and trusted snack ingredients, like real cheese and potato. Considering their broad reach, popular snack ingredients should continue to be a focus of innovation; fuse in trending flavors and ingredients to keep mature snack ingredients fresh and exciting. Consumers are looking to snacks to serve various purposes within their daily life (e.g. a source of satiation, comfort, a BFY option).

Men gravitate more toward classic, recognizable snack ingredients, like real cheese, potato and corn. Mainstream ingredients with a flavor twist can appeal to male consumers. While women also express interest in more recognizable snack ingredients, they are more broadly engaged with a wide variety of snack ingredients than men are. Women especially overindex in ingredients with authentic, fresh cues, such as real cheese, avocado and cauliflower.

"WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INGREDIENTS WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN TRYING IN A SNACK? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY." *In percent*



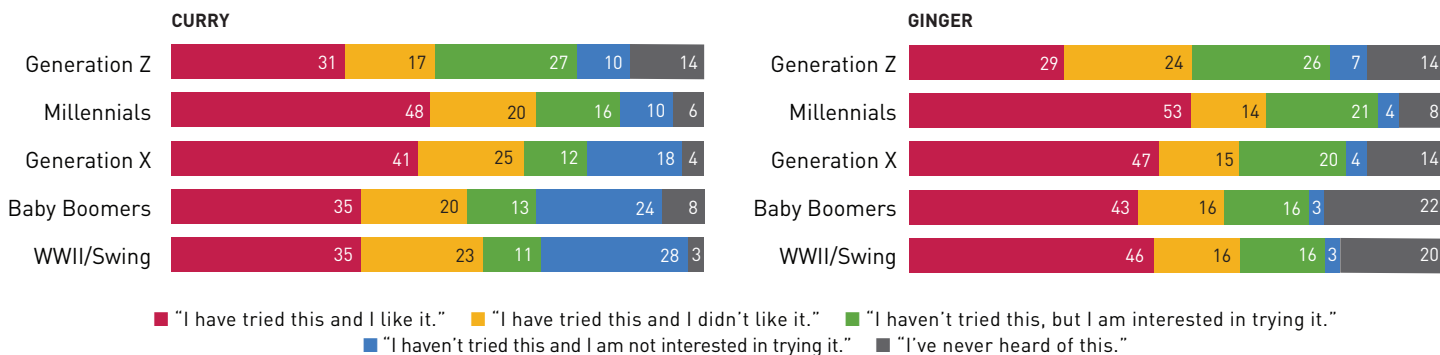
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CREATE INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR TRIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GEN Z

Gen Z consumers lead the interest for Japanese and Indian cuisines, however they underindex in experience with popular ingredients and flavors from Eastern cuisines, like curry.

EXPERIENCE AND INTEREST IN GINGER AND CURRY AS A FLAVOR IN SNACKS *In percent*

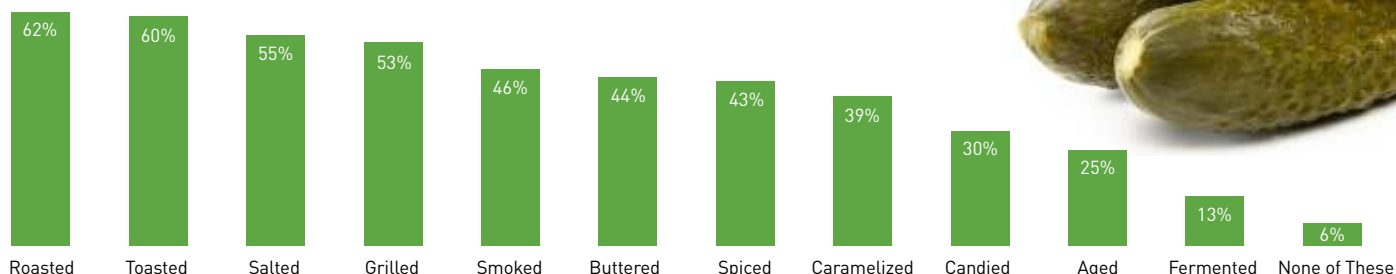


Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.

FOSTER PREMIUM CUES THROUGH ELEVATED PREPARATIONS

Specialized preparation methods offer a twist to the familiar, which is appealing to almost half of consumers. Familiar snack preparations, like toasted and roasted, garner interest from more than three in five consumers. These traditional preparations should be combined with unique ingredients to create complementary flavor combinations without becoming too niche of an innovation opportunity. Broadly appealing preparations are often linked to certain textures. As consumers seek immersive experiences, specifying preparation methods that cue textural experiences and flavors can enhance the eating experience. 44% of consumers agree that snacks with added textures are more satisfying. Fermented is a preparation method with potential for growth due to its natural, functional digestive benefits. Awareness and interest in this preparation method is likely to grow as almost half of consumers indicate they are seeking more BFY snacks.

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FLAVOR PREPARATIONS WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN TRYING IN A SNACK? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.” *In percent*



Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.



CONSUMERS INTERESTED IN BFY SNACK INGREDIENTS, LIKE BUTTERNUT SQUASH, CAULIFLOWER AND MUSHROOM SHOW HIGH INTEREST IN FAMILIAR PREPARATIONS, LIKE ROASTED, GRILLED, AND SALTED.



MOMS ARE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN HEAT-EXPOSED PREPARATIONS, LIKE ROASTED, TOASTED AND GRILLED, WHICH IMPLY DISTINCTIVE AND DELIGHTFUL FLAVORS.



DADS OVERINDEX IN MATURED PREPARATIONS, SUCH AS SPICED, AGED AND FERMENTED. INFUSING ALCOHOL FLAVORS, LIKE BOURBON BARBEQUE, CAN HELP ENTICE DADS WITHIN THE SNACK SECTION.



15%

GROWTH OF GLUTEN-FREE MENTIONS ON MENUS FROM Q2 2018-Q2 2021. CASSAVA IS NATURALLY GLUTEN-FREE, CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION IN BFY SNACKS.



WHILE GEN Z CONSUMERS HAVE MORE ADVENTUROUS PALATES FOR INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS, THEY TEND TO PREFER TRADITIONAL PREPARATIONS, LIKE SALTED, ROASTED AND TOASTED.



250,000+

CONSUMERS ARE INTERESTED IN MIDDLE EASTERN SNACK FLAVORS. TAHINI OR CARDAMOM CAN BE PAIRED WITH ROASTED AND TOASTED PREPARATIONS TO DELIVER EARTHY, WARM FLAVOR PROFILES.

BRANDS CAN INCLUDE COMMONLY USED HOME-COOKING PREPARATIONS TO CONVEY A PREMIUM AND GOURMET SNACKING EXPERIENCE

While highly desired by consumers, brands should be mindful that home cooking differs greatly from processing methods on an industrial scale, and subsequent flavor differences may arise from the alternative methods. Snack producers should ensure their process is optimized so that the desired flavor profile is achieved from the preparation.

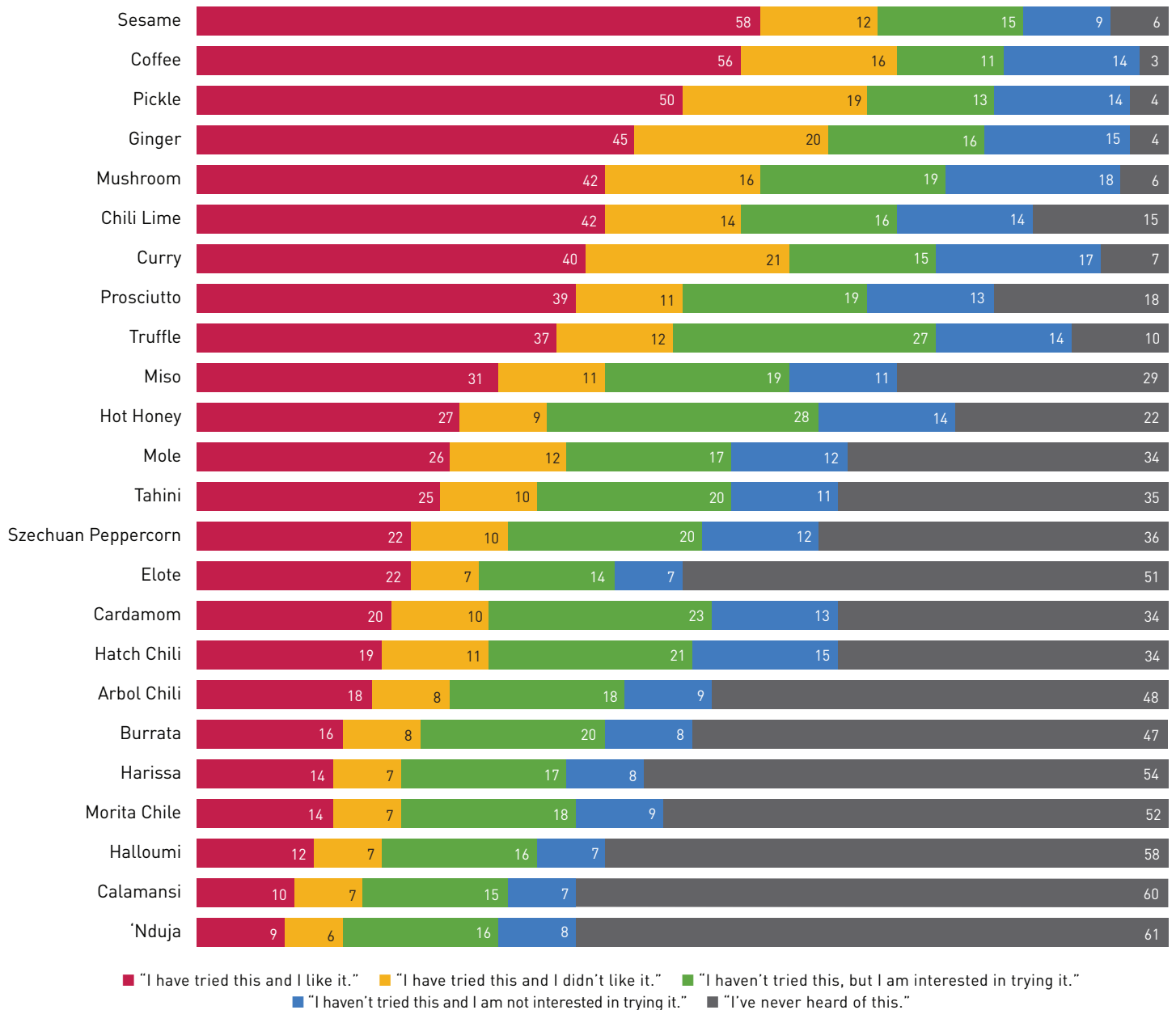
HYBRID WORK MODELS CARVE OUT A NEED FOR CURATED ADULT SNACK OPTIONS

While parents still continue to be more frequent snack consumers, prolonged hybrid work routines have contributed to an uptick in snacking among nonparent adults. Nonparent adult consumers overindex in positive experiences and future interest in emerging snack flavors, like prosciutto and pickle.



24% OF NONPARENT ADULTS—ALMOST A QUARTER — INDICATE THEY ARE SNACKING MORE THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

“HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH, AND INTEREST IN, THE FOLLOWING SNACK FLAVORS?” *In percent*



Base: 2,000 internet users aged 18+. Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2021.