

Snacks & Treats

Sweet or salty, everyone loves them

Image courtesy of Kyle Roxas, Pexels



Sweet and savoury snacks and treats occupy a massive space in the consumer mindset. From impulse buys through to being an absolute staple, snacks and treats are part of everyday life for everyone.

However, while there are many opportunities in this category and all its related sub-categories, there are also challenges. Staying relevant and the correct range selection is key. Manufacturers and retailers have to stay relevant to the evolving needs of their customers and constantly adapt to the changing tastes of consumers.

Speed at the checkout and multiple purchase points

Whatever your range and the extent of your offering, remember to create multiple point of purchase points throughout the store. The snack aisle can be overwhelming for casual browsers and those looking to shop quickly.

Targeted shoppers with a purpose may also tend to ignore whatever is not on their list. By creating different purchase points, you constantly remind consumers of their need or desire to snack, and you often increase your chances of alerting them to a new product launch or special by isolating it from the crowd.

Your snack categories should include salty snacks such as nuts, chips, popcorn, pretzels and other nibbly bits; sweet snacks such as chocolates, sweets, and biscuits; meaty snacks including salami sticks, biltong, and droewors; dairy snacks such as cheese wedges, cheese slices, drinking yoghurt, dairy-based smoothies, small tubs of yoghurt, and baked cheese twists; healthy snacks such as raw nuts, dried fruit

(with sulphur- and sugar-free options) fresh vegetables and dips; trail mixes (nuts and seeds have seen a big surge of interest); energy boosting or mood balancing products; and niche snacks that include Banting, low-carb, low-calorie, high-protein, low-sugar, vegan, and gluten-free options.

The current market

Last year, www.MarketResearch.com reported moderate value growth in the savoury snacks category. This was driven by increasing retail prices, as retail volumes declined. Production costs and delays, increasing

energy and fuel costs, and constrained consumers buying less has led to a sharp increase in product prices. That said, the report also identified some growth areas, saying "Local demand for peanuts and biltong is set to continue to drive volume growth in nuts, seeds, trail mixes and meat snacks, despite rising unit prices." It also predicted that niche categories were expected to see moderate






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CHICKEN BURGER PITA BREADS

WITH TZATZIKI, ROCKET, RED ONION
AND CHERRY TOMATOES



Ingredients

COUNTY FAIR CHICKEN BURGERS:

8 chicken burgers

TZATZIKI:

1/2 cup Greek yoghurt
1/4 cucumber, grated
10g mint, finely chopped
1/4 cup lemon juice
Salt and pepper

PITA BREAD:

4 large pita breads
1/2 bag fresh rocket
1/2 punnet of cherry tomatoes, chopped
90g pickled red onion

Method

Cook chicken burgers according to the packaging instructions.

To make the tzatziki, mix the cucumber, mint and yoghurt. Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Place the pitas in a grill pan and char on both sides. Remove them from the pan and cut each in half to form a pocket for the burger.

Fill the pita pockets with the chicken burgers, tzatziki, rocket, red onions and tomatoes.

 Prep time 5min	 Cook time 20min	 Serves 8
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Trendy Tip

Our recipe for chicken burger pitas with tzatziki, rocket and cherry tomatoes makes for an easy mid-week family meal.



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volume growth, indicating a rising interest amongst consumers in unusual, exotic, and innovative snacks.

MarketResearch.com also reported that there had been a noticeable decline in volume sales of plain biscuits in 2022. The report stated ...

“ Unit prices have been rising in the country, driven by inflation.

Global wheat shortages as a result of the war in Ukraine are also increasing the price of flour, which is used as a raw ingredient in most products in this category. ”

There’s no denying it’s a tough market currently, but smart category management can ensure that retailers come out tops.

Snacks and treats for every occasion

- Social snacking, impulse purchasing, snacks at home and at work – everyone does it, from health-conscious consumers to those who need a regular snack to meet their dietary or health management requirements.
- Snacks and treats play many roles in our lives, used for gifting and rewards, energy boosters and pick-me-ups, meal replacements and comforters.
- Mindful, purposeful snacking is also here to stay. However, nobody wants protein balls for Halloween – consumers will choose their snack preferences to suit the occasion. Ensure your merchandising covers the major holidays and occasions, from Eid and Hanukkah through to Diwali, Easter, Christmas and Halloween.

Image courtesy of Valeria Boltneva, Pexels



- South Africans also enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, from braaing and alfresco dining to sports events, as well as communal viewings of international sporting fixtures – and snacks and treats play a big part here. Savoury snacks, either served as a precursor to the main meal or as the main event themselves, tend to be salty and meaty. Savoury dairy, vegetarian, and baked snacks are also popular. Crisps are invariably served with a variety of dips, and finger foods such as frikkadels, samoosas, spring rolls, and chipolatas are firm favourites.

- Snacks and treats to replace a meal is not new but has become much more prevalent. Millennials (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012) are snackers of note, and Gen Z consumers are particularly fond of all day grazing instead of eating at set mealtimes. Gen Z are also extremely focused on the environment and sustainability. If your store is located near a university, secondary school or start-out apartments, your snacks and treats range should take this into consideration (packaging, ingredients, ethical sourcing).
- Consumers who are strapped for time, or who have run out of inspiration in the kitchen, rely on a multitude of snacks and treats to meet their nutritional needs. This can include everything from the ever-popular pie, cooldrink, and a chocolate combo deal, to protein bars, biltong, and trail mix.
- Smoothies and drinking yoghurts are a popular snack choice as they are quick and easy, and often have a number of health benefits such as probiotics, added vitamins, iron, and protein, as well as fresh flavours.

Labelling and marketing for snacks and treats

Clean labels refer to labels that are clear and easy to read, and which list all the ingredients in a product. Many consumers want these ingredients to be healthy and free of chemicals, certain artificial ingredients and additives, as well as too much salt, sugar, trans fats, cholesterol, and so on. More consumers are also actively avoiding environmentally unfriendly or unsustainable

ingredients. In addition to clean labels, attractive, easily identifiable, and recyclable packaging can make or break the success of a snack or treat. New packaging trends do suggest a move towards simpler, more elegant designs, however this is certainly not the case for all products and those targeted specifically at children tend to be bright and exciting for 'pester power'.

When it comes to marketing, new products that are clearly marked as such will attract shopper attention. Some shoppers will automatically try a product labelled 'new', and actively seek these out. Clearly indicated promotions and special offers always drive sales and are helpful for time-poor consumers who are rushing and who may miss these deals. Additionally, marketing products based on attributes like new or exotic flavours and health benefits can help entice consumers and drive purchases.

Snacks and treats for at-home entertaining

During the pandemic years people developed an interest in at-home entertaining. Although restaurants have opened without restrictions and dining out is again popular, the at-home experience can often be more affordable – particularly if alcohol consumption is involved – and it can be specifically tailored in a way some restaurant experiences cannot.

Upscaled snacks include gourmet and premium products, as well as those that introduce international flavours and products, including speciality crackers with grains, flavours of spice



or citrus; nuts with chilli and citrus flavours, and luxury savoury cracker packs. Merchandise these with dip options and complementary products. Consumers have a growing interest in Asian-inspired food, less common European offerings, and niche flavours from America.

Smaller portions, including bite-size and minis, are popular both from a mindful eating perspective and as part of tasting platters and at-home international experiences. There's something very appealing about mini snacks, such as mini burger sliders, samosas or pancakes. For those who can afford it, paying for quality and presentation is more than acceptable and these consumers will choose products that reflect both quality and care in terms of ingredients and production, packaging, and presentation.

Snacks and treats in a healthy lifestyle

Back in 2021 Ipsos (www.ipsos.com) noted that, "It is the sweet-toothed 25- 34-year-olds driving the growth" of the snacks category. This should come as no surprise. Consumer behaviour analyses over the last few years has pointed to the fact that consumers are beginning to look at mindful eating as a way of including their

favourite sweets, treats, and delicacies in their diets, without sacrificing their health. Instead of abstaining from all the fun things they used to enjoy, they now include them as part of a well thought out eating plan. Smaller portions, less frequent consumption, and guilt-free enjoyment are all part of this process that aims to make eating a physically and mentally healthy undertaking. We snack because we like it, and because it makes us happy. The trick for good health is to indulge mindfully.

Smaller snacks and packs

Stocking grown up snacks and treats in smaller sizes makes sense from both an affordability and a health/mindful snacking perspective. Aim for a good range of decadent or premium sweet treats and truly healthy snack options that offer great

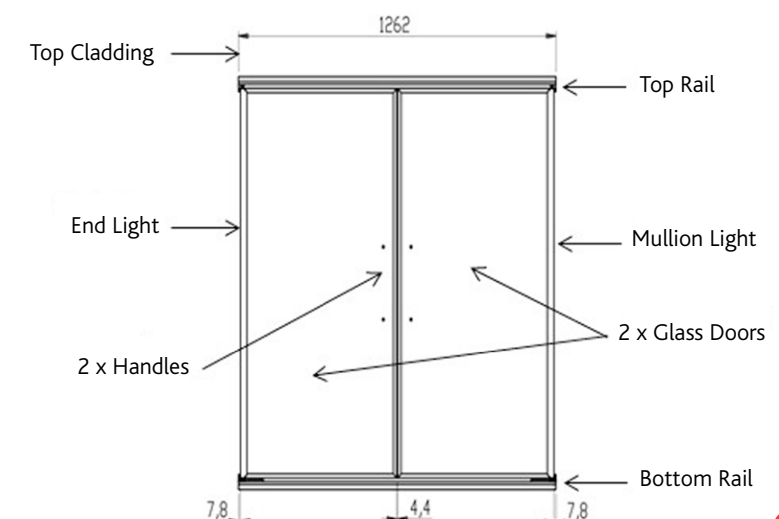
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Glass

- Safety toughened 4mm glass inside and outside standard on all doors. (Toughened to SABS standards)
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- Normal temperature doors are fitted with Low emission front glass and a clear rear glass, both safety toughened.

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Lights (LED)

Energy Saving LED 22W, 6000K, LED Light fitted on the inside of the architrave in a closed polycarbonate light diffuser.



nutritional benefits as well as extras such as mood or immune boosting ingredients and added protein, minerals, or even vitamins. Bite-size bars fall into this segment and offer consumers a treat without overdoing it.

Global trends in snacks and treats

World Bakers (www.worldbakers.com) listed several upcoming trends for the European and American markets:

- **Seasonal bars.** Capitalising on seasonal flavours keeps things fresh and interesting, such as gingerbread and warmer spicier flavours for winter, and citrus and berry flavours for summer. And pumpkin pie- or birthday cake-flavoured protein bars may just catch on in the South African market!
- **Prebiotic bars for gut health.** Improving and maintaining gut health can attract consumers looking for healthier alternatives.
- **Sweet and salty combos.** Apparently Americans are really enjoying sweet and salty combination



when it comes to their snacks. Then again, some people put Smarties in their popcorn, so this could be more than a passing fad. According to www.bakingbusiness.com, Mars has a Sweet n Salty pretzel range that includes a Chocolate Fudge Pretzel

and a Caramel Pretzel, while British confectionery and snack firm Pladis Global's Flipz brand launched Flipz Clusterz at the 2022 Sweets and Snacks expo in Chicago. The product combines chocolate clusters with salted pretzel pieces and caramel in a sweet and salty flavour fest.

Vegan is growing. Vegan or plant-based snack options are growing. As consumer interest develops, so too does the R&D into new, innovative flavours and ingredients. TH Foods launched its Crunchmaster crackers at the 2022 Sweets and Snacks expo, which combine the savoury flavours of avocado toast into one vegan snack.



Limited edition international flavours. Pickle or mustard flavoured crisps, anyone? They're a Swiss favourite, and while the SA market might be smaller, limited editions often spur impulse purchases. Walkers Food in the UK launched two limited flavours to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, Spit-roast Pork & Apple Sauce and Baked Cheese & Sweet Honey, "which were launched in what Sensations calls its 'poshest-ever' marketing campaign."

Micro snacks. These frozen snacks that you can pop in the microwave (or airfryer) are pub- and restaurant-inspired food at more affordable prices. South Africa does a good line in mini pizzas, but there is a whole world of frozen snacks and desserts to be investigated and on which retailers and wholesalers can capitalise.

Gluten-free, sugar-free biscuit ranges. Niche and speciality diets are becoming more common, and snack and treat manufacturers are responding accordingly.

New twists to old favourites. Mint and Snickerdoodle are two new Oreo flavours that have recently launched in response to consumers looking for new flavours and experiences.



Non- high-fat-sugar-salt (HFSS) snacks. Mondelez UK announced last year that it is launching eight new non-HFSS products. The company says these are aimed at consumers who are choosing to snack mindfully and manage their overall diet.



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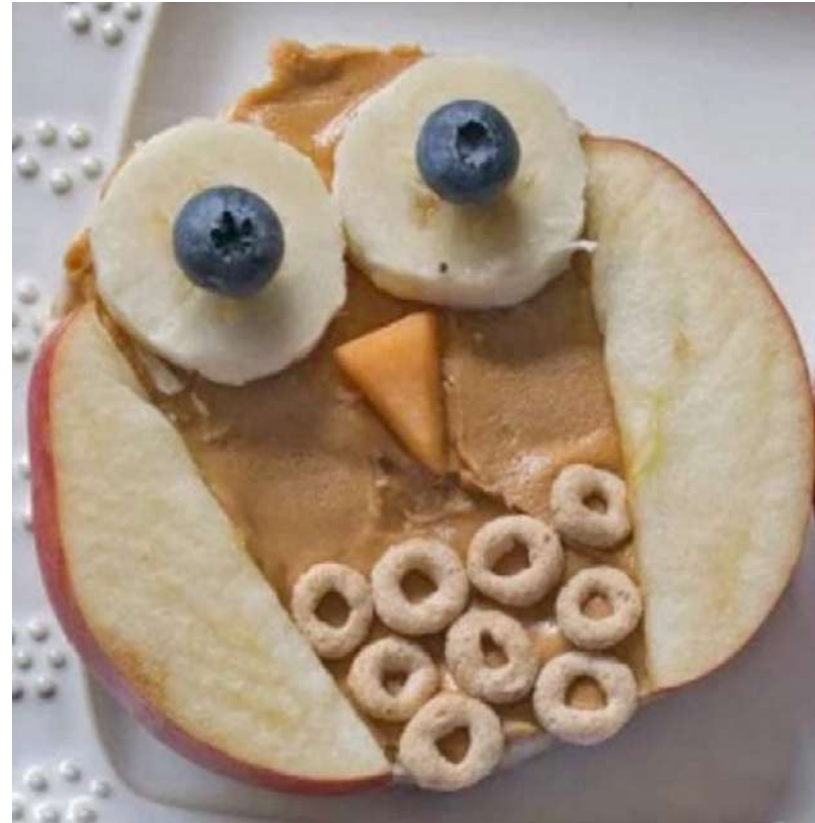
Back to School

As every parent or caregiver knows, this is a sub-category that offers so much scope. There is a fine line between healthy snacks to keep children fed, energised, alert, and healthy, and those tasty treats that make sports days fun and aftercare bearable. Firm favourites on the tasty treats side include mini chocolate bars, fruit-flavoured chewy sweets, sour candies and chews, soft gummies, marshmallows, and lollipops. It is important to remember that within this category, age plays a big role. Younger children may be allowed to eat sweet treats and snacks, but their needs will differ to those of older children. Softer, easier to eat sweets that don't pose a choking hazard and allergy-free treats are important to consider when managing your range.

When it comes to healthier snacks, fruit rolls spring to mind. An increasing number of consumers are looking for low or sugar-free options while also taking into consideration salt content, fat content, the preservatives used, and the type of sweetener, as well as colourants and other artificial ingredients and additives. Multicoloured fruit pieces made from fruit pulp, flavourings and colourants are certainly no longer acceptable to many health-conscious consumers (despite how much their children might enjoy these products).

Children are being exposed to international and exotic flavours from a much younger age and many have a tolerance or even a preference for spicy, flavourful products with bold, interesting, or unique flavour profiles. Sweet, salty, and sour remain choices for children of any age, and interesting fruit

Owl rice cake snacks_www.oprahdaily.com/life/food



flavours such as Marvellous Gummy Watermelon Flavoured Slices offer nice alternatives.

Pack size is a purchase driver in the Back to School Snacks & Treats segment. Individually wrapped small portions that can be packed in a lunch box or backpack and that can be consumed in one sitting are ideal. Often, bulk buying these individual products makes economic sense. In some instances, however, individually wrapped items can work out far costlier than bigger sizes simply due to the cost of producing and manufacturing that packaging. In this case, cross-marketing opportunities with items such as plastic containers, small Ziplock snack pouches, and even wax paper wrap are a good idea.

Convenience, nutrition, and price are the driving factors of back-to-school purchases. Take note of local public and private school dates and plan

your sales and specials accordingly. Remember to start your sales events early enough to catch bulk buyers and extend them long enough to suit those shoppers who rush in last minute.

In summary: Snacks and treats are alive and well

Despite the higher cost of living, more pressure on grocery budgets, and increased retail prices, snacking is alive and well. The 2022 State of Snacking Report from Mondelez International shows that snacking remains preferred over regular meals and are seen by consumers as 'affordable and necessary indulgences'. Convenience, portability, health, and nutrition are driving innovation, while self-reward, meal replacement, social engagement and comfort are four of the primary reasons for snacking. With its capacity to evolve and grow to meet the needs of consumers, snacks and treats offer excellent opportunities for retailers and wholesalers. **SR**

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