

THE EVOLUTION & REVOLUTION OF SNACKING





THE STATE OF SNACKING

While the pandemic certainly reshaped the eating habits of consumers everywhere, even before then snacking was growing in popularity. More and more people were turning to snacks as not only fill-ins between meals, but also as meal replacements altogether. The concept of three square meals is transitioning in no small part due to snacking – and it's likely to stay that way.¹

WHAT MAKES A SNACK A SNACK IS CHANGING

While snacks are primarily defined by item type and whether these items are consumed during nontraditional meal hours, shifts have occurred since 2018 with consumers increasingly defining snacks as small or inexpensive items.²

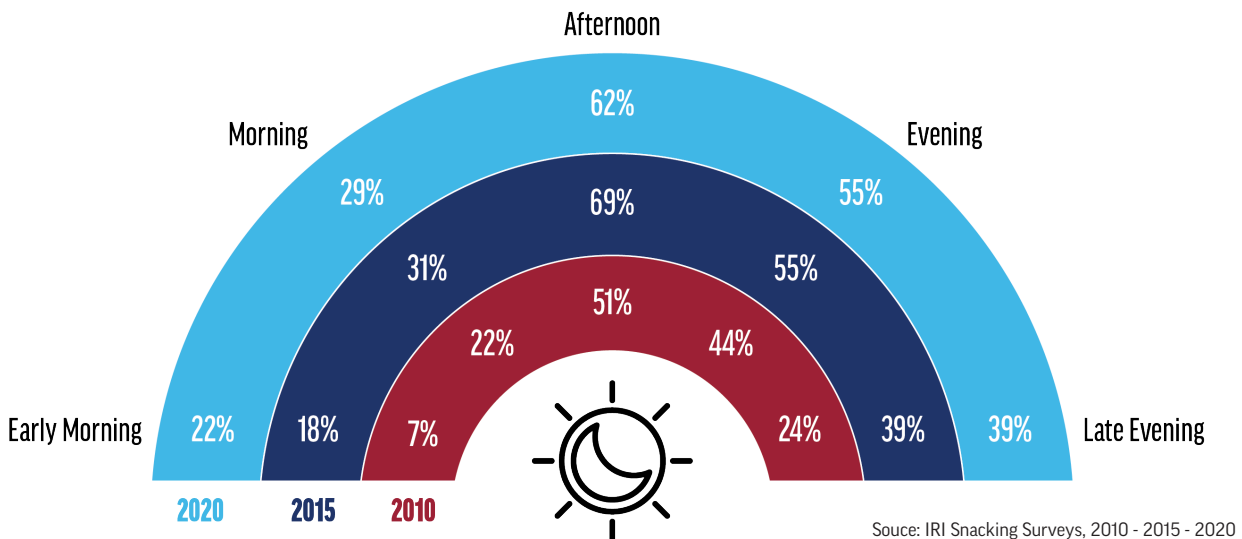


- Dinner is relatively constant but breakfast and lunch are being replaced – especially by women, and younger age groups.¹
- 44% of consumers said they often ate snacks instead of meals at home and at work. That was pre-COVID-19. Post-COVID-19, those numbers point to a big opportunity.³
- No longer are snacks “between meals” – snacks are meals. 54% of consumers snack for treats, 46% snack for substance.¹
- 66% of consumers say they're stocking more snacks now than they did before COVID.⁴



SNACKING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Snacking is shifting between dayparts. A recent survey found that morning snacks need to be more substantial with helping to replace full meals while afternoon snacking may need a boost of caffeine or energy to help them get through the day. Evening or late evening snacks tend to be more indulgent for people looking to finish up their days.⁵



IMPACT ON FOOD MANUFACTURERS

The pandemic has of course had an effect on the snacking category. It's useful to note that 25% of consumers are eating more comfort foods even though 33% say their eating habits have become healthier in the past year.⁶ Trying to stay ahead of the trends, meet the needs of your customers and continue to innovate can be quite challenging.

Nearly half of snacks are being consumed at home (49%) and are purchased from grocery stores¹ (as opposed to restaurants or other foodservice locations).

Though name brands have an established place, other brands are finding their way into purchasing decisions due to price and availability. In fact, 36% of surveyed consumers said they are trying new products and 25% are regularly incorporating private labels into their lives. Value, availability, and quality are the main attributes that drive purchasing behavior in the US.⁷

As consumers anticipate pulling back on spending, manufacturers will need to enhance speed to market/product development, with a focus on essential and value offerings in addition to their big brands.

TRENDING FLAVORS AND FUNCTIONS

Snack trends seem to be consistent with overall food trends. While there is a decline in on-the-go snacking likely due to changes in work-from-home situations and in-home schooling, the snacking trend is still expected to grow from previous years.⁸

Flavor will always be crucial. In fact, 52% of respondents in a recent survey said taste is more important than health in snacks.⁸ Mainstream flavors such as barbecue, salt, ranch and garlic remain the most popular, but pickle, rosemary, bourbon and Nashville hot are among emerging snack flavors.⁸ Other general leading innovations in snacking include:²

- Exotic flavors
- Plant-forward products
- High-protein edibles

Since 3 in 10 consumers are looking at the nutrition facts label more often in 2020, ingredients matter more than ever.⁶

Snack foods are emerging with nutritional benefits too. 54% want snacks to contain vitamins and minerals.³

Consider small portions of healthy snacks like mini grain bowls, hummus and whole grain crackers that can bridge the gap between meals—and satisfy the mindful snacker.

Diversified Shopping:

Shoppers themselves are becoming increasingly diverse. It's this growing diversity and greater worldview that encourages consumers to try new foods and cuisines.¹⁰



GLOBAL INSPIRED CHIPS & DIPS

Chip and dip bases are great carriers to introduce consumers to unique ethnic flavors because they are a blank slate and easily take on new flavors. These flavors are off the charts and cross the globe with international inspiration. The amazing part is how great they taste on traditional white corn chips that pairs perfectly with Mexican Crema or salsa.



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When it comes to new projects, our teams are efficient and open-minded. We can quickly innovate and work from a broad flavor description and then dial in the details for customer-specific needs. We are working through COVID and the changing market demands while still collaborating to create the best applications for our customers.

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Scott Barnes
Technical R&D Manager,
DFA Ingredient Solutions

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Source 1: IFMA CPP 2020, Wave one Snacking Grab & Go, August 2020
Source 2: Technomic, Snacking Insights – Smart Support Project, January 2021
Source 3: Snack Food & Wholesale Bakery, State of the Industry 2020: Meeting Snack Market Demands, July 13, 2020
Source 4: Frito Lay US Snacking Index Video
Source 5: IRI Snacking Surveys, 2010 – 2015 – 2020, April 2020

Source 6: IFIC, Year in Review Survey, December 2020
Source 7: McKinsey & Company, Perspective on retail and consumer goods, August 2020
Source 8: Euromonitor Passport, Snacking, 2021
Source 9: Food Business News, Snack Trend Evolution, May 24, 2020
Source 10: What's In Store 2020 Report, IDDB