

Snacking on the rise

Food
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SPRING 2023



White Paper

by **Richard C. Delerins, PhD**
Arunima Kumar

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Pairing music and culinary arts

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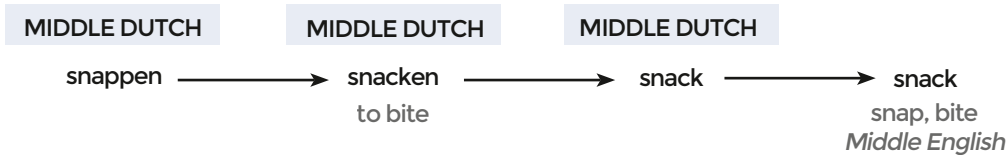
Part 1

Understanding Snacks & Snacking around the world

To uncover the different consumption practices associated with snacking, it is indispensable to understand the origins of the term and the act itself. In some cultures, the term arrived as late as the 90s indicating a relatively young space for the producers and the consumers alike. Dissecting the snacking moment in different cultures and languages thus unravels food scripts and entry points for snacks in the day to day lives of consumers. While snacking is an individual moment in several parts of the world where brands would benefit from individualizing their offer, it is a moment of collective respite in others where all the brand

communication would centre around family, celebration or togetherness.

Snack flavours have forever been inspired by pre-existing flavour combinations often found in traditional street foods of particular countries. Today, snacks have become the international vehicle of these street foods, bringing local and niche flavours to experimental consumers worldwide. Therefore, it is vital to factor-in various rationales, themes, origin stories and driving forces governing the growth of snacking as a product category as well as a dedicated mini-meal.



Culinary Cultures & The Meaning of Snacking

The word 'Snack' originates from 17th century Dutch 'snacken' (to bite). It means to have a 'mere bite or a morsel, eat a light meal', 'a share, a portion, a part' or a 'bite or morsel to eat hastily'. The translation of the word is not straightforward in other languages and each culture defines snack in their own capacity. Some current definitions of "snack" in the literature are based on the time of day of an eating occasion, type of food consumed, amount of food consumed, location of food consumption, or a combination of several of these factors.¹

However, despite this ambiguity in defining the practice, in most cultures, snacks or snacking have a collective meaning which is the opposite of a meal. Although snacking is still an occasion during which people consume energy and nutrients, it has been largely associated with eating alone, short eating periods, disposable utensils etc. as opposed to a proper meal.

A fourth 'meal' or snack is part of a traditional meal pattern in several countries. In France, the word 'snacking' was not utilised till the late 90s/early 2000s after which it steeply spiked up, as depicted by the Ngram graph. The concept was non-existent and 'goûter' is what came closest to a snack but it was (and is still) largely sweet, for kids and taken at a defined time. The adults have of course enjoyed the 'apéritif',

'aperitivo' and other terms for the evening 'appetite opening beverage and finger foods' in the Mediterranean culture for ages. The Latin 'aperire' from which the concept originates, literally means to open. In the context of food, to open your appetite before a meal. In fact, 'Apéritif Effect' is the term coined for when consuming alcohol prior to a meal (an apéritif) increases food consumption. This greater food consumption may result from increased activity in brain regions that mediate reward and regulate feeding behaviour.² This is the opposite of what a snack seeks to achieve.

The Hindi word for 'snack', nashta (नाश्ता), is the same as the word used for breakfast, essentially meaning something lighter than a whole meal, to break a fast or satiate hunger pangs. Much like goûter or aperitif, नाश्ता (the snack version) is taken in the evening along with a beverage, not alcohol but tea. A small meal between lunch and dinner, merienda, is customary in the Philippines. In Mexico, a midmorning meal (almuerzo) is relatively common. In the American and Anglo-Saxon cultures, "salty snacks, desserts, candy, and sweetened beverages" are popular snack choices unlike traditional foods in other parts of the world. However, 'snack' is sometimes used interchangeably with a quick grab-&-go meal. In fact, with developments in the nutrient contents, snacks have the possibility of becoming a meal replacement as the functionality aspect takes over.

Google Books Ngram Viewer



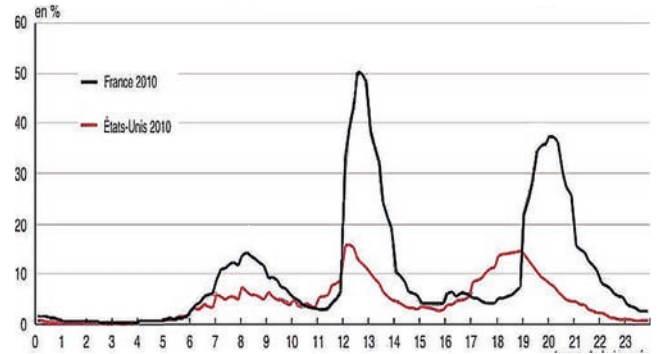
¹ What Is a Snack, Why Do We Snack, and How Can We Choose Better Snacks? Advances in Nutrition, Hess et al. (2016)

² Eiler WJ 2nd, Džemidžić M, Case KR, et al. The apéritif effect: Alcohol's effects on the brain's response to food aromas in women.

The Moment & Significance of the ‘Snacking’

The lack of a static definition is an asset in uncovering the various food scripts associated to ‘snacking’. There are different meanings associated with the eating occasion. Snacking can stem from different motivations such as hunger, location, social environment, hedonic eating. It is even influenced by eating companions.

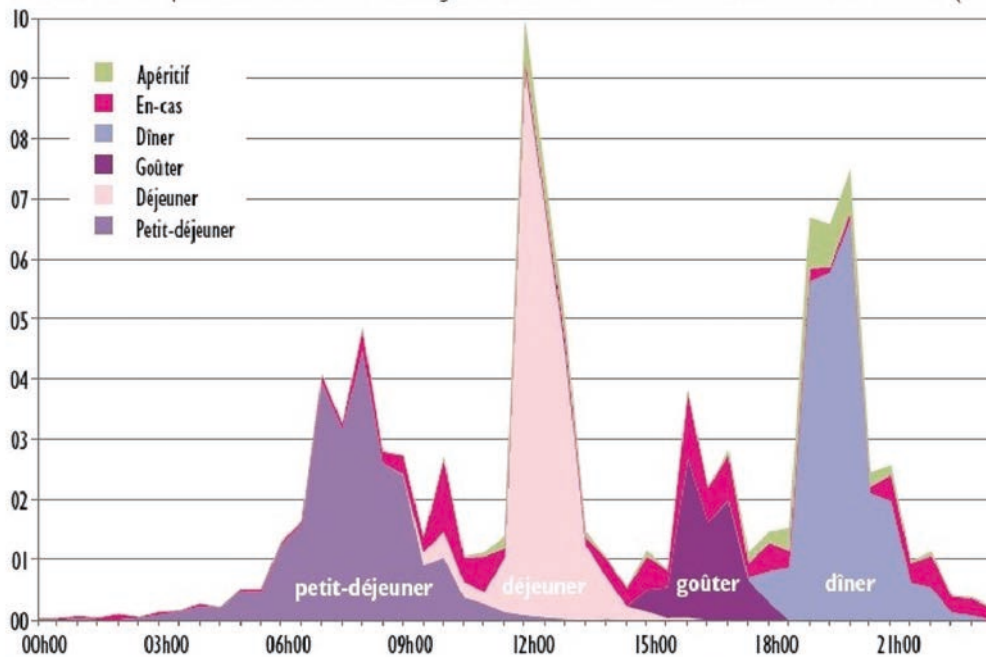
In the American/Anglo-Saxon hustle-culture, snacks are more suited for individual consumption through smaller, single serve products. Snack consumption may also be initiated because of celebratory social occasions as well as the availability of or desire for tempting food. Especially, in cultures where meals itself are celebrated or the eating occasions are well defined, such as in France, there is not much room for snacks. The ‘moment of snacking’ is rather a collective moment, a time to get together, catch-up, chit-chat and bond with close ones. There is most likely wine or another alcohol in the mix. In eastern cultures like India, snacks are accompanied by ‘chai’ (tea) without fail. ‘Chai-nashta’ is a match made in heaven. This is a moment of unwinding with family/colleagues/friends after a long day and rejuvenating before calling it a day at work.



It is interesting to note that defining eating occasions as snacks instead of meals or vice versa influences the overall food choices for a day. Consumers report feeling less satiated by a ‘snack’ than a ‘meal,’ even when the 2 eating occasions are isocaloric.³ This gives an insight as to why some cultures might be considered healthier than others, simply because of the food script associated to the eating occasion.

With a faster pace of life, and now, COVID induced blurred lines between work and breaks, snack breaks have become frequent, celebratory and functional across the world. ‘We’re in the middle of a snacking evolution. 47% of consumers eat three or more snacks a day, up from 43% in 2015. People aren’t snacking at traditional times. They are snacking all throughout the day.’⁴

The French meals have very specific times



Base: prises alimentaires des adultes normo-évaluants (18 ans et plus), en % du nombre total de prises sur sept jours de consommation alimentaire.
Source: CRÉDOC, Enquête CCAF 2007.

³ What Is a Snack, Why Do We Snack, and How Can We Choose Better Snacks? Advances in Nutrition, Hess et al. (2016)
⁴ <https://www.foodbusinessnews.net/articles/13814-the-future-of-snacking-flavorful-functional-and-full-of-opportunity>

The Geography of Snacking

Looking at the iconic, traditional snacks from around the world, it appears that processed snacks of today have been largely modelled on them.

For instance, **Papadum** is an Indian snack possibly from 500BC, widely popular in South Asia, made with either lentil, gram, rice, or chickpea flour that is baked into a thin, crispy cracker bread or sometimes fried. It can be consumed on its own, with pickles, or served with other dishes such as curries, when it's used as a utensil for scooping the dish up. Could this have been the original inspiration for a crisp? We might never find out, but it surely sounds very similar to the multi-grain based, baked snack variations now present throughout the world.



Biltong is a traditional South African beef snack that is cured in a unique way. Although it looks similar to American beef jerky, it is quite different in flavour and the method of preparation. The beef is dried with vinegar which cures the meat and adds layers of texture and flavour. It is seasoned with salt, pepper, and coriander, and the meat is much thicker than beef jerky. Originally, it was created out of necessity as a survival food when the Dutch settlers arrived in South Africa.



The Sicilian Arancini are big, golden rice balls filled with a savoury combination of ingredients in the centre. The fillings often include meat sauce with peas, dried prosciutto, cheeses such as mozzarella and pecorino, tomatoes, or dried capers. The balls are rolled in breadcrumbs and fried in hot oil. The dish was invented in the 10th century during the Kalbid rule of Sicily. The name of the dish is derived from the Italian word for orange, *arancia*, referring to the similarities in visual appearance and colour, so arancini means small oranges.



Although **elote** is a Spanish word for corn, it also signifies a popular Mexican street food consisting of corn on the cob that is coated with lime and mayonnaise, then rolled in crumbled cotija cheese and chili powder. It is also found in India in the form of 'bhutta', a celebrated street food, now an inspiration for several fusion snacks.



Korean egg-bread, **Gyeran-ppang** (계란빵), is a popular street snack which is a sweet, steamy, hot and fluffy little loaf of bread with a whole egg inside. With the rest of the world discovering and adopting Korean delicacies at a lightning speed, could this street food be the next inspiration for snack brands?



Snacking & Street Foods: An Inevitable Fusion

Street food has been a constant source of inspiration for flavours in case of savoury snacks around the world. Even though chips or crisps were invented by mistake, the flavours were very intentionally developed. The most basic and popular 'barbecue' flavour (excluding the classic salted flavour), was in fact the first flavour of chips sold in the United States in the 1950s by Herr's. In another part of the world, after some trial and error, in 1954, Joe 'Spud' Murphy, the owner of the Irish crisps company Tayto, and his employee Seamus Burke, produced the world's first seasoned chips: Cheese & Onion and Salt & Vinegar, flavours that have stood the test of time.⁵ The origin of these lies in the various street food traditions that have been passed on through generations. The rationale behind this is the ability of street food to make one feel comfortable and nostalgic. It allows one to have the taste of their favourite dish without having to go through an elaborate cooking process.

Over the years, brands have understood and leveraged this intel. Pringles introduced their street food edition in 2017 with flavours such as



Thai Green Curry, Mac & Cheese etc. Frito Lay's Cheetos followed suite with Hamburger, Pizza and Hot dog flavours in their Mix-Ups edition, offering the consumer a little bit of everything. Hand cooked crisps brand, London Flavours launched street food inspired crisps in the summer of 2018 which included street food favourites from around the world reflecting London's diversity such as Pho, Teriyaki, Sticky Ribs. 'We saw an opportunity to capitalise on the high consumer demand for adventurous new street food flavours and cuisines, infusing them into a delicious range of premium crisps.'



Cheetos, USA



London Flavours, UK



Pringles Street Food, USA



Beyond Snack, India

⁵ <https://www.foxnews.com/food-drink/the-surprising-history-of-potato-chips>

Banana chips from the streets of Kerala, India have gotten a global makeover. Sold as plain salted for decades, they are being reinterpreted in contemporary flavours to appeal to a wider market with flavours such as peri-peri, sweet chilli, *tandoori* and even *biryani*. Beyond Snack is a brand taking the lead on this front.

Snacking brands in each country highlight their local ingredients and dishes as inspiration to create snacks. For instance, fish skin and egg are the most popular new snack bases in South-East Asian countries. But today, these local snacks are being taken and appreciated beyond their places of origin. This is a consequence of the sudden popularity of street food, partially accelerated by pop culture (Netflix documentary, 'Street Food Asia') and partially by the 'wanderlust' spirit of the millennials who have no inhibitions in experimenting with new food and flavours from other cultures.



F. East Hainanese Chicken Rice Chips, Singapore

Looking back at iconic snacks from around the world which also happen to be beloved street foods further strengthens this interconnection. Trader Joe's Elote Chip Dippers, Kalahari Biltong and Poppadoms, a word play on papadums, are all examples of snack foods inspired from street foods.



Trader Joe's Organic Elote Crunchies, USA



Kalahari Biltong, USA

Part 1 - CONCLUSION

The basics of snacking give an overview of the nature & significance of the moment in various contexts. Understanding these allows identification of opportunities & windows for producers & manufacturers to set foot into. As a food category or a filler-meal, snacks are relatively new and therefore capable of breaking traditional codes of consumption while writing their own. Knowing what snacking means in different geographies is key to identifying untapped food scripts and delivering value to consumers.

A majority of packaged snacks around the world today are modern renditions of traditional street foods, a fact often overlooked by brands racking their brains for new ideas. While some have identified this correlation between street food and snacks to tap into new flavours, bases, textures, shapes- presenting their consumers with unique opportunities to have a holistic sensory experience through their products. Fortunately for others, there is still a plethora of unexplored avenues. With new technology, dynamic consumer preferences, emerging categories, novel business models and so on, it is a stimulating time to be a player in the snacking industry.



Part 2

Snackization: A Food Innovation Heaven

The last decade has brought in a wealth of innovations to the snacking industry. Evolving consumption practices are dictating the industry players to develop new narratives, new food scripts, new product formats and unleash creativity through various dimensions. Miniaturization is a key emerging theme in food in general, but snacking in particular is highly conducive to it. Traditional snack foods are

competing with charming fun-sized versions of regular foods that have been redesigned for munching-on in between meals. Individual packaging and pre-portioning allow the health-forward 21st century consumer to stick to a prescribed calorie limit allotted for snacking. Mindful eating has opened doors for functional snacks- be it gut health, skin health or even mental health, snacks are here to give it their all.



Brazi Bites, USA

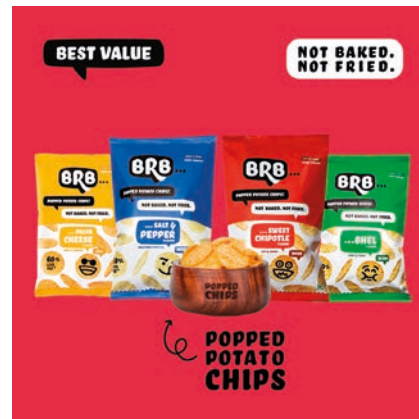
All About the Feels: Crunchy, Crispy, Textures & Flavours

The recent innovations in the snacking world are striving to indulge and tantalize all the senses of the consumer. The new snacks are not only visually striking & come in a plethora of fascinating flavours, they also pack that ‘crackle, snap and pop’. And it is not just about launching one product in a unique flavour. Success is rooted in line extensions. Adding new flavours and colours creates new products that get their own space, and the more likely shoppers are to see a brand, the more likely they are to buy it.⁷

While street food continues to be an inspiration for flavours, brands are tapping into locally beloved dishes to develop their offering. These new flavours are anything but generic, for example, ‘Green lemon and pink peppercorn’ or ‘Hot to Trot Habanero’. The names are as descriptive and as specific as they can get. There is no shying away from mentioning the source of origin of the ingredients, for example, ‘Himalayan Salt’ or ‘Alaskan fish’ or ‘Singapore Laksa’. This rather adds a dimension of depth and originality and in some cases, maybe even credibility.

And if the flavour is kept simple, then some other component bears the X-factor. Either the base would be something unconventional like flax seeds or cassava or even egg white or the texture/shape would have a twist, quite literally. 96 different flavours were identified in our sample of 100 innovations alone, some extremely niche. The fusion of sweet and savoury was another angle used to give a gourmet touch to the snacks. The ability to order snacks (& their trial boxes online) has enabled the brands to experiment more with their offering. Someone in the US can order a Japanese or a Korean snack box from platforms such as tokyotreat.com or myseoulbox.com and get acquainted with new ingredients. Brands get to test the waters before releasing a quirky flavour to the masses, especially with limited edition launches, festive packs etc.

For a heightened mouthfeel, complementing flavour, texture is a standout theme for the snacking family more than any other class of foods. 56 different texture types or adjectives were revealed in our analysis. While crunchy and crispy are the most common ones, sharp, hand-crafted, smoked, herbed, pickled, toasted, harvested etc. are some recurring ones. Popped Snacks are quickly emerging as the industry’s preferred choice of snack when it comes to developing Better-For-You snack products.



BRB Popped Chips, India



Goodfish, USA



Kettle Studio, India



Podberry, UK



Hopapops, USA

⁷ Salt, Sugar, Fat- How the food giants hooked us, Michael Moss, 2013.

Flavours (1)	Flavours (2)	Flavours (3)	Textures/ Descriptives (1)	Textures/ Descriptives (2)	Bases	Shapes
Honey Sriracha	Spring Wing Garlic	Mediterranean	Crunchy	Fresh	Corn	Chip
Sour Cream and Chive	Soya Corn	Basil & thyme	Crispy	Fiery	Potato	Crisp
Spicy-Sweet	Himalayan Salt & Pepper	Avocado-licious	Crackling	Bake, Mix, Sprinkle	Soya	Straws
Smoky-tangy Barbecue	Sharp Jalapeno & Cream Cheese	No-cheese cheesiness	Cheesy	Crumbs	Rice	Puffs
Ranchest Ranch	Tandoori	Oh-my-ghee	Oven-baked	Deli-Style	Cauliflower	Balls
Seaweed & Black Sesame	Spicy Mayo	Apple Cider Vinegar	Kettle-cooked	Grass-fed	Root Veg	Crackers
Basil & Garlic	'Makhani'	Spiced Bacon	Luxury	Plant-based	Quinoa	Wheels
Sea Salt	Magic Masala	Pumpkin Pie	Premium	Heirloom	Ragi	Sticks
Chipotle	Coriander	Honey Mustard	Hand-cooked	Flamin-hot	Lotus Seed (Makhana)	Waffles
Olive Oil & Black Pepper	Ripe Banana	Dill Pickle	Pop	Artisan	Multi-grain	Os
Buffalo Hot Wing	Sesame Butter	Truffle	Popping	Extra	Avocado	Julienne
Texan BBQ	Salsa	Hainanese Chicken Rice	Dried not Fried	Dangerously Addictive	Flax Seeds	Triangle
Roast Beef & Mustard	Bhel	White Cheddar	Hand-crafted	Crinkle-cut	Chickpeas	Pyramids
Cheeseburger	Blue Cheese Pancetta	Shrimp	Gourmet	Drool-Inducing	Broad Beans	Rods
Even Hotter & Spicier	Sausage Mustard	Feta	Puffs	Yolky	Lupini Beans	Pods
Sweet Chilli	Brebis & Cherries	Hummus	Beaten	Umami	Pinto Beans	Rings
Parmesan & Truffe	Smoked Paprika	Ricotta	Zingy	Umami-packed	Lentils	Twists
Sea salt & Balsamic Vinegar	Grilled Bacon	Tapenade	Exotic	Goodness	Chicken Skin	Ripple
Emmental Cheese & Onion	Onion Confit	Tarama	Spicy	wellness	Fish Skin	Crinkle
Lime & Pepper	Camembert	Tzatziki	Mature	Nourish	Egg	Matchstick
Betroot, Parsnip, Sweet Potato	Woodfired Pizza	Beef Rendang	Sharp	Real	Egg White	Fish
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	Yakitori	Singapore Laksa	Un-junked	Skinny	Popcorn	Abstract
Cured Cheese	Dijon	Plum & Sweet potato	Tangy		Sorghum	Whole
Chipotle Lime	Maple Honey	Singapore Chilli Crab	Herbed		Cuttlefish	Rectangle
Green Lemon, Pink Peppercorn	Mac and Cheese	Salted Egg Yolk	Pickled		Yellow Corvina	Square
Punchy Paprika	Mango Habanero	Mala Hot Pot	Multi-grain		Cassava	
Hot to Trot Habanero	Coconut	Tom Yum Goong	Smoked		Crab	
wasabi	Rosemary	18 Carrot Gold	Grilled		Bread	
Paprika	Hempseed & Hatch Green Chile	Miso	Thins		Peas	
Broccoli	Sriracha Lemongrass	7 layer dip	Toasted		Sourdough	
Dill Pickle	Sauerkraut	Kimchi	Crunchions		Kimchi	
Okra	Guacamole	Everything	Tropical		Cabbage	
Katsu Curry	Fried Rice		Popper			
Honey Roasted	Caesar		Harvest			

This 'Sensory Renaissance' can partly be attributed to the Asian forward-looking markets like China, Japan, South Korea which have been incorporating interesting textures in their beverages for a while now (for example, bubble tea). Similar memorable eating experiences are being demanded by consumers in the savoury snacks as well. This is being achieved by incorporating multiple textures at a time, layering up on textures, thinning the product, topping it with something unusual like seaweed flakes or playing with contrasts.

Back to the Roots: Retro-innovation & Superfoods

Revisiting the 'Bases' column in the above table reveals that there is a whole universe outside of the fried potato crisp. Other vegetables and grains are increasingly taking over as the key ingredient in savoury snacking. Part of the reason why is because of the enhanced consumer orientation towards choosing healthier alternatives in their day to day lives. If

the chip is potato-based, its 'baked, not fried' or 'kettle cooked' or 'dried not fried' all indicating the relevance of health for the consumer. Ancient grains & plants are getting a glamorous makeover in the form of premium snacks. Root vegetables, lentils, pulses, cereals, regular vegetables, beans, seeds - everything can be a base for the snack as long as it is a source of protein or fibre and healthier than the classic potato chip.



Skinny Lily, USA

⁸ <https://blog.taurarc.com/en/texture-a-standout-theme-for-2020>

By picking up local grains of their own ancestors or from other corners of the world and making them the star ingredient, snacking companies are 'retro-innovating'. What has been consumed for decades in some parts of the world is now being re-discovered as a superfood. For example, the lotus seed or water lily seed (makhana in Hindi) is commonly used in the Indian cuisine as an ayurvedic snack.⁹ It is rich in proteins, Vitamin B and other dietary minerals. Traditionally consumed as is or added to curries or salads, it is now being dressed up with salt and spices, wrapped in an aesthetic packaging, and sold as a superfood.



I Heart Keenwah, USA

Once a mere side-dish member of the weeknight dinner crew, today a 'super-cereal', Quinoa is undergoing the same transformation. It is being puffed up, thinned, baked, sprinkled and what-not to keep the snackers satiated without compromising on their health. Still underrated, Fonio, an African heritage grain-the continent's oldest cultivated cereal, is yet to be commercialized as a snack grain by the mass producers but it has already been brought to the public's notice by celebrity chef Pierre Thiam's business venture, 'Yolélé', selling Fonio chips in basic flavours.

Thus, 'looking back' and 'looking beyond borders' seems to be the path being taken by innovators and disruptors in the snacking industry.

All by Myself: Individual portion sizes and formats

The sizes of families are compressing around the world and consumers are becoming more aware of their individualities. Additionally, amidst a faster pace of life and blurring lines between workspace and personal space, the meaning of snacking has transformed for most consumers. More than indulgences, snacks need to be zero effort and functional at the same time. Therefore, practicality, convenience, no food wastage etc. all play an important role in the purchase decision. Product formats need to adjust accordingly.

Picking up on this discourse, Hippeas, a brand of chickpea puffs has introduced single serve bags- 'Perfect for on-the-go, WFH or packed lunches so you can snack hapPEA anywhere, anytime.', they say.

Pre-portioning according to calories or nutrient requirements has also proven to be a big hit for some. The rationale is to up the convenience quotient of the snack. The success of Babybel, the individual cheese in the red wax packaging has already proven how significant the 'grab & go' aspect of snacks is to the consumer.



Yolélé Fonio Chips, USA



Too Yumm, India



Benenuts Plaisir Brut, France

⁹ <https://krya.in/2017/09/ayurvedic-superfoods-the-foxnut-phool-makhana/>



Hippeas, USA



Skinny Pop, USA



Pringles Lunch sized, USA

Sabra, USA



Hershey's owned 'Skinny Pop' is one such brand selling pre-portioned pop-corn bags (28 bags of 100 calories each), perfect for a month and easy to order at the click of a button on Amazon. Sabra's classic hummus comes with pita chips in a pre-portioned snack-pack that emphasizes on the protein content. Snackibles, a brand based out of India, runs on a similar concept, serving chips and an accompanying dip all in a single pack. Pringles released their 'Snack Stacks' which are the perfect fit for school lunchboxes. 'Snack Stacks are the one thing you can pack for school lunch that you know won't get traded!' They come in a variety of packaging sizes, allowing the consumer to try different flavours in a single purchase and each cup contains 100 calories, making it the perfect snack.

Therefore, packaging innovations, aside from the aesthetics, play a key role in meeting the changing consumer expectations. Cylindrical tube bottles, resealable Ziplock-type pouches, variety packs, subscription boxes, pre-portioned packets etc. all accommodate the individuation aspect that the consumer is seeking.

Building an Identity: (De)ethnicization, Iconification

Ethnicization is the phenomena of making something more representative of the diverse ethnic groups that make up a society. On the other hand, de-ethnicization refers to when a product belonging to an ethnic group detaches itself from its roots and appeals to other groups as well. For example: Bagel going from Jewish staple to mainstream breakfast.

Building an identity, though important in all F&B categories, has now become a central agenda particularly in snacking. Part of this could be attributed to premiumization which demands the snacks to be hyper-descriptive of their ingredients or their sources of origin. Part of this is due to heightened consumer awareness who wish to know every little detail of what they are buying or associating themselves with and their high proclivity for exploring various cultures.

It is safe to say that the snacking industry is simultaneously going through ethnicization and de-ethnicization right now. This means that, while the emphasis on the ethnicity of the ingredients is at an all-time high, many ethnic snacks are being brought to mainstream consumption by international entrepreneurs. Taking the case of water lily seeds, an ethnic snack in the States or in the UK, is speedily transforming into a more mainstream



Goya, USA
Barnana, USA

Terra Chips, USA

superfood in both these countries through the awareness brought in by Indian-Americans or British-Indians. Similarly, at one point in the past, Quinoa was an ethnic ingredient, today very much mainstream in diverse countries, recognised for its nutritional profile. Plantain chips are going through their ethnicization phase right now where they are recognized from being an African staple but more and more people enjoy them in their day-to-day lives.

Thus, ethnicization and de-ethnicization are both playing an indispensable role in building an identity for the snack.

Iconification, on the other hand, might take years to happen. Brands have become icons after existing for decades. For example, Lay's is the most iconic chips brand globally. In India and the middle-east, the love for the brand has probably gone too far with make-up artists such as Divya Premchand doing a cult-favourite flavour inspired make-up look that grabbed the world's attention. Pop Artist, Lizzo, states that Lays is the only chip for her. Cheetos Flamin' Hot, Cool ranch Doritos are other iconic chips in the US, Ruffles in Canada, Smith's in Australia that have warranted similar fanfare in the past.



Pipcorn, USA



Lay's Magic Masala, India

Flamin' Hot Cheetos, Global



Calbee Shrimp Chips, Japan

But today, it does not take decades for brands to become cult favourites. Social media can be attributed for the acceleration in the process. A brand true to its identity is quick to receive consumer love through likes, shares, follows etc. Pipcorn, a New York based heirloom corn-based popcorn brand is on its path to becoming an icon. The success story begins with the product first appearing on Shark-Tank. Already in the minds of millions of viewers, it had Oprah Winfrey's support. Now, its 30k followers engage with the brand on Instagram. The focus of most of their communication is via a family-centric or 'for-the children' appeal which reflects very well throughout the brand's different channels & communications.

Calbee's Shrimp Chips have a cult following in the US. In Japan, Calbee is as recognizable as Lay's is to Americans. But when Cynthia Chen, a Chinese American product designer in San Francisco, posted photos of rugs she'd crafted based on her favourite Asian snacks – Calbee Shrimp Chips among them – Twitter noticed. Americans consumed 6.7 million bags of Calbee Shrimp Chips in 2020, up from 4.4 million bags in 2014. California, which has a large Asian population, is Calbee's biggest U.S. market.¹⁰



Shrooms, USA



Mushgarden, USA



Heaven's Lettuce, USA

The Solutionist Approach: Functional Snacks

A solutionist brand or producer is someone looking to solve problems that are originally not the main purpose of a product. It refers to adding on a functionality above and beyond what is expected from a product. This has the potential to be either positive and negative depending on the target market of the said product.

Besides eliminating hunger pangs in-between meals, the snacks of today have other purposes to serve. Providing protein is an indispensable, standard expectation from snacks but the manufacturing brands have decided to take their offering further up a notch by allowing consumers to avail much more from their products.

The lines between functional foods, over-the-counter drugs and supplements are blurring. As entrepreneurs from the bio tech and pharma space are entering food, functional mushrooms, adaptogens and nootropics are beginning to appear in the snacks category. "There is so much science coming now into the efficacy of the different mushrooms: lion's mane, cordyceps, shiitake, maitake. Each one of them has a different benefit, but they are also very interesting from a flavour perspective, a taste perspective, etc."¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.latimes.com/food/story/2021-09-05/calbees-shrimp-chips-have-a-cult-following-heres-how-it-happened>

¹¹ <https://www.bakingbusiness.com/articles/55237-three-issues-to-impact-snacks-category-says-mondelez-director>



Kush, France



Mile High Club Blaze, USA

Popular functional food offerings include energy, focus, or calm. They carry anti-diabetic, anti-obesity and antioxidant properties. Functional ingredients in foods are a growing trend as consumers search for options outside of supplements.

With many shoppers still being new to functional products, brands need to carry clear messaging around their snack's claimed benefits. Transparency is the holy grail. When it comes to snacks, shoppers are looking for ingredient provenance for raw materials as well as ethical credentials and packaging sustainability. Some of the hottest superfoods in functional snacks right now include fermented foods, berries, seeds, tea, leafy greens, ancient grains etc.

CBD Snacks are a no-brainer when it comes to functional snacking especially in stressful times such as now. Hemp Chips 'Kush' are crispy chips with a delicious texture. Handcrafted with

Mile High Cure's 'Blaze Pot chips are a phenomenal CBD Edible that tastes just like your favourite Flaming Hot Cheesy Chips. These CBD edibles effects include relaxation, pain relief, anxiety relief and much more!

Skin & Beauty related functions are also being explored in the industry. Collagen chips: SkinnyPop's Popcorn Supports Healthy Nails, Hair, Skin & Joints. The Sea Salt & Herb-flavored popcorn comes in at just 47 calories per cup and offers a different way for consumers to enjoy the benefits of collagen—especially as an alternative to taking powdered supplements or collagen-infused snack bars.

Pacha Chips are the world's first and only "collagen and protein chips". It is marketed as a functional food for those with health problems or anybody who has concerns about their skin beauty and health.

Probiotics (detailed in the 'Gut Friendly' section) are another functional area experiencing a boom.

Lastly, there is room in the snacking industry to create experiential opportunities. Experiential is all about how consumers want to engage with their snacks. It could be an engaging package. It could be virtual reality. Experiential may also include foods and beverages that feature multiple textures, tastes and colours, something already widely implemented industry-wide.



Skinny Pop Collagen, USA

Pacha, Turkey



Part 2 - CONCLUSION

Understanding these global innovations in snacking through a range of lenses helps in identifying the underlying themes that are bound to dictate the market offer in the near future. Even though taste is what predominantly makes the consumers return to a product, today's snacks need to cater to a lot more in order to onboard & retain them. The overall identity of the snack has become indispensable in the purchase decision. From the aesthetics to the greater purpose to the environmental impact, the sourcing of ingredients or even social media presence- new players are ticking a majority of these boxes and delivering extraordinary value to their consumers.



Part 3

Snacking Experience: The consumers' Perspective

With an abundance of options & new ones cropping up more frequently than ever before, consumers today are spoilt for choice. However, their attention span is declining and the budget

allocation for snacks is limited. Therefore, understanding consumer preferences & the rationale behind them becomes indispensable for the producers & marketers.

As health & nutrition become a rather mainstream topic of conversation, enabled by social media & pop culture alike, consumers are diligently watching what they eat. If they are to fill the gaps between meals with smaller meals, they might as well derive some benefits out of it. Thus, the nutrient contents of snacks are under scrutiny. Protein and fibre are the two most sought-after components for functionalities such as strength and digestion. The relevance of the gut microbiome to one's well-being is finally being widely acknowledged and consumers are seeking out options that fit the bill. All this emphasis on health has surely been accentuated by coronavirus. The notion of comfort attached to snacks was further reinforced during this period too. Additionally, consumers already valued brands that were engaged with the environment and the society ethically but in the aftermath of the pandemic, proactivity and the do-good factor of the brands has become even more significant.

**No Hustle for Muscle:
The rise of proteins**

Health has been made an individual's responsibility which they achieve through implementing a self-care regime. The increased emphasis on health in 'the new public health era'¹² has created a market for products promoted as healthy or with some kind of wellbeing association. What is sold as 'good' and nourishing snacks is the fastest growing food trend in many parts of the world.¹³ Discourses on food, indicating what 'good food' is demonstrates, can be a way to distinguish social classes. Products claiming to be organic, natural, or protein rich can signal 'good food' and as fitting into particular ways of life. For marketers of healthy snacks, such signalling is central, as it is a way to connect these products to certain cultural values and lifestyles and thus fit into particular patterns of consumption.¹⁴



Biena, USA

Protein has never been as popular as in the past half a decade or so. 'If you're a packaged food and you want to sit at the cool kids' table in 2019, you'd better be jam-packed with protein.'¹⁵

Time and again macronutrients have oscillated from the most popular to the least. It started with villainizing fats in the 1970s so carbohydrates became the crowd favourite. Until, in the early 2000s, Harvard University nutrition professor declared 'Fat is not the problem', blaming carbohydrates for weight, diabetes and other metabolic problems. People began recoiling from carbs and including 'good fats' in their diets.



Brami, USA

¹² Petersen, A., & Lupton, D. (1996). *The new public health: Health and self in the age of risk*. Sage Publications, Inc.
¹³ Griffith, T., 2018. Emerging trends in the food and beverage sector [online]. Grant Thornton.
¹⁴ Ariel Chen - Göran Eriksson (2019), The making of healthy and moral snacks: A multimodal critical discourse analysis of corporate storytelling. Discourse, Context & Media
¹⁵ <https://qz.com/1669418/the-problem-with-americas-protein-diet-obsession/>



Whisps, USA

Today, the consumers' unhealthy love affair with protein is based on the premise that protein helps one lose weight, get stronger, avoid age-related muscle loss and so on. In recent years, the rise of Paleo, Atkins, the Zone and other low-carb diets have helped sustain protein's MVP status.¹⁶ The current protein fetish is merely the latest manifestation of a far larger phenomenon that Michael Pollan memorably referred to as 'Nutritionism' around 10 years ago.¹⁷

It isn't beyond the realm of possibility that science may one day kick up new reasons to be sceptical of prolific protein intake but protein's popularity has more staying power than other food crazes because its benefits are easy to explain, understand and witness. Therefore, brands maintain their stance on the heightened communication of the protein contents in their products.

Mirroring the meat analogue industry, the sweet snack industry was already big on selling protein with their energy bars. This has been a total hit with the consumers. The savoury snacks are catching up by using atypical sources of protein for their base. Being potato-based simply doesn't cut it today.

To begin with, retailers are turning to beans for a more protein and fibre packed base. A classic example of retro-innovation, chickpeas, which have been consumed roasted as snacks in India for decades, have been internationalized. American consumers enjoy these roasted and sprinkled with tantalizing flavours or very recently as puffs. Beans are not left far behind. Brami Snacks sells Italian Lupini beans containing 9g plant protein in a single serve pack. These can be added to salads, stir-fries or

consumed as is. Bada Bean Snacks sells crunchy broad beans that carry 6g protein at 100 calories a pack.



Bada Bean Bada Boom, USA

Cheese based Whisps 'are made of 100% real cheese for a delicious keto-friendly and gluten free snack that's a good source of protein, and sure to beat even your cheesiest cravings.' They contain 8-9g per pack and come in a plethora of flavours.



Quevos, USA

¹⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/protein-the-nutrient-du-jour/2014/07/22/6a11b882-0b7b-11e4-b8e5-d0de80767fc2_story.htm
¹⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/protein-the-nutrient-du-jour/2014/07/22/6a11b882-0b7b-11e4-b8e5-d0de80767fc2_story.html



itsu, UK



Peckish, USA

Egg eating consumers enjoy Quevos that are high protein, low carb chips made out of egg whites. And, instead of reinventing the wheel, 'Peckish' has kept it simple by reimagining a whole egg as a snack just covered with intriguing toppings. Branding themselves as 'fresh portable protein'

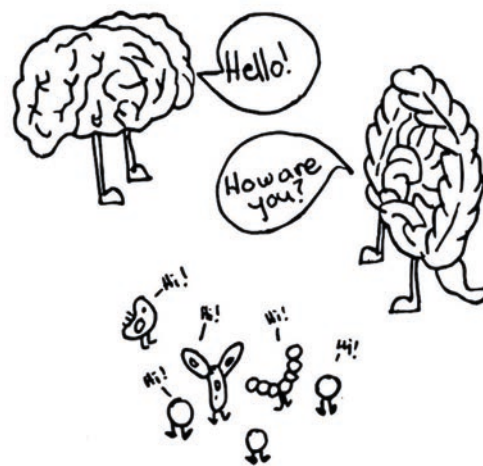
Other upcoming snack bases include seaweed as popularly sold by Itsu in the form of crispy seaweed thins or by GimMe Snacks. These do not contain a high amount of protein but are a rich source of Vitamin B12 and K, suitable for vegans and often deprived from their diets. Could these be the next most sought-after nutrients?

Gut Friendly: Microbiome & the Health Factor

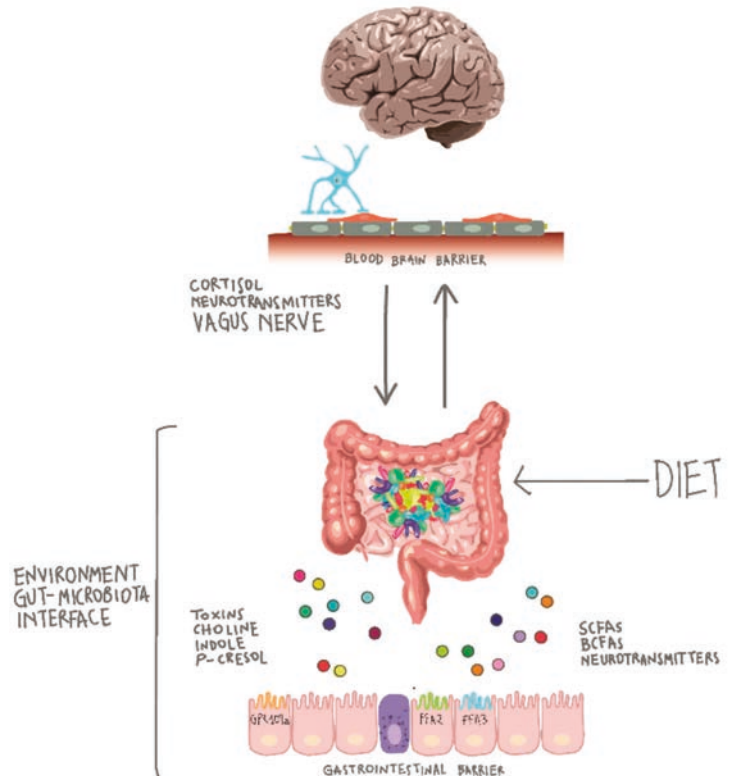
The COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened consumer interest in health and immunity in an unprecedented way. A major topic of discussion, research, and consumer interest has been the connection between the gut microbiome and

mental well-being. A series of studies have hit the market addressing issues such as anxiety and sleep hygiene through gut health.

The gut-brain axis and the correlation of the gut to mental health is becoming mainstream knowledge. Consumers are exploring that gut health has more to do with just digestion and increasingly associating it to immune health, heart health, mental health. A recent study by Murphy Research found that 90 percent of consumers surveyed could identify at least one benefit of consuming prebiotics. Between 2014 and 2019, the number of Google searches for 'Microbiome' and 'Gut-Brain Axis' grew by 267 percent and 204 percent, respectively.¹⁸



©, International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics, 2017



¹⁸ <https://www.nutritioninsight.com/news/gut-health-roundtable-consumer-awareness-pushes-sector-beyond-digestive-troubles.html>

Therefore, the symbiotic relationship of humans and microbes is being explored by the consumers with a heightened interest. A rise in fermentation practices around the world was especially reflected during the first COVID lockdown when almost everyone was producing their own sourdough at home. More and more people are getting into kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha, kefir or other fermented foods, not just in terms of including these in their diets but the inclination is strong enough for the consumers to take matters into their own hands and ferment at home.

While probiotics have been in the scene for a while as being beneficial for digestive health, prebiotics are finally being recognised for their potential. Prebiotics help in breaking down hormones like serotonin and dopamine into SCFAs (Short Chain Fatty Acids) such as butyrate (which helps in maintaining the gut lining by stimulating the growth of villi).

The research into what diverse, balanced and stable gut microbiota could deliver is just getting started – muscle health, bone health, nutrient uptake and resilience to circadian disruption, among others are all areas of interest to the researchers right now. In essence, combined probiotic and prebiotic solutions could allow formulators to create enhanced solutions which respond to growing interest in improving overall health simultaneously. Consumers are beginning to take note and want products that support their well-being in convenient formats that can fit into their day to day lives. In 2021, consumers sought out fortified and functional food and drinks while not wanting to compromise on taste & texture.¹⁹

In the savoury snacks segment, some forward-thinking players have started creating products to cater to the gut-conscious consumer. Core Foods 'Happy Gut' are fiber powered oat based snacks and carry a 'gut healthy' label right on the face of their packaging.



Core Foods, USA



Go Natural Hiprotein, Australia

Go Natural is a 'Proudly Australian Owned' probiotic chips brand. Their 'HiProtein' chips are made by blending the goodness of lentils, chickpeas and peas and contain 17g protein, 1 billion probiotics, 13.5g Fibre per pack. They come in a variety of flavours that are anything but plain.

Farmhouse Culture, an Illinois based brand rooted in uncovering the potential of foods



Farmhouse Culture, USA

¹⁹ <https://www.dairyreporter.com/Article/2021/10/28/Gut-opportunity-Responding-to-health-conscious-consumers-with-combined-prebiotic-and-probiotic-solutions>

through the timeless art of fermentation. They turn simple, organic vegetables into intense taste experiences with surprising gut-centric benefits. Their Wild Fermented Cabbage can be purchased for snacking or adding to recipes and the Kraut Krisps are the first of their kind in terms of their fermented flavours.

Sonomono is a Japanese health foods brand adapting traditional Japanese practices of health & longevity through fermented foods into their products. Their Jerusalem Artichoke chips with natto bacteria combine probiotics and prebiotics.

Hence, there are windows of opportunities for producers who can harness these consumer concerns.

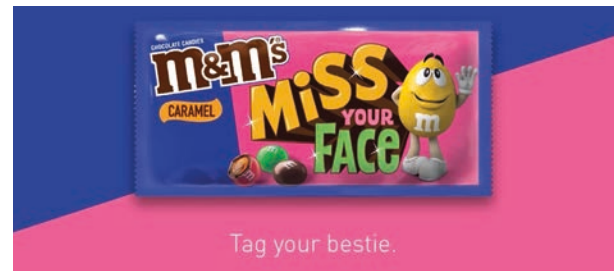
A Notion of Comfort: Snacks as Comfort Food

Snacks are inherently considered as an indulgent category of foods and therefore closely associated to comfort foods. Back in the day, comfort foods meant foods typically high in fat or sugar, energy-dense, and may have relatively low nutrition value. These foods could trigger an emotional response or a temporary feeling of stress relief. Even though, today the comfort foods have gotten their own makeover under a health halo, they still remain foods that promise solace as much as they do fuel.

Snacks fit right into this bill. To the consumers, they offer a sense of comfort, positivity and



Pringles Hearty, USA



M&M's Miss your Face, USA



Worldwide Treats, USA

take them back to the security of childhood. They take an emotional refuge in their favourite snacks in stressful times.

Speaking of, in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, cookie and cracker sales had shot up by nearly 30 percent, a gargantuan leap in the world of groceries. Consumers were seeking to cope with the anxiety of the pandemic, and turned to comfort foods, including indulgent or nostalgic snacks, as an escape. Often those foods were "permissible indulgences," however, with better-for-you ingredients or cleaner labels. Moreover, consumers cooped up at home were tempted to snack throughout the day and the pandemic turned their kitchen into one huge vending machine. Self-medicating moods with foods, therefore, became the 'new normal'.

Even though, many people took to home-cooking and relaxing their nerves by putting on their aprons, in the end, due to an increased frequency of eating, quick, simple, grab-&-go options held their own in the consumers' day to day lives.

²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/well/eat/pandemic-snacking-junk-food-habits-eating-weight.html>

²¹ <https://www.supermarketnews.com/center-store/snacks-fit-bill-shoppers-turn-comfort-foods>

The conception of comfort food varies from region to region, time to time and from person to person. What was comfort food in the US in the 80s was most probably non-existent or arrived later in Asia. FMCG snacking giants like Mondelez or Pepsico (Lay's) have been customizing their offering for different geographies for decades. Then how have snacking brands continued to strike the nostalgia chord with the consumers? The answer is in the narrative. Even at the peak of the pandemic, snacking brands had staggeringly effective pitches: "pick your quarantine house" from Skittles, social distancing with virtual hugs from M&Ms etc.

In today's diverse world, obtaining snacks from where one grew up carries a big notion of comfort in itself. Playing on this idea, snack 'care packages' & get well soon goodies are flooding the internet. Nostalgic snack-boxes from different parts of the world can be ordered and sent online to your loved ones. These snacks are bearers of carefree times.

**Keeping it Light & Funny:
Narratives, Ambassadors, Media,
Influencers, KOLs**

The modern-day consumer gets their news, updates, information from the internet, has a short attention span and is pressed for time when grocery shopping. Brand communication demands a redirection in channels to suit the Millennial and Gen Z buyers more optimally. The rise of Instagram and Tik Tok has made everyone a mini-celebrity and given everybody a platform to express their unique identity. The food choices of consumers also incorporate these generational character traits.

Consumers associate themselves to a brand when they are in agreement with what the brand or its products stand for. They see an advertisement on their social media or their friends recommending a product and go ahead to try it. In the supermarkets, they gravitate towards healthier options but healthy cannot mean boring. The packaging has to be fun and colourful enough to get & grab their attention. The name of the product should be witty or catchy and light. If they have a good social media presence, even better to love a cool brand.

Snacking is a 'fun' activity in itself. It's a respite from work or school, it doesn't involve elaborate cooking. It a bearer of excitement and refreshment. Snacking brands have the opportunity to be quirky by default. Hence, picking up on these cues, many of them have started unleashing their creativity without hesitation. What matters foremost is the



Hardbite, Canada



Harvest Snaps, USA



Open Secret, India

packaging and text on the packaging. Bright, popping, contrasting, bold colours guarantee to lure the consumer in. And then, the witty flavour names to add comic value to the lives of the consumers.

Hardbite, 'All Couch, no Potato' is a *Canadian handcrafted, artisanal, croustilles-style* vegetable chips brand selling flavours such as '18 Carrot Gold', 'Sweet Spud of mine'. Consumers love to know more. Snacking brands are going all out in descriptions with as much detail as elegantly possible. Biena, a 'Female Founded' chickpea snacks brand sells snacks with 'Squeaky Clean Ingredients'. They have a following of 24k on Instagram and the social media game is strong because they make pop-culture references. Howdah snacks sells 'Sense Assaulting Snacky Things', Quevos- 'Boldly Delicious, Shockingly Healthy', 'A snack without tradeoffs'. Boldness is the status quo.

Harvest Snaps sets different 'moods' themed around their different flavours such as 'Freshly Cracked', 'Flavourly Feisty', 'Taste of Passion', 'Classic Suave' to name a few. Their snacks are 'found in the produce aisle' hinting on the naturalness of the product. Industry wide, other details not to be missed relate to the ingredients. Use of 'Superfood', 'Multi-grain', '100% real' is standard.

Some other brands like Open Secret have developed their own testifying standards. Their products are 'Mom Approved'. They call their chips 'Un-Junked chips' again signalling the health quotient.

Consumers appreciate the brands that are current with the social trends. Limited edition flavours are therefore a hit and a great way for brands to test out new flavours before releasing them at mass. Many American brands do special game day flavours, Superbowl flavours etc.

All of this ties in with the brand's social media presence. A strong narrative allows the brand to have a strong & unique tone of voice. Consumers are able to identify the brand without the mention of the name and want to keep up and support through social media. For instance, Indian brand 'Snackible' has 132k Instagram followers. It was first brand in India to sell different cereal-based chips along with dips in the same packaging, working on a delivery-based retail model. Their communication style is witty and quality focused. Mary's Gone Crackers also have a unique style and share recipes on their Instagram page with a strong community of 17k followers.

Collaborating with chefs, home-cooks, influencers or even high-profile celebrity (chefs) brings visibility to these brands.

YouTube videos about recipes one can create with their snacks encourage people to try out their products. For example, Kurkure is an iconic snack in India known for being super spicy and addicting. Kurkure chaat is quick snack inspired by the Indian street food, chaat. Recipes of Kurkure chaat give consumers ideas on what to do to elevate a snack they've been consuming a certain way for years. Similarly, Dorito-crust chicken tenders are a hit with the consumers.



Kurkure Masala Munch, India



Doritos, USA

For the Greater Good: Snacks with an impact

A new survey by Food and Wine has shown that millennials are the most likely to prefer snacks and beverages that fit within higher ethical standards. The study found that consumers younger than 35 placed the most value on factors like fair trade, sustainable farming, and zero waste in their food and beverages. They hold their snacks to a higher standard compared to other consumer groups. On the snack side, the survey found about 64% of millennials don't think there are sufficient grab-and-go items meeting their ethical standards.²²



Billy Frank's Vegan Jerky, UK

Therefore, a positive or at least non-negative environmental impact is an important function snacks are meant to serve. They are 'good for you, good for the planet'. Even meat-based snack manufacturers such as those in the jerky or pork scratchings segment have introduced a vegan or plant-based range in order to win brownie points for their environmental engagement or their mindfulness towards the animals. Billy Franks, a well-known jerky brand launched their vegan version recently. Not Telling Porkies and Vegan Pig are other brands selling 'no-pig' pork scratchings.



Vegan Pig Scratchings, UK

As a part of the 'Nature 2.0' phenomenon, local resources are being utilised like never before. Upping the sustainability factor of the brands, communication on locally plenty ingredients such as fish skins from Alaska, Quinoa from the Andes, eggs from your local farms, seaweed from Korea etc. is substantial industry-wide. It is important that brands communicate their 'ethical sourcing' and what they do to give back to the communities or how they support them.

A majority of the new releases in the snacking industry put a heavy focus on the 'realness' of their ingredients. Most of these snacks seem to be gluten-free, without added preservatives or colorants etc., adding another dimension to the 'Health quotient' besides 'proteinizing' them. This gives the brand a 'clean' aura. Some other brands communicate their impact through word-play. The name of the brand, 'Lesser Evil' – sinfully tasty snacks with clean, sustainable ingredients – also suggests a level of evilness in common snacks which is brought down by their products.



Goodfish, USA



GimMe Organic, USA

²² <https://www.fooddive.com/news/survey-millennials-are-the-most-likely-to-prefer-ethical-snacks/519373/>

For some brands, ethical impact goes a step further by associating to specific causes that will be benefiting from the brand's sales. Howdah (Give Back as You Snack) is a UK-based snacking brand bringing Indian classic 'chai-time' snacks to the world, but not just that. They donate a school meal to underprivileged children for every packet bought. This gives an added sense of purpose to the consumer when they purchase from Howdah.



Howdah, UK



Lesser Evil, USA

Treat Yourself (& the others): Premiumization, Celebrations, Gifting, Subscriptions

Shoppers have a newfound appetite for indulgence. It is a norm now but the acceleration of premiumization can be

attributed to the Coronavirus pandemic. Since the consumers were locked in, they felt the need to recreate some of the luxury of a dining-out experience at home – and independent fine food retailers are perfectly placed to cater to this desire. Additionally, in the absence of international holidays, consumers have been travelling via their taste buds. Working from home also accentuated the process as the workday coffee break turned into an occasion. How better to celebrate a 10-minute respite from your makeshift desk than with a little quality treat. Consumers turned to food as an act of self-care and a break from the monotony.

Premiumization opens new doors for snacks. What it means is adding a characteristic, trait or feature that elevates consumer perception, creating a willingness to pay more. Some ways to achieve this include sharing the stories of terroir, focusing on quality ingredients, communicating on the health/nature/ethic factor. Being specific and very descriptive of the product's identity also goes a long way. And finally, the easiest way to signal is through the packaging. Jaren Koerten, head of packaged food at Euromonitor advises that savoury snacks can benefit from "looking at white spaces more strategically." Or in other words, find a void and fill it. Snacking sector could take a leaf from the chocolate sector's know-how which has lived and thrived through premiumization.²³



Ooh Mala, Singapore



L'Atelier Blini, France

²³ <https://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/Article/2019/05/31/Path-to-premiumization-snack-sector-should-take-a-leaf-from-chocolate-s-know-how>



Harvey Nichol's Naughty Nibbles, UK

The fresh dips and accompaniments sector is not sleeping on this wave of premiumization of savoury snacks. To be enjoyed as is or with a savoury snack, brands like L'atelier Blini are tasting success from their high-quality dips and appetizer accompaniments. There is room for synergy between these two sectors.

Packaging plays a great role in the process of premiumization. For instance, Ooh Mala, a Singapore based brand has a minimalistic, all red packaging with the word 'Premium' right on the face of it. Harvey Nichol's Naughty Nibbles claim to be 'richer than a bank account in Zurich' which touches the quality factor but also maintains a humorous tone.

These edible luxuries are not just for oneself. Increasingly, getting snacks delivered to your loved ones on special occasions is becoming a standard practice among consumers. It shows love and care like no other gift. As a consequence, the internet is flooded with websites such as Fodabox or The Gourmet Box which hold only premium snacking brands. Consider them the Amazon Prime of snacking brands because they allow small artisanal creators reach consumers by providing a platform and the convenience of home delivery. Other times, some snacking brands have taken the matters into their own hands and sell trial packs and subscription boxes on their website. For example, Nudie Snacks, a plant-based snack company offers hampers starting from 20£. The chuckling cheese company is a dedicated foodie hampers & gifts online store.

What is interesting in the gifting space is the rise of regional snacks. There are websites dedicated to snacks from Korea (my Seoul box) or Japan (Tokyo snack box) or India (Cratejoy.com). You can send a meaningful gift to your K-pop obsessed friend without having to do much. Finally, gifting 1 year subscription of a healthy snack box, or a themed snack box, a vegan snack box, you name it- to yourself or to your friends and family removes any sort of effort from thinking of gifts, buying them, then mailing them. This balance of convenience and luxury has been well-received by the consumers.



Part 3 - CONCLUSION

Consumers want to get the most out of their snacks and the brands are here to serve them. With an influx of functional snacks, a snack break is not only a moment of respite but also a moment to take care of oneself by nourishing the body. Furthermore, new distribution channels and ecommerce platforms have enabled the consumers to use snacks as a token of affection and celebration. Powered by dedicated websites, subscription models and premiumization, snacks now make the perfectly affordable yet meaningful gift. Thus, consumers are factoring-in a variety of dimensions when they choose their snacks, some that have possibly been in a blind spot for very long but can't afford to any longer.

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Richard C. Delerins, PhD

Dr. Delerins is an anthropologist and behavioral scientist, international expert in food, consumer behavior and product innovation. He is co-director of the Food 2.0 LAB Paris, Visiting Professor of Behavioral Sciences & Marketing at ESSEC Business School and Distinguished International Scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

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