

# CRUNCH ON THIS

Almonds Drive the Bar Category



## Bars: A Growing Category

According to Innova Market Insights and research conducted by the Sterling-Rice Group, the bar category has seen consistent growth in terms of dollar and volume sales.<sup>1</sup> In fact, over 1,600 new bar products were launched in the U.S. in 2014, as bars become more and more mainstream and appeal to a wider consumer audience.<sup>2</sup>

A 2014 consumer study showed that snacking is the most frequent occasion for bar consumption, particularly with the rise in active lifestyles and on-the-go food consumption.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the proportion of consumers reporting that they eat three to four snacks daily more than doubled in three years, growing from 24 percent in 2009 to 43 percent in 2012 alone.<sup>3</sup> The same study found among the 72 percent of consumers who eat bars as a snack, the mid-afternoon and mid-morning timeframes accounted for 55 percent of all occasions.<sup>1</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2014, **509 new bar products with almonds** were introduced in North America.<sup>4</sup>

With North American consumers snacking more often and on more types of food items than ever before, manufacturers are challenged to develop new bar products that deliver on ever-changing consumer demands, and are different from other products available. Fortunately, California almonds are a versatile ingredient that manufacturers can use to achieve desirable flavors, textures and nutritional benefits in their bar formulations.<sup>1</sup>

## Almonds Satisfy Consumer Cravings

Nuts, and specifically almonds, are important ingredients that consumers look for in their bar products. Nearly 80 percent of respondents would like a nut in their ideal bar, with **almonds ranking as the most desired ingredient and most desired nut.**<sup>1</sup> In fact, consumers surveyed **picked almonds as the number one ingredient** they'd choose to be included in their "ideal bar."<sup>1</sup>

With consumers seeking bars that "nourish" and "energize," it's no surprise they choose bars with almonds for:<sup>1</sup>

- Taste
- Health benefits\*\*
- Crunch

In fact, after eating bars with almonds, consumers reported feeling **satisfied, happy, full and energized.**<sup>1</sup>

### TOP 5 REASONS FOR SELECTING ALMONDS AS AN INGREDIENT IN THEIR "IDEAL BAR"



### The top benefits consumers look for in bars are:

1. Great taste
2. High in protein
3. High in fiber
4. Filling and satisfying<sup>1</sup>

## Complementing Taste and Texture

Not only are almonds the top nut that consumers surveyed choose in their ideal bar, the distinctive flavor of almonds complements the flavor profiles of many other fruit and filling inclusions for which consumers show preference. In addition to almonds, consumers selected granola, dark chocolate and oats as other top ingredients for their ideal bar product. Each of these ingredients is a natural fit with the rich, nutty flavor profile of California almonds.<sup>1</sup>



Furthermore, two out of three respondents selected fruit flavors, like coconut and strawberry, in their ideal bar, which provide a pleasing contrast to the buttery flavor and crunch that almonds lend to bar formulations.<sup>1</sup> With honey as the most popular sweetener, followed by brown sugar, selected among surveyed consumers, the variety of inclusions that amplify the flavor profile of any almond form in a bar formulation are endless.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to texture, chewy is the most popular, selected as a preference by 62 percent of consumers.<sup>1</sup> Crunchy is also a popular choice, with over one third of consumers selecting it as their preferred texture.<sup>1</sup>

## Opportunities in Versatility and Nutrition

Almonds are not only a consumer favorite; they are also an extremely versatile ingredient, particularly within the bar category. The versatility and benefits associated with almonds make them an essential tool for product developers:

- Delivering on consumer demands for “crunch,” “nutrition,” and “taste,” almonds in their many forms lend preferred flavor and varied texture to bars.<sup>1</sup>
- The majority of consumers surveyed felt almonds are important in their bar of choice, reinforcing the power of almonds on in a bar product.<sup>1</sup>
- When choosing a bar, consumers say the most important attributes they look for are taste, satisfaction and satiety – all of which almonds deliver.<sup>1</sup>

With 6g of protein per ounce, 12 vitamins and minerals, and 13 grams of “good” monounsaturated fats, almonds are a nutritional powerhouse.\* Furthermore, they are naturally gluten free, have a low glycemic index and no cholesterol or sodium. It’s no wonder consumers love the satisfying crunch of this heart-smart bar inclusion.\*\*



Available in more forms than almost any other tree nut, almond kernels can be cut into different shapes or pieces, such as slices, slivers, diced, half or split, ground, paste, butter, and more. Each cut can have different thickness or particle size, making them a uniquely multifunctional ingredient for developers.

### 15 Forms of California Almonds

- Whole
- Almond Oil
- Diced
- Flaked
- Halved
- Almond Milk
- Almond Flour
- Blanched
- Ground
- Slivered
- Almond Meal
- Almond Butter
- Sliced
- Chopped
- Almond Paste



\* One serving of almonds (28g) has 13g of unsaturated fat and only 1g of saturated fat.

\*\*Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 oz of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. Good news about fat. U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that the majority of your fat intake be unsaturated. One serving of almonds (28g) has 13g of unsaturated fat and only 1g of saturated fat

#### References:

- 1 Sterling-Rice Group, 2014 U.S. Bars Exploratory Study conducted on behalf of the Almond Board of California.
- 2 Nielsen Product Movement Study. January, 2015
- 3 IRI State of the Industry Report
- 4 2014 Innova Global New Product Introductions Report