

# SNACKING HYBRID INNOVATIONS MEETING CONSUMER DEMAND



Consumers continue to seek bite-sized or more on-the-go snacks as many cultures shift from sitting down to the traditional three meals a day. Across the globe, people are also enjoying chocolate products as an everyday snack with four out of five choosing chocolate as their number one or one of their favorite snacks – and 84 percent usually or even primarily enjoy it as a standalone snack.<sup>1</sup>

Innova Market Insights surveyed consumers and found that seventy percent are now experimenting with new food concepts and unique combinations. As people continue to become more adventurous with their food choices, the evolution of snack products has grown to include a hybrid of combinations – identified as one of the top ten food trends for 2020 by Innova Market Insights.

## Consumers seek snacking

Consumers are constantly on-the-go – moving between professional life, family time, and personal duties. Innova Market Insights found that one in three global consumers say “snacks support my busy lifestyle profile,” meaning that snacks increasingly deliver a satisfying experience to consumers who are looking for not only indulgence and convenience but also healthy attributes that fit their dietary choices.

Innova Market Insights also found that “health” is most important to consumers when purchasing cereal and energy bars, while “indulgence” matters most in chocolate, and “convenience” stands out for salty snacks. They also discovered that many Gen Z consumers are embracing their busy lifestyles and are looking for healthy, on-the-go food options.

## California almonds as a versatile ingredient



Almonds continue to be the number one ingredient in global new products<sup>2</sup> and are the number one ingredient in global consumers’ ideal chocolate products<sup>1</sup>. Innova Market Insights found that 60 percent of U.S. consumers are choosing a savory

afternoon snack, like nuts and seeds, that fit their eating habits and diet preferences.

California almonds come in a variety of forms utilized by product developers in unique ways. From whole almonds and almond milk to almond meal or almond butter, this popular ingredient can provide snack products with various



textures and flavors aligned to popular food trends that consumers follow. Almonds are naturally a fit for gluten-free, dairy-free, paleo, keto, vegan, and many more lifestyle choices, making them a “go to” for many consumers.

According to Innova Market Insights’ Global New Product data, 25 percent of new product launches tracked with almonds are confectionery items, while 20 percent are snacks, which is up three percentage points from 2015 to 2019. Nearly 50 percent of all snack mixes and 33 percent of cereals and energy bars launched in 2019 featured almonds.

# Attracting consumers with hybrid snack concepts

Innova Market Insights named “hybrids” as one of the top ten trends of 2020. This trend speaks to adventurous consumers who are becoming more receptive to products that blend ingredients, combine food types, and mix flavor profiles. Hybrid products offer exciting food options, encourage exploration of multiple product features in a single purchase, and meet needs for health matched with on-the-go indulgence. Innova Market Insights continues to see a growing number of product examples featuring a sweet or savory twist alongside healthful, texture-rich ingredients, such as almonds, particularly in the snacking and confectionary categories. Outlined below are a few unique product examples of snacking and confectionery hybrids utilizing almonds:



**Cookia**, a social enterprise company based in South Korea that specializes in tofu snacks, launched a line of new cookie products containing both tofu and almond powder



Livia's **Nugglets Salted Almond Butter: Chocolate Covered Little Squidgy Nugglets of Heaven**, from Ireland, incorporate the creaminess of almond butter with bits of almonds.



**Nestle KitKat Snak It: Sweet and Salty**, introduced in Australia, goes for indulgence by combining KitKat bites, salty pretzels, roasted almonds, and caramel popcorn.



Trader Joes **Fruity Snackballs** from Germany feature almonds, dried fruit, and a crunchy coating of seeds.



In **Gepa Vegan White Salmandel Cassis Chocolate** from Germany, almonds join white chocolate and currants.



The fast-growing trend of the combination of almonds and grains in snacks – with 33 percent growth in launches between 2018 and 2019 – inspired products such as **Ritter Sport Vegan Mandel Quinoa** in Germany and **I am (arant) Galleta Vegana** in Mexico with amaranth and chunks of almond and cocoa.



Canada's **Maze Cherry Lemon Fruit and Nut Bar** combines the flavor and texture of almonds and almond butter with sweet and sour fruit.



Germany's **Chateau Mini Schoko Crunchies** add cornflakes, freeze-dried raspberries, and chopped almonds into smooth milk chocolate.

**Looking ahead, Innova Market Insights expects hybrids to continue to evolve as a unique category for growth within snacking and confectionery. Utilizing an ingredient like California almonds with the right sensory combinations can provide products with nutrition, function and flavor, as well as varied texture and visual appeal to meet consumers ever-changing goals.**

## References:

1. Global Chocolate Study, Sterling Rice Group, 2018.
2. Global New Product Introductions, Innova Market Insights, 2019.