

FROM RESEARCH TO REALITY

Global Consumers' Ideal Chocolate Bars

Evolving consumer demands are keeping the chocolate category spry with new iterations and exciting flavors, formats and textures. Regional chocolate chefs from the U.S., UK and Mexico used survey responses from the Almond Board of California's 2020 Global Chocolate Study to create an "ideal chocolate bar" for consumers in their markets, revealing both regional nuances and global commonalities.

Confectionery is the **number one category** for new almond product introductions.¹

Almonds are the **number one ingredient** surveyed global consumers selected for their "ideal" chocolate product.²



Providing Premium - Almonds and Fruit

Whole food ingredients like nuts and fruit continue to lend a quality, premium feel to products while appealing to health-focused consumers.

Surveyed consumers perceived almonds as the top nut* for making chocolate more nostalgic, natural, higher quality, and something they feel less guilty about eating.²



Balancing Comfort and Complexity

As consumers turn to chocolate for a brief escape, balancing nostalgic and familiar tastes and textures while introducing twists of intrigue and excitement is key.

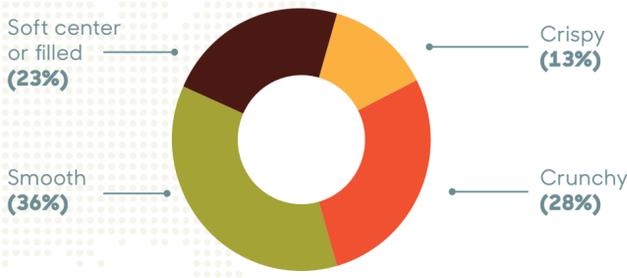
Surveyed consumers reported that emotional benefits are a top reason for eating more chocolate in 2020.²

UNITED STATES

Preferred Flavors and Ingredients²:

- Milk Chocolate (#1) and Dark Chocolate (#2)
- Cherries
- Caramel
- Sea Salt

Preferred Textures²:



All-Star Almond Bar

EH Chocolatier, U.S.

This multi-layer candy bar is both nostalgic and modern in presentation, with layers of almond meltaway and almond and tart cherry-studded nougat, topped off with a thin later of soft salted caramel and candied almonds— then enrobed in a rich, dark 61% chocolate shell. Tart cherry complements this bar's complex and layered almond flavors, adding more dimension without overtaking. Smoked Maldon salt calls back to the familiar, classic smoked almond, balancing the overall flavors of the bar without overwhelming it.

Texture:

Combining light, chewy, crunchy and salty sweet with flavors of almond, tart cherry, caramel, nougat and chocolate provides a satisfying mouthfeel and a brief getaway from life's challenges. Almonds are ground for use in the meltaway, creating a much more refined texture.

MEXICO

Preferred Flavors and Ingredients²:

- Milk Chocolate (#1) and Dark Chocolate (#2)
- Almond Butter
- Cherries

Preferred Textures²:



Almond & Black Cherry Chocolate Bar

Chef Jesús Escalera, Mexico

This bar features dark and blonde chocolate, black cherry fruit pâté, caramelized almond praline, almond and amaretto ganache, and almond gianduja. Almonds and stone fruits like cherries share similar aromas, making them a perfect pair.

Texture:

The crisp, fragile texture of tempered chocolate meets the smooth and crunchy texture of the gianduja, along with the moist and creamy texture of the black cherry fruit pâté.



Almond Butter's Ascent

Top 10 Ingredient

for surveyed consumers who selected dark and white chocolate for their ideal chocolate products.²

- (#9) for dark chocolate
- (#10) for white chocolate

Surveyed consumers' **top-3 selected ingredient**

among all inclusion options in China and India.²

UNITED KINGDOM

Preferred Flavors and Ingredients²:

- Milk Chocolate (#1) and Dark Chocolate (#2)
- Caramel
- Sea Salt

Preferred Textures²:



California Almonds Bar

Chef Paul A. Young, UK

This chocolate bar encases toasted almond milk ganache and rosemary caramel within a 45% milk chocolate shell topped off with almond brittle, cocoa nib praline, white chocolate blueberries, rosemary flowers and sea salt crystals to create a multi-sensory experience. Rosemary caramel introduces an herbal, earthy flavor. Single origin Colombian milk chocolate has a delicate but complex character that complements almonds, adding raw and cooked almonds.

Texture:

Adorned with visual texture cues on top, this recipe leverages almonds' ability to deliver multiple within the same product— from crunchy and brittle to smooth and delicate.



Did You Know?

Alternative Ingredients

like Chef Paul A. Young's toasted almond milk ganache meet demand for plant-based, premium textures.²

Confectionery product launches with "vegan" claims

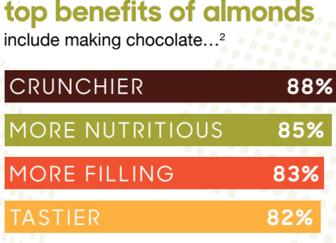
increased at

17%

CAGR between 2016 and 2020.²

GLOBAL INSIGHTS

Surveyed global consumers report the **top benefits of almonds** include making chocolate...²



Top health claims

for global confectionery product launches with almonds¹:

- Gluten-free
- Vegetarian/Vegan
- No Additives/Preservatives
- Natural
- High/source of fiber
- High/source of protein



References

1. Innova Market Insights, Global New Product Introductions Report, 2019, Released May 2020.
2. 2020 Global Chocolate Study, Sterling-Rice Group. The Global Chocolate Study surveyed 5,000 consumers across ten key global markets to understand chocolate usage and attitudes and preference for almonds in chocolate relative to other nuts and inclusions.
*The 2020 Global Chocolate Study survey included almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, peanuts, pistachios, cashews and macadamia nuts.