

Consumer Snacking - UK - 2023

Report Price: £2195 | \$2995 | €2600

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Snacking habits following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, and challenges and opportunities arising from the rising cost of living/inflation.
- Types of snacks eaten and frequency of snacking.
- New launch activity, including progress being made by snack brands on non-HFSS innovation.
- Reasons for snacking and implication of these for product development and marketing.
- Attributes important when choosing a snack as a treat and what this means for brands.
- Behaviours and attitudes related to eating and buying snacks, including interest in calorie-controlled products and those boosting nutritional intake, as well as less healthy options.

Healthiness holds marked sway in snacks even when choosing one for a treat, 24% of eaters and buyers of snacks looking for health claims in this context, including being low fat/sugar or high fibre/protein. This emphasises the scale of demand for options that are enjoyable and nutritious, delivering healthy indulgence.

The home is where people are most likely to snack, with 90% reaching for snacks there in the two weeks to May 2023. This share is even higher than in 2022, the downward trend in households' reported financial wellbeing since late 2021 fuelling cutbacks on out-of-home leisure occasions and boosting the appeal of evenings in and other potential snack occasions at home.

Snacking makes 40% of eaters and buyers of snacks feel guilty. Pointing to an inner conflict, 60% of them nonetheless think that unhealthy snacks are fine as part of a balanced diet. These findings help explain the multifaceted landscape of the current snacking market, with success stories at both ends of the healthy to unhealthy spectrum, and reaffirm the ongoing opportunities in both spaces.



“Reasons for snacking have shifted back to what they were pre-COVID, but treating oneself is still the second biggest driver of snacking. When choosing a snack as a treat, a favourite brand and exciting flavour are most important, but health claims appeal to one in four, emphasising the demand for healthy indulgence.”

– **Richard Caines, Principal Analyst, UK Food & Drink Research**

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Half of snack eaters do not cite satisfying hunger as a reason for snacking, showing how people turn to snacks for a much wider array of reasons than just physiological needs. Treating oneself (41%), satisfying a craving (37%), cheering oneself up (21%) and relaxing/de-stressing (23%) have slipped back somewhat compared to 2021 (during COVID-19), but are still important drivers of snacking for brands to align their proposition with.

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