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CHANGING FOOD OCCASIONS

The snackification trend continues

In today's fast-paced world, traditional meal structures are giving way to what has been described as snackification. This shift, driven by evolving lifestyles and social dynamics, is reshaping the way we eat, with significant implications for both consumers and the food industry.

According to Kantar's 2023 Global MONITOR, a staggering 67% of global consumers now decide their meals in the moment, rather than planning ahead. This trend towards spontaneous eating is fuelled by the preference for smaller, more frequent meals or snacks throughout the day, rather than a few large ones. For many of us, the old "three meals per day" eating pattern does not exist anymore.

Urbanization plays a pivotal role in this transformation, with city dwellers facing longer commutes and increased workloads, leaving little time for traditional meal preparation. As a result, cooking is viewed as stressful by 37% of global consumers. The Kantar report also highlights that changing family structures, including the rise of single-person households, further contribute to the popularity of snacking as individuals adopt different eating routines.

Another snacking trend driver is the rise of the middle-class in many developing countries. This has led to increased access to the snacking market for more consumers. Also, on-the-go consumption has become a convenient and preferred way to re-fuel body and mind. Snacking on-the-go makes us feel "fuller for longer".

In the United States, snacking has become the dominant food and beverage occasion, representing a staggering 49% of all eating and drinking occasions, according to The Hartman Group's "Future of Snacking 2024" report. However, snacking is no longer merely about filling the gap between meals; it has evolved into a nuanced activity driven by various considerations, including taste, nutrition, convenience, and price.

Protein remains as a key priority for consumers, driving increased demand for snacks with high protein content. Additionally, sustainability and clean label credentials are becoming increasingly important factors in snack selection.

SNACKING CRITERIA

Increase in importance 2020–2024 (% points)
United States (Source: The Hartman Group)

PROTEIN SOURCE

9

LOW/NO SUGAR

8

In Ireland, consumer preferences are shifting towards snacks with health benefits, with a particular interest in products that boost immunity and promote gut health, according to Mintel's 2022 Irish report on "Consumer Snacking Habits."

The influence of younger generations, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, is driving further innovation in the snacking landscape, blurring the lines between snacks and meals. This trend towards more casual eating habits creates opportunities for "better-for-you" products to cater to evolving consumer preferences.¹

According to Euromonitor (Voice of the Consumer: Lifestyles Survey, 2023), 14% of Gen Z and 12% of Millennials regularly replace meals with snacks vs only 6% of Boomers. Snackification is likely to grow further, fuelled by the influx of young urban middle-class consumers in developing markets and increasing availability of more nutritionally balanced snacks that are well positioned as meal replacement.

1. Mintel: Better For You Snacking – US – 2024
2. FMCG Gurus: Dairy Trends in China – Country Report – 2024

Globally, dairy is emerging as a popular choice for snacking, offering essential nutrients such as protein and calcium. In China, for instance, dairy products are increasingly consumed as snacks, either for health-conscious or indulgent occasions.²

As food occasions continue to evolve, the trend towards snacking shows no signs of slowing down. With consumers demanding more, healthier, and indulgent options, the future of snacking promises to be a very exciting space to watch.

To learn more about Tirlán's portfolio of ingredients which support healthy aging and muscle maintenance please go to our website www.tirlaningredients.com

 www.linkedin.com/showcase/tirlan-ingredients

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ABOUT TIRLÁN MR&I

An expert team which is provocative, energetic and nimble that adds value through driving insight led growth aligned to our internal customers' strategies and priorities through a thorough understanding of consumers, categories, markets and customers.

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3. European Commission– Population aging in Europe facts implications and policies
4. Impact of nutrition on the ageing process: John C Mathers
5. The World's Oldest Populations AGEING SOCIETY: Felix Richter (Statista)
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7. Nutrition as we age Healthy eating with the dietary guidelines – Dana DeSilva
8. UN Population fund