

# The Modern Snacking Snapshot

How snacking has evolved from an afternoon reward or a late-night treat to meal replacement (and more)

There's been a shift in how people eat. From the introduction of GLP-1 drugs and the desire for smaller portions, to the ever-changing demands of modern life, consumers are looking for more from their food—and snacks have become the go-to solution.

We set out to understand why people are snacking more—delving into what they're eating, why and when they're doing it, and what's capturing their interest. In our proprietary research, we uncovered new trends and intriguing points about what snacking means to today's consumer.



This avocado toast made with Ardent Mills® Organic Wheat Flour is a filling and nutritious snack that can replace an entire meal.



## Deconstructing the modern snack

Snacks were once considered a small treat or a way to bridge the gap between meals to keep you going. But those attitudes are changing.

These days, just about anything can be considered a snack, and they're no longer only to keep you going between meals. A modern snack can be full-on meal replacement, a healthy way to fuel up, or anything in between.

Snackers agree that snacks can be:

-   
**92%**  
 Just about anything
-   
**81%**  
 Savory/  
 salty/spicy
-   
**80%**  
 Good for  
 you/healthy
-   
**80%**  
 Indulgent/  
 treat
-   
**64%**  
 Sweet

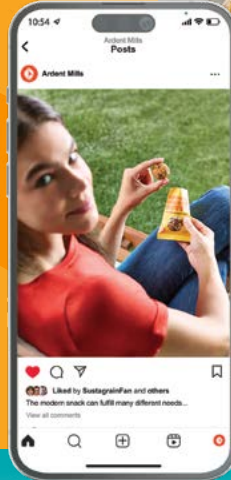


## The brass tacks on snacks

When we asked snackers what they wanted from a snack, we got a wide range of answers. Snacks must:

- “Taste great”** ..... 92%
- Be “convenient/minimal prep”** ... 95%
- Have a “small portion size”** ..... 91%
- Be “portable/eat on the go”** ..... 88%
- “Provide my body energy”** ..... 87%

So, while snacking has changed, some of the criteria for a good snack has remained.



These granola bites made with Sustagrain® Whole Grain Barley Flour are delicious, convenient, filling—and provide energy. Everything a modern snack needs.



18-34  
year olds

Snack  
**11.2x**  
per week



## Why are people snacking?



**These days, more people are turning to snacks.**

In fact, 95% of consumers 18 and older have a snack at least once a week. As the modern snack seems to do so much more (providing needed energy, fully replacing meals), snacking has gained ground. Younger consumers have committed the most to snacking though, with 18- to 34-year-olds reaching for a snack the most frequently at 11.2 times per week.<sup>2</sup> And 42% of them are snacking more than they did a year ago!<sup>1</sup>



Consumers are looking for snacks that provide energy and nutrients. These chickpea pita crackers and hummus do just that—while tasting great.

## What's making them snack so much more than they used to?

### Snacking makes people happy (among other things)

When asked, more than two-thirds of snackers (67%) were highly satisfied with their most recent snack. Snacking seems to put consumers in a better mood in general. The top 7 emotions during recent snacking occasions were: satisfied (41%), content (38%), comforted (37%), relaxed (31%), energized (29%), indulgent (22%) and rewarded (17%). Consumers see snacking as an outlet, a way to improve their day as well as their physical and emotional wellbeing.

### Top 5 reasons for snacking on most recent occasion<sup>1</sup>

To indulge/treat yourself	<b>36%</b>
To give your body “fuel” to keep going	<b>23%</b>
Habit/do it without really thinking	<b>10%</b>
To relieve stress/boredom	<b>7%</b>
To replace a meal	<b>6%</b>

## The snacking showdown: sweet vs savory

In our study, we found that the flavor profile of a snack differed depending on the motivation behind the snacking occasion. In their most recent snack, 44% of respondents ate salty/spicy/savory snacks, 42% ate sweet snacks, and 14% ate a combination of both! And when we clarified the occasion, there seemed to be agreement on what flavor profile fits with the major snacking occasions.

### Flavor profiles by goal:<sup>1</sup>

Flavor profile	To indulge/treat	To replace meal	To eat well overall (for nutrients, vitamins, etc.)	To relieve stress	To try something new	To receive functional benefit
Salty/savory/spicy	41%	57%	22%	60%	31%	59%
Sweet	49%	26%	61%	30%	38%	29%
Combination	11%	17%	17%	10%	31%	12%

## Grains and pulses are fan favorites in snacks

Some classic snacks—like cookies, pretzels and cheese crackers—have featured grains and pulses for decades. And they’re perfect for modern snacks. Even as snacking evolves and people are looking for more from their snacks, grains and pulses are uniquely suited to meet the changing needs of consumers.



### What consumers in our study thought of grain and pulse-based snacks:

Statement	% that agree (grains)	% that agree (pulses)
Snacks that feature [grains/pulses] <b>are nutritious</b>	95%	97%
Snacks that feature [grains/pulses] <b>taste good</b>	92%	75%
Snacks that feature [grains/pulses] <b>deliver benefits related to my snacking goals</b>	79%	76%



## The built-in benefits of grains and pulses

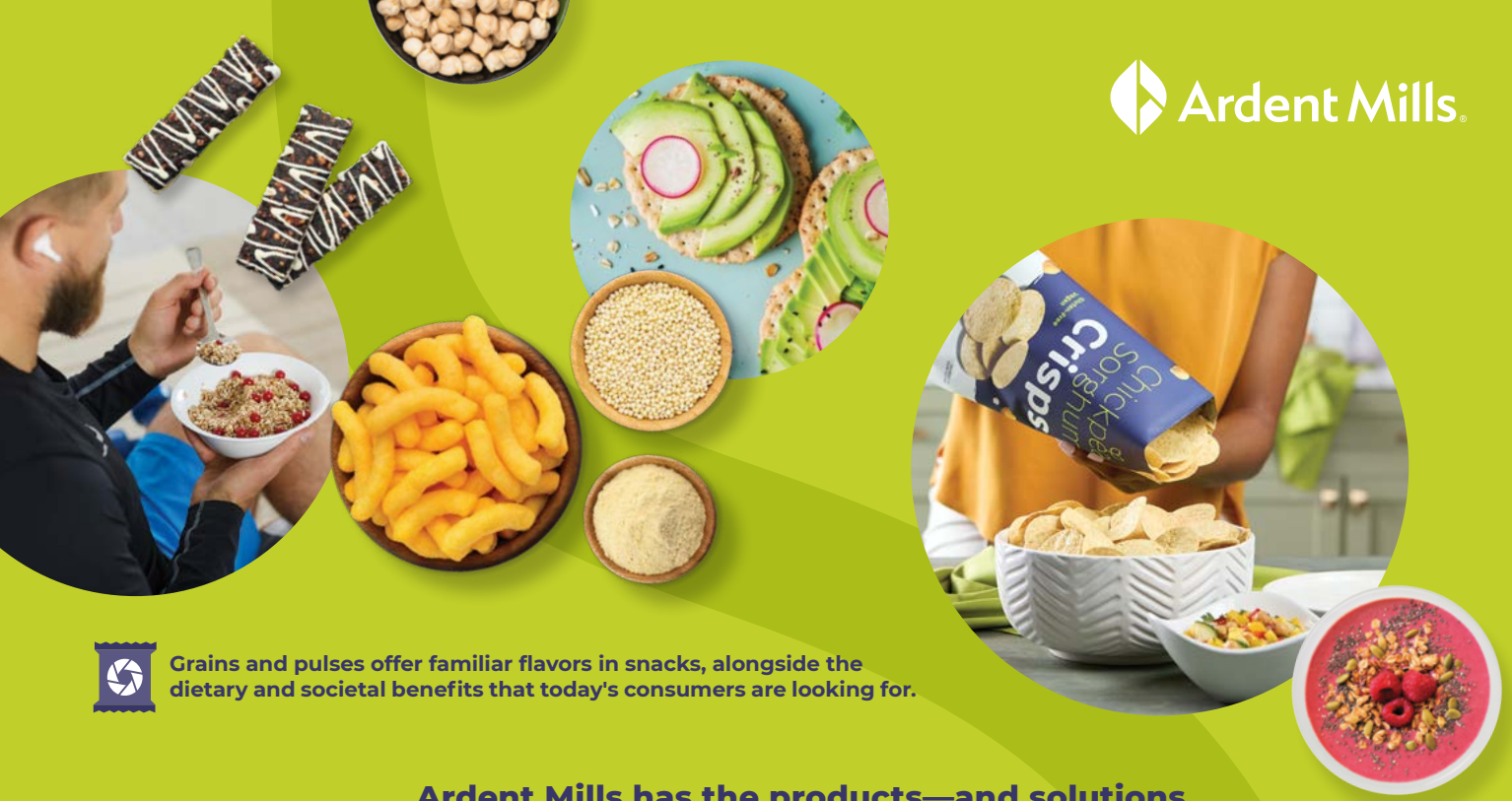
Whether it’s a new healthy hit, or a filling meal-replacement, grains and pulses provide the tastes that snackers expect and the new benefits that consumers are looking for—plus they work in nearly any category.

<p><b>Non-GMO, plant-based and vegan</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour, organic wheat flour, sorghum flour, Sustagrain® Whole Grain Barley Flour</p>	<p><b>Gluten free</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour, sorghum flour</p>	<p><b>Protein rich</b></p> <p>Whole chickpeas</p>	<p><b>Good source of protein</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour</p>	<p><b>Good source of fiber</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour, sorghum flour, Sustagrain® Whole Grain Barley Flour</p>	<p><b>Satiety (sense of fullness)</b></p> <p>Sustagrain® Whole Grain Barley Flour</p>	<p><b>Sustainable properties</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour, sorghum flour</p>	<p><b>Certified Organic</b></p> <p>Chickpea flour, organic wheat flour</p>
--	--	---	--	---	---	---	--



This is only a small sampling of our full ingredient portfolio. See more at the Products section at [ArdentMills.com](https://www.ArdentMills.com).





Grains and pulses offer familiar flavors in snacks, alongside the dietary and societal benefits that today's consumers are looking for.

## Ardent Mills has the products—and solutions you need for your snack initiatives

From our full line of grains and pulses to the opportunities we uncover with our insights, to Purpose-Powered Innovation™—Ardent Mills can be the partner you need to make the next hit snack.

[See ardentmills.com for more](https://www.ardentmills.com)



## Go with the grain (and pulses)

There are opportunities to help consumers understand the benefits of grains and pulses in their snacks. While they may be familiar with them, they might not know the real benefits they offer aside from familiar tastes.

### 1. Amplify the strengths

Grains and pulses offer versatility and functionality in snacks—make sure that's apparent on the packaging. Educating consumers about the benefits of these ingredients will simplify their choice at the shelf.

### 2. Highlight the opportunity

Make sure your snack clearly communicates that it's a meal replacement option, or something completely new or unique. Lean into the opportunity—consumers are looking for snacks for many different occasions. Help them find the right snack for the moments that matter to them.



## Five trends and their impact on snacks

Recently, Ardent Mills identified five top trends driving consumer food purchases. These trends also play a huge role in how consumers choose their snacks. Playing into these trends with a new snack could help make consumers happier with their choices.

See more in Trend to Table™



### Ingredients Matter

Consumers are often making their food decisions with ingredients as the primary decision-making factor.


**80% of snackers agree 'snacks should be made with nutritious ingredients'**<sup>1</sup>



### HERITAGE IS HERO

Overall, U.S. consumers in general are nurturing their culinary roots and ancestral cooking practices, but they are also embracing their sense of adventure by exploring new cultural cuisines.

**62% of snackers agree 'snacks should be different/unique/ something that allows for some experimentation'**<sup>1</sup>



### ADDING WITH INTENT

Seeking foods that enhance their goals is a top priority for today's consumers who are more focused on mindful dietary decisions that will benefit their health and wellness.

**80% of snackers agree 'snacks should be good-for-you by delivering some benefits'**<sup>1</sup>



### DESIRE TO DO GOOD

Ingredient suppliers and manufacturers that incorporate sustainable practices provide tangible ways to connect with consumers and help them feel like they're making a difference.

**47% of snackers agree 'snacks should be made in a way that is good for planetary health'**<sup>1</sup>



### Indulge me

Great taste has moved from expectation to requirement. From sweet foods to savory dishes, consumers are confidently indulging in their daily lives.

**The #1 reason that snackers snacked on their most recent occasion was 'to indulge/treat yourself' (36%)**<sup>1</sup>



Looking to create the next huge hit? Or are you thinking about reinventing a classic? We've got the insights into the market and the innovative solutions you need. Partner with us.

Contact your Ardent Mills Account Manager or [info@ardentmills.com](mailto:info@ardentmills.com) to see how we can help.

<sup>1</sup> Ardent Mills Proprietary Research, U.S. consumers 18+ who report snacking one time or more often in a typical week  
<sup>2</sup> Ardent Mills Proprietary Research