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## Snack Bars February 2024



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#### Snack Bars / February 2024

US lifestyles have rendered meals relative; snack bars and healthy snacks' versatility primes them to fit within today's definition and the next.

#### **Mintel's Market Predictions**









Following record inflation, consumers prove they would rather switch to private label or trade bar types than not engage with the category. Bar brands of all types are challenged to communicate value.

Consumers' lifestyles and external stressors may heighten the appeal of bars as convenient, concentrated hunger solutions. Continued innovation may also heighten the appeal of familiarity in the decision-making process.





Format innovation challenges standard "bar" presentation and adds to the innovation mix. Further functional offerings heighten wellness appeal of select bars: though indulgent offerings will dive further into their differentiators, too.



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Source: Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD)

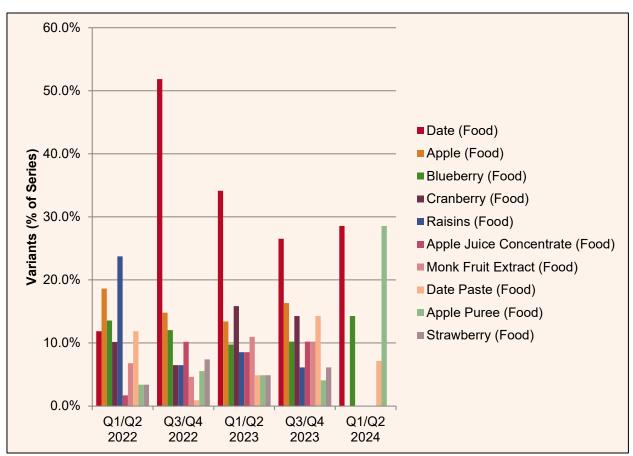




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#### **Top 10 Fruit Ingredients - Snack Bars**





Nature Valley Fruit

Nut - Cranberry
Pomegranate
Chewy Granola
Bars



Kind Thins
Caramel Apple
Cinnamon Bars



Naturally flavored - Made with real fruit - With almonds, cranberries and pomegranate

A smooth caramel drizzle with the sweet taste of apple and cinnamon, rounded out by nuttiness



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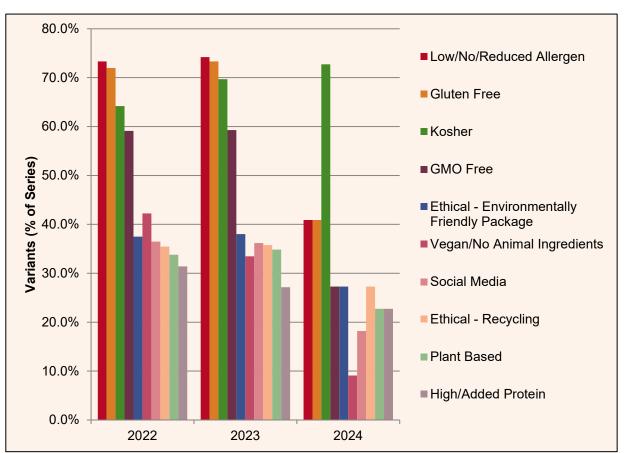




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#### **Top 10 Claims - Snack Bars Containing Fruit**





Made in Nature
SnackLife Figgy Pops Organic Ch-Ch-Cherry
Unbaked Fruit & Nut
Energy Bites



USDA Organic, Non GMO Project Verified, Certified Gluten Free, Kosher Nature's Bakery -Apple Oatmeal Crumble Bars



Plant based, Recyclable pack, Non GMO Verified Project, Certified Vegan by vegan.org, Kosher



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#### **Snack Bar Opportunities**

#### Create new associations

There's a fine line between routines and rituals. While not all bars can leverage explicit exercise associations and related routines, there are infinite rituals yet to be created: nighttime snacking rituals and postwork rituals are just a few starting points that consumers can look forward to.



#### Round it out

Learnings from consumer <u>meal and snack habits</u> tell us ultra-low effort is in, and anything goes. Rounding out flavor or nutrition can amp up the versatility that is already a strong-suit of the category. Pairings can be as dressed up or down as the user has energy and financial means for; the DIY aspect adds an experiential element.

#### It's all about framing

54%

of women are looking for BFY snacks to satisfy an unhealthy craving in a healthier way

Bars fill gaps in consumers' diets: whether as intentional wellness tools or craving satisfaction. As current wellness definitions have consumers saving space for what used to be "guilty pleasures," not only are shamelessly indulgent varieties welcome, but can be framed around portion control and avoiding mindless bingeing.



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#### The snack, nutrition and performance bar consumer: fast facts

- Consumers are widely engaged with bars (<u>78%</u>). Certain factors
  may change degree of engagement (parenthood) or bar type
  (finances), but the fact that financial comfort only changes type
  and not overall engagement says a lot about consumers' priorities.
- Routines impact frequency, seen in performance bars' higher daily consumption compared to other bars.
- At-home occasions lead for <u>adults</u> and <u>kids</u> opening room for creativity that suits current meal and snacking habits.
- Adults want bars that are "real" and filling for themselves or other adults; parents want something their kids will eat.
- <u>Indulgence</u> still has a time and place, and can even be positioned as "better than" mindless binges within wellness definitions that save space for dessert.
- <u>Familiarity</u> is less intimidating and can be used to introduce new flavors and concepts.







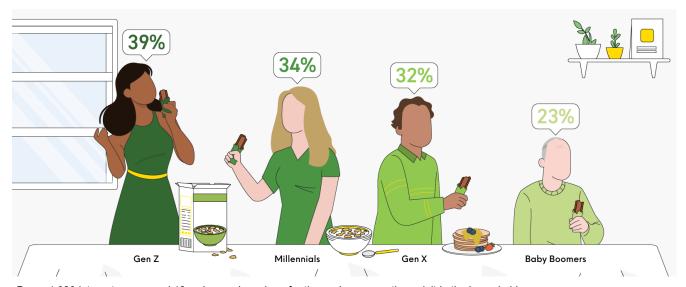


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#### Generational differences point to shifting snacking behaviors



US: adult bar occasions – as **breakfast**, % of respondents by generation, 2023



Base: 1,086 internet users aged 18+ who purchase bars for themselves or another adult in the household

Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel, October 2023



# <u>Kodiak - Cinnamon Oat & Apple Soft-Baked Sandwich Breakfast Bars</u>

The product checks all the boxes for a better breakfast on the go - Crafted with 100% whole grains - 10 grams of protein - Soft oat + fruit filling - Fuel for any adventure



#### <u>Atkins Soft Baked Energy Bar -</u> <u>Blueberry Protein Meal Bar</u>

Full of protein - Limiting the amount of sugar and simple and refined carbs can help minimize spikes in blood sugar and provide steady energy - On the go - Keeps one satisfied at meal time - Chewy, crunchy, sweet and salty snack, anytime, anywhere - Fits into a low carb lifestyle



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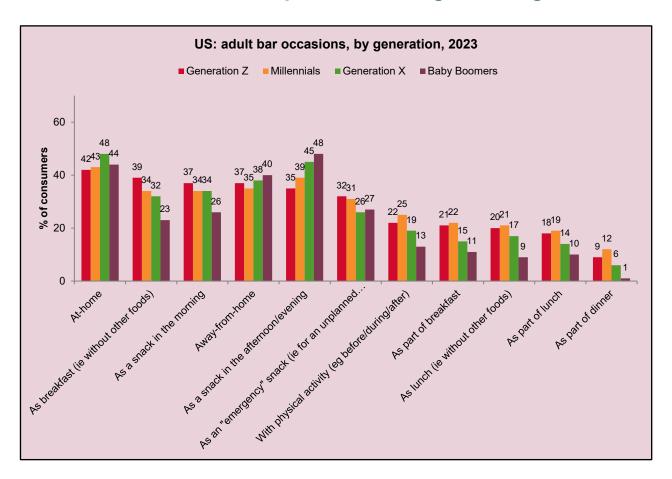
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#### Generational differences point to shifting snacking behaviors



Younger consumers have stronger ties with bars as a meal replacement and part of a meal, reflecting the <u>evolution of meal structures</u> that affords brands additional flexibility in positioning. Consumers' schedules are <u>tight and subject to unpredictable changes</u> that challenge ideal eating patterns, increasing the appeal of bars that fill whatever needs appear – whether keeping hunger at bay, efficient fitness tools or just plain sweet tooth satisfaction. <u>34%</u> of Gen Z's and <u>36%</u> of Millennials say bars are a fun way to break up meals, offering another angle to satisfy consumer interests via snack-sized variety.



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#### Snack Bars / February 2024

#### Finding the sweet spot for reduced-sugar bars is a challenge

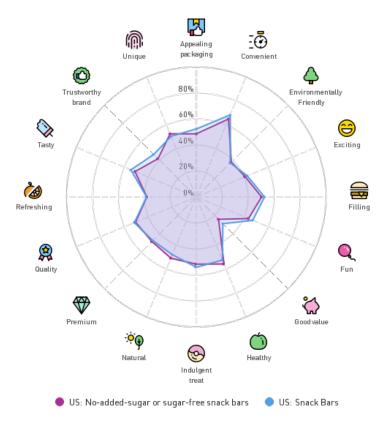


Snack bars have long been plagued by consumers' concerns about high sugar content.

<u>Consumers rate low sugar content among the most important attributes</u> they seek in snack bars. In the <u>UK, 58% of snack bar consumers</u> agree that bars targeted at children are too high in sugar.

The challenge is communicating the benefits of lower-sugar bars while maintaining the importance of great taste. As Mintel <u>Purchase Intelligence</u> shows, <u>US consumers regard no-added-sugar or sugar-free products as less tasty</u> than their full-sugar counterparts.

The 'war on sugar' has become more difficult. Brands need to navigate the complexities of consumer opinion on alternate sweeteners after the <u>WHO announced</u> that aspartame could possibly cause cancer in humans. Even other sweeteners like stevia are facing backlash.





Base: US internet consumers aged 18+ reviewing no-added-sugar or sugar-free snack bars 11,000; all snack bars 113,000 (September 2020-August 2023)

Source: Mintel Purchase Intelligence



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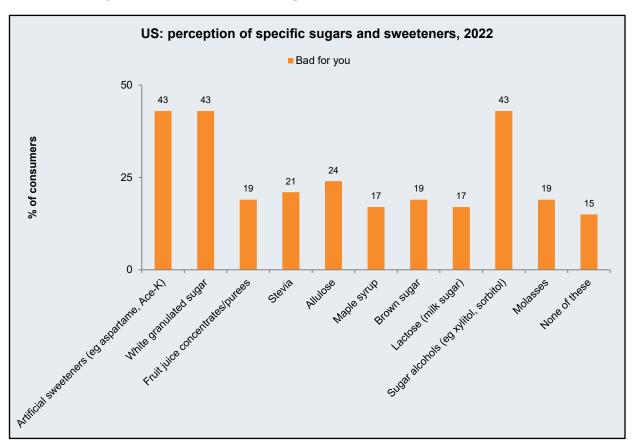
Source: Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD)





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#### It's not just a war on sugar, it's a war on sweeteners



In addition to avoiding the perception of poor taste surrounding reduced-sugar products, brands must also consider the consumer backlash against some alternate sweeteners.

Artificial sweeteners (aspartame or Ace-K), sugar alcohols (mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol) and white sugar are <u>all perceived as bad for you</u> by the same percentage (43%) of consumers in the US.

In France, **only** <u>22% of consumers</u> trust that the sweeteners used in food and drinks are safe.

The consumer perception of specific alternate sweeteners is leading brands to communicate the absence of them on pack.



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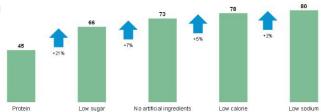


#### Snack Bars / February 2024

# Protein sets the stage; other attributes sweeten the deal (even without sugar)



Whether its a singular snack, the product mix on a retailer's shelf or offerings within a brand portfolio, its the mix that matters. Stacking claims allows BFY snacks to reach more consumers by meeting more needs.



US: TURF analysis - important BFY snack features, 2024

Protein content and low sugar content are the most impactful features: a product with

these two features alone would be appealing to around two-thirds of consumers who are considering a healthy snack.

Beyond that, niche brands can further engage the healthiest snackers with low/no claims, including low calorie and low sodium, but these specific claims are most likely to resonate with consumers with specific health needs (eg, hypertension).



US: protein is still the BFY darling, % of respondents, 2023

Base: 1,973 internet users aged 18+ who snack Source: Kantar Profiles/Mintel. November 2023



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#### Brands seek fresh opportunities in the chilled aisle



Chilled bars that can stay fresh outside the fridge for a given amount of time can help address potential convenience barriers.



# Perfect Bar Snack Size Chocolate Covered Peanut Butter Snack Bars

Crafted with freshly ground peanut butter, organic honey and 20+ organic superfoods.
They can be taken on the go for two days (US).



## **Core Bar Blueberry Banana Almond Bar**

Described as a refrigerated, plant-based superior nutrition bar. It contains 7g of fibre, 6g of protein, vitamin C and D, zinc, probiotics and prebiotics (US).



### Hungry Monkey Fresh Fruit Bar!

Hungry Monkey, a UK chilled snack bar company, explains how its use of High Pressure Pasteurization (HPP), a cold-preservation technique, can provide multiple benefits to its chilled bars.

This means the nutrients, vitamins and flavor are retained to provide a taste similar to fresh food while achieving a refrigerated shelf life of approximately 65 days.





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#### Think outside the bar (and flavor profiles)



Format innovations that retain the convenience and nutrition of traditional bars – with a twist – add an element of fun and snackability.







#### Evolve Habanero Mango Bark

Contains nutrient-dense
"superfood" grains, seeds and
adaptogens in a format that is
less standard, yet still retains
"bar" characteristics.

# Thunderbird Mexican Hot Chocolate Superfood Bar

Contains less than 10 ingredients, with sweetness from dates and flavor from spices.

Upland Mango,
Pineapple, Quinoa,
Chia, Turmeric
Freeze-Dried Bites

Offer immune-focused nutrition in a freeze-dried bar format.



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