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A Look at the Next Snacking Trends

A few years ago, food industry analysts noted the increase in ready-to-go snacks to fit the on-the-go lifestyles of consumers. This all changed when the pandemic began and caused supply chain issues, increased inflation, and new eating habits. Driven by taste, price, and convenience, consumers continue to reshape the snack market as we near the end of the pandemic.

Looking at the current state of snacking, 45% of people in the U.S. consume three or more snacks a day, according to Information Resources Inc. (IRI). Another report by Mintel showed that 94% of Americans snack everyday. Additionally, Mondelez International's "State of Snacking" report showed that 64% of consumers prefer snacking over traditional meals, which is up 5% since 2019. This change can be attributed to pandemic-related lifestyle changes as consumers adapted to work-from-home and hybrid work schedules.



Another trend that's emerging in the snacking category is protein. The demand for protein occurred before the pandemic but continues today. According to IRI's data, dried meat snacks were up 22.4% for the 52-week period ending December 26, 2021. There was also an uptick in cheese snacks to accompany dried meat snacks.

Although the pandemic caused consumers to be more health conscious about their snacking, they also turned to snacks to help comfort them during periods of disruption and uncertainty. Mondelez's report showed that 88% of consumers considered a balanced diet as one that includes small indulgences. There are a few ways consumers are getting

their indulgences in while sticking to a healthy lifestyle. Some shoppers seek out products that taste good while offering functionality or “free-from” claims. Other shoppers opt for portion-controlled snacks that allow for limited indulgence.

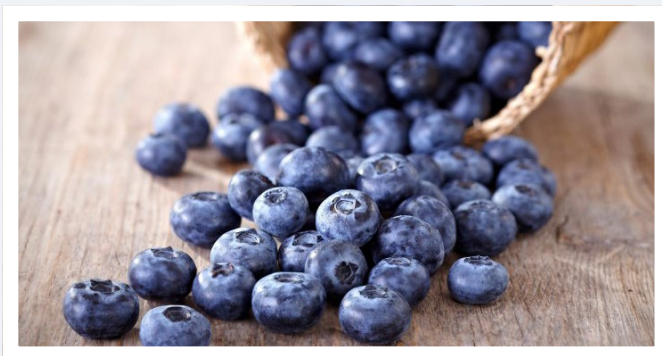
One last trend in the snacking category is flavor. Big flavor, whether it’s spicy, bold, or interesting, is a focal point for new innovations. IRI confirmed that the demand for flavor is showing as sales of hotter flavors like spicy sesame ginger, flaming hot queso, and scorpion pepper are seeing increased sales.

The Unexpected Benefit of Blueberries

Thanks to their high levels of antioxidants and nutrients, blueberries have a number of health benefits, including lowering blood pressure, preventing heart disease, and possible cognitive benefits according to a new study.

According to the study which was published in the journal *Nutrients*, a half cup of blueberries per day was found to help middle-aged individuals against cognitive decline when implemented early in high-risk individuals. “This is an important finding given that in the United States, nearly six million older adults live with dementia,” according to the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council. “Since limited treatments for cognitive decline exist, preventative approaches and mitigation of risk through proper nutrition are of increasing importance.”

We offer both sweet cultivated blueberries and flavorful wild blueberries. Our **exceptional infused dried blueberries** elevate a number of commercial food **applications** by adding fresh flavor, natural nutrition, and a vibrant hue. Interested in a boost of blue? Request your **sample** today!



Superfruit Spotlight: Cherries

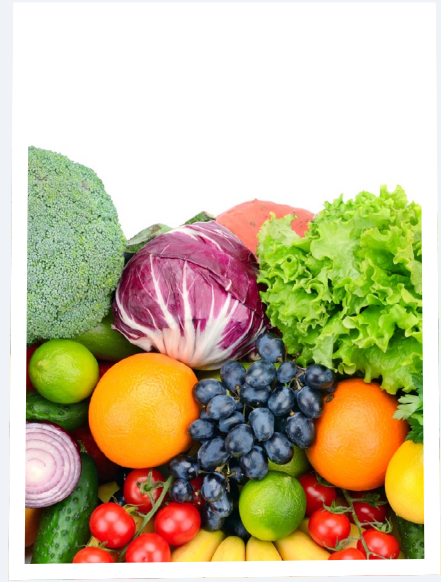
This month we’re highlighting our signature **infused dried cherries** just in time for summer!

Our exceptional infused dried Montmorency cherries elevate a number of commercial food applications by adding vibrant color, distinct texture, and antioxidants that promote a number of health benefits. Consumers are seeking ingredients that are nutritious and rich in flavor and our premium infused dried cherries tick those boxes. Whether it’s a **salad, trail mix, or nutrition bar**, our deeply hued treasures perform well in a number of both sweet and savory foods. Request your cherry **samples** today!

Most Food Waste Comes From Fruits and Vegetables

In the U.S. we waste around a third of our food which amounts to around 492 and 1,032 pounds per person annually, according to a report from the Environmental Protection Agency. "Fruits and vegetables are the most commonly wasted foods, followed by dairy and eggs," the report explains.

The report also indicates that 70-90% of food waste contains edible food and 90% of food wasted in the supply chain is edible. On the household side, 70% of wastage is edible while 40% of household food waste contains fruits and vegetables. The best way to tackle food waste is through efforts to reduce food waste rather than recycling. Additionally, environmental benefits can be achieved by preventing food waste at the consumption level and focusing on the foods that contribute to the most waste.



Health & Wellness Trends in Soft Drinks

In the height of the pandemic consumers opted for either vitamin-boosting ingredients or sugary drinks to get them through a difficult time.

Soft drink company Britvic focuses on consumers' health and wellness priorities and how they've evolved through the pandemic and what they're looking for going forward.

Sugar Intake - Although sugar is a key ingredient in soft drinks, consumers were still divided about it during the pandemic. On the one hand, around 85% of consumers

prioritized some form of healthy eating by reducing sugar (27%) or drinking more fluids (25%). Grocery stores in the U.K. saw increases in low and no sugar products but the opposite was seen in the impulse channel. Overall, sugar still remains a concern when choosing soft drinks as 55% of consumers say they have reduced fruit juice or smoothies due to sugar intake concerns.

Mental Health - Attitudes toward health have evolved drastically over the past two years as well as awareness of mental health issues. 53% of consumers indicated physical wellness and 49% indicated mental wellness as being more important to them in the next 12 months. Interestingly, almost two thirds agree that 'what you eat has a direct impact on emotional wellbeing'.

Functional Benefits - Food and beverages with functional benefits are becoming more and more important to consumers. 48% of households indicated that health properties and benefits are taken into consideration when buying food and beverages.



What's New at Graceland

Going green never looked so blue!

These blue totes are currently in rotation at our Forrester Road Processing facility and are being used to collect organic waste matter which will be turned into clean, renewable energy at the Fremont Regional Digester. The Fremont Regional Digester takes organic food waste (165,000 tons a year) including farm, animal, food processing, and consumer food waste, and turns it into renewable energy that powers the community! Click [here](#) to learn more about our environmental sustainability.



The Growing Demand for Natural Colors

Consumers are opting for natural colors in their food and beverages. According to ADM Outside Voice, 62% of consumers indicate that they avoid artificial coloring in their food and beverage products. Additionally, the natural color of fruits and vegetables appeal to consumers looking for labels that have vegan, organic, or other clean claims. Furthermore, colors and flavors can evoke particular memories in consumers, developing perceptions of products based on how they look. For example, consumers perceive blue or purple food products with rest and relaxation. Blue can also evoke feelings of energy and excitement if paired with cotton candy or fruit punch.

Consumers are demanding playful and eye-catching colors in their food applications, especially in their baked goods. The phrase "The camera eats first" refers to consumers (mostly Millennials and Gen Z) snapping pictures of their food and beverages for their social media before eating or drinking. Unique colors and pretty presentations can further inspire consumers to snap pictures of their food and drink and share them with their followers. Blue in particular is a color that's growing in popularity for its versatility. Blue can signal things like relaxation but also excitement depending on the application.

Our exceptional **infused dried fruit ingredients** are flash frozen to preserve integrity, nutrition, flavor, and brilliant hue. Consumers are seeking bold, natural colors and our infused dried fruit ingredients tick that box. Whether it's **cherries**, **blueberries**, or **cranberries**, our exceptional ingredients retain their texture, nutrition, and natural color to elevate a number of food **applications**. Ready to add some color? Talk to our **experts** today!



We deliver *delight.*

Graceland Fruit, Inc. is a leading producer and global distributor of premium quality dried fruit ingredients for the food industry. Our exceptional product and service performance make it easy for innovative food manufacturers and providers to create delicious, on-trend products to surprise and delight their consumers.

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