



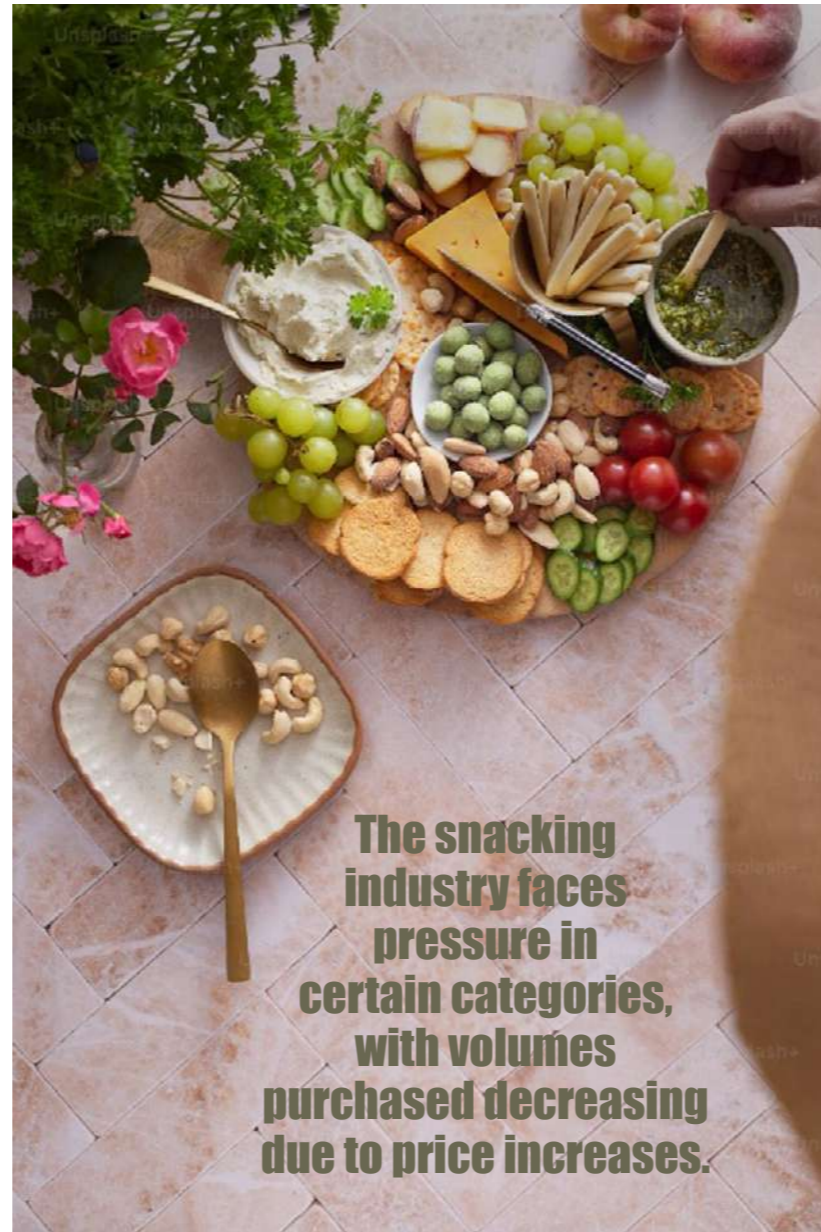
Snacks & Treats ... bites of change

By Julia Baker
S&R Content Manager

The South African snack and treat market is driven by factors like affordability, indulgence, and health-conscious consumers, with local producers needing to adapt to rising costs and embrace innovation and sustainability for success. Furthermore, retailers are learning from international trends and the growing demand for clean labels, eco-friendly offerings and a shift towards healthier and more responsible choices.

An NIQ analysis reveals that the snacking industry faces pressure in certain categories, with volumes purchased decreasing due to price increases. For example, extruded snacks (ready-to-eat snacks made using the food processing method) have experienced 14.9% annual inflation. This is exacerbated because this category is characterised by impulse spending on perceived treats that are not deemed essential, especially in a tight shopping basket.

“Where consumers used to be able to buy chips, chocolates, and biscuits, they’re now having to spend more on a loaf of bread and other food items and are therefore cutting back on treats. When deciding between a pack of biscuits costing R25, a slab of chocolate at R21, chips at R20, and a 6-pack of yoghurt at R18, they may well opt for the yoghurt, which represents six snacking occasions,

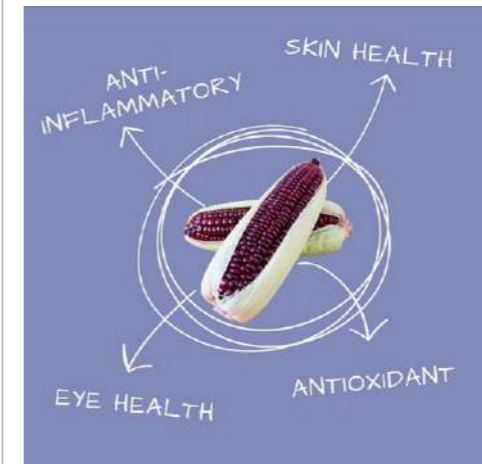


The snacking industry faces pressure in certain categories, with volumes purchased decreasing due to price increases.

or chips that look larger and are therefore seen as offering more value for money.”

According to The World Food Ingredients team, “Consumers worldwide are snacking-on-the-go more frequently than last year. Younger consumers are especially inclined to snack away from home

more than once a day.” Thirty percent of consumers globally say they consume a healthy snack at least once a day.



Popcorn is the fastest growing category with 10% average annual growth in popcorn launches. (Canada) Purpleful Snacking Jalapeno Cheddar Grain Purple Popcorn.



Gluten-free claims are leading the way with 16% of snack launches, 15% – no additives, preservatives. (Australia) Mr Chens Gluten-Free Pork and Chive Dumplings.

Collaboration, +26% average annual growth in co-branding launches for snacks. (Netherlands) Lays Potato Chips with Joppie flavour.





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10 international & local snacking trends

Depending on taste, snacking is seen differently from country to country. International trends are the next thing to watch.



Snacking on the go is gaining popularity, 19% of consumers report doing so in 2024, a rise from 15% in 2023. This is particularly common among young consumers, prompting brands to create more convenient snack options and packaging designs. Try Sabra Barbecue Hummus Dip with Pretzels (US).



Stress relieving. Emotional wellbeing is a prominent factor in the snacking industry. For younger consumers, finding ways to relieve stress and alleviate tension through snacks is a priority. As a result, many brands are now incorporating unique and fascinating ingredients, such as adaptogens, known for their calming properties. 'Gin' Happy Snack Mango Cheese (Thailand).



Using the ocean. Oceans are evolving into the farms of tomorrow, they are serving as a source of inspiration for brands, along with an understanding of their nutrition. Snack products with marine-based ingredients like catfish, crayfish, and herring are experiencing growth. Additionally, new product launches featuring squid and seaweed are on the rise. Kelpie Chips Chipotle Seaweed Snacks (US).

Brain, mood and sleep. Protein is crucial for brain function, mood regulation, and sleep quality, as it provides the building blocks for neurotransmitters. The demand for protein-rich snack is increasing, as indicated by 57% of consumers globally, stating their preference for protein in their snacks. This trend has led to an increase in the number of indulgent snacking options incorporating protein, tryptophan-rich foods like bananas, biltong, and eggs, along with magnesium-rich options like walnuts, almonds, and Brazil nuts and fatty fish.

Pure vegetable. Globally, many consumers (3 out of 5) report regularly incorporating vegetable, cassava and other root-based snacks into their diets at least once a week. These snack options, vary from simple, minimal ingredient snacks to more nutritious alternatives or even indulgent treats. Squash Cheese Baked Chips (Singapore).

Fruit snacks. Natural fruit, fruit nibbles and fruit bars are moving out of the purely health food sector and into the mainstream, especially as many of these products meet HFSS (food and drinks that are high in fat, salt or sugar) guidelines and can safely be placed in the 'grab and go' sections of stores. Packed with fibre and often with added vitamins, minerals and fibre, they are finding their place in lunch boxes, gym bags and computer bags. Examples of food and drink which are not covered by the regulations include nuts and seeds, fruit-based snacks, biltong, drinks without added sugar, sugar-free sweets, non-prepackaged foods (e.g. loose bakery items or fruit).



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Rye-Schweizer Krustenbrot

(Swiss-Rye 30%)

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Rye-Schwarzwälder Bauernbrot

(Black Forest
Rye 60%)

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Rye-Kommiss

(80%)

Bold and rustic. Dense yet moist with a pronounced sourdough tang and softer crust. A favourite for those who love traditional rye. Best with pickled herring, strong cheeses, or butter.



Pure Rye

(100%)

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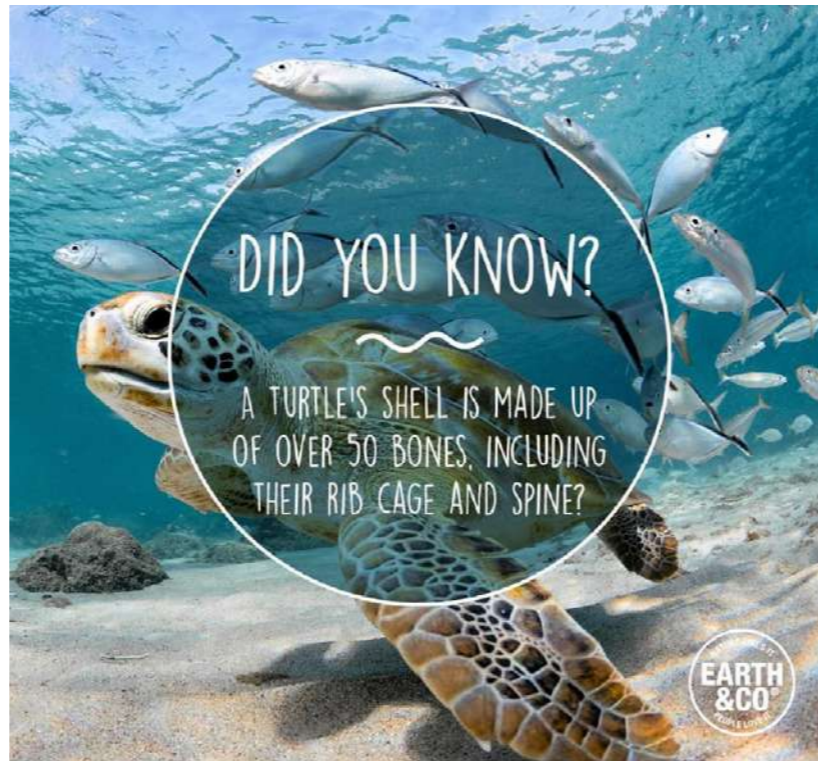
An example is Pick n Pays Kidz lunch box, snack range, they feature 100% real fruit, no sulphur dioxide, no artificial colourants, source of fibre and locally made. Safari Berry Fruit Sticks which are naturally high in fibre, fat-free and gluten-free. Earth & Co, SOS Fruit Snack range, with no preservatives, artificial flavourings, colourings or sulphur, locally sourced ingredients and packaging made from recycled materials.



Simone Stoffberg

Simone Stoffberg from SOS Snacks, another proud South African brand, has found that "Since the launch of our SOS fruit snacks in 2020, we have definitely noticed a substantial increase in the demand for healthier snacks as well as the growing focus on sustainability, we see it in our sales volumes as well as the direct engagement we receive from consumers. It's evident that consumers are more health-conscious and aware of the importance of nutrition whilst also being mindful of recyclable, compostable or biodegradable materials."

<https://soskidssnacks.com/>



Just like your bones, a turtle's shell is actually part of its skeleton.

Artisanal. There is a healthy move towards artisanal snacks, starting with the shift away from UPF (ultra processed foods). Homemade Healthy Treats is a proudly South African artisanal bakery, owned by Charlotte Marrison, that makes delicious treats. Fifteen years ago, Marrison developed a wheat intolerance, which prompted her to start making healthy artisanal snacks and treats.

"My passion for good health has led me to pursue creating a product range that includes a genuine high-quality alternative for wheat intolerant sufferers, gluten free, low sugar, raw and banting friendly seekers," says Marrison.

As there is a larger demand for artisanal products and a healthier lifestyle, Homemade Healthy Treats, is continuously growing to keep up with the popularity.

Solve the puzzle and gobble up the goodness. Each pack contains a pop-up dried fruit puzzle that kids can engage and interact with. <https://soskidssnacks.com/>



Charlotte Marrison

<https://homemadehealthytreats.co.za/>

Superfood Snacks. Consumers are looking for nutritious options that can improve their physical and mental well-being. Snacks are used for a burst of focus and energy or promote calm and sleep. A recent survey by Kerry, a company specialising in ingredients, found that 86% of respondents would be willing to spend more on food and drinks with added functional advantages.



Ashwagandha. www.banyanbotanicals.com/

Notable ingredients for stress management and brain performance are gaining attention. According to Kantar's Dx Global Trends Report, Ashwagandha has seen a significant increase in searches online, it is thought to reduce stress, boost energy levels, and enhance concentration.





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Similarly, searches for lion's mane, believed to benefit the brain, heart and gut, have risen by 65%. These formerly obscure wellness ingredients are becoming more mainstream and will likely start appearing in health-conscious snacks.

Yoghurts. Yoghurt is a regular basket filler, but consumers are putting greater stock in label reading. They want yoghurts that feed their good gut bacteria, are high in protein, and low in sugar. Flavours trending now include lemon/citrusy profiles, tropical fruits, and berries.



Marilee Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen

You've probably noticed the growing variety of dairy snacks on the shelves. But what's the difference between dairy snacks and yoghurt, and does it matter? Marilee Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen, Brand Manager at Woodlands Dairy and First Choice, explains that while there

is a difference, dairy snacks are made using the same process as yoghurt. "Does a dairy snack contain real milk? Yes. Does it contain cultures? Yes. Are the ingredients the same? Yes. Is it good for you? Yes."

There are various options for both yoghurt and dairy snacks, including Low Fat, Full Cream, and Double Cream. The fat content is identical in both yoghurt and dairy snacks.

Van Nieuwenhuizen stresses that dairy snacks provide the essential nutrients of dairy. "Our dairy



www.firstchoice.co.za

snacks are made with real milk sourced from local South African farmers and provide all the essential nutrients of dairy. Dairy snacks have their place in the market and shouldn't be viewed as inferior. They follow the same production process and offer the added advantage of being more affordable, which is a significant benefit in the current economy," Van Nieuwenhuizen concludes.

Biscuits are a perennial favourite in most households. Available at a wide range of price points, they are easily accessible. But that means speciality retailers need to work a bit harder to ensure what they stock sticks out in a large crowd.

Adina Smith, Marketing Manager at BiscoPlus understands the need to cater to all pockets, "We want to provide good quality and affordable biscuits to all South African consumers. We have our Bisco brand that is targeted at lower LSM

consumers and our Henro brand targeting mid to upper LSM consumers."



Shoppers are massively tapped into nostalgia right now, so classic flavours will always sell.

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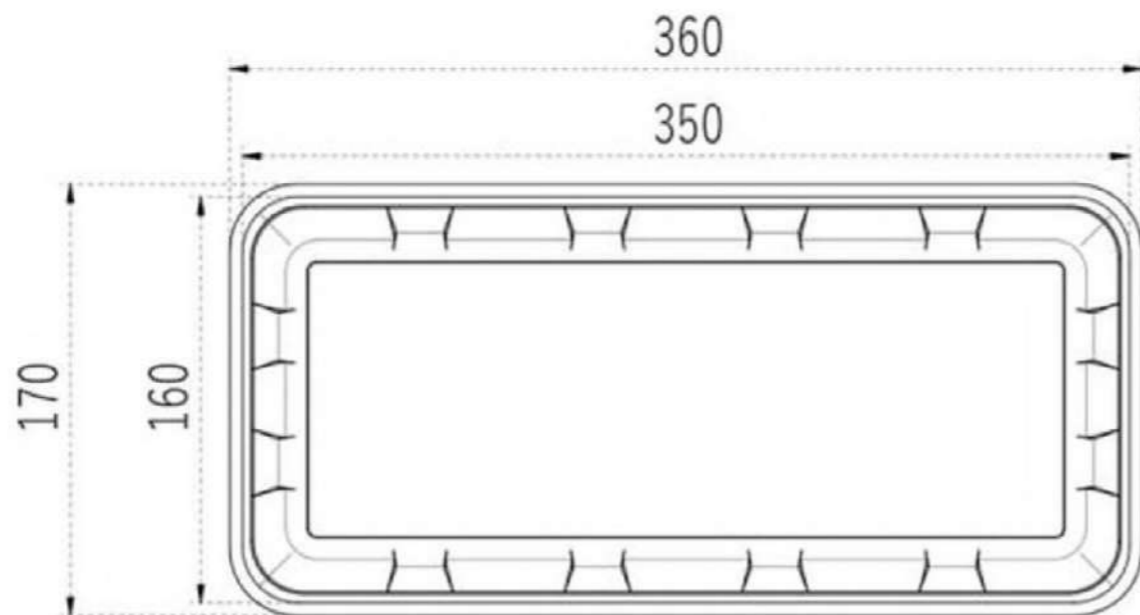
Smith goes on to show how popular classic flavours are, "The Henro range consist of many products that are similar to our competitors, especially products like Marie, Lemon Cream, Ginger and Shortbread cookies however what differentiates the brands from competitors is the Henro Choc Chip range. We have recently launched a product called Henro Disco's which competes with Oreo's which has been well received by both the trade and consumers."

Whether your preference is for decadent chocolate biscuits or plain dunking biscuits, South Africa has a large array to choose from.



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Generational snacking

Neglecting to develop strategies to engage with consumers at different stages of life could easily result in lost profits for both brands and retailers, present and future. There are many opportunities for brands to cultivate customer loyalty by providing individual snack choices during different phases of life. Snacking habits vary significantly across generations, reflecting changing lifestyles, preferences, and priorities.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946–1964)

Contrary to popular belief, Baby Boomers actually snack more frequently than Millennials. Their snacking habits are characterised by ...

- **Snacking motivation:** They often snack to avoid preparing full meals, especially since they eat alone more frequently than other age groups.
- **Preferred snacks:** Fruit, chocolate candy/candy bars, potato chips, nuts, and yoghurt.
- **Snacking approach:** More traditional and planned snacking occasions.

Generation X (Born 1965–1980)

Gen Xers sit between the traditional habits of Boomers and the convenience-seeking Millennials. It is evident that Gen Xers are the leading generation in terms of snacking. They hold a significant 21% share of all snacking. This group has shown a remarkable increase of 60 points in annual eatings per capita compared to last year, according to SnackTrack report in America.

- **Location preferences:** Convenient locations for food purchases.



- **Preferred snacks:** 81% purchase chips, popcorn, packaged cookies, and conventional chocolate bars.
- **Snacking approach:** Gen X prioritise taste more than other generations. They're also more likely to focus on health and wellness when eating, with very traditional snacking.

Millennials (Born 1981–1996)

While typically found in households with younger children, millennials tend to consume fewer snacks than both their younger and older peers. Data from SnackTrack reveals that in the year ending March 2024, millennials made up only 15% of snacking, experiencing the biggest decline of -69 points in the AEPC category compared to other generations.

Millennials have distinct snacking patterns focused on convenience and novelty:

- **Budget allocation:** Spend the highest percentage of their food budget on prepared foods (7.5% vs. 6.9% for other generations).
- **Preferred snacks:** Prepared foods, pasta, sugar/sweets, chips, and cookies.
- **Motivation:** Primarily snack because they're hungry and want convenience.
- **Time investment:** Spend significantly less time on food preparation (88 minutes on average).
- **Unique trait:** Continue to purchase prepared foods even as income increases.

Generation Z (Born 1997–2012)

Gen Zers are rewriting the rules of snacking, turning what was once an erratic habit into a part of daily life. Their choices reflect their desire for both enjoyment and wellness. A recent survey revealed that 76.2% of Gen Z snack 2-3 times a day, what is notable is that 87% of these groups think about dessert at least once a day, indulging in something that is rewarding.

These young adult consumers show emerging distinct preferences:

- **Service priority:** 54% favour speedy service (compared to 40% of Millennials).
- **Takeout preference:** Most likely to opt for takeout and snacks (40%) compared to other generations.

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- **Snacking approach:** Gen Z adults are likely to purchase from QSRs, salty snacks take the lead followed by sweet and healthy snacks.

Generation Alpha (Born 2010–2025)

www.creativeboom.com/



Children are widely known for their love of snacks and treats. While older kids have a stronger say in what their parents purchase for them, parents of younger children tend to make more decisions about snack times

and prioritise healthier choices. To assist parents in making informed choices, snack companies can promote the health advantages of their products while also emphasising their delicious taste.

Key Factors Influencing generational snacking

- **Convenience:** Younger generations prioritise ready-to-eat options, with some Millennials reportedly finding even cereal preparation too time-consuming.
- **Health consciousness:** All generations show increasing awareness of nutritional content, though implementation varies.
- **Taste preferences:** Significant flavour preference gaps exist between generations, with younger consumers typically more adventurous.
- **Social considerations:** Millennials and Gen Z are more likely to consider ethical factors (sustainability, worker welfare, etc.) in their snack choices.
- **Income influence:** Higher income correlates with eating healthier and sustainable purchase, though the effect on snacking choices still varies by age group.

This generational divide in snacking habits reflects broader cultural shifts in how we approach food, time management, and consumption priorities in modern society. **SR**

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