
Snack Components and Savory Ingredients in Confectionery

Some considerations for producing great products that blur the line between snacks and confections.

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For a long time the confectionery industry has shared the consumer's between-meal plate with the snack food industry. Snacking decisions were often made based on the individual consumer's desire for something either sweet or salty. There have always been those products that walked the middle ground, for example, coated popcorn and peanut butter cups. That traditional line has been blurred further and crossover products are much more attractive to consumers, and therefore are also much more interesting to the confectionery industry.

Hybrid products generally incorporate savory ingredients or snack components into traditional confectionery forms. Many of these ingredients are different than those typically used and may need special handling. By keeping these differences in mind, employing some general practices and learning from the mistakes of others, many new products can be produced successfully and safely in confectionery plants.

Snack components and savory ingredients can be mixed into chocolate, added into a center, incorporated into a granola bar or panned/drizzled alone or in a mix.

Snack components can be grains or seeds, fried or baked vegetable chips, expanded pasta or other extruded snacks, or baked items. Grains or seeds (toasted, puffed or parboiled) like quinoa or other ancient grains, oats, popcorn, flax seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are currently some of the most popular. Potato, sweet potato, cassava, yarrow and carrot are among the vegetables that can be baked or fried and become a substrate for chocolate or part of a sweet and salty snack mix. Extruded and expanded pasta can be made with various ingredients and comes in many forms. These can all be used as components, as can similar products like lentil chips, protein crisps or extruded, unexpanded snacks like sesame sticks or corn snacks. Baked items as snack components can include cookies, wafers, crackers or granola. Popular savory ingredients can also present challenges and include savory flavors, chilies, spices, vegetable purees, vinegar, salt and even bacon.

Many confectioners have used snack ingredients for years, including ingredients such as crisped rice, wafers, nuts and cookie ►



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