



CRAVING THE CRUNCH:

Today's Tortilla Chips Satisfy Healthy Snackers

Satisfying the need for healthy indulgence

The U.S. is becoming a nation of snackers. In a trend that *New Nutrition Business* termed “snackification,” consumers are snacking between meals or instead of meals more than ever... but they're not content with empty calories. Today's label-conscious consumer is snacking with purpose – to satisfy cravings and provide functional benefits. Tortilla chips are winners on both counts.

A label-friendly snack choice

Popularized in the 1940's by a delicatessen owner looking to make use of misshapen tortillas, the humble tortilla chip has long been a snack staple. It's convenient and portable. It's delicious on its own, or can provide a crunchy delivery system for a cornucopia of dips, salsas and guacamoles. And at a time when consumers are paying closer attention to the foods they eat, tortilla chips can be perceived as a “healthy indulgence” with label-friendly appeal.

- **Simple, recognizable ingredients.** The fundamental tortilla chip consists of corn, vegetable oil, salt and water.
- **Gluten-free.** Corn flour is considered a gluten-free ingredient.^{2,3}
- **A source of fiber.** Grain-based snacks, like tortilla chips, are a source of digestive-health-promoting fiber.
- **Better-for-you options.** Recent new product launches include organic, baked, and functionally-enriched tortilla chips.

Consumer demands for label-friendly, healthful ingredients are driving most of the innovation in snack food, including tortilla chips, says Chad Rieschl, Cargill senior research technologist. “Consumers want to recognize the ingredients in their snacks and know where those ingredients come from,” he says. “A growing number of consumers not only want to know what is in a product, but also how those ingredients are made.”

THE “SNACKIFICATION” GENERATION¹

94%

of Americans snack
at least once daily

62%

snack to satisfy
a craving

33%

of U.S. consumers
are looking for
healthier snacks

31%

snack to satisfy
hunger outside
regular mealtimes

MILLENNIALS

are significantly more likely to snack frequently
than older consumers

Sales are pointing upwards

The U.S. tortilla chip market has been steadily on the rise in recent years. It currently accounts for 35% of the entire salty snack market, with \$8 billion in annual retail sales value. With a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.6% forecasted from 2017 to 2022, the tortilla chip market is expected to exceed \$9 billion by 2022.⁴

Although potato chips continue to be the top-selling salted snack in terms of pounds sold, tortilla chips have been increasing in sales at a faster pace than potato chips, especially during [football season], according to Tom Dempsey, CEO of the Snack Food Association.⁵ And with tortilla chips' versatile adaptability to a variety of current trends, their momentum shows no signs of slowing down.

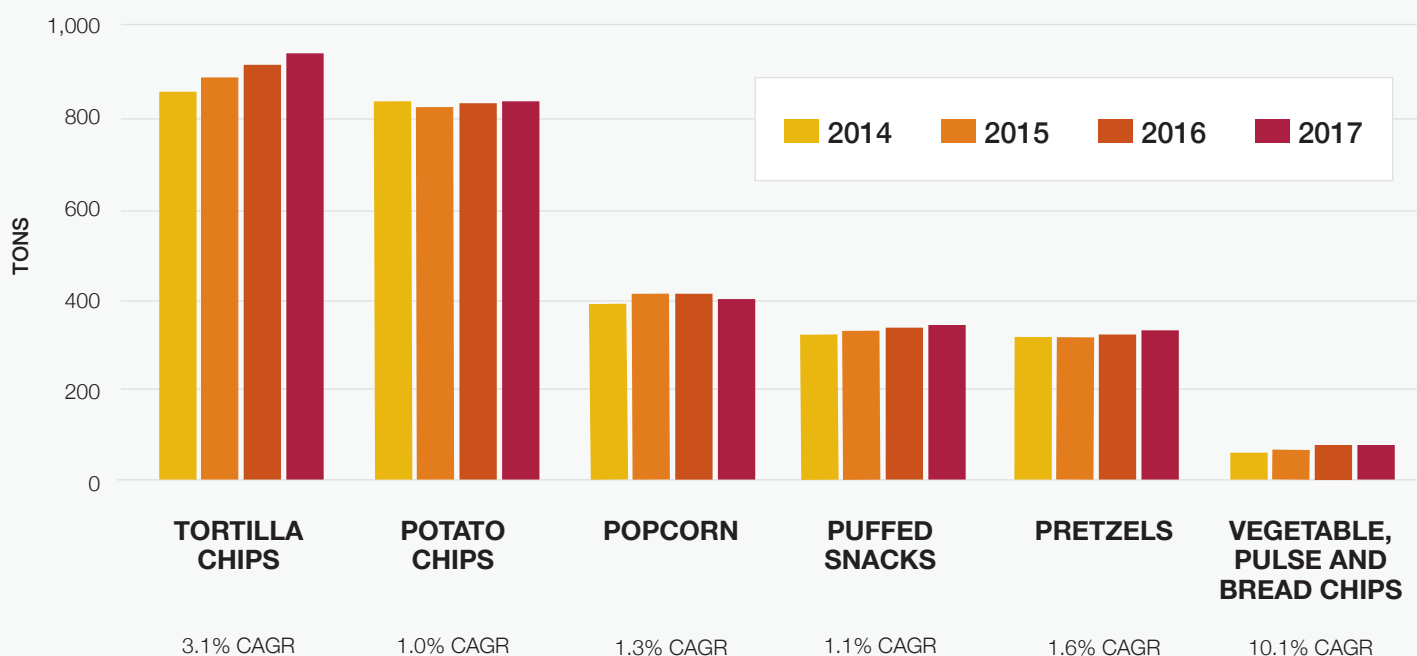


From 2002 to 2017,
new tortilla chip product
launches increased by

630%

Source: Innova, March 2018

TORTILLA CHIP SALES RISING STEADILY



Source: Euromonitor

Innovative new flavors and formats

Today's tortilla chip options have expanded far behind the original salted and nacho-flavor-dusted varieties. Recent introductions have centered around several key themes.

- **Big flavors and exotic combinations.** As American palates have evolved, so too has diversity in snack flavorings. Innovative companies are introducing bolder flavors and unique blends like Sriracha, peach-habanero, cinnamon-sugar, kimchi and even seasonal flavors like pumpkin-cranberry-flavored chips.
- **Value-added ingredients.** A wave of next-generation chips is solidifying tortilla chips' position as a better-for-you snack by incorporating functional ingredients like pulses, nuts, seeds, ancient grains, vegetables and fruits. Organic, baked and non-GMO varieties are also available.
- **Unique shapes.** Beyond the traditional triangle, chips are branching out into a wealth of grip-and-dip-friendly shapes, including scoops, circles, squares, "footballs," and even hexagonal shapes.
- **Convenient packaging and placement.** Combining healthy snack options with grab-and-go convenience, new individual snack packs are pairing tortilla chips with salsa, cheese, hummus and guacamole – while positioning these snacks around the "fresh" perimeter of the store in refrigerated cases.

The masa you choose matters

Corn masa flour is traditionally the main ingredient used in tortilla chips, so clearly, the masa you choose will have a big impact on your finished product.

Cargill's masa flour starts with high-quality white and yellow corn from the American Midwest. Then we use a proprietary dry-milling process to produce the masa in a more sustainable way than the traditional wet-milling process.

Cargill's unique dry-milling process uses

80%
less water
than a wet process



Most corn millers rely on a water-intensive approach that first soaks the corn in a vat of water, then uses an alkaline solution to soften the kernel. This approach not only uses significant amounts of water, it also requires treatment and disposal of vast quantities of wastewater. Cargill has developed a unique, dry-milled process that uses 80% less water than the conventional method.

“Our approach not only uses much less water than the conventional method, it also gives us the flexibility to make customized masa flour that adjusts to the specific customer’s needs for textures, flavor profiles, color and shape functionality,” explains Keyla Rodriguez, technical service manager for Cargill Starches, Sweeteners and Texturizers.



Snack ingredients and innovation

From traditional tortilla chips to innovative options with functional appeal, Cargill researchers are helping food processors develop the next generation of wholesome, corn-based snacks to satisfy label-conscious consumers. You can depend on our extensive product portfolio, proven formulation expertise and reliable sourcing to help you dip into the growing tortilla chip market.

Sources

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