

Q&A Almonds

with
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Almonds + Chocolate – Innovation Meets Consumer Demand

As the confectionary industry continually innovates to meet new challenges and the ever-changing consumer demands, ingredients with natural, wholesome appeal like California almonds can help manufacturers deliver next-level products. We asked **Lu Ann Williams, Global SVP Research at Innova Market Insights**, for the latest industry and consumer insights on how innovative products that combine almonds and chocolate, meet these current consumer demands.



Q What are the key demands of today's consumers?

WILLIAMS | Today's consumers want to make responsible, "better for you" food choices that are healthy and align with their real and natural ingredients, low/no/reduced sugar, no artificial flavors/colors, and low/no/reduced fat.¹ They equate clean-label with "goodness" in products, including chocolates, that are natural and have a short ingredient list.² At the same time, consumers' desire for flavor and indulgence strongly influences their chocolate purchasing decisions.

Q How do almonds and chocolate meet consumer expectations for "better for you" products?

WILLIAMS | According to Innova Market research, gluten free and organic claims stand out in chocolate confectionery with all almond formats. They named almonds as their ideal ingredient in chocolate. According to the research, almonds also outperform other nuts for making chocolate more nutritious (86%) and more filling (85%).¹

In chocolate confectionery featuring almond ingredients, gluten free is the leading health claim, while prebiotic claims are gaining traction. Brands can innovate by offering almond and chocolate products with reduced sugar, as sugar reduction claims are seen to significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Another functional health claim gaining traction is high/source of protein.



What chocolate product features are driving consumers to consume more chocolate?

WILLIAMS | According to the Almond Board of California's 2022 Global Chocolate Survey, new confectionery product launches featuring almond and chocolate pairings have resulted in 10.2% of products with a creamy texture and 0.6% with a crunchy texture. The survey also reveals that in 9 out of 10 countries, global consumers choose chocolate as their preferred indulgence throughout the day, with almonds being the ideal inclusion for this permissible treat. Almonds outperform other nuts in delivering desirable attributes, while also contributing nutritional value in chocolate products, making them a compelling choice for both indulgence and health-conscious consumers. Changing taste preferences are driving consumers to consume more chocolate, with flavors being the most important factor in their purchasing decisions.¹



What's next for almonds and chocolate?

WILLIAMS | The future of almonds and chocolate lies in combining indulgence with health benefits and innovative textures to meet the demands of modern consumers. Almonds complement chocolate by enhancing its health appeal, supporting clean-label claims that cater to wellness-focused consumers. Their versatility allows for a wide range of textures, from crunchy to creamy, creating unique sensory experiences.

Additionally, flavor innovation is a major trend, with almond paired with seasonal and globally inspired profiles to meet the demand of adventurous consumers.



About Innova Market Insights

Innova Market Insights is a leading market research company, serving our customers with our unique and powerful insights platform, including the world's largest database for the food industry, used by leading companies in food ingredients and manufacturing for future success in the dynamic FMCG/CPG industry.

¹ Winning Opportunities in Chocolate Confectionery with Almonds. Innova Market Insights. Released 2024.

² 2022 Global Chocolate Survey. Sterling Rice Group. 2022.