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Photo by Aleksandar Pasaric from Pexels

Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars, and Fruit Snacks in UAE

PROSPECTS

Reduced Shopping Frequency and Focus on Staples Constrains Sweet Biscuits' Growth

The average frequency of grocery shopping declined at the end of the review period, largely as a result of the imposition of VAT across packaged food, which limited growth in sweet biscuits. While sweet biscuits is often regarded as a healthier snacking option than other categories, such as chocolate confectionery, it struggled to maintain its popularity in light of the growing pressure on consumers to prioritize the purchase of staple food items over snacks.

Fruit and Nut Bars Boosted by Mars' Investment in Kind

Fruit and nut bars was the fastest-growing category in sweet biscuits snack bars and fruit snacks in the final year of the review period. The category's expansion is being driven by the health and wellness trend, as consumers look for more nutritious snacking options. Manufacturers are enhancing the capacity of fruit and nut bars to take advantage of the health and wellness trend by claiming that such products are healthier than other snack bars because they have less or no artificial sugar.

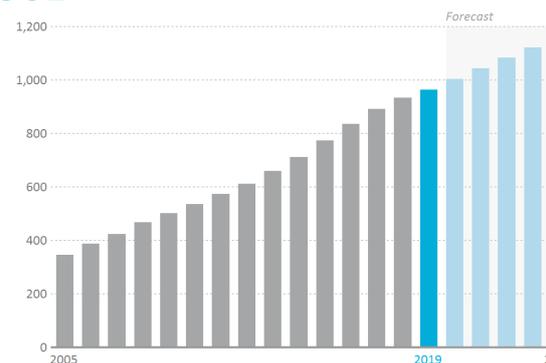
Mars helped to fuel growth in the category by taking on the marketing of the market-leading KIND brand, in which it bought a minority stake at the end of 2017. Growing from a low base and driven by its compatibility with prevailing demand trends and growing manufacturer investment, fruit and nut bars is expected to maintain strong growth during the forecast period.

Dried Dates Building on Strong Traditions of Consumption

Strong sales of dried fruit are supported by the strong traditional role of dates in Arabic culture and the Islamic faith. Dried dates is a popular snack, appetizer, and dessert in the United Arab Emirates. Dates consumption reaches its peak in Ramadan, when many Muslims break their fasts with dates because they are high in carbohydrates, fiber, and potassium. However, dates are increasingly becoming a year-round option, stimulated by the expanding range of products on offer, including Khodri and Medjoul and other dates with nuts and fruits. Dates are becoming a regional trademark, encouraging consumers to choose dates as a gift or souvenir. The vitamin, mineral, and fiber content

Sales of Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks in United Arab Emirates
Retail Value RSP - AED million - Current - 2005-2024

961



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of dates, meanwhile, makes them highly compatible with the growing demand for healthy snacks.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Oreo Maintains Strength Despite Mistranslation

Mondelez Eastern Europe, Middle East, and Africa was the leading player in sweet biscuits, snack bars, and fruit snacks in 2019. Mondelez supported its Oreo and Belvita brands with strong marketing towards the end of the review period as its experience in developed markets enabled it to recognize an opportunity in the change in consumer spending following the imposition of VAT. In developed markets, when consumers reduced their purchases of chocolate confectionery and gum, they turned towards biscuits. Consequently, the company invested heavily in promotions and other activities to encourage consumers in the United Arab Emirates to add sweet biscuits to their regular grocery basket.

The company's Oreo brand retained the lead in filled biscuits with rumors that it contains a small amount of alcohol failing to dent its popularity. According to the Dubai Municipality, the rumor derived from a mistake in translating the phrase "chocolate liquor" literally as "alcohol", when it should have been translated as "cocoa paste".

Stable Shares But International Players Have Greater Presence

Both domestic and international manufacturers saw relatively stable value share performances in 2019. However, international manufacturers and their brands have a greater presence as they have higher

levels of recognition and trust among consumers. Sweet biscuit companies also ensured that they offer the popular pack sizes of single serving and bulk packs, which encourage consumers to have the mindset to serve sweet biscuits on a tray for the office or at home.

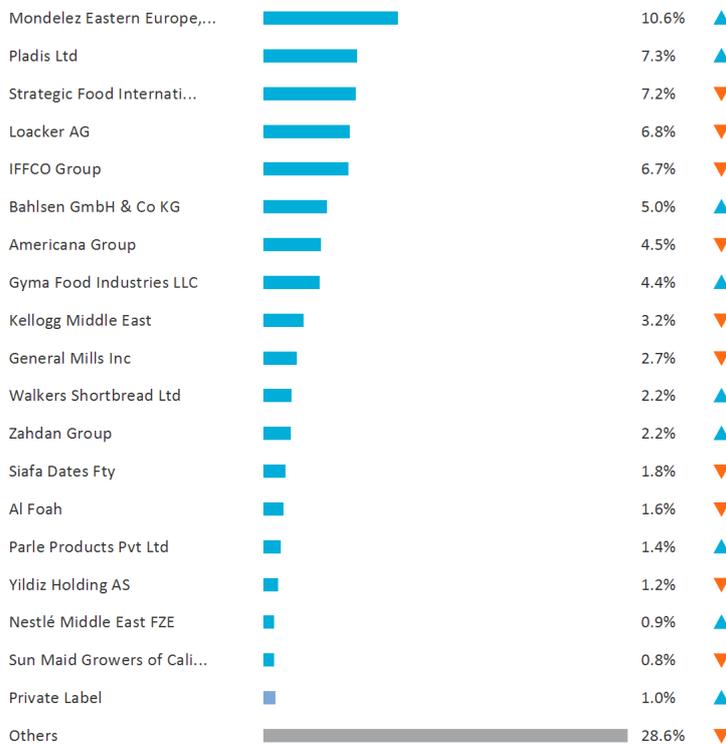
New Hunter's Product Takes Distinctive Approach To Health Trend

Hunter's benefited from new product development at the end of the review period, including the launch of Hunter's Mixed Tropical Fruit Chips in 2019. These chips are comprised of dried banana, jackfruit, pineapple, and cantaloupe in foil-lined, brown paper packets. Made

with real fruit and advertising the fact on its packaging, the product is capable of competing with fruit or vegetable-flavored chips and appealing to health-conscious consumers looking for an on-the-go snack. The fact that it is comprised of a combination of fruits is a distinctive and disruptive selling point. Hunter's Mixed Tropical Fruit Chips also targets the health trend by being vegan and free of gluten, MSG, dairy, lactose, and GMOs, as well as containing no preservatives, no artificial flavors or colours, no trans fats, and no cholesterol. ■

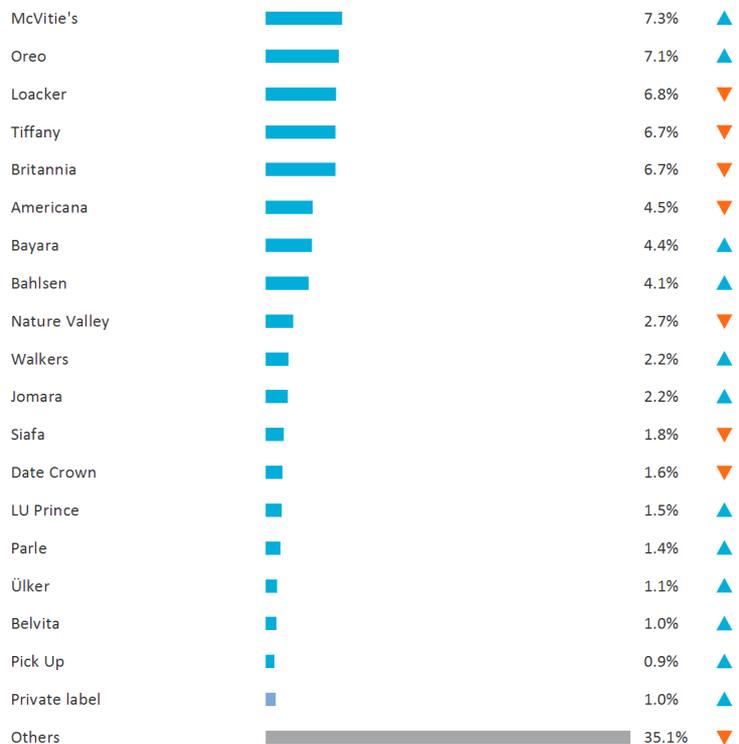
Company Shares of Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks in United Arab Emirates

% Share (NBO) - Retail Value RSP - 2019



Brand Shares of Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks in United Arab Emirates

% Share (LBN) - Retail Value RSP - 2019



▲ Increasing share ▼ Decreasing share — No change

Check out our previous issue:
Packaged Food in Thailand