

The snack between meals, the main consumption occasion

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With products that satisfy more and more tastes, the biscuits category has been specialized and diversified in the past few years so as to fit any consumption occasion and any type of consumer. However, the snack between meals remains the main occasion, given that more than half of the respondents state that they choose biscuits when they feel the need for something sweet – except for the plain or cereal biscuits which are consumed particularly because they quench hunger – this is the conclusion of a survey conducted by the market research company ISRA Center.



The research on biscuits consumption and purchase habits was conducted by ISRA Center for Magazinul Progresiv magazine. The quantitative research was based on a sample of 1,091 respondents from the urban area, aged 18 to 64. The data were collected during August 17-31, 2012 via computer-assisted personal interviews, and the sampling error was +/- 3%. The research aimed at identifying consumption and purchase frequency and habits as well as brand awareness for several types of sweet biscuits (plain, sandwich biscuits with cream, with cream or jam filling, with chocolate chips, with cereals/ fibers and fruits, with glazing, with jelly and chocolate).

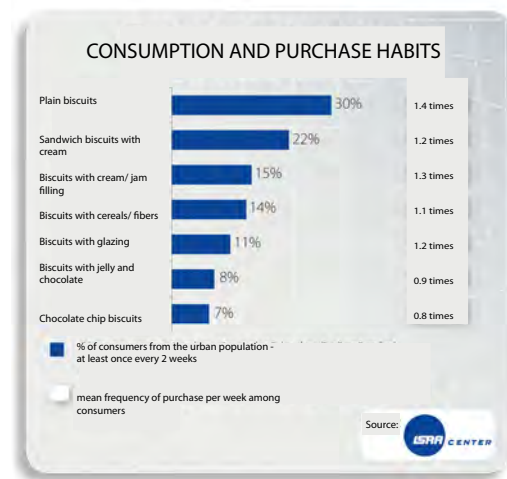
Plain biscuits are category leaders

Romanians are not big biscuits consumers. According to ISRA Center study, the most popular category of biscuits, the plain biscuits, is consumed at least once every 2 weeks by only 30% of the Romanians in the urban area. Every day, plain biscuits are consumed by 2% of the respondents and once a week by 11% of them.

They are followed by sandwich biscuits with cream (consumed at least once every 2 weeks by 22% of the Romanians), biscuits with cream filling (15%), biscuits with cereals/ fibers and fruits (14%), biscuits with glazing (11%), those with jelly and chocolate, like Jaffa Cake (8%), and those with chocolate chips (7%). The last two categories of biscuits are the least tried, 63% of the Romanians stating to never have tried chocolate chip biscuits and 57% of the Romanians saying that they have never consumed jelly and chocolate biscuits.

Analyzing the consumption behavior on regions, the study also reveals that Transylvania respondents are the biggest consumers of the category (for example, 40% of the Transylvania respondents, by comparison to the 30% national mean, consume plain biscuits at least once every 2 weeks). As for the lowest level of consumption, results differ based on type, most categories of biscuits belonging to Banat-Crisana-Maramures respondents.

On the other hand, Bucharest residents show the lowest interest towards plain biscuits (only 22% of the Capital city residents consume them at least once every 2 weeks). What is also interesting is the behavior of Moldavia and Oltenia residents, both regions with a relatively low consumption by comparison to the national mean. This way, the fewest persons who state to never have consumed sweet biscuits are found among Moldavians. Even if they don't eat them frequently, Moldavia respondents register the highest level for the testing of the various types of biscuits. At the opposite end are Oltenia respondents who, although showing a slightly higher consumption than in Moldavia, are much more reluctant in trying various types of biscuits, Oltenia being by far the region with the highest number of persons who have never tried to consume these types of products.



Biscuits are consumed even at dinner

Biscuits are most often consumed as a snack between meals, sandwich biscuits with cream (59%) as well as biscuits with cream or jam filling (58%) or with glazing (58%), but plain biscuits are consumed to a smaller extent (41%). However, plain biscuits are chosen by 30% of the Romanians in the morning for breakfast or after breakfast, just as in the case of biscuits with cereals/ fibers and fruits (34%).

Other important consumption occasions are at lunch for jelly and chocolate biscuits (20%), sandwich biscuits with cream (18%) and biscuits with cream or jam filling (17%), or in the evening in the case of chocolate chip biscuits (23%), this is what ISRA Center data also show. The feature of being impulse products that biscuits have is revealed by the main reasons Romanians consume them, these reasons being: the need for something sweet, the pleasure of taste, pampering and a state of wellbeing. In the case of plain biscuits and biscuits with cereals and fruits, the most important reason for consumption is that they quench hunger.

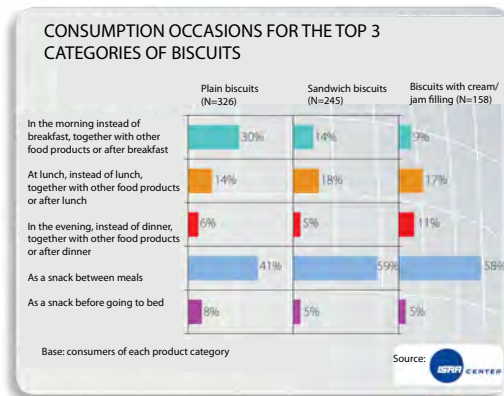
As for the gender of the consumers of sweet biscuits in the urban area, most of them are women (59%). The biggest difference is registered in the case of chocolate chip biscuits and biscuits with cereals or fibers, segments for which women represent three quarters, 73% of the consumers respectively.

From the convenience store or the hypermarket?

Plain biscuits are most often purchased by the Romanians in the urban area, with a frequency of 1.4 times a week. These are followed by biscuits with cream or jam filling (1.3 times), by sandwich biscuits with cream and biscuits with glazing (1.2 times). On the other hand, chocolate chip biscuits register a purchase frequency of only 0.8 times a week

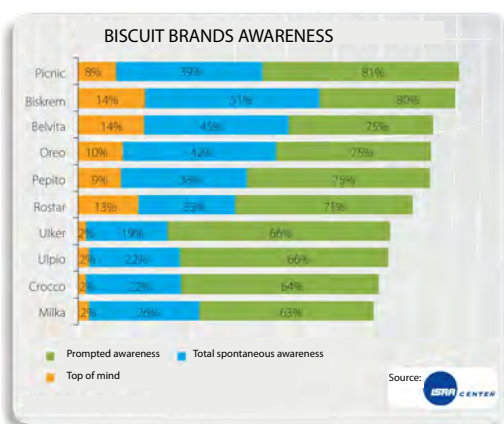
The distribution channels preferred by Romanians for the purchase of biscuits are traditional retail, hypermarkets and supermarkets. However, percentages differ from one category to the other.

This way, plain biscuits are purchased mainly from traditional retail (42%), sandwich biscuits with cream are bought from hypermarkets (35%) and traditional retail (33%), according to ISRA Center survey. Romanians purchase biscuits with cream or jam filling especially from supermarkets (41%), and chocolate chop biscuits are best sold in hypermarkets (43%) and supermarkets (37%). Biscuits with cereals or fibers are bought from hypermarkets (42%), while biscuits with glazing and biscuits with jelly and chocolate are purchase from hypermarkets as well as supermarkets, to a somewhat higher percentage than in the case of the former channel of distribution. Discount stores are not that important, 3% to 6% of the Romanians, depending on the category of biscuits, preferring this store format for the purchase of sweet biscuits.



Biskrem and Picnic, the most often consumed biscuits

Part of the portfolio of the Turkish manufacturer Ülker, Biskrem brand was the top of mind mention for 14% of the respondents included in ISRA Center study. Belvita brand, owned by Kraft Foods and launched in 2010 on the market, enjoys the same level of awareness, registering the same 14% for the top of mind mention. In addition to Biskrem (51%), a high level of spontaneous awareness was also registered for Belvita (45%), Oreo (42%) and Pepito (36%) brands, all three part of Kraft portfolio. But if prompted awareness is taken into account (which entails recognizing a brand from a larger list of brands), Picnic biscuits are ranked first, being known by 81% of the Romanians. By comparison, Biskrem was recognized by 80% of the respondents.



Picnic is a brand as well as a type of biscuits, being used by several Romanian manufacturers. As far as the brands consumed in the past 12 months are concerned, first rank is occupied by Biskrem (40%), followed by Picnic (38%), Belvita (32%), Pepito (32%) and Oreo (29%). Relevant brands are also RoStar (26%), Ülker (21%), Ulpio (20%), Milka (19%) and Tempo (17%). In the case of the brands consumed in the past month, the ranking is slightly different, Biskrem (21%) being followed by Belvita (19%), Picnic (18%), RoStar (16%), Pepito (16%) and Oreo (15%). Ulpio, consumed by only 5% of the Romanians in the past 30 days, is not in top 10

When it comes to the gender of the persons who consumed biscuits in the past month, Biskrem and Ülker are rather consumed by men, while Belvita, Pepito and Oreo brands are preferred by women. Persons with low incomes (family income of less than 1.500 lei) especially consume Picnic, RoStar and Pepito biscuits, while Romanians with higher incomes (family income of more than 2.700 lei) prefer to buy Biskrem and Belvita biscuits.

[To download the full study, click HERE.](#)