

Consumption pattern and characteristics of potato crisps in Nairobi city, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the consumption pattern and characteristics of potato crisps in Nairobi City.

Methodology and results: Potato crisps consumption pattern was carried out by use of structured questionnaires to collect data from 215 crisps consumers. A total of 80 shops were surveyed to establish the brands and characteristics of potato crisps sold within Nairobi City. The available brands were then sampled and evaluated in the University of Nairobi. 32.6 % of 215 consumers were males while 67.4 % were females. A majority, 73.9 % consumed potato crisps averagely once a week. A part from gender, the frequency of purchasing crisps was also influenced by factors such as, occasions, seasons and availability of money. Many consumers (22.3 %) preferred Tropical heat brand, a good number (10.82 %) preferred Krackles while as low as 0.57 % preferred Pringles, Delice and Highlands crisps. The most preferred flavor was onion just salted crisps. The most purchased packaging units, 51.7 % ranged from 30-50 g due to affordability, retailing at Kshs. 30-40 compared to units of 150 g and above that were least purchased (1.7 %) due to their high costs, retailing at Ksh. 100 and above. 28 % of the consumers bought crisps for self-consumption while 72 % purchased both for self and family members.

All the outlets (100 %) sold potato crisps. Only 15 % of the outlets stocked potato crisps and other potato products such as chevda and potato sticks. A total of 24 brands of crisps were sold in Nairobi city. The most stocked brands in the outlets were Tropical heat and Krackles that were available in 46 % and 45 % of the outlets surveyed respectively. 100 % of the shops surveyed stocked brands of crisps made in Kenya while only 15.3 % of the outlets also had imported brands. The units of packaging ranged from less than 10 g to 1 kg. The most popular unit packages (40 %) varied from 10 g to 100 g as they were cheap and affordable to most customers selling between Ksh. 10 to Ksh. 60. The study indicates that potato crisps are highly consumed by young children and youths in their teenage ages while parents were moderate buyers of the products. Laboratory characteristics of the brands evaluated included colour, size, thickness, moisture, salt and oil contents that significantly ($P \leq 0.05$) differed among the brands. The oil content ranged from 24.37 % to 40.22 % while the moisture and salt contents varied from 1.09 % to 5.45 %, and 1.10 % to 2.96 % respectively.

Conclusions and application: Crisps consumption in Nairobi city depends on gender, occasions, and seasons of the year and availability of disposable income. Except in the sizes, most brands with a few exceptions had characteristics that conformed to the crisps standards. This study provides the current scenario in the crisp market and is useful information to consumers, processors and policy makers in the potato subsector.