

Savoury snack tasting - February 2009

Free-from savoury snacks are a difficult group to identify as many of the most common snacks (such as potato crisps) should be, by definition, both gluten and dairy free. However, this does not mean that

they necessarily are – dairy allergics should read crisp labels with particular care as casein and lactose often creep into the flavourings.

However, since it was really impractical

to include potato /corn crisps in a tasting unless it were to take over the whole supplement, we have restricted ourselves to classic snacks (pretzels/crackers) which would normally be expected to contain

wheat flour, regardless of dairy content.

Our selection does not intend to cover the market – just give readers a few ‘safe’ suggestions.

SAVOURY SNACKS

FREE OF:	WHEAT	GLUTEN	SOYA	CORN	YEAST	EGG	DAIRY	INGREDIENTS ARE LISTED SO AS TO INCLUDE EVERY INGREDIENT BUT NOT IN ORDER/QUANTITY THEY APPEAR ON PACK.	TASTE	AVAILABILITY / COST PER 100G
CRACKERS/NIBBLES/’BITES’										
Clearspring tamari rice crackers	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Sweet rice, water, whole soya beans, sea salt, grain alcohol, sesame seeds , nori sea vegetable, barley, cultured rice	Nice strong flavour, sweet and sour, pleasant touch of seaweed, ‘marmite’ flavour, good crunch, slightly fishy aftertaste, bitter tasting 7.5/10	£2.58 D,O,FS,HFS,MM,W
Clearspring golden sesame crackers	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Rice, sesame seeds , brown rice, whole soya beans, water, sea salt, sweet rice, cultured rice, roasted barley flour, malted barley	Good nutty finish, sesame adds richness, chunky snack, hint of peanut butter, crunchy and a little sticky, not great flavour, coats the teeth 7/10	£3.58 D,O,FS,HFS,MM,W
Conscious sorghum millet crackers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Sorghum millet flour, parsley, black pepper powder, water, sea salt, cold-pressed peanut oil	Spicy, tasty, good flavour, poppadom style, light and crispy, boring, nasty, too earthy, not a great flavour, bad aftertaste, dull, goes soggy fast 6/10	£3.98 W
Conscious sesame sticks	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Soya bean flour, cumin seeds, white sesame , water, sea salt	Crisp texture, good hint of cumin and coriander, nice crunch, good spicy flavour, very chalky, lingering bad taste, not good, texture a bit dusty 6/10	£3.98 W
Conscious brown rice dippers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Brown rice flour, sea salt, water, cold-pressed peanut oil	Crunchy, crisp, unusual but dry, boring, like eating nothing, like a communion wafer, thin and light but not much taste, soft and tasteless 5.5/10	£3.98 W
Kallo bread sticks	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Maize starch, rice flour, vegetable oil, vegetable fat, water, E471 , salt, flavourings, modified maize starch, dried whole milk, dextrose, yeast, buckwheat flour, E503 , E500	Munchy, moreish, crisp bite, pleasant flavour, slightly bland, the crunch is the loudest and best part, perfect with guacamole or red pepper dip 7/10	£1.48 HFS,MM,W
Kallo cheese crackers	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Maize starch, rice flour, olive oil, vegetable oil & fat, water, E471 , salt, flavouring, modified maize starch, cheddar cheese powder, yeast extract dextrose, egg, yeast, E412 , E500 , E503	Nicely toasted flavour, mini-Cheddar-ish, starts well, crunchy, but leaves an unpleasant aftertaste, cheesy, bitter, stale-tasting, not so good 6.5/10	£2.98 HFS,MM,W
Mrs Crimbles original cheese bites	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Edam cheese, potato starch, yeast extract, egg yolk, salt, flavouring	Cheesy, crunchy, yum, delicious, good taste, light and more-ish, nice and crisp, coats the mouth a bit but good, strong lingering aftertaste 9/10	£2.31 D,HFS
Mrs Crimbles sour cream & onion bites	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Edam cheese, potato starch, egg yolk, onion powder, yeast extract, sour cream powder, salt, sour cream and onion flavouring	Crunchy, a subtle cheese taste, light and crispy, delicious, a powerful snack, very nice, not too salty or heavily flavoured, a realistic taste 9/10	£2.31 D,HFS
Mrs Crimbles olive & oregano bites	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Edam cheese, potato starch, tomato & olive paste, yeast extract, egg yolk, salt, onion & garlic powder, tomato & oregano flavouring, herbs	Flavour okay, strong tomato, reminiscent of pizza, crisp, tasty, nice subtle spice and light crunch, looks good, strong herby flavour, tastes real 8/10	£2.31 D,HFS
Nairns cheese oatbakes	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Wholegrain oats, cheese, tapioca starch, wholemeal barley flour, sea salt, natural flavouring	Nice and crisp, flavour grows pleasantly, nice taste, decent snack, light, mild cheese flavour, tastes quality, fine, crispy and slim, strong oat taste 8.5/10	£1.46 D,HFS,O,MM,W
Nairns sweet chilli oatbakes	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Wholegrain oats, tapioca starch, wholemeal barley flour, sunflower oil, apple juice concentrate, tomato powder, natural flavouring, sea salt	Zingy, starts out plain but delivers a spicy kick, good flavour, like pizza base, very sweet initially, hint of chilli, doesn’t quite work, floury coating 7.5/10	£1.46 D,HFS,O,MM,W
Organico spelt grissini	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Spelt flour, extra virgin olive oil, yeast, salt	No strong flavours but texture pleasant, if a touch dry, full of flavour, lingering and cumbersome, a stale breadstick, bland, tasteless 6.5/10	£1.79 D,HFS,O,SM,W
Orgran onion & chive crispy bites	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Maize meal, onion, salt, chives	Nice crunch, bit of a packing chip, heavy, plastic, not much flavour, bit like Wotsits, sticky in the mouth, dry but pleasant 6.5/10	£1.89 SM,W
Sainsbury’s Mediterranean crackers	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Maize starch, rice flour, palm oil, coconut oil , water, E471 , salt, dextrose, egg, yeast, tomato powder, oregano, garlic, E412 , E503 , E500 , natural flavouring	Close to Cheddars, crunchy, good savoury flavour, subtle herb taste, not bad, pasty aftertaste, not good texture, leaves slight residue in the mouth 7/10	£1.50 SM
Sainsbury’s cheese crackers	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Maize starch, rice flour, palm oil, coconut , water, E471 , cheese powder salt, modified maize starch, dextrose, egg, yeast, E412 , E503 , E500 ,	Slightly tangy cheese flavour, crunchy, but leaves an unpleasant aftertaste, boring, bland, not a great flavour, coats the mouth, not very tasty 6/10	£1.50 SM
Sunrise rice crackers	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Rice, soya bean, salt, water, gluten-free wheat, sugar, tapioca starch, chilli, seaweed, natural paprika colour	Crunchy, nice sweet spicy taste, good flavour, good beer and party snack, thick and sticky, not pleasant, boring and bland, chemical taste 6/10	99P HFS,SM,W
Tesco tomato & oregano	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Maize starch, rice flour, vegetable oil & fat, water, E471 , salt, flavouring modified maize starch, dextrose, egg, tomato & cheese powder, sugar yeast, E412 , E503 , E500 , oregano, basil, parsley	Crunchy, gritty aftertaste, nice, mealy aftertaste, good oregano flavour, nice and herby, good brown colour 6.5/10	£1.50 SM
Tesco bread sticks	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Maize starch, rice flour, vegetable oil & fat, water, E471 , modified maize starch, dried whole milk, dextrose, salt, yeast, buckwheat flour, E503 , E500 , natural flavouring	Quite hard – watch your dentures – pleasant straightforward breadsticks, good with dips, nice aftertaste, crisp and snappy 7/10	£1.06 SM
PRETZELS										
Barkat plain pretzels	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Maize starch, potato starch, palm oil, soya flour, salt, sugar, E339 , E500 , soya lecithin, E466 , yeast extract, E524 , (sesame)	Frankly gorgeous, lovely bite, nicely toasted flavour, salty, good, light, spot on, almost buttery taste, could eat a lot of these, lovely flavour, very more-ish 9/10	£1.32 W

FREE OF:	WHEAT	GLUTEN	SOYA	CORN	YEAST	EGG	DAIRY	INGREDIENTS ARE LISTED SO AS TO INCLUDE EVERY INGREDIENT BUT NOT IN ORDER/QUANTITY THEY APPEAR ON PACK.	TASTE	AVAILABILITY / COST PER 100G
Barkat sesame pretzels	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Maize starch, potato starch, sesame seeds , palm oil, soya flour, salt, sugar, E339, E500, soya lecithin, E466, yeast extract, E524	A nice sesame surprise, tasty, inoffensive, bland, more-ish, tasteless, a bit soft, taste like burnt brown bread, cardboard flavour 7.5/10	£1.73 W
EnerG plain pretzels	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Potato flour, corn starch, rice flour, palm oil, corn glucose, modified corn starch, E339, E500, E341, E466, bamboo fibre, salt, yeast	Nice pretzels, crisp, okay, too crunchy but the taste delights, weird chemical taste initially, spoilt it, slightly perfumed flavour, burnt tasting 7/10	£1.49 HFS,SM,W
EnerG sesame pretzels	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Potato flour, corn starch, rice flour, palm oil, corn glucose, modified corn starch, E339, E500, potato starch, E341, E466, bamboo fibre, salt, yeast, E460, sesame seeds , gum arabic	Interesting flavour, salty seedy, bit flavourless, hard, bland, a little mealy in texture 6/10	£1.58 HFS,SM,W
Trufree pretzels	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Maize starch, potato starch, palm oil, sugar, salt, E339, E500, E466, soya lecithin, soya flour, yeast extract (sesame)	Good, dough texture slightly too coarse, but buttery and salty, just the right amount of crunch, a slight aftertaste, not salty enough, light, tasty 8/10	£1.63 HFS,MM,W

*CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

The Codex standard for gluten-free foods is now a maximum of 20 parts per million of gluten. This is likely to become law across the EU by the end of 2009 after which manufacturers will have three years in which to comply with the new legislation. The old regulations allowed up to 200ppm gluten.

INGREDIENTS:

Ingredients in grey in brackets are not included in the product but are used in the factory in which the product is made.

Nuts/lupin/soya – in bold in red

Yeast - N* = separate yeast sachet included, or yeast needed to make bread

E NUMBERS – BREAD MIXES:

E300 = ASCORBIC ACID*; E333 = CALCIUM CITRATES*;
E339 = SODIUM PHOSPHATES*; E410 = LOCUST BEAN GUM*;
E412 = GUAR GUM*; E415 = XANTHAN GUM*;
E461 = METHYL CELLULOSE*; E471 = MONO- AND DIGLYCERIDES OF FATTY ACIDS*;
E464 = HYDROXYPROPYL METHYL CELLULOSE*;
E491 = SORBITAN MONOSTEARATE*;
E575 = GLUCONO DELTA-LACTONE*;
E466 = CARBOXY METHYL CELLULOSE;
E500 = SODIUM CARBONATES
(green** = safe and/or beneficial, green* = safe for most peo-

ple, orange = caution advised, red = best avoided. Ref: *What's Really in your Basket?* by Bill Statham – published by Summersdale)

AVAILABILITY:

B – B&Bs, C – Cafés, D – Delicatessens, GC – Garden Centres, FS – Farm Shops, H – Hotels, HFS – Health Food Stores, MM – Most Multiples (large supermarkets), O – Organic Shops, P – Prescription, R – Restaurants, SM – Some Multiples (supermarkets), W – Website