

Crackers and Chips: Healthy or Hoax



It used to be that chips were less than healthy indulgences, and crackers just a vehicle for enjoying cheese. But lately the market has been flooded with a new kind of chips and crackers, made with—or at least “laced” with—a variety of vegetables, beans and fruits, and marketed as “natural” and “simple.”

But are these snacks really a more healthful version of traditional chips and crackers, or just a new marketing tactic? While some are better choices, keep in mind that they are still snacks—something to be eaten in moderation.

Helpful hints. If you like a little something to crunch on alongside a sandwich, or a snack to serve with cheese or dip, go ahead and enjoy some of these new healthy options, using the following tips.

- **Check the ingredient list.** Some new age “healthy” snacks may be delicious and nutritious choices (See *EN*’s picks.) But don’t let yourself be fooled by pseudo-healthy chips or crackers that are made primarily with processed flour and just a hint of healthy ingredients—whole grains, seeds, beans, lentils, and vegetables. Make sure that the wholesome ingredient you’re looking for, whether it’s lentils or kale, is one of the first two ingredients listed.
- **Check the fat and sodium.** Just because a product contains healthier ingredients doesn’t mean it really *is* any healthier. Those chips and crackers may be deep-fried, baked with lots of fat, or slathered in salt. Potentially, they may be no better than their traditional counterpart, yet probably more expensive.
- **Keep an eye on portion sizes.** The serving size for most snack foods, such as chips and crackers is usually one ounce. However, because of the size and weight of the individual items, the number of chips/crackers in one serving can vary greatly. In fact, the number of chips or crackers per serving in *EN*’s nutrition comparison chart ranges from 2 to 38. In order to keep calories in check, be sure to read the suggested serving size on the package before you plunge into an open package. [EN](#)

—Heidi McIndoo, M.S., R.D.

“Healthy” Snacks: A Nutrition Comparison

As with all EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of what’s available. Products are listed alphabetically.

✓ = **EN’s Picks.** Picks contain no more 150 calories (8% DV), 7 g fat (11% DV), 1 g saturated fat (5% DV), 250 mg sodium (10% DV) and at least 2 g fiber (8% DV).

Snacks	Serv Size (g/amt)	Calories	Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Carb (g)	Fiber (g)	Sodium (mg)	Sugar (g)	Pro (g)
CRACKERS									
✓ Doctor Kracker Culinary Crisps Apple Oat Crunch	28/10	100	2.5	1	18	2	105	4	2
✓ Doctor Kracker Culinary Crisps Asiago Cheese	28/10	130	2.5	0.5	23	3	170	0	4
Foods Alive Mexican Harvest Organic Flax Cracker	28/5	150	8	0.5	10	9	180	1	8
Jovan’s Pure Nutrition 100% Natural Whole Foods Cracker Zesty Tomato	28/12	118	6	2	10	4	256	2	6
Mediterranean Snacks Lentil Crackers Sea Salt	28/na	110	3	0	16	1	200	2	5
Somersaults Pacific Sea Salt	30/14	150	8	1	14	3	260	1	6
✓ Somersaults Salty Pepper	30/14	140	7	0.5	14	3	240	1	6
Trader Joe’s Savory Thin Mini Edamame Crackers	28/38	120	2	0	21	1	180	0	3
✓ Triscuit Brown Rice Baked with Red Bean Roasted Red Pepper	29/6	130	4.5	0.5	20	2	110	1	2
Triscuit Brown Rice Baked with Sweet Potato Roasted Sweet Onion	29/6	130	4.5	0.5	21	1	85	1	2
Triscuit Brown Rice Sea Salt & Black Pepper	29/6	130	4.5	0.5	21	1	130	0	2
CHIPS									
Cheetos Simply Natural	28/32	150	9	1.5	16	<1	290	1	2
Enjoy Life Lentils Dill & Sour Cream	28/31	130	6	0	18	1	400	1	3
Enjoy Life Lentils Garlic & Parmesan	28/31	130	6	0	17	0	410	0	3
Enjoy Life Lentils Margherita Pizza	28/31	130	6	0	17	1	370	0	3
✓ Food Should Taste Good Blue Corn	28/10	140	7	0.5	18	3	80	1	2
✓ Food Should Taste Good Multigrain	28/10	140	7	0.5	18	2	80	1	2
Green Giant Multigrain Sweet Potato Chips Sea Salt	28/16	140	6	0.5	19	<1	80	3	1
Green Giant Roasted Veggie Tortilla Chips Zesty Cheddar	28/10	140	7	0.5	18	1	190	2	2
✓ Mediterranean Snacks Baked Lentil Chips Cucumber Dill	28/22	110	3	0	19	3	210	1	4
✓ Mediterranean Snacks Baked Lentil Chips Sea Salt	28/22	110	3	0	19	3	180	0	4
Popchips Original	28/23	120	4	0	18	1	190	<1	2
Popchips Sweet Potato	28/23	120	4	0	20	<1	115	3	1
Ruffles Simply Natural Reduced Fat Sea Salted	28/15	140	7	0.5	17	1	160	0	2
Rhythm Superfoods Kale Chips Kool Ranch	28/2	160	7	0.5	15	3	190	3	6
Rhythm Superfoods Kale Chips Zesty Nacho	28/2	160	7	0.5	13	3	190	3	6
✓ Simply Sprouted Way Better Snacks Multigrain Tortilla Chips	28/11	130	7	0.5	15	3	90	0	2
✓ Snap Pea Crisps Caesar	28/22	120	5	0.5	16	3	65	1	5
✓ Snikiddy Eat Your Vegetables Sea Salt	28/13	130	7	0.5	17	3	140	1	3
✓ Snikiddy Eat Your Vegetables Sea Salt & Lime	28/13	130	7	0.5	17	3	150	2	3
✓ Snikiddy Eat Your Vegetables Sour Cream & Onion	28/13	130	7	0.5	17	3	125	2	3
✓ Stacy’s Pita Chips Multigrain	28/9	140	5	0.5	19	2	270	1	3
Terra Exotic Vegetable Chips	28/14	150	9	1	16	3	150	3	1
Tostitos Simply Natural Blue Corn Tortilla Chips	28/6	140	6	0.5	19	1	80	0	2
Trader Joe’s Kale Chips	28g/na	150	9	1	11	3	220	4	6
✓ Trader Joe’s Quinoa & Black Bean Infused Tortilla Chips	28/8	140	7	1	18	2	50	0	2
✓ Trader Joe’s Veggie & Flaxseed Tortilla Chips	28/7	130	6	1	17	3	50	0	2

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates, pro=protein, DV=Daily Value, Daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet, na=information not available. Source: food labels.