As snacking gains momentum among consumers, many are also broadening their definition of snacks to include beverages. Nearly two-thirds of consumers say that they purchase beverages for snacks at least occasionally, according to Technomic’s Snacking Occasion Consumer Trend Report. And while these beverages run the gamut from juices to smoothies to teas, coffee beverages in particular hold great potential as snacks, especially since nearly half of consumers (47%) say that purchasing coffee is already a part of their habit.

Consumer Attitudes Toward Coffee During the Snack Occasion

Over half of consumers (54%) indicate that coffee beverages are appealing as snacks, with this sentiment relatively equal between men and women. Breakdowns of generational and ethnicity data, however, show larger skews. Over two-thirds of millennials (67%) and nearly three-fifths of Gen Xers (58%) find coffee beverage snacks appealing, whereas fewer than half of Gen Zers agree (49%). Similarly, interest in coffee beverages as snacks is much higher among Hispanics (68%) compared to Caucasians (52%), Black/African-Americans (44%) and Asians (48%).
Likelihood of Considering Coffee Beverages as Snacks Throughout the Day
(Top 2 box = somewhat and very likely)

**MORNING**
- Men: 66%
- Women: 68%

**AFTERNOON**
- Men: 55%
- Women: 54%

**EVENING**
- Men: 45%
- Women: 38%

**LATE NIGHT**
- Men: 38%
- Women: 28%

**AS A MEAL REPLACEMENT**
- Men: 35%
- Women: 30%

Base: 1,000 consumers age 18+

**TAKEAWAY:**
As dayparts continue to blur and breakfast expands further into lunch, dinner and late-night hours, so too will coffee increasingly become an anytime beverage in consumers’ minds. Promoting decaf coffees can encourage caffeine-wary snackers to order these drinks later in the day.

More than two-thirds of respondents (67%) say they would consider a coffee beverage as a snack during morning hours, but data shows that interest gradually reduces as the day progresses. This greater likelihood to consider coffee during earlier snacking hours can be partly attributed to some individuals viewing coffee as solely a morning beverage and others opting to avoid caffeine consumption later in the day.

Older consumers are the least likely to consider coffee beverages as a snack, especially beyond morning hours. For instance, 60% of baby boomers like the idea of coffee beverage snacks in the morning, but that proportion falls to 44% for the afternoon, 31% for evening hours and 20% for late-night occasions. And only 20% of boomers would consider coffee beverage snacks as a meal replacement, whereas half of millennials (49%) say the same.

Men and women are nearly equal in their likelihood to order coffee beverages as a snack in the morning and afternoon hours, but men’s interest in this option far exceeds women’s throughout the later hours of the day. Similarly, men also have a stronger propensity to opt for coffee beverage snacks as meal replacements than women.
Preferred Coffee Beverages for Snacking

Regular hot coffee is the coffee beverage consumers say they most purchase for snacks at least occasionally. Six out of 10 consumers buy regular hot coffee snacks, whereas all other coffee beverages are only purchased by roughly half that proportion. About a third of consumers select specialty hot coffees (35%) and regular iced coffees (32%) as snacks on occasion, whereas slightly fewer say the same for specialty iced (28%) and frozen blended coffees (27%).

Nitro and cold brew are the least likely coffee beverages to be chosen as snacks. These more emerging coffee preparations are not yet cemented in consumers’ purchasing and consumption habits but will likely gain steam over the coming years, particularly with younger consumers.

Noteworthy demographic breakouts include:

- Men skew higher for purchasing regular hot coffee as snacks, whereas women respond greater for purchasing specialty hot, iced and frozen blended coffees for these occasions.
- Matures buy regular hot coffee as snacks more than any other generation (69%), whereas Gen Z are the least likely to do so (48%).
- Respondents living in the Northeast are most likely to purchase regular hot coffee as snacks (67%), whereas those in Western states have the highest response for all other coffee snack purchases, including specialty hot (38%) and frozen blended (35%) coffees.
- Hispanics are the ethnic group with the highest proclivity to snack on regular hot coffee at least occasionally (72%), and Hispanics and Asians tie for purchasing specialty hot and iced coffee, regular iced coffee and frozen blended coffee as snacks the most.
- Specialty hot coffee and specialty iced coffee appeal the greatest to 25-34 year olds.

### Coffee Beverages Purchased for Snacks at Least Occasionally (once every 90 days)

*Select all that apply.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coffee Beverage</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular hot coffee</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty hot coffee (e.g., latte, cappuccino, etc.)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular iced coffee</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty iced coffee (e.g., iced latte, iced cappuccino, etc.)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen blended coffee (e.g., frappe)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold brew coffee</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitro coffee</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1,000 consumers age 18+
Tips for Making Coffee Appealing During the Snack Occasion

1. **Play with Portion Sizes**
   Reducing coffee cups to be more snack-sized may enhance the appeal of these drinks between meals.
   
   **ON THE MENU:** San Francisco-based Martha & Bros. Coffee Company offers a small 8-ounce cup size to provide guests with just enough coffee to get a fix.

2. **Feature Snack-Inspired Coffee Flavors**
   Infusing coffees with the flavors of more traditional snacks—such as doughnuts and cookies—can help build consumers’ association of snacking with coffee beverages.
   
   **ON THE MENU:** Jack in the Box’s limited-time Cinnabon Iced Cinna Coffee is iced coffee infused with Cinnabon’s cinnamon roll flavor.

3. **Satiate Appetites with Functional Add-Ons**
   As with juices and smoothies, functional add-on ingredients for coffees, particularly proteins, will make these drinks seem like a more filling and energizing snack option.
   
   **ON THE MENU:** Bulletproof Coffee in Los Angeles offers collagen protein as an energy-boosting supplement to coffees.

4. **Think Beyond Traditional Coffees**
   Guests who don’t view classic coffee beverages as snacks might be more inclined to purchase nontraditional coffee options instead, including hot and iced coffees poured over or blended with ice cream.
   
   **ON THE MENU:** Paciugo Gelato Caffe’s gelato-filled coffee drinks include the Affogato, espresso poured over gelato.
FEATURED RECIPE:
Vanilla Affogato
Yield: 2 Servings

INGREDIENTS
- 4 scoops vanilla ice cream or gelato
- 1 Folgers® Classic Roast Coffee K-Cup® pod or 4 to 6 oz. brewed Folgers® Classic Roast Ground Coffee
- Ground cinnamon

DIRECTIONS
PLACE 2 scoops ice cream or gelato into each (4 oz.) espresso cup.
BREW coffee on smallest cup setting (4 to 6 oz.). Divide evenly over ice cream.
SPRINKLE with cinnamon
TECHNOMIC TAKEAWAY:

3 Areas of Opportunity for Coffee During the Snack Occasion

1 Promote Coffee Variety
Showcasing a breadth of coffee options to your guests—including decaf and caffeinated, cold and hot, and regular and specialty coffees—can help widen the scope of guests who view these drinks as viable snacking occasion options. Other ways to add range to and increase the appeal of coffee beverages during between-meal times is to experiment with flavors and smaller cup sizes. In addition, offering customizable coffees also promotes variety, especially to the 27% of Gen Zers who say the ability to customize their beverages is a very important menu attribute when deciding where to purchase a beverage. And younger consumers also skew the greatest for specialty coffee preferences, so marketing specialty hot and iced coffees to this crowd is key.

2 Make the Most of Regular Hot Coffee’s Appeal
While coffee variety is helpful for broadening appeal, operators with a limited coffee menu needn’t worry as traditional hot coffee can still be a useful traffic driver during snacking occasions. While men, matures and Hispanics skew highest for purchasing regular hot coffee as a snack, data shows this option also has strong appeal with women, younger generations and other ethnicities. In addition, knowing consumers’ branded hot coffee of choice is very important, since 37% of consumers choose where to purchase a beverage based on where their preferred beverage brand is available.

3 Creatively Push Coffees Between Meals
Operators can work with their supplier partners to roll out useful tactics to get consumers to consider coffee beverages as snacks. Whether it is offering coffee purchase discounts during the afternoon hours for guests who make same-morning purchases, or promoting a free dessert with the purchase of a coffee beverage in the evening, providing incentives to order coffee beyond breakfast hours can increase the snacking appeal of these beverages.

Stay tuned for our forthcoming issues on:
- Regional Hispanic snacks
- Traditional coffee
- Snackified entrees