

Makhana Emerges as Top Healthy Snack Choice for Majority of Indians: Report



In a clear indication of evolving consumer preferences, nearly three out of five Indians now identify makhana, or fox nuts, as their preferred healthy snack. This significant shift is highlighted in Farmley's 2025 Healthy Snacking Report, released on Saturday, July 19, 2025, revealing a growing inclination among Indian consumers towards functional, clean-label, and convenient snack options. The report underscores a broader cultural move where wellness goals increasingly dictate food choices.

The study indicates that Indian consumers are no longer content with bland "healthy" snacks or feeling guilty over indulgent treats. Over 55% of those surveyed actively seek snacks that are clean and preservative-free, demonstrating a strong desire for transparency in food products. This trend reflects a major push towards "functional snacking," where each bite is expected to contribute positively to one's well-being. Packaging also plays a crucial role, with 52% of respondents preferring resealable, eco-conscious packs for their convenience and environmental considerations.

While flavored dry fruits emerged as the most preferred savory snack overall, chosen by 36% of respondents, makhana specifically garnered significant traction, with 19% of individuals selecting it as their top choice. This cements makhana's successful transition from a traditional staple, particularly in Bihar, to a modern-day "super-snack." This growing popularity has even prompted the Government of India to announce the establishment of a Makhana Board in Bihar under the Union Budget 2025-26, signaling official recognition of its economic and nutritional potential.

Despite the rise of newer healthy options, traditional snacks still hold a segment of the market. Chips and wafers were chosen by 14% of respondents, followed by namkeen at 10% and multigrain snacks like khakhras at 9%. In the sweet snack category, chocolate remains India's perennial favorite, though nutty flavors such as peanut butter, hazelnut, and pistachio are gaining ground due to their perceived blend of taste and health benefits.

Lifestyle changes are also significantly reshaping snacking habits. Nearly 45% of consumers now favor on-the-go snack formats like dry fruit-based desserts and energy bars that are portable, clean-label, and functional. This trend is particularly evident among India's expanding urban workforce, where convenience and conscious consumption are paramount for desk-side indulgence. The report further notes that the demand for organic snacks is on the rise, with makhana benefiting from this trend as consumers increasingly seek pesticide-free and non-Genetically Modified Organism (non-GMO) products.

As consumers become more discerning and health-conscious, the snacking industry is adapting to meet these evolving demands. The surge in makhana's popularity reflects a wider shift toward natural, wholesome, and purpose-driven food choices, suggesting a promising future for healthy snack alternatives in the Indian market.