



iconTM
FOODS



SweetBitz

No added sugar chocolate chips.

October 2018 | www.iconfoods.com





If time behind the bench weren't so valuable, today's fickle consumers might give R&D developers reason to pause. But there's little time for hesitation. The developer must respond to evolving trends. As predicted by global researcher, Mintel, 2018 puts the focus on texture.¹ US News, in a report posted February 6, 2018 put a healthful spin on the trend suggesting that tactile foods can help curb overeating because sensations beyond flavor contribute to satisfaction.²

Inclusions and toppings in baked goods, frozen desserts, and bars are one way to expand the eating experience by adding different tastes and impressions. The challenge is to build on the healthfulness of a food in an environment when consumers are exceptionally discerning. They want their foods to be simply made – or at least to have been made from understandable ingredients. Along with a clean label, they are reading the nutrient facts panel for a call out of added sugar. The conundrum is their unwillingness to give up sweetness. The food scientist must meet their flavor expectations. For most, it's the sweetness of sucrose.

Confectionery inclusions are typically made of sugar, a real diet buster. Sucrose adds four calories per gram. It also induces a glycemic response. Sugar-free candies can help developers meet the sweet spot, but they also must appeal to label-conscious consumers who are turning away from artificial ingredients.

A sugar-free chocolate chip from Icon Foods helps manufacturers play up good-for-you, clean label indulgence. Completely natural and non-GMO, the chips are made from unsweetened chocolate, erythritol, cocoa butter, stevia extract, and sunflower lecithin. Sweetness is purely balanced through the combination of a sugar alcohol and a plant extract. Erythritol is produced through natural fermentation. It has just 0.2 calories per gram. Stevia extract is a zero calorie, high potency, plant-derived sweetener. Together, they allow the rich chocolate flavor to shine while providing a guilt-free, sugar-like flavor that's subtly sweet without any aftertaste. Icon Foods offers chips in 2m or 4m. A one ounce serving (28.35g) has 99 calories

Icon Foods' chocolate chips tap into the top ten trend first dubbed "Sweeter Balance" by Innova Market Insights in 2017.³ They also fit a top 2018 trend named "Lighter Enjoyment" by the research firm.⁴ Looking toward 2019, Kroger recently announced low sugar and natural sweeteners among its top five food trend predictions.⁵

Adding inclusions is not complicated, but food developers can benefit from a few helpful tips. Begin with an understanding of the proposed formula. For instance, gluten-free or low-fat products, typically utilize hydrocolloids to build texture and manage moisture.

The moisture content of inclusions contributes to the overall moisture of the product, if not immediately then through migration. In baked goods, moisture helps determine temperature, bake time, and ultimately shelf-life. The chocolate chips, for example, have a maximum of two percent moisture. Because these are sugar-free they will not absorb moisture to the extent of high-sugar inclusions so they will be less syrupy.

Consider mixing times to limit color migration and preserve piece identity. A thicker batter will support inclusions from settling to the bottom. Adding a gum can build viscosity. Melt point is important because it affects the visual as well as the flavor impact. Is the goal to maintain an impression of pieces or a marbled effect?

The same is true for bars. These sugar-free chocolate chips work well in baked and extruded unbaked bars. Expect a ribbon-like effect in baked bars. Solid chips complement oats, grains, and seeds in unbaked extruded bars, just as they will in trail mixes.

Chocolate and peanut butter often meld together in foods ranging from confections, bars, and baked goods. Adding chips to peanut butter builds flavor and definition to be enjoyed in a sandwich or spread across warm toast. As today's consumers look beyond traditional flavors, consider adding chips to almond, cashew, pecan, walnut, pistachio, hazelnut, or macadamia butters. Try a fusion of different nuts and seeds with chips or fruit pieces added for emphasis.

In frozen yogurt and ice cream the melting point is an important attribute. In general, smaller piece size is preferred because it helps the chocolate to melt quickly when consumed in a frozen ice cream treat. However, the pack size is also a determinant. Large bulk containers can handle a larger size.



Sometimes a manufacturer will incorporate a higher level of overrun in the ice cream to compensate for the higher density of inclusions injected into it. The standard identity of ice cream requires a minimum weight per gallon of 4.5 pounds. (21 CFR 135.110). Adding an ingredient that weighs 10 or 11 pounds per gallon makes it possible to incorporate more air in the ice cream and still meet the minimum required weight. This is a common cost reduction strategy with an additional benefit. Chocolate chips, nuts, and fruits give consumers a premium product impression.

Even when using confections as a topping in a variety of applications, consider moisture, melt point, and the desired texture, flavor, and visual impact. If confections are part of a dual pack to be mixed into yogurt, for example, will color meld into the product during stirring? Will the effect enhance or detract from the product's appearance?

The contrast of a dark chip adds a wow factor to typical white or chocolate chip frozen yogurt. It adds something extra when incorporated in light-colored cookies or bars. Sitting atop a raspberry or strawberry dessert, it adds pizzazz. These morsels tap into another 2018 trend predicted by Innova Marketplace - "Say it with color." By adding contrast food becomes not only more appealing, but it becomes more instagrammable.

When confections are used as inclusions, they maximize product value. The advent of sugar-free confections helps keep indulgence in check. And indulgence is always on trend, even if today's consumers are more mindful about the choices they make.



1. <http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/food-and-drink/mintel-announces-five-global-food-and-drink-trends-for-2018>
2. <https://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/articles/2018-02-06/tactile-foods-what-to-know-about-this-emerging-trend>
3. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/clean-supreme-leads-top-trends-for-2017-601079836.html>
4. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/mindful-choices-the-key-food-driver-for-2018-says-innova-market-insights-656335853.html>
5. <https://www.krogerstories.com/krogers-top-food-trends-for-2019/>
6. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/mindful-choices-the-key-food-driver-for-2018-says-innova-market-insights-656335853.html>





ABOUT

Icon Foods works with food manufacturers to create plugin and custom sweetening systems of all particle sizes that function as a replacement for sucrose, 10x sugar, invert sugar and high fructose corn syrup. When you collaborate with Icon Foods, you can be assured of chemical-free processing and 100% natural products with ingredients that are clean label, in most cases, gluten-free diabetic safe and kosher.

Icon Foods has an extensive system in place for ensuring the highest possible standards for quality control and food safety. These standards include stringent ingredient oversight, adherence to good manufacturing practices with strict microbiological standards and ongoing heavy metal and pesticide testing. Icon Foods is a Level II SQF facility certified organic by Oregon Tilth and certified kosher by Oregon Kosher.

For spec sheets, documentation and samples of Clean Label Sugar Replacements, call your Icon Foods sales representative at 310-455-9876 or email sales@iconfoods.com.

