



Consumption pattern and characteristics of potato crisps in Nairobi city, Kenya

George O. Abong^{1*}, Michael W. Okoth¹, Jasper K. Imungi¹
and Jackson N. Kabira²

¹Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Technology, University of Nairobi, P.O. Box 29053-00625, Nairobi (Kangemi), Kenya;

²National Potato Research Centre (KARI), Tigoni, P.O. Box 338-00217, Limuru. Nairobi, Kenya.

*Corresponding author: Email: georkoyo@yahoo.com; Phone: +254735508558

ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the consumption pattern and characteristics of potato crisps in Nairobi City, Kenya.

Methodology and results: Potato crisps consumption pattern was studied using structured questionnaires to collect data from 215 crisps consumers. A total of 80 shops were surveyed to establish the brands and characteristics of potato crisps sold within Nairobi City. The available brands were then sampled and evaluated at the University of Nairobi. Of the sampled 215 consumers were males while 67.4 % were females. A majority, 73.9 % consumed potato crisps on average once a week. Apart from gender, the frequency of purchasing crisps was also influenced by factors such as occasions, seasons and availability of money. Most consumers (22.3 %) preferred Tropical heat brand, 10.82 % preferred Krackles while the least (0.57 %) preferred Pringles, Delice and Highlands crisps. The most preferred flavor was onion and slightly salted crisps. The most purchased packaging units (51.7 %) ranged from 30-50 g due to affordability, retailing at Kshs. 30-40 (about 0.5



USD) compared to units of 150 g and above that were least purchased (1.7 %) due to their high costs, retailing at Kshs. 100 (about 1.5 USD) and above. A total of 28 % of the consumers bought crisps for self-consumption while 72 % purchased both for self and family members.

All the outlets surveyed (100 %) sold potato crisps. Only 15 % of the outlets stocked potato crisps and other potato products such as *chevda* and potato sticks. A total of 24 brands of crisps were sold in Nairobi city. The most stocked brands in the outlets were Tropical heat and Krackles that were available in 46 and 45 % of the outlets surveyed, respectively. All the shops surveyed stocked brands of crisps made in Kenya while only 15.3 % of the outlets also had imported brands. The units of packaging ranged from less than 10 g to 1 kg. The most popular unit packages (40 %) varied from 10 to 100 g as they were cheap and affordable to most customers selling between Kshs. 10 to Kshs. 60. The study indicates that potato crisps are highly consumed by young children and youths in their teen ages while parents were moderate buyers of the products. Laboratory characteristics of the brands evaluated included colour, size, thickness, moisture, salt and oil contents that significantly ($P \leq 0.05$) differed among the brands. The oil content ranged from 24.37 to 40.22 % while the moisture and salt contents varied from 1.09 to 5.45 %, and 1.10 to 2.96 %, respectively.

Conclusions and application of results: Consumption of crisps in Nairobi city depends on gender, occasions, and seasons of the year and availability of disposable income. Except in the sizes, most brands had characteristics that conformed to the standards set for crisps. This study provides a view of the current scenario in the crisp market and is useful information to consumers, processors and policy makers in the potato sub sector.

Key words

Potato brands, consumers, oil content, salt content.