

Natural Products

MARKETPLACE

Butters in a Nut Shell

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Working for Peanuts

While many nut butters make up the market, **peanut butter** is still the king in conventional grocery stores, making up 82 percent of the nut butter sales, at \$99 million, according to SPINS. And, according to Mintel, it was the top nut for new products launched in the United States in 2009.

The old staple also offers health benefits. "Peanuts have more than 30 essential nutrients and they have tons of antioxidants; actually peanuts have more antioxidants than green tea or broccoli," said Raffaella Marie Fenn, president and managing director, [National Peanut Board](#). "They are good for heart health, cholesterol and a variety of things."

Bob Coyle, marketing team leader, National Peanut Board noted peanuts are also high in B vitamins and have the highest amount of protein among all nuts.

Almond Joys

Indeed, a 2006 Tufts University study noted almonds are a nutrient-dense source of vitamin E, manganese, magnesium, copper, phosphorus, fiber, riboflavin, monounsaturated fatty acids and protein.⁴ The researchers also stated habitual almond consumption in low-calorie diets appeared to promote more weight loss than a comparable carbohydrate-based, low-calorie diet; almonds have a low glycemic index and do not adversely impact insulin sensitivity; and they possess antioxidant actions.

Other studies have shown almonds' chemo-protective effect,⁵ ability to improved micronutrient profiles and eating patterns of free-living healthy individuals,⁶ capacity to significantly reduce total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol,⁷ and preventive effects on oxidative stress and DNA damage caused by smoking.⁸

Natural product shoppers seem to be on board with almond butter, as almond butter sales accounted for 38 percent of the sales of nut butters at natural supermarkets, with peanut butter falling slightly behind it at 37 percent.

Justin Gold, founder of [Justin's Nut Butters](#) said he has seen an almond butter fad in the market. "Nutritionists nationwide are consistently supporting almonds as a healthy diet staple," he said. "Diets such as the Paleo diet and the Mediterranean diet are popularizing the daily usage of almond butters."

Other Nutty Butters

Consumers may also look to other nut butters to avoid some of the problems brought on by peanut and almond butters, including price fluctuations. "Prices for both peanuts and almonds have been tumultuous over the last few years, with both nuts having at least one major spike in costs due to both market forces and climate-related crop performance," Zalben said. "Companies without long-term contracts and stable supply of raw ingredients have faced challenges."

Hazelnut butter has made inroads in natural products stores with \$314,000 in sales from June 2007 to June 2008, according to SPINS. During that timeframe, hazelnut butters saw a growth of 11 percent. Justin's Nut Butters offers hazelnut butter mixed with chocolate (think of it as a "natural" Nutella). Gold said other hazelnut butters on the market have more sugar per serving than cake frosting and less than 10 percent nuts, "Whereas Justin's uses 60-percent less sugar and contains close to 70-percent nuts."