

## Carrubo snack (Italy)

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### Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Crackers are popular snacks among consumers of all ages. In Italian cuisine, there are many kinds of bread snacks: *taralli*, *tarallini*, *crostini*, *grissini*... Unfortunately, they are usually not very nutritious. To enable the consumers to enjoy the pleasure of crackers without harming one's health, Italian older consumers in collaboration with a food company created a grain product that is both tasty and healthy.

To find out what kind of food products answer the needs of older adults, the EIT Food project team invited older consumers in Italy to participate in co-creation workshops. The participants developed an idea of an innovative snack that offers rich, attractive taste and meets the expectations of both gourmards and mass market consumers.

#### Innovative food product

The unique taste of *Carrubo* Snack comes from carob – a locally sourced ingredient, rich in nutritional values. The ancient Greeks were the first to grow carob trees. Carob flour is produced from dried, roasted carob tree pods and looks a lot like cocoa powder. It has also been used in the past as cocoa powder alternative. Despite being a typical Mediterranean raw material, carob has not been used often in bakery products and snacks as the main ingredient. *Carrubo* Snack does not contain any ingredients of animal origin therefore can be consumed also by vegetarians and vegans. Furthermore, *Carrubo* Snack may be eaten between meals as well as a side dish. The product's packaging, made of recyclable materials, allows consumers open and close it multiple times.

#### Good for health

Carob flour contains high amount of protein, fibre, fat, calcium, and polyphenols with antioxidant properties. The high protein and fibre content, low calorific value, and low glycaemic index prevent the sugar level from rising and support the maintenance of healthy body weight. It does not contain any artificial additives and preservatives. Carob powder is considered today a superfood – the flour contains no fats and is very low in sodium but has twice the amount of calcium compared to cocoa. Moreover, carob flour is a good source of vitamins A and B and minerals such as copper, manganese, potassium, and magnesium.

#### Preferred by older adults / Designed by older adults for older adults

*Carrubo* Snack was created as a result of the cooperation of older consumers and the Italian company Valle Fiorita. The traditional but usually neglected ingredient of the *Carrubo* Snack – the carob flour – makes the snack especially attractive for this age group. What is more, the snack is a healthy alternative to other *hors d'oeuvre* available on the market. Older consumers are aware of their own health requirements, but they are also concerned about the environment. Therefore, the new product comes in a unique eco-friendly paper tray packaging, making it not only healthy but also a sustainable consumer choice.

#### Different from existing products

Consumers worldwide, also the older ones, become more and more aware of how important a healthy diet is. As such, they are more conscious about the food choices they make and are increasingly opting for clean label strategies and snacks that offer nutritional benefits, such as vitamins and minerals, energy boost through added protein. The use of carob flour in the production of the *Carrubo* Snack makes it stand out among similar food products and enriches the palette of Italian bread snacks.

### Additional information about the project:

*Carrubo Snack* is a product designed during the co-creation workshops, held as part of the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project. The project is coordinated by the University of Warsaw and financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), under the Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. The project's main aim is to address the needs of older consumers in the food and beverage market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates their creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The product concept was designed in 2020 in Italy during co-creation sessions which gathered older consumers, scientists from the Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, the representatives of food producer Valle Fiorita Srl and the start-up company Innovabile Srl. Following the co-creation process, the innovative product was developed and introduced to the market in 2021.

Find out more about the project at: <http://timo.wz.uw.edu.pl/cel>