

FREE GUIDE • DIET SWAD

Same Brand, Different Recipe: India vs Europe

Why the identical product can have a different formula here - 5 documented examples and a parent's clean-label survival guide

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Ancient Wisdom, Modern Life

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The uncomfortable question

If a snack is made by a global company, is the pack sold in India identical to the one sold in Berlin or London? Often - no. Same brand, same cartoon on the front, different ingredient list on the back. This guide explains why that happens, shows five documented patterns, and gives you a simple defence. We describe product categories and published findings, without pointing at any single brand.

Why formulas differ between countries

- **Regulations differ.** The EU requires a warning line on foods containing certain synthetic colours ('may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children'). Rather than print that, many companies reformulate with natural colours - in Europe. In India, no warning is required, so the synthetic version often continues.
- **Cost pressure differs.** In price-sensitive markets, cheaper ingredients (palm oil, glucose syrup) are more tempting to use.
- **Enforcement differs.** Limits may exist on paper but testing frequency and penalties vary.

5 documented patterns

Category	What has been reported / documented
1. Candies & colourful sweets	Synthetic colours (INS 102, 110, 122, 124, 129) common in Indian versions; EU versions often reformulated with plant-based colours to avoid the mandatory child-attention warning
2. Baby & infant cereals	A 2024 international investigation reported added sugar in versions of a popular baby cereal sold in India/Asia/Africa, while European versions of the same product had none
3. Soft drinks	Sweetener and colour systems vary by market; some caramel-colour variants were reformulated in certain countries after local rules, unchanged elsewhere
4. Instant noodles & savoury snacks	Flavour-enhancer and antioxidant (TBHQ/BHA) usage differs with each country's permitted limits
5. Chocolates & spreads	Fat composition can differ - EU rules on 'chocolate' composition are strict; elsewhere more vegetable fat may replace cocoa butter

The point is not that Indian food is 'poisoned' - it is that **the company's recipe follows each country's minimum rules, not one global standard of care.** Where rules are lighter, recipes get cheaper.

What this means for your family

You cannot personally change food regulation. You CAN refuse to be the market for the lower-standard recipe. That takes exactly one habit: read the back of the pack, especially on anything your child eats weekly. The colours mentioned above are easy to spot - they are printed right there as INS numbers.

The child-snack quick check

For anything your child eats regularly: (1) any INS 102/110/122/124/129 colour? (2) more than one sugar name? (3) palm oil where butter should be? Two or more 'yes' answers - find a better default.

The clean-label shopping guide

- Prefer products that print ingredient percentages - transparency is a habit, brands either have it or don't.
- Prefer short lists with kitchen words: wheat, butter, dates, nuts, jaggery, salt.
- Colour should come from food (cocoa, fruit, turmeric) - not from a number.
- For daily snacks, pick brands whose entire business depends on clean labels - they cannot afford to cut the corner you're worried about.

One standard, one recipe

Diet Swad has exactly one formula per product - the one we feed our own family. Real ingredients with printed percentages, zero synthetic colours, zero preservatives. Power Bites to Millet Cookies, everything ₹499 with FREE shipping - dietswad.in.

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This guide shares general nutrition information in simple language, prepared by the Diet Swad team. It is not medical advice. If you have a health condition, an allergy, or special dietary needs (pregnancy, diabetes, children under 2, etc.), please talk to your doctor or a qualified dietitian before making changes. All ingredient examples describe common label patterns, not any one specific brand.