

FREE GUIDE • DIET SWAD

Packaged Snacks Ka Sach

What's really inside India's 20 most common packaged snacks - names, numbers, and a 30-second way to check any label

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Ancient Wisdom, Modern Life

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Read this first

This guide is not here to scare you. It is here to make you the smartest shopper in the store. Below: the 20 most common packaged snack types in India, what their labels usually reveal, the ingredient code-words to watch for, and a 30-second label routine you'll remember forever. We describe common label patterns of each **category** - always check the actual pack in your hand, because recipes differ brand to brand.

The 4 code-words on almost every label

- **Refined Wheat Flour (Maida):** wheat with the fibre and nutrients polished away. Fast to digest, spikes blood sugar quickly. If it is ingredient #1, the product is mostly maida.
- **Sugar / Liquid Glucose / Invert Syrup:** all forms of added sugar. Companies split sugar into multiple names so no single one tops the list. Count them together.
- **Palm Oil / Edible Vegetable Oil:** the cheapest cooking fat available - used instead of butter or ghee to cut cost.
- **INS numbers (e.g., INS 211, INS 102):** the international code system for additives - preservatives, colours, emulsifiers. One or two is common; a long parade of them means heavily processed.

Jargon buster: 'INS number'

INS = International Numbering System. Every food additive has a code number so it can be listed compactly. The number itself is not 'bad' - it just tells you an additive is present. This guide decodes the common ones.

The Top 20: what the label usually shows

#	Snack type	What the label typically reveals
1	Cream biscuits	Maida first, sugar 2-3 times under different names, palm oil, artificial flavour
2	'Digestive' / 'wheat' biscuits	Often still maida-heavy with added sugar - 'wheat' on front, check the % on the back
3	Chocolate-filled cookies	Maida + sugar + palm oil; 'choco' often means cocoa solids + flavouring, not real chocolate
4	Instant noodles	Refined flour, palm oil; taste-maker with flavour enhancers (INS 621 and friends) and high sodium

#	Snack type	What the label typically reveals
5	Potato chips	Potato, palm oil/palmolein, salt - plus flavour powders with added MSG-type enhancers in many variants
6	Corn puffs / extruded snacks	Corn meal puffed with oil, salt, flavour enhancers and sometimes synthetic colours
7	Namkeen / bhujia	Besan is good news - but check the oil type and sodium; some use added colours
8	Fruit 'juices' / drinks	Many are water + sugar + a small % of fruit pulp + acidity regulators + colours - check the fruit %
9	Flavoured yogurt / dairy desserts	Milk solids + sugar + starch + colours; plain dahi with real fruit is cleaner
10	Tomato ketchup	Sugar is often the 2nd ingredient - a tablespoon can carry a teaspoon of sugar
11	'Health' drink powders	Frequently 40-70% sugars (check 'of which sugars' in the nutrition table)
12	Energy / granola bars	Some are great; many are glucose syrup binding a few oats - read the sugar line
13	Breakfast cereals / flakes	Refined grains + sugar + salt; 'multigrain' does not automatically mean whole grain
14	Candies & gummies	Sugar + glucose syrup + gelatine + synthetic colours (INS 102, 110, 122, 124, 129)
15	Ice creams / frozen desserts	'Frozen dessert' means vegetable oil instead of milk fat - check for the word 'dairy'
16	Packaged cakes / muffins	Maida, sugar, palm oil, emulsifiers (INS 471), preservatives (INS 202/282)
17	Soft drinks / colas	Roughly 8-11 g sugar per 100 ml - a 500 ml bottle can cross 10 teaspoons
18	'Diet' / 'sugar-free' biscuits	Sugar may be replaced but the maida and palm oil usually remain - read past the front claim
19	Flavoured milk	Milk + 8-12% added sugar + colours/flavours - closer to dessert than to milk
20	Instant soups / gravies	Starch, salt, flavour enhancers, dehydrated vegetables in small % - check sodium per serving

The INS decoder (the ones you'll actually meet)

Code	What it is	Worth knowing
INS 211	Sodium benzoate (preservative)	Common in drinks & sauces; studied together with synthetic colours for effects on children's attention
INS 220	Sulphur dioxide (preservative)	Can trigger reactions in sensitive/asthmatic people

Code	What it is	Worth knowing
INS 202	Potassium sorbate (preservative)	One of the milder preservatives - still a sign of long-shelf-life food
INS 621	MSG (flavour enhancer)	Makes salty snacks 'moreish'; some people report sensitivity
INS 102 / 110 / 122 / 124 / 129	Synthetic food colours	In the EU these require a warning about possible effects on activity and attention in children - in India they are permitted and common in candies
INS 319 / 320	TBHQ / BHA (antioxidants for oils)	Keep frying oils from going stale; a marker of heavily processed snacks
INS 471	Mono- & diglycerides (emulsifier)	Very common in baked goods; tells you it came from a factory line, not a kitchen

Remember: an INS number is a signal to look closer, not automatically a danger. The dose, the frequency, and how many of them you eat every day is what matters.

The 30-second label routine

1. **Flip the pack.** Ignore the front completely - the front is marketing, the back is law.
2. **Read the first 3 ingredients.** They are listed by weight, so the first 3 ARE the product. Maida + sugar + palm oil = a dessert pretending otherwise.
3. **Count the sugars.** Sugar, liquid glucose, invert syrup, fructose, maltodextrin, corn syrup - add them up mentally.
4. **Scan for INS numbers.** One or two, okay. A cricket team of them? Put it back.
5. **Check 'of which sugars'** in the nutrition table - per 100 g, over 20-25 g is a sweet treat, whatever the front says.

"Problem ye nahi ke healthy khaana expensive hai. Problem ye hai ke hum label padhna bhool gaye hain."

What a clean label looks like

For contrast, here is the entire ingredient list of two Diet Swad products, exactly as on the pack:

- **Peanut-Sesame Delights:** Dates (50%), Roasted Peanuts (40%), Sesame Seeds (6%), Ghee (4%). That's it - four ingredients.
- **Roasted & Salted Cashews:** Cashews (99.8%), Iodized Salt (0.2%). Two ingredients.

The Diet Swad standard

No maida, no palm oil, no refined sugar in our bites, no preservatives, no artificial anything - across Power Bites, Royal Bites, Peanut-Sesame Delights, Millet Cookies and Roasted Cashews. Every product ₹499, FREE shipping all over India - dietswad.in.

Enjoyed this guide?

Follow **@dietswad** on Instagram for honest, no-jargon nutrition content in simple language, every single day. And when you want a snack whose label you never have to worry about - every Diet Swad product is ₹499 with FREE shipping all over India. Visit **dietswad.in** (link in bio).

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.