

Chunks of Energy™ (Egg-Free)

Lets face it; there is no shortage of energy bar options. From meal replacements to granola to the ubiquitous Powerbar, we are a society addicted to condensed carbohydrates and protein. Always on the go, I think most of us are guilty of grabbing the closest bar when hunger strikes, whether we are heading out for a jog or simply stuck in traffic. Yet aside from some energy "gels," which thus far I have been a bit too grossed out by the mere concept to trial, we seem to be stuck on autopilot with the "bar" formation.

However, there is one small manufacturer who has been seeking to break out of the "bar" mold. Dancing Star Company has emerged on the scene with their Chunks of Energy®. Though it wouldn't seem like a revolutionary concept, Dancing Star appears to have very little competition in the "chunk" market. Surprisingly, this bite-sized company has been around for several years, but their product line is just now gaining attention. Rightfully so, I might add.

I recently had the opportunity to sample a handful of their various flavors, to see if they really do measure up ounce for ounce with the various energy bar options. Admittedly, they do pack an enormous amount of nutrition and flavor into square and rectangular chunks, averaging about an inch in diameter. Technically, I found them easy to eat in two or even three bites, though manly sized appetites would probably pop them in a single shot.

For that homemade feel, no two chunks look exactly alike. Nonetheless, each flavor had a similar texture, which I was very pleased with. They were dense and solid packed for minimal crumbling, yet relatively soft to bite into and just barely chewy. The texture was in fact so perfect, that not a single bit stuck to my teeth! Stickiness is my primary complaint with most energy bars, so this was a pleasant surprise.

What about this energy claim? There are very few foods that I can say I have eaten and felt an instant boost. Yes, most of these are plain old fruits and vegetables. However, there are hundreds upon hundreds of foods I can name that actually sap my energy when I need it most. I am pleased to say that Dancing Star's Chunks of Energy® quickly satisfied my appetite, and in no way weighed me down. I actually trialed a few as a last minute boost before a soccer match, and played rather well, if I do say so myself.

One word of warning, these are much more filling than they look. I picked four of the smaller chunks to trial in one sitting when a good bout of hunger struck. It was more than I needed. Granted, had I spaced them out over an hour or so (rather than 5 minutes), both my stomach and my fuel would have been moderated.

Beyond the texture, each chunk flavor is quite unique, and there are many! I believe on last count there were about 15 Energy Chunks and Bites to choose from. As a chunk rookie, I trialed the two organic offerings first, followed by three additional flavors…

Organic Wild Cranberry Apricot ‐ I didn't instantly recognize this flavor blend, though it was quite tasty. Flecks of dried cranberries, apricots, and raisins added a wonderful sweet-barely tart taste to the overall chunk background, which was fairly neutral, but noticeably sweet. It was difficult to say which fruit had the most influence, but as the initial punch began to fade, the solid undertones of the sunflower seeds and nuts began to emerge. To be honest, there were so many flavors in one bite, they were hard to pull out, but everything seemed to meld well. On a five star scale, I would give it a solid four, definitely worth purchasing again. ([Click for Ingredients](#))

Organic Chocolate Paradise ‐ Whoa, sweet chocolate explosion! The cranberry apricot was quite good, but this flavor is incredibly addictive. The chewy sunflower seeds spiked throughout seem almost irrelevant when the somewhat "milky" semi-sweet chocolate flavor comes bursting through. As a self-proclaimed "vanillaholic," I must admit this is one delicious chocolate snack that could quite frankly cross into the treat zone. If energy tastes this good, I will be bouncing off the walls soon! ([Click for Ingredients](#))

Mocha Chip ‐ I am not certain if this was an Energy Chunk or Bite, but it was very similar in size, shape, and texture to the other varieties, so I will keep it classified as a chunk. Though I love tea, coffee is not my thing. With this in mind, I didn't have high hopes from the Mocha Chip. Luckily, I am willing to trial (almost) anything. This time my adventurousness seems to have paid off. The Chocolate Paradise Chunks offer a sweet chocolate experience throughout, while the Mocha Chip variety has a more subdued backdrop with positively delicious chocolate chunks for contrast. The wonderfully mild chocolaty aftertaste lingered long after my last bite. Of course, this left me longing for more, so I went back for one (or two) more chunks. I would assume most mocha fans would be pleased with the flavor, though us non-coffee consumers need not feel left out with this flavor. ([Click for Ingredients](#))

Vanilla Almond – This flavor had the most honey-like appeal, with even the warm scent of honey emulating from it. The taste was a unique blend of vanilla, nuts, seeds, honey, dried papaya, and dried apricots. It was more on the sweet side than the cranberry apricot selection, yet the nut and seed flavors were slightly more pronounced for contrast. I preferred the flavors in which the honey was more immersed in the overall flavor, but the dried apricots and papaya definitely added a tasty twist and a welcome change from the traditional use of raisins. (Click for Ingredients)

Carob Spirulina – Any food titled with spirulina doesn't exactly scream indulgence. Needless to say I was a bit surprised to find out this is their top selling flavor. What magic could possibly lay behind anything “spirulina?” The first thing I noticed was the unique, yet comforting, fragrance of carob. Second, was the unique flavor that just somehow…really worked. My teeth were greeted by a familiar crispy bite, which I found out later was rice cereal, followed by various bits of nuts. The flavor was mild, and just slightly sweet. It morphed into the recognizable taste of carob with its more grown-up flavor. Distinctly different from chocolate, carob has a sweet-bitter flavor that is instantly recognizable. As it turns out, I am a carob fan. I thoroughly enjoyed the mild carob aftertaste. I still have no idea what spirulina tastes like, but it seems to combine well with carob. Though the Chocolate Paradise offered my taste buds the “wow” factor, this Carob Spirulina bite ranked in line with the Mocha Chip for a “Chunk” I would choose on a daily basis for flavor, energy, and dare I say, nutrition. (Click for Ingredients)

My Extra Notes & Tips:

- All of the Dancing Star products are made without any milk ingredients. Those without chocolate chips (grain-sweetened) are also free of gluten ingredients.
- The Chunks of Energy are close to vegan, though almost all are made with honey. For strict vegans, trial their Vegan Carob Banana flavor, I hope to soon!
- I found the chunks to be very versatile. While they are great for long hikes, I actually enjoyed the Chocolate Paradise and Mocha Chip Chunks with tea for an afternoon boost.

Where to Purchase: See the store locator on the Dancing Star website to find a retail outlet near you. However, for ease, they also sell all of their snacks online in 5 and 10 pound packages.