

Doctor Kracker Snacker Crackers - Review #1 (Vegan, Soy-Free)

By Hannah Kaminsky - The words "whole grains" may have meant very little to Americans only two or three years ago, but now that buzz-worthy term is on the tips of all mindful mothers and health conscious consumers' tongues. Only recently has it gained such attention, and in the first few whispers of this new problem, a panic seemed to spread through the concerned public as though there were no feasible remedy. How should one squeeze these whole grains into your diet? Where do they come from? Why were they lacking in the first place? Such a simple answer should have been elementary, but here were countless articles, books, and television programs popping up to teach us how to eat again. Contrary to the struggle that so many made it out to be, whole grains should be the least of your worries when it comes to eating healthy, because they really are quite delicious in their own right.

Sure, everyone has old standby comfort foods that aren't so easy to exchange for more nutritious alternatives, but allow me to introduce you to a snacking dream in the form of crunchy, hearty crackers that make no bones about their wholesome nature. Crackers are a staple in every well-stocked pantry, and now there is no excuse to keep those flaccid, tasteless cardboard squares on hand when Dr. Kracker is pumping out salubrious flat breads that could rival any others on the shelves in both taste and nutrition.

Even the pickiest snackers will find something that appeals to them; producing seven flavors in total, browsing for healthier morsels among their products alone will banish any thoughts a healthier diet can be limiting. Be mindful of the labels though, as some of their offerings include cheese and thusly are not vegan. Of those that included no dairy that I was lucky enough to try, I'm not going to beat around the bush. I loved them. Forget about looking for something more nourishing; these are darn good by any standards.

Dr. Kracker obviously took good care to source high-quality ingredients and present them in a pleasing manner. Yet, what struck me as being unique was the amount of attention paid to their shape. All flavors are made as the standard small, rectangular crackers, as well as larger flat breads, chips, and smaller individual packs as well. I only obtained one pack of flat breads in addition to four flavors of the regular "snacker crackers," but since they have the same flavor anyways, it was nice just an idea of what they would look like in comparison.

Grabbing the first package my hands happened upon, I started by taking my chances with the Seedlander variety, and I'm sure it requires no further explanation than the picture to understand why it might be called that. Doused with whole pumpkin, sesame, and poppy seeds, the dark brown cracker holding it all up seems like almost an after thought. Taking a whiff from the open package, all that my nose can pick up on is the smell of seeds, which excites me to no end. Finally, a cracker that is more than just a vehicle for goopy, artery-clogging dips — There's real substance to this one!

Crunching loudly enough to arouse the curiosity of people in adjoining rooms, it occurs to me that this is perhaps the exact opposite of Wonder Bread. The thick slices of dense crisp bread possess a hearty taste similar to rye bread, but coupled with all of the toppings, they are elevated to a whole new level. The deep undertones of poppy seeds seemed to dominate the flavor profile, but each individual element was far from forgotten. Even those that didn't share the spotlight contributed amazing texture, bringing added dimension to each bite. All of these hearty subjects did amount to a serious test of my teeth and jaws at times though. These crackers were so solid that I might not recommend them for the weak of dentistry.

Taking somewhat of a departure from the savory chips that I had anticipated, I discovered a package of unusual snackers that went by the name of Muesli Kribbons. Muesli I understand; But what makes these "kribbons"? Moreover, what are kribbons? No matter, the same sort of deep rye crackers made up the base for these sweeter munchies, but instead of a barrage of toppings, a more modest sprinkling of sesame seeds graced the exterior that revealed dark spots of dried fruits lurking just below the surface. Aided by the natural chewy tendencies of dried fruit, this one was a bit easier to just pop in my mouth and grind down like usual, but rest assured that absolutely no crunchiness was sacrificed to achieve this.

Powering through these with enthusiasm, I was surprise to take a closer look and discover the appearance of sunflower seeds every now and then tucked into the base of the cracker as well. An uneven distribution of fruits and seeds all over perturbed me at first, but I soon found that making every bite just a little bit different was a huge draw, as it kept me coming back for more. Only very lightly sweet and more tart if anything due to the choice of fruits, I could very easily see myself enjoying these for breakfast instead of a bowl of cereal.

Picking up a farer-skinned cracker next by the name of Klassic 3 Seed, I can't help but find that the cutesy use of "K" instead of "C" is starting to wear on me, but luckily the goods aren't in the package for long, and the taste more than makes up for their creative spelling. Resembling the Seedlander in many aspects, it boasted a fairly similar flavor as well, but with slight nuances that effectively held my rapt attention. Flax seeds replaced the previously dominant poppy seeds, but this time seemed take the place of a silent vowel. Contributing mainly to aesthetic appearance and nutrition, the flax allowed other seeds to shine instead of hogging all the glory, while simultaneously allowing the more subtle nutty flavors typical of whole-wheat goods to quietly sneak into the background. Having more restrained flavors, I could easily see this one being paired with a hummus or other sort of dip, whereas I would have been completely content to eat the former unadorned. While I may prefer the Seedlander to these overall, I would certainly not be averse to picking up another box of the Klassic all the same.

Reaching once more into the depths of my cracker horde, I pulled out the final flavor within my grasp. Although it definitely had some tough acts to follow, this one needed no introduction all the same. Seeded Spelt really lived up to its name. True, I've never actually had any spelt product before, and therefore couldn't describe its unique taste, but it was definitely a pleasant change of pace. Lighter and less powerful in general, this would be another good cracker to be paired with some sort of topping or spread to kick it up another notch. A simple, solid, all-purpose cracker, this could be the flavor that the less adventurous might feel more at home with, if easing into new foods is the way to overcome initial reluctance. Added only in the textual department by the addition of toothsome sunflower and sesame seeds, they were quite pleasant to nibble, but I don't think that this is the one I would come running back to first.

My only small complaint is about the packaging for the snacker crackers. I like the shape and design of the boxes, but just musing about the ingredients and turning one upside down to read the label unleashed a down pour of loose seeds and crumbs... Directly into my keyboard below! Still, I can forgive that tiny flaw because I don't think that the crackers would really hang around in that package for too long in the first place. Even though I had a huge box of these nibbles packed away in the back hall closet, my supply dwindled down to mere crumbs much faster than I had anticipated!

If there was ever a processed food to dispel the myths that whole grains are too difficult and distasteful to fit into the standard person's diet, these crackers would get my vote. Instead of serving weak party platters full of insubstantial dusty squares comprised mainly of salt and trans-fats that are truly nothing but filler, why not venture out of the realm of the mediocre and try dishing out real food? Take the hint from your gagging guests and end the suffering - Beneficial to your health and your taste buds, whole grains are the way to go.

Where to Purchase: Dr. Cracker's Snacker Crackers are available in stores throughout the U.S. and Canada. Visit the Dr. Cracker website for a U.S. store locator. They are also available online, via Amazon.

Hannah writes and reviews for Go Dairy Free, and her own blog, Bittersweet.