

Food Allergy-Friendly Sweets

2020 Teen Taste Test Panel Report

A FARE Teen Advisory Group Project



Photo by Lauren Rivera

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We all need a little sweetness in our lives. However, for teens with severe food allergies, it is often hard to find sweets that are both safe to eat and taste good.

During school sports, study sessions and Halloween parties, it is not uncommon to hang out with friends who are digging into delicious-looking candy bars, peanut butter cups, M&Ms, and other mainstream sweets.

Meanwhile, teens with severe food allergies are limited to eating poor substitutes that call attention to their disability, make them feel different, and often, don't even taste good!

We launched a taste test panel to identify the best tasting food allergy-friendly sweets on the market, from a unique teen perspective. We think it's important for teens to have sweets that are safe to eat *and* taste good.

It's the little things in life that matter!



Photo by Lauren Rivera



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Thank You to These Special Brands!

We researched companies that produce allergy-friendly sweets, then contacted them to request complimentary samples for our taste test. We are grateful to these companies who are dedicated to providing products that are safe for people with food allergies. With this project, we hope to raise awareness of these brands and provide them with real, honest feedback from teens so they can make their awesome products even better and continue to thrive!

Our Teen Taste Test Panelists

Our panelists are teens from across the United States. All panelists are members of the FARE Teen Advisory Group.

Taste test panelists were not aware which companies provided free samples for the taste test.

Note that FARE does not endorse any of these products. This project was conducted independently by FARE Teen Advisory Group members.



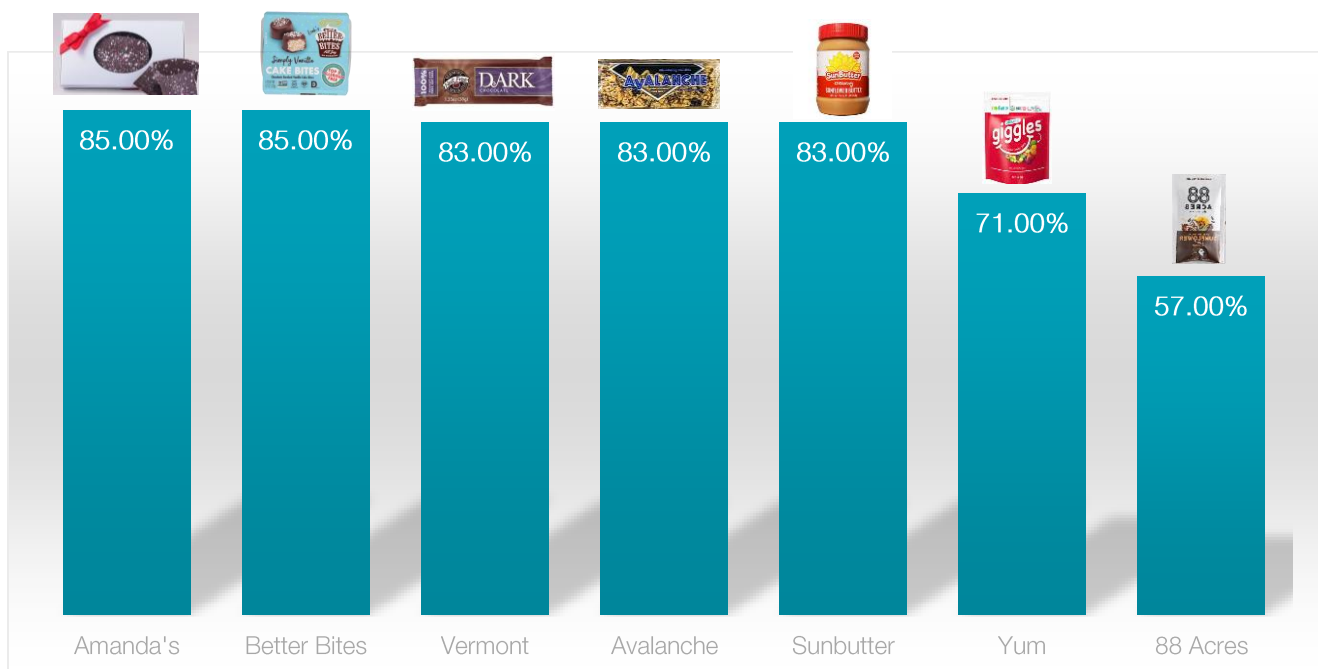
Reviews

Our teen panelists tasted each of the following products, then rated each on a five-point scale. The following represents the average rating.

Product	Five Star Ratings		
	Looks Appealing	Tastes Great	Cool Packaging
88 Acre Sunflower Seed Butter	3.5 stars	3.5 stars	4 stars
Amanda's Own Chocolate Bark	5 stars	4.5 stars	4 stars
Avalanche Protein Bar	4 stars	3.5 stars	4 stars
Better Bites Bakery Cake Bites	4.5 stars	3.5 stars	5 stars
Sunbutter Sunflower Seed Butter	3.5 stars	3.5 stars	4 stars
Vermont Nut Free Chocolate Bar	4 stars	3.5 stars	4 stars
Yum Earth Giggles Candy Bites	4 stars	3.5 stars	4 stars



Our Panelists' Top Picks




Our teen panelists were asked if they would recommend the product to a friend. The following percentage of panelists said yes, they would recommend the product to a friend.





The Details

Our teen panelists were asked to describe what they liked/didn't like about each product and why they rated it as they did. The following are some of the representative quotes.

	Product	Flavor	What We Liked	What Would Make It Better
	88 Acres Sunflower Seed Butter	Dark Chocolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It tasted excellent.” ▪ “I enjoyed the twist on classic sunflower seed butter with the added chocolate.” ▪ “A delicious spread on toast and apples.” ▪ “The packaging is innovative and contemporary, which made me excited to try their product.” ▪ “The packaging goes with the rustic and organic vibe of the actual ingredients. Artsy, cute, easy to read.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It would be difficult to take this on the go because you need something to stir it.” ▪ “Putting it in a packet made it messy and a lot more difficult to eat.” ▪ “It is hard to rip open. You need scissors.”
	Amanda's Own Bark	Chocolate Peppermint Chocolate Pretzel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The pretzels were easy to eat with my braces.” ▪ “I liked that it came in a gift box. It looked very fancy.” ▪ “Cute, minimalistic packaging. Looks like a homemade gift you would get from a neighbor.” ▪ “Informational note made me feel comfortable eating it.” ▪ “I've never had bark before. This was really good!” ▪ “Comes in a big serving. Perfect for families.” ▪ “Tastes like it is fresh from the bakery! This was my first time trying a bark, and I loved it! I will definitely buy some after this!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Maybe they could put the Amanda's Own Sticker on the front so that it is clear.” ▪ “A little too rich for me!”

	Product	Flavor	What We Liked	What Would Make It Better
	Avalanche Protein Bar	Blueberry Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The bar was really good!” ▪ “Seeing the ingredients through the packaging was nice.” ▪ “It is bigger than a lot of granola bars. I might not always be that hungry when I want a snack, but it makes the bar stand out!” ▪ “I liked the clear packaging because it gave it a fresh and natural vibe. It looks healthy.” ▪ “Hearty taste.” ▪ “A very generous portion.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I did not like the seeds in it. I also did not like the dried blueberries.” ▪ “The nut free labeling on the packaging is so small that I may have missed it in a grocery store.” ▪ “The allergen information is unclear.” ▪ “Slightly too sweet, and the seeds unfortunately got stuck in my teeth.”
	Better Bites Cake Bites	Double Chocolate Vanilla Strawberry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Delicious!” ▪ “The creamy texture was very good.” ▪ “The background of the founder is interesting and makes you feel more comfortable eating it.” ▪ “Very appetizing!” ▪ “Nice bite size and quick to eat.” ▪ “Everything is soft, smooth, moist, and a little bit gummy, creamy, dense, and chewy.” ▪ “Looked delicious and so professional!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The clear container makes it look a little messy since the chocolate melted a little bit and the pink sprinkles fell off, however, I like being able to see what I am going to eat.” ▪ “It could have a better distribution of sprinkles.” ▪ “It was a little bit underwhelming.” ▪ “A little too dense for me.”
	Sunbutter Sunflower Seed Butter	Creamy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I liked the sunflower seed taste.” ▪ “Nice small serving size with the “on the go” package.” ▪ “It is good that the allergen information was clear.” ▪ “Tasty spread to eat with apples.” ▪ “I appreciate that this is a good alternative for recipes that require peanut butter.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “There is not as much sweetness and overall flavor.” ▪ “Packaging wasn’t exceptional.”

	Product	Flavor	What We Liked	What Would Make It Better
	Vermont Nut Free Chocolate Bar	Dark Chocolate Milk Chocolate Milk Chocolate with Crisp Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The chocolate melted in my mouth.” ▪ “The packaging looked very classy and sophisticated.” ▪ “Creamy and delicious.” ▪ “I have never been able to eat chocolate bars before due to my peanut allergy, so it was nice to finally have a safe chocolate bar to eat. These were absolutely addictive!” ▪ “The rice inside of the bar made it lighter and gave it an extra crunch.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s pretty standard chocolate.”
	Yum Earth Giggles Candy	Varied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Tastes like Skittles.” ▪ “Sour and fruity.” ▪ “Very good! Similar to Skittles, but better. The flavors are more natural.” ▪ “Slightly different, possibly healthier version of Skittles.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A bit too sweet and sugary.” ▪ “The purple tastes too artificial.” ▪ “The packaging looked childish and not like something a teen would want to bring somewhere.”

About This Project

Teens with severe food allergies are just like everyone else – we love sweets! However, it can be hard to find sweets that are both safe to eat *and* taste good. We are often limited to eating poor substitutes that call attention to our disability, make us feel different, and often, don't even taste good!

As a member of the FARE Teen Advisory Group (TAG), I proposed a project to address this issue and make it easier for teens to find sweets that look good, taste good and are free from the top 8 allergens. I led a team of TAG teens from across the nation to identify and sample food allergy-friendly sweets. I wrote to food manufacturers and requested samples for the taste test, and also purchased additional products from other brands. Next, I set up an online survey to capture panelists' ratings and reviews. Note that our teen panelists were not aware which companies provided free samples for the taste test.

Thank you to these special brands who provided complimentary samples for our taste test: 88 Acres, Amanda's Own, Avalanche Bars, Sunbutter, Vermont Nut Free Chocolates and Yum Earth. We are grateful that they are dedicated to supporting consumers with food allergies! For example, before participating in this taste panel, many of us never had the opportunity to try chocolate bark in our lives! What an amazing new experience, thanks to these innovative companies.

If you know of food allergy-friendly brands who want to be included in future taste test panels, please let us know! We want to help spread the news about food allergy-friendly sweets that are safe *and* taste good.

Thank you!

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About FARE

FARE's mission is to improve the quality of life and the health of individuals with food allergies, and to provide them hope through the promise of new treatments. FARE's Teen Advisory Group (TAG) is our voice for the teen and young adult food allergy community.