



# THE PERFECT BAR: 4 CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FORMULATING PEANUT BUTTER BARS

By: Kaylind Cook, Application Technologist II

One of the most popular flavors in bar applications, peanut butter is the perfect balance between sweet and salty, not to mention it usually pairs with just about anything. In fact, as a classic favorite, peanut butter flavored snack, cereal and energy bar releases have even grown between 2015-2019 according to Mintel GNPD. As such a familiar flavor, hitting the perfect profile can sometimes be difficult because each consumer has a different expectation of what they believe peanut butter should taste like. Let's take a look at some important considerations when formulating with peanut butter.

## STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR GOLD STANDARD

When starting your development on a new peanut butter bar, it is important to determine your gold standard. Below are a few examples of some popular peanut butter market products.

- Jif- Roasted Forward
- Reese's- Candied Forward
- Skippy- Fatty & Fleshy Forward
- Freshly Ground- Varies depending on purchase location and brand

## STEP 2: IDENTIFY PREFERRED PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS

It is also important to identify the profile characteristics you like about your gold standard to allow your flavor supplier to create the perfect peanut butter profile for your product.

Below is a list of common descriptors used to describe peanut butter. Using these descriptors can help your flavor supplier understand exactly what taste you are looking for.

### PEANUT BUTTER DESCRIPTORS

- Raw Bean/Beany
- Green Grassy
- Caramelized Sugar
- Molasses
- Roasted/ Burnt
- Woody
- Skin/Shell
- Earthy
- Oily/ Rancid Oil
- Cardboard
- Painty
- Fishy
- Musty
- Smokey
- Astringent
- Metallic

### STEP 3: CONSIDER RAW MATERIALS

Once you have identified your gold standard it's important to consider the raw materials you can use in your formulation to achieve that craveability.

- Peanut Butter- Typically added to the binder and helps with the mouthfeel and nut perception
- Peanut Flour- Typically added to dry ingredients and adds roasted notes. As peanut flour can affect the texture of the bar, you may need to adjust the dry to liquid ratio to achieve desired texture.
- Peanut Extract- Typically added to the binder and adds oily and roasted notes. It is important to note that different extracts can have different profiles.
- Flavor- Typically added to the binder. Adds nuances and differencing notes to round out the profile and allows for customization of your bar.
- Sugar and Salt Levels- Can be added to either the binder or dry ingredients. A little salt and sugar can go a long way when trying to hit your candied and

roasted profiles. When manipulating these levels on a lab scale I have found it useful to increase the usage @0.05% at a time.

- Peanut Inclusions- Typically added to dry ingredients and depending on size and roast they can contribute different profiles. It also adds texture for added eating experience.

### STEP 4: CONSIDER SHELF LIFE AND EQUILIBRATION

Now that you have perfected your base formula, it is important to consider equilibration time. Depending on the bar type that can range anywhere from two weeks to two months. Roasted notes that seem high on the first day will fade over time which allows the creamy and buttery notes to become more apparent. Over time the impact for the natural peanut butter and peanut inclusions can fade especially in dairy protein bars. This is where flavor is important, and it can allow for your profile to last for the length of your shelf life.

---

Formulating peanut butter bars may be challenging, but our experts are here to help. We can help guide you through these considerations to lead you the perfect formulation for your brand.

### NEED DETAILS?

Reach out to our team to find a customized peanut butter flavor solution.



Kaylind Cook  
Application Technologist II  
kcook@fona.com  
(331) 276-9818