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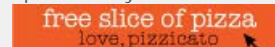
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Things We Love: What's in our cupboards

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Brazzi Bites.

Brazzi Bites: Brazzi Bites, addictive little cheese puffs made from tapioca flour and Northwest milk, eggs and cheese, pack a world of flavor in a single morsel. In a quick trip from freezer to oven, Brazzi Bites cook up crisp on the outside with a moist, fluffy center. The only effort required is choosing a favorite: Cheddar Parmesan, Bacon or Fire-Roasted Jalapeño. (Available at Zupan's Markets, Market of Choice, Barbur World Foods, Lingonberries for \$5.99 for 22 pieces) --Laura B. Russell

Graeter's ice cream: Folks in the know ship this deliciously rich ice cream, made in 2-gallon French copper pots, from Cincinnati in Styrofoam boxes on dry ice at Christmastime.

Fortunately, you can now find the premium pints next to the Ben & Jerry's at your local Fred Meyer (owner Kroger is also headquartered in Cincinnati). Graeter's mint chocolate chip is the ideal, with creamy (not waxy), feathery, oh-so-chocolaty flakes that melt on the tongue. Graeter's black raspberry chip is a cult favorite. Select seasonal flavors, such as cinnamon, peppermint stick and Elena's blueberry pie, can be ordered online. (\$3.99 now on sale -- \$4.99 full price -- per pint at Fred Meyer's) --Laura McCandlish

Oregon Cracker Co.'s Sharp Cheddar Cheese Crackers: A far cry from the typically starch-heavy, gluten-free crackers, Oregon Cracker Co. blends high-protein millet, sorghum, amaranth and flax for its addictive cheesy crisps. If you need additional snacks, check out the company's killer granola, too. (Available at Market of Choice, Lamb's Markets and most co-ops for around \$5.99 a bag) --Laura B. Russell

Trader Joe's Unsweetened Organic Soy Milk: I give this to my toddler; we call it "bean juice." Its mouth feel and unassuming, subtle sweetness set the bar so high we can't abide any other non-dairy milk around here. (\$2.99 for a 1.89 liter carton) --Sara Bir

Penzey's Extra Bold Black Peppercorns: My husband rolls his eyes whenever a waiter offers me freshly ground pepper because he knows I'll make the poor guy grind forever. That's why I love these huge, long-ripened Tellicherry peppercorns; they have a more complex, almost floral flavor with a nice zesty burn at the end, so a little goes a long way. They're a must for salt and pepper

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squid and Caesar salads. (\$4.99 for 4 ounces; available at Penzey's stores in the Pearl and Clackamas) --Ivy Manning

Pierogi from St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Church: As the cold winter rains roll in, it's hard to resist the charms of good comfort food -- such as pierogi. The good news is Sellwood's Ukrainian church sells parish-made potato pierogi every weekend. Get a frozen bag to go or chase away the cold with a fresh plate, topped with sour cream and caramelized onions. (\$5 for a dozen frozen, \$7 for them hot, available 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays, 8014 S.E. 16th Ave.) --Deena Prichep

Soft black licorice: We love licorice in all forms except salty, but chewy Australian (or Finnish-style), sweetened with molasses, is our favorite. Apparently, confectioners first made these gummy bites by accident with a botched batch of hard candy. We love the 1.5-pound value bags of Lucky Country Aussie Style Soft Gourmet brand sold at Costco and Trader Joe's Black Licorice Scottie Dogs. Now the Bend-headquartered American Licorice Co. (more famous for its Red Vines) makes a new bite-size soft black "**Natural Vines**" enhanced with anise oil. (\$3.79 for an 8-ounce bag of Natural Vines) --Laura McCandlish

Xocolatl de David Olive Oil and Parmigiano-Reggiano Bars: David Briggs is guilty in the over-the-top sweet-with-savory conspiracy (see: Bacon-Caramel Bar and Foietella, a foie gras/chocolate spread, I kid you not). However, two of the Portland-based chocolatier's dark chocolate bars, the olive oil and the Parmigiano-Reggiano, are merely subtly savory and bittersweet, making a fine accompaniment for red wine. (\$9 each at Cheese Bar, Cacao, Cork, Eastmoreland Market, Foster & Dobbs, The Meadow, Meat Cheese Bread) --Katherine Cole

Zip Chips: Rarely does a snack that's healthy and gluten-free leave you clamoring for more, but Zip Chips by Bekaa Farms hit the mark. Crisp, local Fuji apple chips join forces with almonds and flax seeds (Crunchy Apple), pecans and molasses (Pecan Crunch), or almonds and cinnamon (Cinnamon Swirl) for a treat that feels naughty and nice. (Available at select Whole Foods, Food Fight Grocery, Lingonberries Market, around \$2.49 a bag) --Laura B. Russell

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