

# SA's Richester Foods invests in local chewing gum production

Local sweets manufacturer Richester Foods has launched South Africa's first locally manufactured chewing gum, Mintex, with an aim to challenge the position of multinational gum giants.



Source: Supplied

Richester Foods co-founder and managing director Dr Hussein Cassim notes that the reason other sweets companies have avoided investing in local chewing gum manufacturing facilities for so long is likely high barriers to entry.

“Producing chewing gum is an expensive, labour-intensive, and technology-sensitive process, even compared to bubble gum, so most other major brands choose to rather make it at a super-site somewhere else in the world, and then import and distribute the product to other countries,” he says.

## New chewing gum division

In keeping with its South Africa-first strategy, Richester Foods has instead invested millions towards purchasing the specialised equipment needed from Europe, and set this technology up in its new chewing gum division at its sweets factory in Centurion near Gauteng. This has created 30 new jobs throughout the gum’s supply chain.

“Mintex is the most complex product we have. Chewing gum is different from bubble gum in that it goes through five

additional steps in the production process. After extrusion, the gum is rolled and scored, and then rests before being coated several times with specialised ingredients to its desired thickness. It then rests again before being polished, and finally wrapped and packaged,” he explains.

“It takes roughly 36 hours in total to make a single piece of gum, but our factory produces roughly 600 sachets a minute or three million single gums per week.”



## Outlook for Africa's snack foods industry in 2022 and beyond

Francois Robertson 15 Feb 2022



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### Low price point

Mintex has been produced to cater to cash-strapped consumers. The gum retails at a price of between R18 and R20 per bag of 50 sachets (which contain two pieces of gum each). At less than 20 cents per gum, this makes Mintex up to 50% more affordable than other brands on store shelves.

The gum comes in three flavour variants: the traditional Peppermint, the cool Spearmint, and the Extra Strong for an intense burst of cool air. The gum is also vegan, gelatine-free and halaal, appealing to a broad consumer base.

Since its soft launch in May, Richester Foods reports to have sold in excess of five million Mintex sachets to select wholesalers, cash n carry's, and informal traders. Preparation is now underway to launch the product nationwide.

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