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Plant-Based Foods a Hot Trend, Cool Art

BY A.J. FLICK

A little girl's surprising declaration led to an artistic mother's creative obsession and along the way, the Phoenix, Arizona, family joined one of the hottest trends:



Adopting a plant-based diet.

"My daughter was 5 years old and said, 'I'm feeling sick every time I eat meat.' We were meat eaters at the time," Sandra Marshall recalls. "She said, and it was very heartfelt, 'Mom, Dad, I cannot eat meat any more, nor will I eat meat.'"

"Oh, my gosh, I never thought about it. I never thought you could survive without the meat and vegetables combination. I didn't know about plant-based meats. I never thought about that lifestyle. I never looked into it, but the more I researched it, I said, 'This is unbelievable.' I became fascinated with it," she says.

Motivated by her daughter's demand for vegetable-forward meals, Marshall eventually saw another side to plant-based diets, one that fed her artistic soul. She saw art.

"Just the colors of nature in fruits and vegetables makes cooking fun and not much of a chore," Marshall says. "When I started shopping in the produce aisle, I saw things I never dreamed of. The colors that are out in nature, what a gift they are to us."

She began creating what she calls "everyday art pieces" that she paired with a little story and posted them on her social media. They were instantly popular and

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Grocery Shoppers Choose Healthier Home Meals

With a focus on home cooking and online grocery shopping forced by the pandemic, American grocery shoppers are placing a priority on healthier meals, according to the FMI.

"Throughout this past year, American grocery consumers have developed a deeper relationship with their kitchens, increased their healthy eating consciousness and have learned new ways to shop," said FMI president and CEO Leslie Sarasin in a statement.

"We see shoppers engaging in more stock-up trips to support their at-home cooking, exercising new online shopping skills and letting their personal concept of being well impact their food and shopping behaviors. Looking ahead, we expect many of these trends to continue," Sarasin said.

At-home cooking, online grocery shopping and an evolved perspective on wellness are the three major focus areas defined by FMI's 2021 U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends report. Prepared in partnership with The Hartman Group, the report explores how the future of food retail will be colored by the pandemic and

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Seaweed Study Shows Promise Overcoming Neophobia with Credible Cues

BY A.J. FLICK

While the United States may seem like the land of plenty for adventurous foodies, there are limits to what some people are willing to eat.

Neophobia, or the unwillingness to try foods outside of someone's comfort zone, can be a serious condition that leads to dangerous afflictions. It's common in children, often labeled as "picky eaters," and even considered a phase of development, and

older adults.

But beyond that, it can also lead many adults to eschew unfamiliar specialty foods.

A new study published in the July issue of International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science compared consumer attitudes and willingness to consume seaweed.

The study found that newly introduced foods such as seaweeds aren't easily accepted if they're not part of someone's culinary tradition, for instance, Spain, where

seaweed isn't commonly accepted as a food product.

The study examined the effect of neophobia by offering a sensory tasting session followed by a survey among those attending cooking workshops, particularly younger consumers, in Spain. Participants were asked about their willingness to eat seaweed and attitude toward it before the workshop.

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Organic Sales Reach \$61.9 Billion Spurred by Pandemic Trends

Apparently, the pandemic gave Americans a hunger for organic meals. For the first time, total sales of organic food and non-food products passed the \$60 billion mark, with U.S. organic sales reaching \$61.9 billion in 2020, a 12.4 percent increase, according to the Organic Trade Association.

"The pandemic caused abrupt changes in all of our lives," Laura Batcha, CEO and executive director of the trade group said in a statement. "We've been eating at home with our families and often cooking three meals a day.

"Good, healthy food has never been more important, and con-

sumers have increasingly sought out the Organic label. Organic purchases have skyrocketed as shoppers choose high-quality organic to feed and nourish their families," Batcha said.

"The only thing that constrained growth in the organic food sector was supply," Angela Jagiello, OTA's director of education and insights said in a statement. "Across all the organic categories, growth was limited

by supply, causing producers, distributors, retailers and brands to

wonder where numbers would have peaked if supply could have been met."

Fresh organic produce sales rose by nearly 11 percent in 2020 to \$18.2 billion, according to a press release. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables also jumped,



with frozen sales alone rising by more than 28 percent. Including frozen, canned and dried products, total sales of organic fruit and vegetables in 2020 were \$20.4 billion.

Pantry stocking was the main growth driver in 2020. Sales of organic flours and baked goods grew by 30 percent, the OTA said.

Consumers also turned to "meal support" products to help them in the kitchen. Sales of sauces and spices pushed the \$2.4 billion condiments category to a growth rate of 31 percent. Organic spice sales jumped by 51 percent, more than triple the growth rate of 15 percent in 2019.

Meat, poultry, and fish, the smallest of the organic categories at \$1.7 billion, had the second highest growth rate of nearly 25 percent. **GN**

GOURMET

products

featured at
Atlanta & Las Vegas Markets

As the pandemic in America begins to wane and the number of vaccinated individuals continues to rise, retailers and consumers alike are beginning to resume a semblance of normalcy. A welcome part of this returning normalcy is the return of in-person trade shows, where companies can promote their products and connect with others in the industry.

International Market Centers (IMC) is eager to facilitate this connection.

“Buyers and sellers are preparing for a strong market as industry recovery continues and business approaches pre-pandemic levels,” said Bob Maricich, IMC chief executive officer.

Atlanta Market, held in July, and Las Vegas Market, held in August, will both follow Together Safely, IMC’s COVID-19 operating protocols. Safety procedures include social distancing, the use of PPE as indicated, hand-sanitation stations and enhanced housekeeping measures. More information about IMC’s safety protocols can be found at www.togethersafely.com.

Both markets will feature gourmet products in showrooms and temporary exhibits. Atlanta Market will offer a Gourmet section featuring specialty food and beverage items, as well as Gourmet LUXE, a special juried collection of gourmet products. Las Vegas Market will offer the new Gourmet Housewares Collection, which includes gourmet food items and a wide selection of kitchen and bar accessories.

Bourbon Barrel Foods will attend both Atlanta and Las Vegas Markets, showcasing its small-batch products that incorporate innovative uses of bourbon barrels. Featured products will include Gentleman Jack Whiskey Sour Cocktail Mix, Bourbon Smoked Pepper and Bourbon Smoked Paprika. The Paprika is domestically harvested, handpicked from a family-owned farm in New Mexico. Bourbon Barrel Foods spice rubs, jams, jellies, syrups and sauces will also be available, and more information can be found at www.bourbonbarrelfoods.com.

Coffee of Grace will exhibit at the Atlanta Market Gourmet Temporaries, featuring its globally inspired coffee blends. The Karisimbi roast is named after Mount Karisimbi, an inactive volcano in the Virunga Mountains near the northwest border of Rwanda. It is a blend of coffees from Maraba (North Rwanda) Nkora (West Rwanda) and Buf Cafe (South Rwanda). Offering a classic character in the cup, this coffee is accentuated with a touch of bittersweet chocolate, and is perfect for all-day drinking or as a refined espresso. Coffee of Grace’s Silverback Espresso roast is named after the powerful silverback gorillas that inhabit the forests of the Virunga Mountains. This is a blend of coffee from Nkora and Maraba, roasted to bring out a deeper body and to maximize the sweetness and depth of flavor. This coffee will make a perfect well-balanced espresso or a bold drip cup. More information is available at www.coffeeofgrace.com.

Exhibiting at both Atlanta and Las

Vegas markets, Country Home Creations will offer Cheesy Veggie Dip Mix, Tea’Le’Mo Drink Mix and Spicy Guacamole Dip Mix. Cheesy Veggie Dip Mix is the perfect combination of Cheddar cheese, spices and veggies. It can be served with tortilla chips, pretzels, crackers or bread chunks. Tea’Le’Mo Drink Mix is a refreshing blend of natural tea leaves and lemon for a perfect sweet year-round drink. Spicy Guacamole Dip Mix is an all-natural blend of herbs and spices that takes the guesswork out of making a delicious spicy guacamole. Perfect for any party, the big game or Cinco de Mayo. Find more information at www.chcdips.com.

Dillon’s Gourmet Candies will showcase its Peanut Brittle and Pecan Brittle at the Atlanta Market Gourmet Temporaries. The Peanut Brittle comes in a newly designed, beautiful gift box filled with the company’s award-winning peanut brittle. Dillon’s Peanut Brittle is hand stretched using a family recipe. The Pecan Brittle is



COUNTRY HOME CREATIONS



COFFEE OF GRACE



STONEWALL KITCHEN

a thin, buttery brittle containing the king of nuts. These crisp, truly brittle pieces of gold can only be achieved by carefully timed hand-stretching. Learn more at www.dilloncandy.com.

Another featured product at the Atlanta Market is Festivus Infused™ Maple Syrup from Runamok Maple. Made famous by an iconic '90s television show, Festivus is the greatest non-holiday holiday ever created. Festivus Infused Maple Syrup is part of a seasonal limited release collection. For this seasonal blend, Runamok Maple infused its maple with organic cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, vanilla and cloves, which goes beautifully on waffles. The same formulation is also available with a different label, and a more traditional title of Holiday Spice. More information is available at www.runamokmaple.com.

Attending both Atlanta and Las Vegas markets, Stonewall Kitchen will exhibit its jams, jellies, marmalades, spices and rubs, as well as other products. Stonewall Kitchen's Hot Pepper Cranberry Jelly contains spicy jalapeños and a dash of cayenne and is gluten-free and non-GMO. It's perfect to spread on a turkey burger or serve with crackers and cheese. Stonewall Kitchen's savory Turkey Seasoning Rub includes rubbed sage and thyme, ground ginger, salt and pepper; the rub is also gluten free and non-GMO. Learn more at www.stonewallkitchen.com.

WithCo Cocktails will exhibit its Hey Girl and Bouquet cocktail mixes at Atlanta Market. Hey Girl is a crowd favorite, guaranteed to keep the conversations lively. Cool, fresh cucumber with muddled mint and lime make the perfect drink for everything from garden parties to lazy afternoons. It mixes well with any clear spirit and also makes a killer mocktail. In Bouquet, dreamy notes of lavender weave through fresh-squeezed lemon and rosewater. A light and herbaceous cocktail, Bouquet is a refreshing partner to clear spirits. It's a gin lover's essential or the perfect finishing touch to elevate your favorite brunchtime bubbly. Each 16-ounce bottle makes 10 cocktails. Find more information at www.withcococktails.com.

Zia Pia, a boutique importer specializing in authentic regional Italian foods,

will showcase its products at Atlanta Market. Named for Zia (Aunt) Pia Custodi in Orvieto, Italy, an extraordinary person and cook, Zia Pia imports aims to embody the values she held dear: simplicity, care and quality of ingredients. Featured products will include award-winning olive oils: Fantasia Extra Virgin Olive Oil by Frantoio Galantino, in hand-painted ceramic; Extra Virgin Olive Oil in Rose Gold Glass Bottle by Frantoio Muraglia, in a mirror glass bottle; and Extra Virgin Olive Oil in Magnum Ceramic

by Frantoio Muraglia, in-hand painted ceramic. Zia Pia will also feature the VeroPop Collection by Italianavera, an assortment of authentic Italian tomatoes in a tin, and the Aperitivo Gift Box, a stunning gift box ready-made for the Italian tradition of aperitivo. More information is available at www.ziapia.com.

Atlanta Market

Atlanta Market offers an expansive gift product mix and a broad selection of home décor, featuring more than 8,000 brands across all categories. Held semi-annually at AmericasMart Atlanta, Atlanta Market attracts retailers and designers from every U.S. state and more than 60 countries.

The Summer 2021 Atlanta Market showrooms will be open July 13-19. Temporaries are open July 14-18. The show includes a Gourmet offering, which includes specialty gourmet food items, beverage products and cookbooks, and Gourmet LUXE, a juried collection of luxury gourmet products



WITHCO COCKTAILS

made from the finest ingredients.

More information on the Summer 2021 Atlanta Market can be found at www.atlantamarket.com.

Las Vegas Market

Las Vegas Market presents more than 4,300 furniture, home décor and gift resources in an unrivaled market destination.

The Summer 2021 Las Vegas Market will be held August 22-26. A new highlight at this summer's show is the brand-new Gourmet Housewares Collection, which includes kitchen gadgets, cookware, small electrics, grilling tools, kitchen textiles, bar accessories, cookbooks, gourmet food and more. These new resources will complement the existing gift-oriented housewares and specialty food resources presented in permanent showrooms.

More information on the Summer 2021 Las Vegas Market can be found at www.lasvegasmarket.com. **GN**

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