

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 78: Fall Into the Season with a Shopping List from Trader Joe's

[Breaking news music.]

Matt: This just in.

Tara: Meaning just into your neighborhood Trader Joe's.

Matt: What's our lead story? I just don't know where to start.

Tara: I count 13 new products to report on our Fall Shopping List Episode, and that's just a fraction of the new seasonal items at Trader Joe's.

Matt: Now that's good news. Let's go *Inside Trader Joe's*.

[Theme music begins with no two bells at a neighborhood Trader Joe's.]

Tara: I'm Tara Miller, director of words and phrases and clauses.

Matt: And I'm Matt Sloan, the culture and innovation guy at Trader Joe's.

Tara: We're gonna have crew members, Arlene and Hasmik, stop by soon to unveil some products they've been working on. But first, where should we start?

[Theme music ends. Light upbeat music begins.]

Matt: Well, it's fall. We could be talking about the autumnal equinox astronomical fall, or we could be talking about the weather meteorological fall. Either way, you need to get ready for fall. Let's start with something pumpkin.

Tara: That doesn't narrow it down too much. We have 73 pumpkin products this year, and pretty much all of these are in limited quantities, so they'll likely sell out and some of them very quickly.

Matt: How about some Pumpkin Spice Cold Brew for a little boost to get over to your TJ's.

Tara: It's cold brewed with real spices: cinnamon and ginger and clove and nutmeg and orange peel. This is a concentrate, so like our original Cold Brew Coffee Concentrate, it comes in a 32 ounce, bottle uses about half a pound of coffee to make that 32 ounce concentrate.

Matt: It's gonna be about eight 12-ounce beverages. The cold and cold brew is really about how it's made. And you can of course drink it cold over ice, but you can warm this up too. I think if you're into pumpkin spice, I think you'd be crazy not to give this a try.

Tara: Cold brew coffee is just so smooth.

Matt: Hats off to the folks who figured out cold brewing coffee because it's all the depth of flavor and richness and none of that acidity.

Tara: Important to remember, it's a concentrate, so sure, you can drink it straight like a really strong shot of espresso. The intention is one part of the Pumpkin Spice Cold

Brew Concentrate, and two parts milk or water or whatever liquid of your choice. But whatever makes sense for you is how you should drink it. You know what makes sense for me?

Matt: What?

Tara: Eating cake in the car on the way home from the store.

[Car driving by. Music transition.]

Tara: We've become somewhat known for our mini...

Matt: Do you have a self-driving vehicle? I'm interrupting you. How do you eat cake and drive?

Tara: Oh, don't eat and drive. I would never! Okay, Pumpkin Spice Cold Brew Concentrate, I think a natural pair is the Pumpkin Spice Mini Sheet Cake. Now, our mini sheet cakes have become a bit of a thing. I understand why. They're delicious. They're moist. You can stack them. You can eat them just as they are. You can eat them in the car. And suddenly I sound like Dr. Seuss.

Matt: You can eat it wherever you are, near or far, on a distant star.

Tara: (laughs) But the Pumpkin Spice Mini Sheet Cake is brand new this year, just in, just arriving. Its intended arrival date is the same day that this podcast is going to launch.

Matt: Imagine. How did that happen?

Tara: It's just delicious.

Matt: And I guess what really takes it from being a pumpkin bread recipe into sheet cake territory is that wonderful cream cheese frosting.

Tara: Dig in with that purse fork, everybody.

Matt: The top of the cake makes me think of like a really exclusive resort where they rake the sand every morning before you go down.

Tara: There is nothing sandy about that frosting. It is delightfully creamy.

Matt: Well, thanks for keeping us on track.

Tara: Hey, you know what's an improvement on pumpkin? Vanilla pumpkin.

Matt: And we're talking about a soapy situation. A Vanilla Pumpkin Scented Hand Soap.

Tara: It does smell good enough to eat, but please do not.

Matt: Now, this is not necessarily a new thing.

Tara: Yeah, for several years we had a Vanilla Pumpkin Hand Soap and Hand Cream, like a duo in a little caddy. We got a lot of feedback that people liked both of those products, but that the caddy was kind of unnecessary, right? Like that's...

Matt: We'll carry our own club.

[Ding.]

Tara: Matt, that is pun number one.

Matt: We're keeping score now?

Tara: Always. So, this year they're separated.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: They're still very much...

Matt: They're still talking.

Tara: ...friends, but they're separated.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: They're, they're, it's amicable.

Matt: For me, it has a buttery, creamy kind of smell. Almost, almost like a sheet cake. It's really warm and comforting and sort of soothing. If you've gotta wash somebody's mouth out, it's something to think about.

Tara: Hey, surprise, surprise. That one's gonna show up in our stores pretty much today also.

Matt: Kismet.

Tara: It's pumpkin season. We're all excited about the arrival of all the pumpkin products, but there's also so much more to talk about.

[Small transition.]

Tara: As promised, Arlene is here with us. She's been working on a drumstick kit.

Matt: Are you ready, Arlene?

Arlene: I am ready.

Matt: I mean, for some jokes.

Arlene: Oh, okay.

Tara: Oh boy.

Matt: Okay, speaking of drumsticks, what's the last thing a drummer says in a band?

Tara: What, Matt? (laughs)

Arlene: Aye.

Matt: Hey, wanna do one of my songs?

[Rimshot.]

Matt: Okay, more, more.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: What did the drummer call his daughters? Hmm? Anna one. Anna two.

[Rimshot.]

Tara: Oh God. (laughs) Okay.

Arlene: Hmm.

Matt: Why did the drummer have to sleep on the couch?

Tara: Why?

Matt: He snares too loud.

[Rimshot.]

Tara: Oh boy. Okay.

Matt: Did you hear about the drummer who writes in hieroglyphics?

Tara: No.

Matt: Lots of cymbals.

Tara: Oh, good grief.

[Rimshot.]

Tara: These are not musical drumsticks, Matt. These are chocolate covered drumsticks. These are pretzels behaving as drumsticks.

Matt: I'm remembering this now. And Arlene, I'm remembering a certain someone who might have given you kind of a hard time about developing this product.

Tara: Who would that be?

Matt: Well, I mean I'm not gonna name any names, but it rhymes with Shmatt.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Um...

Arlene: Thank you for reminding me.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Break it down for us. This is a drumstick kit, what does that mean?

Arlene: You can put it together in three simple steps. So it starts with these mini pretzel sticks and soft caramels that you mold it on the pretzels with your hand, and then, um, you warm the chocolate in a microwave and dip the pretzel with the caramels into the chocolate. So it kind of creates this drumstick looking shape. And then you sprinkle orange,

red, and white nonpareils sprinkles on them and they just look completely adorable. Like mini drumsticks.

Tara: Like chicken drumsticks.

Arlene: Like chicken drumsticks.

Tara: Except there's no chicken in it.

Arlene: Or like turkey drumstick, maybe?

Tara: Or turkey drumstick.

Arlene: Yes.

Tara: Right. Not as big as the ones at like Disneyland.

Arlene: No.

Tara: Right? They're like a couple inches long.

Arlene: Mm-hmm.

Tara: I'm gonna open this box.

[Music transition.]

Tara: First of all, the box is adorable.

Matt: I think Designer Bobbi, I think she worked on that.

[Opening box.]

Matt: Let's sort of get at why would you even make a product like this?

Arlene: Yeah. Well, I'm a mom with a three and a half year old and a 20-month old kid. So there's a lot of crafting and...

Tara: Cheers to you.

Arlene: ...baking on a weekly basis. And this just looked like a really fun and silly idea that I know my family would really enjoy making it and get a kick out of it. (laughs)

Matt: It's kind of like a little candy factory in a box.

Arlene: Mm-hmm.

Matt: For young folks in mind.

Arlene: Yeah. Honestly, I think even among like my girlfriends, I could see us making it and just having a fun silly night. And...

Matt: Do you mean to say this could be a Friendsgiving activity?

Arlene: Absolutely. (laughs) Absolutely. That's a good idea.

Tara: This product doesn't launch till the end of October.

Arlene: Mm-hmm.

Tara: Correct?

Arlene: Right.

Tara: So this is a sneak peek.

Matt: We're leaking top secret information.

Tara: Right. I wanted to let people know about it 'cause it's so adorable.

Matt: Do you think these are difficult? On a scale of one to infinity, how challenging are these?

Arlene: Hmmm, good question. Honestly, I think like a four. I'd say a four.

Tara: From one to infinity, a four is pretty great.

Matt: I might even be able to accomplish this.

Arlene: (laughs) It doesn't require an artist to make. It's not long and elaborate. It's not super messy either, speaking like a mom with two kids under three. So...

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: I think it'd be great for the kids to then serve these. They could on a little platter, walk around, work the room and someone's like, "Oh, I'm a vegetarian." And you're like, "It's okay. There are no chicken in this drumstick."

Arlene: (laughs)

Tara: Matt mentioned that he was sort of a naysayer about this product...

Arlene: (laughs)

Matt: Sort of.

Tara: ...in the development process.

Matt: Yes.

Tara: What were the challenges in getting this approved through the tasting panel?

Arlene: Um...

Tara: Were there challenges other than Matt?

Arlene: I can't remember.

Matt: Sometimes I tend to be a worrywart. What you were able to bring to this project is a delicious eating end result. Let's do this.

Tara: So excited. Okay, everybody, it's not till the end of October. Don't go looking forward it today. What else are you excited about for this fall?

Arlene: Oh my goodness. The Iced German Gingerbread Cookie.

Matt: Maybe you've experienced something in a Christmas market in Europe that's similar. These are beautiful.

Arlene: It's just a great balance of spice.

Matt: And there is a classic sugar icing that provides just enough like dental resistance, right? So there's like a little bit of a shatter of that sugar icing into the soft gingerbread. There's a chew to it. If you like cookies like Lebkuchen, I think you will flip out for this new gingerbread cookie. I don't even remember what we called it. It was like Iced Iced Cookie, something like that.

Arlene: (laughs)

Tara: Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. That's like pun number two.

Arlene: We're still working on it, obviously.

Tara: Iced Iced cookie. Arlene, I'm appreciative of the fact that you developed this product because I think it's super cute and people are gonna love it...not today, the end of October.

[Tara typing on computer keyboard.]

Matt: Yeah, it'll be worth the wait.

Tara: I just looked it up so that we knew exactly what the name was gonna be because these things change.

Arlene: Correct.

Tara: Yes. Trader Joe's German Iced Gingerbread Soft Spiced Cookies. That's a little bit of a tongue twister.

Matt: Thanks for coming by.

Arlene: Thank you.

[Small transition.]

Tara: So Matt, we have something else that's super cute and really yummy, but a little bit on the higher brow scale of things.

Matt: Okay. Always ready for a highbrow moment.

Tara: Highbrow doesn't mean high price.

Matt: Great clarification.

Tara: It's a really delicious Trader Joe's All Butter Apple Shortbread Cookies. When we say all butter, doesn't mean a hundred percent of the recipe is butter. But butter is the shortening of choice, the fat of choice.

Matt: I think butter should run for office.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Butter, the fat of choice. These are shortbread cookies made in England. This is like the perfect accompaniment to an afternoon tea.

Tara: We're gonna open it up. (opening bag) Every cookie has a cute little apple stamped on it. I just think they're adorable.

Matt: Cute. They smell really nice.

Tara: Mmm.

Matt: Not like a green apple candy apple, but more like a toasted apple.

Tara: That's a really delightful flavor.

Matt: Tastes like it's made with apples not flavored by something adjacent to apple.

Tara: It has dried apples, and it has apple juice concentrate. So they're super apple-y.

Matt: Keep those on hand for when the neighbor pops over.

Tara: Those taste like fall and those will be in stores around the middle of September, until they're gone. They come from a relatively small supplier in the UK and we ordered really as many as they could manage to make for us. I love the idea of these on a dessert tray with sliced green and red apples, like just all together.

Matt: Actually, I would add to that dessert tray, this next product. How about that for a little bit of a segue? Apple Pear White Stilton. These cookies with that cheese would be a really nice combo. This is young Stilton, It's not young Sheldon. It's a cheese. Young Stilton Apple Pear Stilton made with dried apple pieces and what is really like a pear apple compote, almost like a pear apple applesauce kind of thing. This is a really fun cheese. I'm sometimes challenged by young, fresher stilton with how crumbly they are. And if you had a little cracker or a little cookie to kind of scoop it up and eat that with, well, I think that that would be helpful.

Tara: The idea of these Apple Shortbread Cookies, the White Stilton with Apple and Pear and actual sliced apples on a tray, that is so instantly appealing to me.

Matt: And fancy.

Tara: Right?

Matt: I mean, everyone will be blown away with like, how did you pull this together? And you don't have to say, well, I just got it all at Trader Joe's. I mean, you could, but you don't have to.

[Transition to Hasmik.]

Tara: Okay, Hasmik, play along with us here.

Hasmik: Yes, let's do it.

[Music transition.]

Tara: When you think of beautiful fall colors, the classic orange and red, you think of which tree?

Hasmik: Maple?

Matt: And when I think of maple, I think of Butter with Brown Sugar and Maple Syrup because I'm looking at a package of it right here. And when I see this package, I can't help but think of you, Hasmik, because you worked on this great product.

Hasmik: I sure did, yes.

Tara: Thank you for joining us.

Hasmik: Of course. My pleasure.

Tara: Trader Joe's Butter with Brown Sugar and Maple Syrup.

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Matt: Of course it sounds good because those three things on their own, wonderful, together, magical, but why put them together?

Hasmik: If we really wanna take this back, we have to go back to my childhood.

Tara: Go for it.

[USSR flashback music.]

Tara: It's like therapy.

Hasmik: In the Soviet Socialist Republic...(laughs)

Tara: Oh, wow. Okay.

Hasmik: ...where my grandpa used to bring home chocolate butter.

Tara: Chocolate butter.

Hasmik: It was sold by the stick. And I would literally grab it from the refrigerator and just eat it as is.

Matt: Just as a treat.

Hasmik: Just as a treat. I mean, it was decadent, it was rich, it was chocolatey, it was buttery. It was all the wonderful things that you want butter to be.

Tara: Wow.

Matt: Plus you have like grandpa memories. That's pretty cool.

Hasmik: Yeah, it was wonderful.

Matt: That's great.

Hasmik: So, then fast forward to...

[Tape fast forwarding. Mexican music begins.]

Hasmik: ...a trip that we made to Mexico, Mexico City. We were sitting down at dinner, and they brought over a little plate of, it was apple butter, actually.

Tara: Mm.

Hasmik: It was wonderful. Then when we got back to the office, I started to, to work on some of these holiday projects. I was working on a savory butter. There's a garlic and herb one and I just happened to ask a vendor for some other iterations they had. We tasted the apple cinnamon ones but when they sent the brown sugar maple butter, we just thought it really kinda related to some other trends we had been seeing in stores and also just the sheer number of maple flavored things that we sell.

Tara: So, this one, before we started recording you mentioned that when we named this particular product that we're talking about, we had to lead with butter.

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Tara: Because it's butter, it's, it's...

Hasmik: Dairy.

Tara: ...dairy butter.

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Tara: Maple butter, apple butter, which we have carried in our grocery aisle.

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Tara: They're not dairy.

Hasmik: No actual dairy butter in it, yeah.

Tara: Right, so it's confusing, right? Those are more like, they're more closely related to like preserves or jams than they are to this, which is butter that has been sort of mixed and infused with brown sugar and maple syrup.

Matt: So in the industry, this would be known as a compound butter. So it's butter compounded by other things.

Tara: And we've tried selling compound butters before.

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Tara: In like little tubs. And this format, which is in just like a little package, a little like a wax paper package, and it's just a little roll, roll of butter.

Hasmik: Yeah, I think it's so approachable and one of the reasons why we thought maybe the tubs didn't work as well is because they kind of hid the product. You couldn't really tell what they were. With this roll, I think it's perfect because you can just cut like small pieces of it and place it on top of...

Matt: I think if you're gonna use a pat of butter, this format conveys that's what you can do. Whereas a tub feels like a spread of something else. Of course this is gonna be amazing on toast. Of course it's gonna be wonderful on pancakes or waffles, but I want to go further out like I'm thinking of a grilled cheese sandwich with apple slices and brie, or maybe even leftover turkey or something, and butter the bread with this and caramelize it in that pan. Use a non-stick pan just so your cleanup is not so crazy. I'm thinking of roasted carrots with this thrown on at the end. I'm thinking even of a beautifully roasted, simple, sweet potato with this on top.

Hasmik: Yeah, absolutely.

Matt: Man.

Tara: I'm gonna give it a try, just the way you did at your grandfather's when you were a kid. I'm just gonna have a little piece.

Hasmik: It smells wonderful.

Tara: Just open it. Just take a, take a whiff there.

[Hasmik then Matt sniffs.]

Hasmik: It's very maple forward.

Matt: It smells like cookie dough.

Tara: But then you need to give it back.

Hasmik: (laughs)

Matt: Okay.

Tara: Like, come on.

Matt: All right. Stop huffing the butter.

Tara: Right?

Hasmik: You could just grab a spoon and eat it as a, yeah, as a meal in your car during your lunch break.

Tara: That's what the sheet cake is for.

Hasmik: What I really love about this product, and this was intentional, the slight graininess you get. There are two types of sugar and a brown sugar, as well as regular ground granulated sugar, there's also a bit of salt in there, which enhances the flavors of the brown sugar.

Matt: Oh my God.

Tara: It's whipped, like it's light and whipped. What the salt is doing for me is it's keeping it from being super sweet.

Hasmik: Yes.

Tara: Right? It's sweet, obviously, but it's not, it's not cloyingly sweet. Oh my gosh. That's really good though.

Hasmik: That's delicious.

Tara: I'm just thinking like a nice piece of sourdough bread. Really well toasted with that slathered on top.

Hasmik: My gosh. Yes.

Tara: It's really good. You have to like...

Matt: If you're gonna bake apples, you bought all these apples and you're like, what are we gonna do with them? Core 'em and drop a bunch of this in and bake 'em. You're done.

Tara: Oh my gosh.

Matt: Amazing.

Hasmik: Alex got really creative yesterday and made us pasta and we just kind of mixed this into it.

Tara: Really?

Hasmik: Like, it's almost like, we call it kasha, which is like a Russian word for like, grain.

Matt: Grain.

Hasmik: It kind of reminded me of that flavor.

Matt: Oh man. Now I'm thinking a bowl of cream of wheat with this on top. Unbelievably great.

Tara: Oatmeal.

Hasmik: It'd be delicious.

Tara: That's arriving when this podcast lands. So that is like early September. Yummy and exciting. But that's not the only thing on our list that you were responsible for developing.

[Music transition.]

Hasmik: No, there's this other product we call Limone Premuto.

Matt: Which in Italian means....

Hasmik: Pressed lemon.

Matt: Thank you.

Tara: So it's a bottle of pressed lemons?

Hasmik: (laughs)

Matt: I think you would, it's under the heading agrumato.

Hasmik: Agrumato, yeah.

Matt: So it's basically olive oil.

Hasmik: Most lemon flavored olive oils in the marketplace have lemon flavoring added.

Tara: Yeah.

Hasmik: What's really, really unique about this product is while they're grinding up the olives and washing them, they physically put whole lemons in with them, minus the leaves and the stems.

Tara: Okay.

Hasmik: So what you get is this like really clean flavored olive and lemon. So there's nothing else in it. It's literally just lemons pressed with olives.

Matt: But you don't get the juice necessarily. You get the oil.

Hasmik: This is simply just olive oil pressed with lemons.

Tara: I'm opening up a bottle.

Matt: Limone Premuto.

Tara: Limon Premuto. Extra virgin olive oil cold pressed with fresh whole Sicilian lemons.

Matt: This is very approachable from a price standpoint. So what do you do with it? Walking around the office today, I asked two of the more hip folks here. Catherine said that grilled zucchini, drizzle on at the end, fish prepared almost any which way, drizzled on at the end. The other hip person, Kathleen said, finish a soup and the season doesn't matter. A cold soup, a warm soup, or make aglio e olio and use this instead of regular olive oil, you get that lemony brightness with the spiciness and the garlic. And I think this is a way to get chef-y when you have something that you've prepared and it's just lacking some oomph.

Hasmik: I had given this to someone else who's like an olive oil connoisseur. I suggested he drizzle it on some vanilla ice cream with some lemon zest.

[Music transition.]

Hasmik: Especially if you're using our Super Premium French Vanilla Ice Cream.

Matt: Which I will go on a record as saying it is, in my opinion, the best vanilla ice cream out there. Full stop.

Hasmik: A little plug, right? For one of ours.

Matt: Shameless plug.

Tara: No one's gonna argue.

Hasmik: I was eating a lot of cottage cheese when I was developing this product. I would drizzle it on top of my cottage cheese.

Tara: Oh, that sounds delightful.

Hasmik: Yeah, it was wonderful. Yeah.

Matt: This is smooth. Um, that's really nice.

Hasmik: Oh my gosh. I forgot how great that was.

Tara: It's really good.

Hasmik: I could just do shots of this in the morning.

Tara: I could get on, I could get on that train.

Hasmik: (laughs)

Matt: Fantastic. Well, thank you for working on this.

Tara: We really appreciate you.

Matt: Before you go, I have one more question. Is Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese back this fall?

Hasmik: Ab-so-freaking-lutely. (laughs)

Matt: Okay, okay. I appreciate the emphasis. Did we actually order enough this year?

Hasmik: I would say that this year we took the go big rather than the go home approach.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Okay.

Tara: So, but people can come into the store, go big and then go home.

Hasmik: Oh my gosh, yes.

Tara: Well, let's not encourage hoarding.

Matt: We will have it for as long as it lasts relative to customer interest.

Hasmik: We bought a lot, a lot.

Hasmik: Thanks for having me.

Matt: Now go do some more great stuff so we can come back and talk about it.

Hasmik: I'm working on it.

[Small transition.]

Tara: I wanna move on to another product that's tangentially related to the last thing we talked about with Hasmik.

Matt: I love a good tangent, oblique or otherwise. Let's get into this.

Tara: This is a new appetizer that we have in our freezers this fall. Should be arriving this week sometime, probably. How's that for vague? Savory Squash Pastry Bites. A collection of 12 pieces of a puff pastry, little bite-size appetizers, a blend of squashes. I'm reading here. Pumpkin puree, butternut squash puree, mascarpone cheese, ricotta cheese, feta cheese, Parmesan cheese, all the cheese. Super easy. Pop 'em in your air fryer or your oven and don't put 'em in the microwave. They won't taste good if you put them in the microwave.

Matt: Not at all. No.

Tara: Instant dinner party, instant passed hors d'oeuvres, like, okay, not instant.

Matt: These are just moments away from deliciously available to you and your guests. If you like those Caramelized Onion and Feta Bites, these are very similar. A little new angle on what has been a classic customer favorite.

Tara: Super excited about those. One of the things that Trader Joe's does better is frozen appetizers. September through December people are entertaining and there's parties and there's all kinds of gatherings and anything that can cut down on the amount of time that you need to put in to have an impressive party, I'm all for that.

Matt: And I would like to propose that you need not have an extensive guest list to have a party. It could be you and your partner at home for a quiet evening. These with a little salad. Boom party for dinner. This could be fun.

[Small segue.]

Matt: So thinking about easy ways to have delicious things quickly, over in the refrigerated produce section, I'm really keen on this new Caesar Broccoli Bake Kit. All the components, and you basically make a wonderfully savory broccoli side dish in just a couple minutes.

Tara: So. it looks like a bagged salad.

Matt: It really does.

Tara: Except the intention here is that you're gonna put it in a casserole dish or a baking dish and you're gonna pop it in your oven. Our friends on the produce team made it up for us. And it was so delicious. I think I went back for four or five bites after I, I was really only supposed to have one.

Matt: It was all the high notes that you come to expect from a classic Caesar flavor profile.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Leading with Parmesan. That depth of flavor, the richness is so greatly amplified by just a little bit of anchovy.

Tara: I have mixed feelings about anchovies in my Caesar salad. This was delicious. So I, I was unaware that I had anchovies.

Matt: It's the flavor that you dare not utter its name, but when it's there you sense it.

Tara: Toss all these ingredients together, pop it in the oven for 15 or 20 minutes and you have this very impressive side dish.

Matt: I think the phrase Broccoli Caesar Bake is gonna be on a lot of lips this season.

Tara: I think you're absolutely right.

[Small transition.]

Tara: We're in the home stretch. Let's continue with this Fall Shopping List Episode of *Inside Trader Joe's*. Next up hoisin sauce.

Matt: Oh.

Tara: For years, we've been looking for exactly the right version of this sauce because frankly, a lot of what's on the market in stores around the country is filled with ingredients that we don't allow in our products. Preservatives and other ingredients that just don't meet our ingredient standards. This one does.

Matt: I think this is the perfect time, the fall, all of the spices that make hoisin sauce so unmistakably what it is. Those are the same spices used in a lot of fall cooking and baking: pumpkin spices, cardamom, star anise, black pepper. Those are the kinds of things that are in gingerbread. And while you certainly might know hoisin sauce from a good moo shu wrap as that sauce within the moo shu, try it in other places. Use hoisin sauce to add some extra oomph and emphasis to anything like if you have eggplant and don't know what to do with it. Lacquer it, glaze it with hoisin and roast it. Roasted root vegetables great with hoisin sauce. If you have a soup and it's falling a little flat, a spoon of hoisin sauce. Of course, hoisin is classic with Chinese style barbecue, fattier meats, but I think it's really great on vegetables. I think it's interesting on sandwiches.

Tara: How about mix it with peanut butter and some sesame oil to make a really, really flavorful peanut sauce.

Matt: I think that's great. I think if you're making a vinaigrette, and you want an extra angle on that vinaigrette, not a lot, just a little bit. Maybe a tablespoon of hoisin sauce, in lieu of mustard. Taste it, tinker with it. Get it to where you want it to be.

Tara: We plan to make this an everyday product. This is not a fall only, this is not a limited edition. This is something that we plan to have on our grocery shelves for as long as people show us they want it.

Matt: I hope it becomes a go-to flavor enhancer in your kitchen. And I think of cardamom as like being a really interesting aspect and flavor of a classic hoisin sauce. And then I look right ahead of me as happenstance would have it. I see another cardamom products. So cardamom is just everywhere.

Tara: What is cardamom?

Matt: Well, I know what you're thinking. Cardamom is not what you do to a young mother who's buying alcohol.

Tara: Always with the puns with you. The flavored coffee space is where we sort of have a lot of room to do some interesting things, and this one, it's so on point for what people are talking about right now, right? Now you see cardamom in baked goods and you

see cardamom in sauces and you see cardamom in coffee flavors and it's sort of, of the moment.

Matt: This is a cold brew coffee. A ready to drink, ready to go, cold brew coffee.

Tara: Okay, wait. We started this episode with a cold brew coffee concentrate. So this is of an important point of differentiation here.

Matt: If you drink the concentrate as is, too strong, this one ready to drink, says so. right on the bottle. This is Trader Joe's Vanilla Cardamom Flavored Cold Brew Coffee. It's a 32-ounce quart bottle. It's really nice and it has fall-ish flavors, mostly supplied by that cardamom. But the vanilla is a smooth dessert kind of aroma and flavor that I really like. And I love that, we are finally catching up to a spice that has been used all around the world to such amazing purposes, cardamom, and we are sort of just getting warmed up to it, just starting to understand it. And having it in this coffee, well, it's a treat.

Tara: So you said 'warmed up' there, was that pun also?

Matt: Sometimes I just fall into this stuff.

[Closing music begins.]

Tara: (sighs) We have more episodes of *Inside Trader Joe's* to share with you, you know.

Matt: Don't leaf us hanging.

Tara: Oh gosh. Please hit that free subscribe or follow button.

Matt: It *is* free and worth every penny.

Tara: Until next time, thanks for listening. Have a great fall.

Matt: And an even better landing.