

# Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 105: The Future of Trader Joe's Depends on These Grads

*[Upbeat music begins.]*

Tara: It's that time of year.

Matt: We're finally rolling out the new Trader Joe's Unexpected Cheddar sunscreen.

Tara: No.

Matt: The time of year when people think it's okay to wear flip-flops to work.

Tara: Ooh, no.

Matt: When it's time to stop procrastinating and clean off the barbecue.

Tara: Well, yes, but...

Matt: What time of year were you thinking about?

Tara: Graduation season, and with us today are six young Trader Joe's customers who are graduating from high school this year.

Matt: The class of 2026.

Tara: Let's have them try some new Trader Joe's products that are currently in development.

Matt: They are graduates *and* guinea pigs, I love it. Let's go *Inside Trader Joe's*, ba-wah-wah.

*[Theme music begins with 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: Hey, ready to meet our grads?

Matt: Sure.

Tara: Okay, let's go around the room one by one, and please say your first name and then tell us...

Matt: All your big plans for after high school.

Tara: No, no, no, something even more important. Tell us your favorite Trader Joe's product. And go.

Mathilde: My name is Mathilde, and my favorite product is the Chicken Soup Dumplings.

*[Theme music ends. Jazzy upbeat music begins.]*

Camille: My name is Camille, and my favorite product are the Ranch Rolled Tortilla Chips.

Declan: My name is Declan, my favorite product at Trader Joe's is the Jasmine Rice.

Tara: By the way, Declan is my son, but his opinions are all his, believe me.

Ariana: My name's Ariana and my favorite product are the Chili Lime Pork Rinds.

Kaitlyn: My name is Kaitlyn and my favorite product is the Sour Cream & Onion Puffs.

Miki: My name is Miki and my favorite product is the Angus Beef Meatballs.

*[Long beep. Voice chimes in over intercom.]*

Speaker: Actually, your favorite product is Brookies with ice cream.

Matt: It is? Are you sure?

Tara: That's what he said.

Miki: It's meatballs.

Matt: Maybe it was...

Tara: You changed your mind.

Miki: It could've been.

Tara: That's okay, you're allowed to change your mind.

Matt: Those are great meatballs.

Miki: Yeah, they are great meatballs.

Tara: Based on your answers, we have a little something.

Matt: But you would have to eat raw meatballs, so...

Tara: We don't have raw meatballs here today, but we do have ice cream, and we do have Brookies.

Female: (laughing)

Miki: Oh my goodness.

Kaitlyn: Wow.

Miki: I'm a big fan of the French Vanilla Brookie combo actually, because it's really a nice, simple, easy dessert. What I typically do is I microwave the Brookies and then I throw the ice cream on top of them, and then I kind of mash it up, and it's just a very homey dessert that takes maybe two minutes.

Tara: Yeah, and it feels like you spent a lot of time, like somebody baked that for you.

Miki: Yeah, exactly.

Matt: Someone did.

Tara: Well, that's true. That's true.

Matt: Somewhere...

Tara: Just not...

Matt: ... at a big Brookie factory.

Tara: Right. You want to taste Brookies and ice cream?

Ariana: I'll do it.

Tara: All right. We can taste Brookies and ice cream.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: All right. What's the verdict?

Ariana: This is really good.

Matt: There's a surprise.

Tara: I think the Brookie is an absolutely astonishing invention. Combining a cookie and a brownie, that's genius.

Ariana: Thanks, Miki, for sharing your Brookies and ice cream.

Tara: Chili Lime Pork Rinds.

Ariana: They're so good.

Tara: Ariana?

Ariana: I've always liked pork rinds, but I never had flavored ones, so when I discovered them, I was really excited. Then I saw that they had them at Trader Joe's and then it was just so convenient to go there because there's one right across the street from my house. Then I compared them to other brands and I liked these more, so I just liked them.

Matt: What were the differences that you noted?

Ariana: There was more seasoning in these, and I like seasoning.

Matt: So, strong flavors are more interesting?

Ariana: Yeah.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: Chicken Soup Dumplings. That was Matilde.

Mathilde: Because they're just so convenient and I can just throw them in the microwave. They taste really good.

Tara: I mean, you could eat the whole tray of six and there's your dinner, right?

Mathilde: I usually have them alone and it's pretty filling.

Tara: Yeah. I agree with you.

Matt: Any sort of sauce, any sort of thing?

Mathilde: Soy sauce.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: Have you ever tried the Crunchy Chili Onion on top?

Mathilde: I haven't, but cheese.

Camille: That's what I do.

Tara: You like spicy?

Camille: Yeah.

Mathilde: I like spicy. Yeah.

Tara: Okay.

Mathilde: I'll put some chili flakes sometimes.

Tara: Really quick and easy, and I think it takes one minute in the microwave.

Mathilde: It's one minute, 45.

Tara: What do instructions say on the box?

Matt: I think we have an expert here. How long does it take?

Mathilde: It's one minute 45 seconds.

Camille: One minute, 45 to two minutes.

Room: (laughter)

Matt: Good.

Mathilde: Okay.

Tara: Those are a huge hit. Everyone seems to love them. Jasmine Rice, frozen.

Matt: It's a very macho rice throw.

Declan: I like the rice because it's really easy. Three minutes in the microwave and I have it with two meals every day.

Tara: What do you pair it with?

Declan: Salmon and ground beef.

Tara: Okay. You're a protein guy.

Declan: Mm-hmm.

Tara: The thing I love about that rice every time you make it, it's perfect.

Declan: Yeah.

Tara: Like, it's always the right texture. It's always the right consistency.

Declan: Mm-hmm.

Camille Ooh, those are mine.

Tara: And the Ranch Rolled Corn Tortilla Chips, those are new, so good for you for being on top of the new product.

Camille: Thank you. I love the Chili, whatever Tortilla Chips, but these are better because they have more seasoning, but I like the shape of them and they're really crunchy.

Tara: I think these are even crunchier than the Chili Lime.

Camille: Yeah, I think they are.

Matt: Yeah, so a little thicker. I mean, in chip structural nomenclature, the naming would be a tighter chip roll here, scientifically shown to be crunchier. It was accidental, so we'll see if people like it. Apparently at least some people do.

Tara: Let's open the chips.

*[Bag crinkling.]*

Camille: Okay. Declan, you can try them first.

Tara: (laughs)

Ariana: Thank you.

Camille: I already know what to taste like.

Matt: You guys can be like a quality control check. This is like a small focus group, which is actually not something that we do. A lot of companies, they might have a focus group before they release it. We would have a tasting panel. Does it meet your expectations?

Camille: Yeah.

Matt: You are a customer.

Camille: Like, when you open the bag, you can tell there's a lot of seasoning in there. Like, a lot.

Tara: Does it smell good when you open the bag?

Camille: Yeah.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Like air freshener good or snack good?

Camille: Snack good.

Tara: (laughs)

Matt: Okay.

Camille: Yeah.

Matt: All right.

Tara: Air freshener good would not be good.

Matt: Well, I mean, maybe we need a Ranch air freshener.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: I don't think so. Yeah. Do we like them?

Ariana: Yeah.

Mathilde: Yeah.

Tara: Okay. They're a hit, and the giantest bag in the world of Sour Cream & Onion World's Puffiest Cheese Puffs. Is that what they're called?

Matt: They are still the world's puffiest puffs...

Tara: Yeah. Those have had a few names over the years, right?

Matt: ... by scientific measure. Um...

Tara: They're the World's Puffiest Cheese Puffs.

Matt: It's been many years. We have calipers.

Tara: (laughs) Okay.

Matt: Kaitlyn, what do you think?

Kaitlyn: The Sour Cream & Onion Puffs, they're just so much lighter compared to other chips. I could sit down, watch a show, and just keep eating them because it's so light. The flavoring is just like, it's the perfect amount.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: What is it about Trader Joe's that makes you want to shop there as opposed to another grocery store?

Mathilde: I find my grocery stores really overstimulating. It's so hard to find everything, but I feel like every Trader Joe's, I just think there's way more variety.

Tara: Which is interesting because the store is so small and there's way less stuff in it, but instead of having like 50 mayonnaises, we have one, so there's room for more variety of other things.

Miki: I think the ambiance is really nice. I like all the designs on the walls. I really like the flower section. I don't know.

Females: (laughs)

Miki: It just kind of sparks my eyes.

Kaitlyn: I feel like there's always the new tortilla ranch chips. The spicy ones were a really big trend and they still are, and then updating that with a new one that's a different flavor. The Trader Joe's Tote Bags, that becomes a big trend. I have two of them and they're honestly super useful. The other day I was driving back from school, and I saw someone carrying with 10 different colored bag totes. I'm like, "Oh my God." I didn't think it was that big of an obsession, but I mean, it's definitely cool to have because I would think it's pretty aesthetic. The bigger tote bags, I feel like those were really cool and a trend, so making it a smaller version, it was cool.

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: Anything else on anyone's mind where it's like, "Hey, Trader Joe's, what the heck is going on with this?"

Declan: One thing I'd love to see more is the sample things, because I feel like when I was a kid, I used to go in and every single time there would be a sample. Then I think COVID hit and they kind of stopped that. Now, it's like every few times. It's not every time I go and it's like one of the staples of going to Trader Joe's is seeing a sample.

Matt: Exactly, because you get to try something.

Tara: You can try something new without having to buy it first.

Mathilde: One thing I like about Trader Joe's is when I'm checking out, the workers will make an effort to talk to you, ask you how your day's going, talk to you about what you're buying, and say like, "Oh, I love this new item too."

Matt: It is cool. I find that there are places where I don't want that too. There are certain stores not to be named in this moment, but where you're like, "You know what?"

Tara: (whispers) "Don't talk to me."

Matt: "It's okay that we don't have an experience. I just need to get this one thing."

Tara: It's mutual because they don't want to talk to you either.

Matt: It's true.

Tara: It's not about you, that's not what they do, right? We hire people who want to do that. You're engaging with customers, you're not just stocking a shelf. It creates a different vibe.

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: Let's switch gears though. Before we get to new things that we've been thinking about, what if you had an idea for something where you're like, "Hey, Trader Joe's, I can't believe you don't have this." What is that?

Declan: I think a zero sugar drink.

Matt: Okay, but not just water, right? So something that has flavor...

Tara: We have those.

Matt: No, seriously, because there are things where it's like how do you balance that? Then there's lots of things that people are interested in, so whether it's a probiotic soda or even now protein sodas that we've been thinking about because customers are asking for this. Someone's shaking a head and saying, "No," but how come? No to protein stuff?

Mathilde: I'm just done with the whole protein thing.

Camille: Oh my gosh.

Matt: I don't think anyone else is though.

Mathilde: It's getting too much.

Camille: I agree.

Matt: Yeah, same.

Mathilde: Sometimes I just don't want to eat protein for dinner and that's fine, but then you go on TikTok and it's like, "Oh, protein, protein, protein."

Matt: That social media platform is like an amplification device, right?

Mathilde: Yeah.

Matt: It just takes something and makes it bigger, bigger, bigger, and yet we hear from a lot of customers that they would like to see that. Declan, back to things like beverages that have full flavor, even sweet flavors without the caloric impact without those sugars. We hear that from so many people, and I think that there's a lot of opportunities. There are so many new sweetening things that have great taste and are a more natural form, if you will, of a sweetening thing. I'm thinking of Allulose as an example. Stevia is a classic one too.

Mathilde: I would love a Monk Fruit.

Matt: ... and Monk Fruit, so you're also interested in ... Is this sweet beverages or something?

Mathilde: I like prebiotic soda stuff.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: Have you had our prebiotic soda?

Mathilde: I tried the cherry one. I thought it was really good.

Tara: The Cherry Cola?

Mathilde: Yeah.

Tara: I like the Strawberries and Cream one.

Mathilde: I don't like strawberries, so...

Tara: Oh, okay.

Matt: Categorically, if you see a strawberry walking down the street, you're like, "Nope."

Mathilde: Yeah, I don't like any kind of strawberry thing-

Matt: Not strawberry jam.

Mathilde: ... the fruit flavored-

Matt: Strawberry shortcake.

Mathilde: No.

Matt: Strawberry ice cream.

Mathilde: No.

Matt: Strawberry Shortcake, the doll. None of it.

Tara: Different generation.

Miki: One thing, I think the Barebells, every time I go, I think I get 10 of them or something and that'll last me maybe a week, half a week or something like that.

Tara: What's your favorite Barebells flavor?

Miki: Caramel Cashew.

Tara: Me too.

Miki: It's so good.

Tara: Have you ever put them in the freezer?

Miki: No.

Tara: Try it.

Miki: Okay. I will.

Tara: Do any of you actually cook?

Kaitlyn: Usually my mom cooks throughout the week, but when I'm cooking, it's usually with my friends. So I've learned to make my own Caesar salad dressing. So I've been getting my ingredients from there.

Matt: Okay, make a great question, with or without anchovies?

Kaitlyn: With. 100%.

Tara: You and Matt are friends now.

Kaitlyn: Yeah. Hey.

Miki: I'm baking Vodka Pasta, so I have this specific recipe that I make. Then I do a steak and then there's the Lemon Arugula Salad from Trader Joe's, so I'll do salad, steak, and then Vodka Pasta.

Tara: That sounds delicious.

Miki: It's incredible. I've mastered it.

Tara: Okay. (laughs) Declan?

Declan: I only cook two things, ground beef and salmon, so it's like all I eat.

Matt: Then we need to dig in on this because you serve these things with rice. I've been reading about a trend. Boy kibble is this thing that's going on and to me, it sounds like guys cooking for themselves. Are you cooking toward like I want this nutrient profile or is it flavor and flavor only or something?

Declan: Definitely not the flavor.

Matt: Okay.

Declan: It's definitely nutrient.

Matt: But I mean, hopefully it tastes good.

Declan: Yeah. It does.

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: What happens next year?

Declan: College.

Matt: Yeah. Miki, do you know where?

Miki: I'm at San Luis Obispo next year. I'm doing history and minoring in law and society.

Matt: Interesting.

Camille: I'm going to Indiana. Yeah, I'm doing finance. Yeah, I'm going to work in private equity.

Ariana: Yeah. That's a good way to go. TCU, and I looked it up and there's a Trader Joe's too.

Camille: That's the first thing I looked up (laughs).

Matt: Okay.

Camille: There's a Trader Joe's close by.

Tara: When you're studying, do you snack while you're studying?

Camille: I do.

Tara: Sweets, carbs, or savory?

Ariana: I'm a savory type of person.

Tara: Okay.

Ariana: My pork grind, I like olives. I like green olives.

Matt: With or without pits.

Ariana: Without the pits. I don't like that.

Tara: Do you like blue cheese on those?

Ariana: No, I do not.

Tara: That was a quick answer.

Ariana: I'm not a big blue cheese person, but I mean, I just like the Manzanilla Olives. That's what they're called, right?

Tara: Yeah.

Ariana: The Manzanilla Olives. I buy the little snack packs, and I buy the artichoke ones too.

Tara: You do.

Ariana: Yeah. Snacks are a reward.

Tara: If you're describing food, do you have specific words that you would use to describe good food? Like, oh, that slaps.

Ariana: No.

Matt: When did you stop saying that?

Tara: They never did...

Ariana: I've never said that.

Matt: You never said that? Okay.

Tara: ... but what would you say?

Ariana: This hits.

Tara: This hits. Okay.

Camille: I feel like people say that's fire.

Female: (laughs)

Tara: You still say that?

Camille: Yeah.

Tara: Because we're old. We don't know anything about this.

Miki: Gas is a good one.

Tara: Oh yeah.

Miki: Like, "This is gas."

Tara: Yeah. There's a guy on Instagram who does...

Matt: Not as a result, but as an adjective.

Miki: Yeah.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: (laughs) There's a guy on Instagram...

Matt: "These beans are gas," like no kidding.

Room: (laughs)

Tara: There's a guy on Instagram who does a series of videos where he makes recipes he sees online. He calls this series Gas or Trash. We had a group of high school students in here with us a number of years ago. They used the word bussin'.

Ariana: Yeah. I don't use it.

Kaitlyn: No, I feel like people do.

Mathilde: It was kind of short-lived, I think.

Kaitlyn: Yeah.

Tara: Okay.

Kaitlyn: I feel like it's not bussin' and it's like buss.

Mathilde: Yeah, I know.

Kaitlyn: Like, "Oh, this is buss."

Tara: So it just got shorter.

Matt: Wow.

Mathilde: It's kind of like crazy.

Matt: Think of all the energy you're saving without that extra syllable. I mean, that is efficiency, but it's still meaning the same thing, not meaning like a bus.

Tara: No, two S's.

Matt: Oh, it's two S's?

Mathilde: Yeah, it's two S's.

Matt: The second one's silent. It's not bus.

*[Dramatic fanfare music.]*

Tara: All right. The moment we've been waiting for. You guys want to try some stuff that hasn't yet shown up at Trader Joe's?

Camille: Yeah.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: But first, if I may, I'd like to address our graduates.

Tara: Okay. The podium is yours.

*[Pomp and Circumstance begins.]*

Matt: Young people, you are standing at the threshold of something extraordinary. Behind you, childhood. Before you, the rest of your lives and somewhere in between snacks. As you leave this hallowed podcast today, remember the world needs you. I mean, Trader Joe's needs you. In fact, I would argue, and I will argue this because I have the microphone, that the fate of this great nation and of your favorite neighborhood grocery store rests at least partially on your willingness to try a snack you've never heard of before. You are Generation Z or maybe even Alpha or whatever letter it is we're on now. The point is you are next and next is a sacred responsibility. We are here by handing your generation the torch and a plate of samples. Please take both and then be bold. Express yourselves freely without fear. If you think something is too salty, I mean, say it's too salty. If you think something needs more crunch, demand more crunch. You have a voice. You have taste buds. Use them now and always. Graduates we are depending on you.

*[Boisterous crowd applause.]*

Tara: That was great.

*[Light upbeat music begins.]*

Tara: These are a product that we approved at our tasting panel recently and they kind of look like popcorn, but they're entirely made of rice, so there's no corn in them. They are puffed rice. They have a little salt on them, but otherwise they're not seasoned. These are going to be called Crunch-tastic Puffalicious Rice Snacks.

Kaitlyn: Oh, wow.

Tara: So because why not?

Matt: Really?

Tara: Be curious just what you think about them.

Mathilde: They don't taste like anything.

Matt: You're very...

Tara: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mathilde: I don't think I would buy these.

Tara: No?

Camille: I really like the consistency.

Tara: I think they're addictive.

Camille: Yeah. I agree.

Tara: When I start, I can't stop eating them. They have very few ingredients. It's rice, coconut oil, salt, and a little bit of sweetener. Just a little sweet, a little salt, coconut oil, rice and that's it, but they look like popcorn. What's the consensus? How about hands for would you buy them?

Declan: I would.

Ariana: I would.

Tara: All right. Four to two. Okay.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: This one, these are potato chips. (bag crinkling) They're just good chips. Try one, Matt.

Matt: They're ridge cut.

Tara: They're ridge cut.

Matt: Just regular ridge cut potato chips.

Tara: Regular ridge cut chips, (bag crinkling) and we're still working on this, hasn't been approved by the tasting panel yet, not because of the chip itself, but because we're working on the bag. We want to make sure that the bag doesn't have too much what they call head space, so it doesn't look empty when you buy it. Making sure the bag is the right size for the amount of chips that are inside because you fill up a bag of chips by weight and not by volume because you need some air inside the bag, so the bag doesn't just pop. That's like a challenging thing to make sure you have enough air inside, but not so much inside that the bag looks completely empty. Anyway, this bag of chips for 99 cents, would that be like you're just grabbing something? It's like, "Oh, I'll take a bag of chips."

Mathilde: Yeah, that's good.

Tara: Because I know if you go to buy a sandwich at a sandwich shop, it's like an extra two or \$2.49 or something. It's like around that size for the bag of chips that you get, so what do you think for 99 cents?

Mathilde: Good, it's good.

Matt: If you ever have a potato chip cage match, two chips enter, on chip leaves, classic or ridge cut?

Miki: Ridge cut.

Mathilde: Yeah.

Matt: Ridge cut.

Mathilde: ... the ridge cut.

Tara: How come?

Miki: Easier to dip.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: Easier to dip. They crunch more.

Mathilde: Yeah.

Matt: Well, that's good. Otherwise, we'd have to change the whole chip.

Tara: That's a good chip.

Matt: I mean, there's nothing to take issue with that chip.

Tara: I think that these will make it through the tasting panel.

Matt: Tasting panel, just like there's a Robert's rules of order when you have to call a group together. Maybe you've been a part of model United Nations or debate club or things like this. When we vote on something at the tasting panel, it's not a simple majority. It's actually a super majority. It's actually 70%, seven out of 10 are needed to be approved because we don't want something that's good enough. We want something that's worth people's time that's hopefully exceptional. It's like passing something through Congress, which is really tough to do.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: Next one, I have two flavors here. One is strawberry and one is lemon lime. Can I get hands for lemon lime? Almost everybody. Okay, and so that means strawberry. Where's my other strawberry? Strawberry?

Camille: Oh, me. Thank you.

Tara: So, these got approved by our tasting panel today, so soon they will be at Trader Joe's. Here's a bottle of water for everybody. These are hydration sticks, so combined with one bottle of water and I believe if I'm remembering the numbers correctly, it was 570 milligrams of sodium, 200 and something milligrams of potassium and some magnesium. I can't remember exactly.

Matt: Zero grams of sugar.

Tara: Zero sugar. They used Stevia for sweetener, but I'm sure that you've all either purchased or seen hydration sticks from other brands out there in the world. We thought we could do maybe a little bit better job than some of the other ones from a flavor perspective and definitely from a pricing perspective. You open up the little sachet. I don't know what else ... what'd you call that?

Mathilde: Packet.

Tara: A packet.

Matt: I mean, stick. They're often called sticks, just because they're more...

Ariana: I love them.

Matt: ... elongated, almost like a squat straw, but sachet works, envelope pack, packet.

Tara: Pour one into a 16 ounce bottle of water or into 16 ounces of water in a glass.

Matt: I have one grimacing face.

Mathilde: I just don't like hydration sticks.

Matt: Okay. I take my electrolytes from chips.

Tara: (laughs)

*[Music transition.]*

Ariana: I like these.

Tara: Yes?

Ariana: Yeah.

Tara: Two boys.

Miki: This one's a little less sweet than that one.

Mathilde: Yeah.

Miki: I still like it though.

Tara: With sugar or without sugar?

Miki: Also sugar-free.

Tara: Yeah.

Miki: It's a little sweeter.

Declan: I agree with Miki though. It's like less sweet.

Tara: You liked it though?

Declan: Yeah.

Tara: Yeah, and you had the strawberry flavor?

Declan: Yeah.

Ariana: I like that this one isn't a sweet.

Tara: Because you're the savory one.

Ariana: I am the savory one.

Tara: How about you?

Kaitlyn: My team went through a whole bag one game because we play golf, so lifesavers for us, especially during the summer, that's winter season is. Always, we would just split the packaging because it was just too sweet for us, but this one, I was able to use the full thing, and it was the same exact one because I didn't like it too sweet.

Tara: Those did get approved just today, so it'll probably be a few months before they find their way into the stores because it takes a while once we approve them. Then there'll be 10 in a box for \$9.99, which I feel like it's a really great value for people, especially if you just want the one flavor. If you're a real strawberry guy and you really prefer to have that, but you would much prefer the lemon lime than being able to just get what you want.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: Who among you has ever eaten our Peanut Butter Cups? Okay. Everybody's hand goes up. Excellent.

Matt: All right, you can take one and pass that down.

Tara: Milk chocolate or dark chocolate?

Camille: Dark.

Mathilde: Dark.

Miki: No-

Declan: Milk.

Miki: ... milk.

Mathilde: Dark.

Camille: Dark.

Kaitlyn: Dark.

Ariana: Dark chocolate.

Tara: Okay.

Declan: Milk chocolate.

Tara: All right. The girls are all dark. The boys are milk chocolate. Okay.

Matt: Who says boys aren't sweet? Right?

Mathilde: I like the almond butter ones though.

Tara: Okay.

Ariana: Those are good.

Tara: What's being passed around right now are Peanut Butter Peanut Butter Cups, so there's no chocolate. The outside is peanut butter and the inside is peanut butter.

Matt: On purpose, the outer coating is actually made with peanuts that are more darkly roasted so that you get that visual distinction lighter and darker, and they have a slightly stronger roasted flavor than the filling. Butter cups are a huge hit with our customers, and the category manager for this business, her name's Allison, she's always looking at things to come up with new ideas, what might really click with customers, and this is one of her latest ideas.

Mathilde: It's really peanut buttery.

Camille: Yeah.

Ariana: Feel like for people that are really big peanut butter lovers, they'll like it.

Kaitlyn: Yeah. I'm a big peanut butter fan, so I really like these, but I don't know if I would pick them over the chocolate ones, but I thought they were really good.

Tara: You could buy both.

Kaitlyn: That's true.

Tara: I'm just saying.

Kaitlyn: Yeah. I like almond butter better.

Tara: I'm a fan of these.

Matt: It's a tough panel today though.

Tara: Everybody said they kind of like spicy things, right? This is a Spicy Lemonade Gummy.

Female: Okay.

Tara: Very interested to know what you think about this one.

*[Music transition.]*

Camille: (giggles)

Matt: It's not that spicy, is it? Or is it?

Camille: No, I can handle it.

Matt: Okay.

Ariana: I can do it.

Mathilde: I can handle it, but it's kind of spicy.

Matt: Okay.

Declan: That's so weird.

Ariana: Yeah, I kind of like it.

Declan: I've never had a spicy gummy before.

Tara: Does it work for you though?

Mathilde: Oh my gosh.

Miki: It actually does.

Mathilde: I like it.

Miki: My mom would love these.

Kaitlyn: These are good. They're really good.

Tara: It's really spicy.

Ariana: (laughs) Right? (laughs) Okay.

Tara: It hits your tongue right away. Do you ever notice sometimes you eat spicy things and the spice hits you right when you put it in your mouth and other spicy things, the spice hits you when it's in the back of your mouth, be like, "Wait, where did that come from?" This hits you right away.

Matt: That's pretty spicy.

Tara: It is. These are approved. These are on their way in sometime this year. I don't know exactly when.

Matt: That makes two of us. Yeah, sometime.

Tara: Sometimes we have in the past gotten a little criticism from people when we call something spicy and they don't think it's spicy enough.

Ariana: No, that's spicy.

Mathilde: That's spicy.

Kaitlyn: I've never had a spicy gummy before.

Tara: It's really weird, but I like weird. I think weird is kind of fun. I have one more thing for people to try.

Matt: Is this boy kibble?

*[Music transition]*

Tara: Well, no. Okay, so this is something we haven't passed through our tasting panel yet. We tried it this morning.

Camille: Oh my God.

Tara: It's a Pork Carnitas Rice Bowl...

Female: Ooh!

Tara: ...yeah, and so it's got green chili sauce, some veggies, some beans, and some rice. We already think it's good. We want it to be great, so what would you do?

Camille: Maybe like a side of guac.

Ariana: Yeah.

Tara: I don't think we can do that in a frozen item. This came out of the freezer, and it was in the microwave for about four minutes.

Ariana: What does it have in it? Does it have tomatoes in it or no?

Mathilde: More salt.

Tara: More salt?

Camille: No.

Tara: Okay.

Ariana: I don't know. I really like this.

Tara: How do you feel about the amount of meat that's in it?

Declan: More.

Miki: Yeah, I think a little more.

Tara: The amount of everything else?

Mathilde: More corn.

Tara: More corn.

Mathilde: I like beans, but I like corn better.

Ariana: I like beans too.

Matt: Yeah, I feel like it was mostly rice, and so it needs to be mostly other stuff.

Mathilde: I know. Maybe more sauce.

Ariana: It was really good. (muffled mouth full)

Tara: (laughs)

Ariana: I really like carnitas.

Kaitlyn: It is fire.

Tara: Does it hit?

Kaitlyn: It hits.

Tara: Okay.

Camille: It's buss.

Matt: But is it buss? Yeah. Thanks for that. Okay.

*[Music fades out.]*

Tara: Big thanks and congratulations to these graduating Trader Joe's customers in alphabetical order.

*[Pomp and Circumstance begins.]*

Matt: Hold your applause until the end and please no confetti cannons.

Tara: Ariana, Camille, Declan, Kaitlin, Matilde, Miki, and everyone who's graduating from high school or from somewhere else this spring, we're proud to have you as Trader Joe's customers.

*[Boisterous crowd applause.]*

Matt: And seriously, we hope Trader Joe's can continue to be your neighborhood grocery store for many years to come.

Tara: (sniffing) They're moving on to new horizons, Matt.

*[Transition to closing music.]*

Tara: And we'll just keep doing this podcast. We hope everyone listening will hit that free subscribe or follow button.

Matt: It is free and worth every penny.

Tara: Until next time, thanks for listening.

Matt:           And thanks for listening.

*[Crowd applause.]*

Tara:           All right, thanks guys.

Matt:           Thanks everybody.

Tara:           Appreciate you. Don't forget to take those name tags off before you put your shirts in the wash.