

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 111: Can't Help Falling For This Trader Joe's Shopping List

[Upbeat music begins.]

Matt: The record for most people stuffed into a standard size phone booth is 25.

Tara: Huh. I guess this must have been back when there were phone booths.

Matt: Yeah, March 20, 1959. A group of students set the record by stacking and intertwining themselves. This set off a massive and thankfully, short-lived trend among college students to try this themselves.

Tara: Okay, I'll pass.

Matt: Today, we set a record of our own: most Trader Joe's office crew members stuffed into a conference room, simultaneously talking about new Fall Shopping List products in a single podcast.

Tara: Ready for it. Let's go *Inside Trader Joe's*.

[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: In a few moments, crew members on our product development and category management team have some really great behind the scenes stories about several of these Fall Shopping List products.

Matt: Got a lucky 13 products on this Fall Shopping List. How about we start with a little London fog? And by that I mean a London Fog Tea.

[Theme music ends. Transition to upbeat music.]

Tara: Before this product came to the tasting panel, I was unfamiliar with London Fog other than being in London when it's rainy or the raincoat of the same name.

Matt: Yeah, it's not like a Jack the Ripper kind of scene here. It's not like the Killer Fog of London of years ago. It's a drink. It's an Earl Grey tea latte, most often sweetened. And that's what we've got here. And what's cool about this, it's liquid concentrate. You just add whatever kind of milk or milk-like thing that you want to it to make a great latte, a London Fog.

Tara: You would only have to use four ounces of this concentrate along with your creamy beverage of choice to make that latte.

Matt: Sure. And that would result in a 12-ounce.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: You can serve this heated up, hot. You can serve it iced, cold.

Tara: And it costs less than you would pay for a single drink at a coffee or tea shop.

Matt: Which is both true and crazy to me, but there you have it.

Tara: Yeah. It's a really smooth drinking cup of tea.

Matt: Earl Grey, of course, is delicious black tea scented and flavored with oil of bergamot, which is a citrus fruit, classic combo.

Tara: This is not one of those fall only products, which a lot of the products we're going to talk about today are only for the fall, but this one is an everyday product, and it will live on the shelves in our coffee and tea section, I believe.

Matt: Yeah.

[Music transition.]

Tara: So as you mentioned, Earl Grey tea, which is a component of London Fog, has the oil of bergamot, which is a citrus fruit. Our next product is a Mandarin Crunch Pasta Salad.

Matt: Wow. I mean, even tangential segues work.

Tara: So this is a salad in a tub, the 10.8 ounce container. The dressing for the pasta salad is in a separate packet inside the container. So you really kind of have to take it out of the container to enjoy it in its best form.

Matt: Fully tossed.

Tara: It becomes a big bowl of pasta salad. It has a base of Mafalda pasta noodles. And if you're not familiar with Mafalda, if you think about kind of a smaller lasagna noodle, it's those ridges on it when I look at it.

Matt: Sounds like an old family name, Aunt Mafalda.

Tara: Do you know that I had an Aunt Maldina, which is almost like Mafalda?

Matt: No.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: So Mandarin Crunch Pasta Salad with mandarin oranges, diced apples, feta cheese, sweetened dried cranberries, and pumpkin seeds, and a balsamic vinaigrette.

Matt: None of the things I normally associate with pasta salads, so that's kind of got me excited.

Tara: It also has greens. It has arugula and a little bit of celery actually.

Matt: A lot of stuff going on.

Tara: Hold that container. It's pretty substantial.

Matt: If I had to guess, that feels like 10.8 ounces.

Tara: It is 10.8 ounces. You're pretty good at that. That one is a limited time in the store product. So that one's intended for fall. My guess is it will be near the other pasta salads.

Matt: Good guess.

Tara: That's a good guess.

Matt: Good Gouda (GOO-duh).

Tara: Ah ha ha.

Matt: Gouda (KHOW-duh).

Tara: Ha!

Matt: We're talking cheese, of course. We're talking Gouda (GOO-duh), giving it an American pronunciation. Gouda with walnuts.

Tara: So good.

Matt: If you're given to throwing a handful of walnuts or almonds on a cheeseboard or serving with cheese, this does one step better, one step for you. The walnuts are in the cheese throughout the cheese.

Tara: We've had this cheese before. Do you remember?

Matt: I do. It's been a couple years is what I'm thinking. We like to every now and then share really cool cheese finds with customers and then it goes away.

Tara: Yeah, we call it Spotlight Cheese, right?

Matt: That's right.

Tara: So you might be walking by the cheese case at your Trader Joe's and see a little sign that says Spotlight Cheese. This one we had as a Spotlight Cheese, I think it was back in 2024. The response to it was fantastic. We sold through what we had brought in very quickly, and I think we asked the supplier in the Netherlands, "Hey, could you do this for us again?" Because it's a really special cheese. It takes a while to make it happen. It should be in stores right around now for as long as we can keep it. And we're hoping that it lasts through the month of September. And then in October, you'll probably find another Spotlight Cheese in your Trader Joe's.

[Music transition.]

Tara: For the next few things on our shopping list, we thought it would be good to call in some help.

Ally: Hi, I'm Ally. I'm one of the product developers here at Trader Joe's, and I'm really excited to talk about our new ice cream, our Apple Pie à la Mode.

Tara: Fantastic.

Hasmik: And my name is Hasmik, and I'm one of the frozen category managers, and I'm here to talk to you all about the Holiday Duchesse Potatoes.

Tara: Excellent.

Arlene: I'm Arlene. I'm here to talk about the Organic Reddened Green Leaf Salad Mix.
(laughs)

Matt: Okay. What I want to do is start with the most difficult thing first, adding excitement to salad. And in all seriousness, finding something new and interesting enough to squeeze onto the shelves of the produce section in our stores is really hard. Arlene, what did you come up with?

Arlene: It is challenging.

Matt: That's putting it mildly. These are brutal projects.

Arlene: Yes.

Matt: The produce team is like, "Arlene, I need a new salad."

Arlene: Yes. So oftentimes what I would do is take a few of our bags of salad and mix them together. And what I had seen was that a lot of them were the flat leaves and they were like, "Okay, we need more texture and more color," which is why we came up with this one. One is a red arugula, but it has this nice line, red line that goes through. It's really beautiful. It does have more of the arugula bitter peppery taste but blended with the rest of it tastes really good. And then the other color that we added inward, the beet greens, very much a purple leaf, and then spinach and frisée to give that really nice look and texture. So that's what I thought of. And I think this mix reminded me of when I would go to farmer's market, and they would have that vendor of 12 different salads, and they would have flowers in or just different mix. I feel like this really, in our way, kind of meets that. (laughs)

[Music transition.]

Tara: I'm going to open the bag. (loud crinkling of bag opening) It just smells so fresh and delicious and green. I've never seen the arugula with the purple veins in it before. Kind of love that.

Matt: It's like it's turning into the hulk or something.

Arlene: (laughs) The veins?

Tara: It's actually delicious.

Arlene: It's really good.

Tara: It's just a really good salad but elevated above what I would normally buy.

Matt: I think it's cool that in this lettuce mix, there's nothing that is actually lettuce. It's a salad made of different kinds of greens. The color notwithstanding, these are greens because they're leaves, leafy greens.

Tara: Organic baby spinach, organic beet greens, organic red arugula, and organic frisée. And that's it.

Matt: And that's enough.

Tara: Well, it's fantastic because then you can do whatever you want with it, right? You want to add chopped nuts, add chopped nuts. You want to add some kind of cheese, add some kind of cheese. You want to shave additional vegetables, whatever. But it's a fantastic canvas for a salad.

Matt: You want to eat it by the handful right out of the bag while looking wistfully over the kitchen sink, out the window into the backyard as evening sets? Dang it, go for it.

Tara: You're speaking from experience.

Matt: A little bit.

Tara: Just for the season or this is every day?

Arlene: This is for the full holiday season.

Matt: So when we say full holiday season, which is like a little bit of inside baseball on *Inside Trader Joe's*, that's a phrase that we use a lot. What does that mean?

Arlene: It'll be available from October to pretty much maybe January is what we're thinking.

Matt: Okay.

Arlene: Yeah.

Matt: So we get a good run. We have a lot of great opportunities to eat this salad, right? This isn't like the no sugar gummy worms, folks. Okay? And everyone's like, duh. I know, but it's not. You going to have multiple...

Tara: This has less fiber.

Matt: This has less fiber. Way less fiber in this salad.

Arlene: Despite being fiber forward.

Tara: (laughs)

[Music transition.]

Matt: Next up, let's get to know the duchess. Duchess Potatoes, what are they?

Hasmik: Is it duchess or duchesse?

Matt: Well, if it were duchesse, it would have another E at the end of it is how I would read it. I would say it's the duchess, but...

Ally: Our version, we're calling the Duchess Potato. When you see it in Europe though, in French, it can be written as duchesse. You see it both places.

Matt: Do they do anything different? This one comes with a skirt.

Hasmik: It's a crown.

Ally: I wish. This is a classic formulation. Traditionally, you find this in a brasserie next to a steak, sometimes as an appetizer, but it's a really intensive preparation when you make it the traditional way. So you're getting silky smooth potatoes, you're mixing in, sometimes it's cream, sometimes it's butter. Our version, I'm really excited that it's vegan, even though it doesn't taste that way.

Hasmik: Customers absolutely love potatoes. So when we were thinking about the holiday time period, our thought was what are some other ways we can represent potatoes and elevate them and lean into something that's kind of a European and more French classic product. They're beautiful and I think they would make for a great appetizer. You could top these with a little bit of crème fraîche and some chives or some caviar if you're really fancy.

Matt: Whoa.

Tara: Wow.

Hasmik: You can even put them next to a steak. It could serve as a side dish. So I think it's a really versatile product. You could also just air fry them and sit in front of the TV and watch your favorite show and just chomp down some creamy potatoes.

Matt: Chomp 'em up. Chomp 'em down.

Tara: Duchess and chill.

Hasmik: There you go. There you go. Duchess and chill.

Matt: Yeah, duchess and chill.

Hasmik: Yeah.

Matt: And if this hasn't yet added up to a spoken picture, think of mashed potatoes piped into a swirling rosette frosting-like soft serve kind of thing.

Hasmik: Yes.

Tara: Soft serve.

Matt: This is absolutely savory, but then it's kind of crispy fried. So you get mashed potatoes plus the goodness of a frites or a French fry thing. They're maybe about a two bite size puff.

Hasmik: Yeah.

Matt: I could eat a lot of these because there's something amazing in my brain about the texture.

Hasmik: Yeah, the exterior is crunchy.

Matt: I don't know how they got them so light.

Tara: Let's try them.

Ally: Well, they're like a whipped texture.

Hasmik: Yeah. Like whipped mashed potato kind.

Matt: Like a potato mousse more than just straight mashed potatoes.

Ally: Yes. And our vendor, all they do is potatoes. This comes to us from Belgium made with...

Matt: You wonder what they serve at the cafeteria at the factory?

Ally: I know.

Matt: It's just frites all day.

Tara: Potatoes all the time.

[Music transition.]

Ally: You get that creaminess and the crispness, and I don't know how they do it, but I know I will be enjoying these all season long.

Tara: I just took a bite out of one. Super lightly crispy on the outside and just so creamy and light inside. In a million years, I wouldn't have guessed vegan. I would've guessed that there's butter and/or cream in this recipe. How the heck did they do that?

Hasmik: You can also eat them with ketchup if you want to be super basic.

Ally: Yeah, it's like an elevated French fry if you...

Hasmik: Ketchup or mayo, Matt? You know?

Matt: No.

Hasmik: I'm kidding.

Matt: I know these are from Belgium and in Belgium, mayo with frites is the thing.

Hasmik: Yeah, that's the thing with you.

Tara: Yeah, he doesn't do mayo.

Hasmik: I know. I was kidding.

Matt: I don't do mayo, everybody. I want to do a whole episode on my food aversions.

Hasmik: Or Magnifisauce. I was going to say you can squeeze some Magnifisauce on there and it'd be delicious.

Tara: Did you put these in the oven or in the air fryer?

Ally: So today, I did these in the oven. It was just shy of 20 minutes, but we've cooked these multiple times in the air fryer and it's crispier, but this one really comes out great either way.

Tara: And holiday season only. This is not an everyday product?

Hasmik: I will say we were really generous with our buy, frankly.

Matt: I'm a customer listening to that. So if you're generous with your buy, what does that mean?

[Music transition.]

Hasmik: We were really confident that our customers would love this product, but we thought, "Well, if we had this beyond the holidays and customers still liked them, we would potentially consider them as an everyday product."

Matt: So we placed maybe what we would consider large orders?

Hasmik: Yes.

Matt: So the duchess potato factory's been busy making a lot of bags. People can count on these for several months.

Tara: They're not in stores the day this podcast shows up in your podcast feed, but they are coming in soon. So look for them in the freezer case in a bag that says Trader Joe's Duchess Potatoes on this.

Hasmik: Yes.

Matt: Just ask your friendly neighborhood crew member for the duchess.

Tara: This is true. And whether you pronounce it duchess or duchesse, they will still taste delicious.

[Music transition.]

Matt: I would have the potatoes for dessert too.

Tara: Would you?

Matt: Personally, yeah.

Tara: All right.

Ally: Is it your apple jam?

Tara: Well, you have the potatoes and I will take the Apple Pie à la Mode Ice Cream. Can we talk about this please?

Ally: Yeah. We were really inspired by kind of the classic American apple pie, which at least in my family is a staple for every single Thanksgiving. We thought, what if we took all the best components of the apple pie that we love to put ice cream on top of and just made it into one thing? What we came up with was a vanilla-based ice cream with pieces of apple pie crust pieces, which stay surprisingly a little bit crispy, but crumbly, sugary. It's got the texture of an apple crust, but mixed in nicely with the ice cream, and then a spiced apple swirl to give you those warm spices in every bite. I'm really happy with how it came out.

Hasmik: We've definitely seen that banana pudding flavor resonate with our customers, and that one kind of has a similar, oh, a dessert converted into ice cream...

Matt: A dessert.

Hasmik: Yeah. It's re-imagining dessert. So I think this had been on our shopping list for quite a few years.

Tara: Customers come into the store sometimes with a shopping list, right?

Hasmik: Mm-hmm.

Tara: Can you help the folks listening to this understand what the shopping list is from your perspective?

Hasmik: Sure. It's essentially a list of opportunities that we've identified our customers are looking for and having looked at what they're currently buying or what we see out in the marketplace, what we eat at restaurants. Not everything that we will launch or offer to our customers come from a shopping list. We leave room for those treasure hunt types of items that our very talented development team kind of travels the world and discovers. But for the most part, every product that comes to shelf or most of them come by way of us having identified it as an opportunity.

Matt: So it's a collection of absences, things that we don't have that we would like to have, and we're working to bring them into existence.

[Music transition.]

Hasmik: Yeah, and they don't always start out the way they end up. We probably said for flavored ice cream. It started out as this generic term. And then when we started to evaluate samples and tasted many different versions, it kind of evolves into what customers will see in stores.

Ally: Or sometimes we find something that's similar and we decide to pivot and we still... It meets the need.

Hasmik: Or if you're at a restaurant, you have the best actual apple pie with ice cream on top and the wheels kind of turn and you're like, "Wait a minute."

Tara: I'm going to hand out some spoons.

[Opening of plastic bag.]

Matt: Yeah, I think what's interesting about the crust on a texture basis, I would call it short, which is like a baking cookie kind of term. It still has the crust crisp texture. It has a really cooked kind of texture that is miraculous to hold up in ice cream.

Hasmik: Historically, we've offered ice cream products that were either fall products or holiday products, specifically something like a pumpkin or a maple we would deem as a fall product. And then something like a gingerbread or peppermint would be a holiday product. This type of flavor we thought lent itself well to being available during both of those seasons.

Ally: So customers should theoretically be able to buy this during fall and into a holiday season.

Hasmik: September to December.

Tara: We're hoping through the end of the year. That's the plan.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: We've made projections on how much of this to order based on what we think we'll sell during this period of time. And hopefully our projections are right on. But if for some reason people are like, "I can't get enough of this ice cream."

Matt: Exhibit A, No Sugar Gummy Worms.

Tara: Right. And then maybe we go out of stock on it earlier than anticipated. It wasn't a planned scarcity event. We weren't trying to keep it away from people.

Ally: We have to work with an apple farmer to source the apple pieces and the vendor who cooks down our swirl for us to make the swirl and the dairy. So there's a lot of moving pieces and when possible, we try to react and bring more stock in.

Hasmik: Yes.

Ally: It's just not always possible. And if it's a holiday specific item, sometimes the lead times are too long.

Tara: It would be a whole lot easier if we just carried the same products all the time, and it would be the most boring thing.

Ally: We like to keep it interesting.

Tara: A customer might be disappointed if they walk in and they bought it last week and now it's gone until next year, for example. But also, there's something else new and exciting that's coming next week or that's already arrived. And that I think is what makes us different from every other grocery shopping experience you might have.

Hasmik: And we also, I don't think we have the best gauge as to what's going to go viral either.

Tara: Nobody has a gauge as to what's going to go viral. If we did, we would all be kajillionaires.

Hasmik: There you go.

Tara: And we might choose...

Ally: We would run out of...

Hasmik: We would run out of stuff.

Ally: ... No Sugar Gummies.

Matt: Exactly, because our business model is predicated on us selling stuff.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: We haven't monetized desire or scarcity, and we're not interested in that, but we acknowledge the fact that we do run out of things and we work hard to ameliorate that. Why would I even choose to say that?

Tara: I don't know. Wow.

Hasmik: That's a tough word, Matt.

Matt: We do work hard to address it. How about that?

Ally: It's a beautiful word.

Hasmik: It's not like they were making this and we just said slap a Trader Joe's label on it. We worked hard with the supplier to formulate it. You won't find this at any other retailer.

Tara: Well, I think it's delicious. I think customers are going to love it. I think you all have done such a great job on all of these things. I don't know how you do it, just constantly coming up with new stuff, but it's really exciting and it brings joy to our customers.

Matt: Indeed. So thank you so much.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: We'll see you soon.

Ally: Thanks for having us today.

Hasmik: Thanks for having us.

Matt: All right, back to work.

[Music ends.]

Matt: And no Fall Shopping List podcast would be complete without a little time spent thinking about pumpkin.

[Upbeat music begins.]

Tara: This cannot and will not be a complete list of the pumpkin related products at Trader Joe's this fall because that would be an hours long podcast.

Matt: Hours.

Tara: Hours.

Matt: Hours long.

Tara: It would be hours long because there are a lot of pumpkin products at our stores because our customers continue to love them.

Matt: Okay. So how about a non-comprehensive, non-exhaustive list of pumpkin products we think are worth hearing about?

Tara: Love this idea.

Matt: I'd love to start with something new to Trader Joe's. What do we have that fits that bill?

Tara: Organic Pumpkin Pie Spice Creamer.

Matt: Mmm.

Tara: Delicious for your coffee or your tea.

Matt: Creamer. This is a dairy-based creamer, right?

Tara: It is a dairy-based creamer.

Matt: Yes. It's like a cream creamer.

Tara: The first ingredient is organic milk.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: And then organic cane sugar, organic cream, and organic natural flavors.

Matt: Now, if you've been doing the PSL thing and you wanted to do a little PSC, like you didn't want a full-on latte, you just wanted to pumpkin spice your creamer and your coffee.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: This is it.

Tara: Oh, that smells so good. That's so pumpkin spicy.

Matt: Yeah, there's a whole lot of interesting stuff going on there. There's some cardamom happening and with the dairy, it's not eggnog, but it's not in a different universe from eggnog either.

Tara: Yeah, but it definitely gets that...

Matt: It's eggnog's friendly next door neighbor.

Tara: Yeah, which it comes in the season before eggnog. It's pumpkin spice.

Matt: Okay. Like you're training for eggnog.

Tara: You are. I'm going to have a little swig. Here we go. Yeah, that works. That works really well. I'm excited about that. I think customers are going to be excited about that.

Matt: We have on a seasonal basis around this time of year, a Rooibos tea with some spices. And if you wanted to sweeten it up and creamy it up, this would be amazing in a Rooibos tea.

Tara: Oh, I think this is a winner. And again, only around for fall, soon to become a customer favorite. The Organic Pumpkin Pie Spice Creamer should be in stores now.

Matt: I want to push the button on the way back machine and go back to 2012.

[Depressing buttons, rewinding to back in time. Cue upbeat music.]

Tara: Whoa.

Matt: And talk about something that we've been carrying on a limited pumpkin season basis since 2012, Honey Roasted Pumpkin Ravioli. This is a customer favorite.

Tara: And that's why it just keeps coming back year after year. It's not pumpkin pie spice. It's honey roasted pumpkin. You really get all of those caramelized flavors of the pumpkin also. Tastes really great stuffed inside the pasta.

Matt: It's taken all these years for me to get up the courage to ask, what is everyone doing with this?

Tara: They're eating it.

Matt: Well, sure. How? In which manner? I am not thinking like a basil marinara with this.

Tara: No. When I would buy this, I would just put it on a plate or in a bowl and very simply a little bit of olive oil over the top. If you want to get fancy with it, I've done this, brown

butter, a little bit of crispy sage, like take a couple of sage leaves and toast them in that brown butter for a few minutes and then toss the pasta very gently with that.

Matt: With that? Okay.

Tara: To me, that's the pinnacle of how to eat this.

Matt: I don't know in the spirit of candor if I've ever cooked this at home.

Tara: Really?

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: It's really good. It's not super sweet. You get some sweetness because the pumpkin is naturally sweet, especially when you roast it, and then you add a little bit of sweetener to that. And it's blended inside the ravioli. It's blended with ricotta and mozzarella cheeses, so it has a cheesiness to it as well.

Matt: All right, you got me. Dang it. I'm going to go to my Trader Joe's and I'm going to buy this and I'm going to cook it. I'll report back.

Tara: Okay. That one is also arriving in stores right about now.

[Music transition.]

Tara: Hey, I have a crazy idea for a product for pumpkin season.

Matt: I'm here for it. What is it?

Tara: An actual pumpkin.

Matt: Finally.

Tara: Yep. We have a pumpkin this year called a Snowball Pumpkin. Why do you think they're called Snowball Pumpkins?

Matt: Well, if I had to guess, is it the size? Is it they're frozen? Is it...

Tara: They're white.

Matt: Of course they are.

Tara: They're very white pumpkins.

Matt: Snowball the Friendly Pumpkin.

Tara: Yeah. And they're not giant pumpkins, but they're not tiny pumpkins. They're really interesting.

Matt: Okay, so hold on. I'm just really looking here like one and a half to three pounds per pumpkin.

Tara: Yep. You can use them as decor if you want to, that's fine, but you can eat them.

Matt: Really?

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Cool.

Tara: They're really good for cooking. And here's an idea. Cut the top off, scoop out the seeds, right?

Matt: Guts, that's what we call them in the business, pumpkin guts.

Tara: Yeah. Fill the pumpkin with anything you want. You could do almost like a mixture that you would put in the stuffed pepper.

Matt: What if you went crazy and took our Spicy Shrimp Fried Rice...

Tara: Ooh.

Matt: ...and put that inside?

Tara: That would be good. But you want to bake it. The top that you cut off, you want to save that. Put it on the top after you've stuffed it, pop it in the oven.

Matt: Oh...

Tara: Bake it.

Matt: ...a little steaming inside the pumpkin?

Tara: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then after you remove it from the oven, remove the lid carefully because it's going to be steamy inside, right?

Matt: Mm-hmm.

Tara: And you have dinner and you can eat the bowl.

Matt: The vessel.

Tara: Yeah, really cool.

Matt: It could be pretty good size bowls. You could share.

Tara: You could share.

Matt: You could cut it.

Tara: You could cut it in half like you would like an acorn squash or something like that. Just an idea.

Matt: So many of those squash things that we use as decorative elements this time of year are in fact edible.

Tara: Yeah. But I think it's a cool thing to have a pumpkin in our pumpkin season list of products.

[Music transition.]

Matt: What else is pumpkin? It's bark. It's not the bark that's worse than its bite. It's the bark that's candy in fact. And this is pumpkin pie spice. Do you sense a theme? Pumpkin Pie Spice Bark.

Tara: So good.

Matt: And this is white chocolate, actual white chocolate, so lots of cocoa butter.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: And texturally, it eats differently from some other barks, barks made with dark chocolate that might be snappier.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: So this is a softer, very creamy, smooth texture.

Tara: This is in stores now. This should be in the bark area of your neighborhood Trader Joe's.

Matt: Barktown in your neighborhood Trader Joe's.

Tara: I feel like I can say that now because we have a bunch of barks and...

Matt: Yeah. And if you've never had any of our barks, maybe this is one just to introduce yourself to the whole family of these things. This is good stuff.

Tara: Okay. We have only one more product that is pumpkin spice in nature.

Matt: And it's a new one for this year.

Tara: It is called Trader Joe's Pumpkin and Spice Caramel Sauce. It has pumpkin puree in it. It has the sweetness of pumpkin in addition to the sweetness of obviously sugar and sweeteners, but pumpkin itself provides some of that sweetness and that silkiness in the caramel sauce.

Matt: I'm thinking drizzled over baked apples. I'm thinking even just fresh cut, really tart Granny Smith apples dipped into this would be fun. If you have ice cream, this would shine brightest over a vanilla.

Tara: I'm going to open up the jar. (pop from jar) Oh, wow. That is a thick, yummy caramel sauce. If you were making a pumpkin pie, you could drizzle that over a warm pumpkin pie, an apple pie or an apple crisp kind of situation. That would also taste really good. Anywhere you want to use caramel sauce, that's a really interesting taste.

Matt: I'm thinking beautiful sourdough toasted and with this on top of it would just be great.

Tara: Caramel on salad. Wow.

Matt: Make a caramel sandwich. Caramel, carmel, caramel, carmel. I don't even know which one it is at this point.

Tara: To me, it's about the spelling.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: If it has an extra A in it, it's caramel. And if it is just C-A-R-M-E-L-

Matt: Carmel by the Sea.

Tara: That's exactly right.

Matt: Hey, speaking of Carmel by the Sea.

Tara: Oh, oh, what a great unintentional transition that was, and that was unintentional.

Matt: Which has nothing to do with this next thing, but...

Tara: Go for it.

[Music transition.]

Matt: New to this year from a longstanding carmel, caramel supplier in Ireland, making chocolates, making caramels, Trader Joe's Apple Crisp Inspired Milk Chocolate Caramels.

Tara: So good. Very exciting.

Matt: New. A brand new thing.

Tara: It's a box. Hold on, (crinkling of wrapper) let me unwrap before I talk.

Matt: That was a show, Unwrapped, right?

Tara: Yeah. We tasted these at our holiday tasting panel. I had never tasted anything quite like this ever before.

Matt: Okay. We were setting the bar high.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Oh, they look great.

Tara: They're beautiful. Wow.

Matt: Don't take my word for it.

Tara: Yeah, they're gorgeous. They're like milk chocolate covered caramels with a little lighter brown.

Matt: Sort of like a beige...

Tara: Drizzle.

Matt: ... probably what they call compound in the confectionary candy making world.

Tara: On the drizzle.

Matt: Oh, yeah. Two little drizzle stripes.

Tara: The description on the box is apple cinnamon flavored caramel layered over a creamy chocolate filling studded with crispy pieces in a milk chocolate shell.

Matt: There's a lot going on, he says, with his mouthful. Very bright apple flavor, lots of sweetness.

Tara: That is a really yummy piece of candy though. Oh, those should be in stores now. How many are in a box, Matt? How many do you have in...

Matt: Is that 10? Good grief, 10 of those.

Tara: It says with one box.

Matt: With one walk around the block, neighbor to neighbor, door to door, you work through that box in no time.

Tara: Yeah, you make a lot of friends that way.

Matt: For sure.

Tara: If your neighbors are not yet your friends, they would be after you've walked around the block with that box.

Matt: I think that's the plan because I got a couple of those where it's like, "You know what? I need to go make nice."

[Music transition.]

Tara: Okay. You could, Matt, you could share with your neighbors our very last product for this shopping list. Trader Joe's Candy Jar Flavored Lip Butter Balm Set.

Matt: Oh, that's really cute. They're little tubes. They're so tiny.

Tara: They're little tubes of lip balm in different flavors. One is candy apple flavored, one is chocolate bar flavored, one is candy corn flavored, and one is gummy bats flavored. So I want to know what gummy bats flavor is.

Matt: Gummy bats. How do you get them to hold still?

Tara: (laughs) This screams Halloween treat for your kids or Halloween treat for your kids' friends in their class or...

Matt: You want to relive junior high?

Tara: Yep.

Matt: Oh wow.

Tara: Totally do it. This is a super cute...

Matt: It's a good looking collection-

Tara: ... little collection.

Matt: Is that what you have in your hand, bats?

Tara: I have gummy bats in my hand.

Matt: Gummy bats? Okay.

Tara: What is a gummy bat flavor? I think that's grape.

Matt: And it's certainly sweet. Good grief. Sweet lip balm.

Tara: I think that should be your new catchphrase for fall.

Matt: It might be.

Tara: Those are arriving in stores within the next week or so.

Matt: I feel like I'm becoming late onset pushover, but these are so cute.

Tara: They're adorable.

Matt: They're really fun.

Tara: Very excited about those. I'm also very excited and also a little bit sad that that's the end of our list.

Matt: Well, that makes 13. Good work, everybody.

Tara: That makes 13. We made it all the way to the end.

[Transition to closing music.]

Tara: That's our Fall Shopping List. Of course, there are many other new and returning products for fall. Hope you'll go on a little shopping exploration adventure at your neighborhood Trader Joe's.

Matt: That's right. To see what all of our product developers and category managers have been working so hard to bring to you this fall season. I'm really glad that Ally, Arlene, and Hasmik could stop by to give us just a little bit of inside scoop on a few of them.

Tara: And we'll have more stories behind your favorite Trader Joe's products here on the podcast. Better 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.