

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 94: Falling In Love, With A Shopping List From Trader Joe's

[Light guitar acoustic music begins.]

Matt: Ah, yes, the flavors of fall, like maple, and of course pumpkin, and also butternut squash, and honey, and apple, and Thai Red Curry.

Tara: Thai Red Curry?

Matt: Yeah, it's on the Fall Shopping List.

Tara: I can't wait to get into this list.

Matt: 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. How many new and returning products are on this Fall Shopping List?

Tara: There are hundreds of new and returning seasonal products at Trader Joe's right now, but feeling lucky?

Matt: Mm-hmm.

Tara: There are 13 we're going to focus on today.

Matt: Thirteen. Where do we begin?

[Theme music ends. Clacking of a spinning prize wheel. Upbeat accordion music begins.]

Tara: Behold the wheel of Trader Joe's fall flavors.

Matt: Wow. I'm feeling like Ryan Seacrest.

Tara: No, because that would make me Vanna White. I mean, she's awesome, but I'm no Vanna.

[Wheel stops spinning. Ding!]

Tara: Apple. Our first fall flavor is apple.

Matt: Juicy Apple Gummy Candy.

Tara: Excellent.

Matt: Some people are missing a gummy candy that we used to offer, the Gummy Tummies.

Tara: I loved the Gummy Tummies.

Matt: Those little, sweet, liquid center, penguin-shaped gummies. This is a little bit of a nod to that format of gummy.

Tara: These are officially called Trader Joe's Juicy Apple Gummy Candy with a Sweet Liquid Center. They're shaped like apples. The red ones are sweet; the green ones are sour. Want to try them?

Matt: Sure.

[Bag crinkling.]

Tara: Bon appétit.

Matt: The green one is tart in a classic green apple candy kind of way.

Tara: And the red one absolutely has a sweetness. You got that little liquid center.

Matt: These are made in France by a longtime expert in making all things gummy. These are really nice.

Tara: Yeah, I'm with you on that. I like the red one, but the green one I really like.

Matt: So those are definitely treat-y, Juicy Apple Gummy Candies. What else do we have with apple?

Tara: Oh. Oh, maybe the product I'm most excited about this fall.

Matt: Really?

Tara: It's Sliced Apple Cinnamon Sourdough Bread. I asked Trang, who is one of our category managers for bakery, to come and talk to us about this.

[Music transition. Transition to Trang.]

Trang: Hi, everyone.

Matt: All this wheel spinning has got me wanting something that bridges the gap between a little bit sweet and a little bit savory.

Tara: We have just the thing.

Trang: Sliced Apple Cinnamon Sourdough Bread.

Matt: Now, don't let this name fool you because you're jumping to conclusions. I know you dear listeners are.

Tara: What conclusions are they jumping to?

Matt: That it's like a cinnamon bun in sliced bread form. That it is like pound cake to make sandwiches with. It is neither of those things. Trang, tell us about this bread. I'm excited about this bread.

Trang: Can we try it first?

Tara: Yep.

[Bag crinkling.]

Matt: Okay.

Tara: See how quickly I did that?

Matt: Twist both arms.

Tara: We're ready.

Matt: I'll take the heel.

Trang: As usual.

Matt: Hey, even the heel is good.

Tara: I have to say, there's so many apple pieces in this bread.

Trang: Yes.

Tara: Which is not easy.

Trang: We searched far and wide for a supplier that would give us this amount of apple or inclusion in sliced bread.

Tara: Oh, Matt, I think that calls for a retail jargon alert.

[Retail jargon alert sounder.]

Matt: It's about time. Retail jargon alert. Inclusions, things that are added to, included in a recipe, a product, often in some form of suspension. Inclusions.

Trang: It's incredibly difficult, as it turns out, to slice bread with inclusions in it.

Matt: The slicing thing kind of gets gummed up or...

Trang: It gets gummed up, and then if the apple pieces are too big, it gets stuck and then it smears.

[Rustling of bag.]

Matt: This is sweet without being dessert.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: This is flavorful without being flavored, if that makes any sense. It tastes like actual in-real-life apples.

Tara: Each slice has only two grams of added sugar.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: You said at the beginning that people might be jumping to the conclusion that this is like a cinnamon bun kind of thing, really sweet. It really delivers on the sweetness of the apples, but it doesn't feel like it has a whole lot of other sweetness happening.

Matt: Slice turkey, brie, a grilled cheese on this?

Tara: Oh, a grilled cheese on this with Unexpected Cheddar?

Matt: Sure.

Tara: I'm all about that right now.

Matt: French toast is a natural. Come on, everybody. Give me a break.

Trang: We do know our listeners love sourdough bread. They love sourdough.

Matt: They love sourdough. How do you know this?

Trang: It's our number one selling sliced bread. When we look around at different bakeries and different grocery stores, we don't really see a lot of flavored sourdough.

Matt: That's interesting. So you're going where people's attention is already focused?

Trang: We wanted to do something that was multi-application, something that wasn't super sweet, and not something that wasn't super savory either. And so this was in the middle where you could absolutely eat this bread on its own. You could toast it, add a little bit of cultured butter, but you could also do, as you said, like a grilled cheese. We actually tried doing that at one point. That was delicious.

Tara: Mmm. This is so good that I imagine there will be other opportunities to do other types of sourdough bread with other kinds of inclusions.

Trang: Why yes, we're working on a blueberry sourdough for spring.

Tara: Mmm. I have an idea.

Trang: Yes?

Tara: Chocolate.

[Ding.]

Trang: We're doing that too.

Tara: Oh!

Trang: And we've already-

Matt: Caramelized onions and roasted garlic.

Tara: Ooh.

Trang: We have not tried that.

Matt: Hot dogs.

[Buzzer.]

Tara: No.

Trang: No. But chocolate is really interesting because we've already tried it in the toaster, so that won't burn.

Tara: It didn't burn?

Trang: Mm-hmm.

Tara: So this product, Sliced Apple Cinnamon Sourdough Bread, it's not going to be on our shelves every day.

Trang: No, not around forever. September through the end of the year, four months give or take.

Matt: Okay. You're always thinking about what's next. It's a lot of work.

Trang: Fun and a lot of work.

Matt: Yeah.

Tara: Trang, thank you for joining us.

Trang: Thank you for having me.

[Music ends.]

Matt: Okay.

Tara: Okay. Your turn, Matt.

Matt: Here goes.

[Clacking of a spinning wheel. Light upbeat music begins.]

Tara: Ooh, ooh, ooh! Maple, maple. Come on, maple. Come on, maple. Oh, not maple.

Matt: Oh, yeah. Here we go.

Tara: Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh!

[Ding.]

Tara: Falling Leaves.

Matt: They're delicious.

Tara: Well, in this case, I think it's a smell, not a taste, along with two others, Vanilla Woods and Spiced Pear.

Matt: I think those all sound delicious.

Tara: We're talking about Trader Joe's Fall-Scented Candle Trio. We've had a fall-scented candle trio in the past.

Matt: But this looks different.

Tara: New format, new scents, really cool box with a window in the front. And inside there are three glass jar candles.

Matt: They're really cute. They're like little, mini, old apothecary jars or something like that.

Tara: They are, and they have a little lid that seals back on for you to put that on or off. You can display these on your shelf, so it just looks like a jar with a candle in it. You don't have a label.

Matt: They're really neat because there are three different colors, these little glass jars, a golden yellow, an orangy brown.

Tara: And... hold on, here it comes.

Matt: A pomegranate ruby red.

Tara: As we mentioned, Spiced Pear, Falling Leaves, and Vanilla Woods. Soy wax blend candles with lead-free cotton wicks.

Matt: Great. Like our other candles.

Tara: Do you want to give a little sniff here? (sniffs) Those are good. I think the Spiced Pear is my favorite of the three, but I like all of them and I love the jars. I love the presentation.

Matt: If you're going to visit friends or neighbors, this might make a little host or hostess gift.

Tara: A hundred percent. All right, let's go back to the wheel.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: All right, let's do a little spin.

Matt: Here we go.

[Clacking of a spinning wheel.]

Tara: Here we go.

Matt: All right. Round and round. Oh, yes. Butternut squash, butternut squash.

[Wheel stops. Ding.]

Tara: Oh, okay. We got maple.

Matt: How about Trader Joe's Maple Brown Butter Flavored Almonds?

Tara: Here they are.

[Bag crinkling.]

Matt: A little nutty, a nice balance of savory and sweet.

Tara: "Roasted almonds covered in a maple brown butter-flavored confectionary coating and dusted with cocoa powder and maple sugar." So we buried the lede there.

Matt: I really forgot about the cocoa powder.

Tara: We got a little cocoa powder in here. They smell like a pancake breakfast.

Matt: At the fire station?

Tara: Am I wrong?

Matt: Ah, man.

Tara: Am I wrong?

Matt: No, you're not.

Tara: That is a-

Matt: And they look like little, tiny russet potatoes.

Tara: They do. (laughs)

Matt: Like we're working on the world's smallest potato ranch. There's a little salty angle to balance the sweet, but this is a sweet treat.

Tara: (crunching) But I'm getting maple. I'm getting butter. I'm getting a little bit of salt.

Matt: Your power of suggestion is strong. These taste like almonds in pancakes with maple and butter.

Tara: They do.

Matt: Mmm. These are good.

Tara: Can I have that bag back?

Matt: This is not a forever thing, right?

Tara: No, just for a limited time, so just through the fall season. These come in an eight-ounce bag. I just want to eat this whole bag right now.

Matt: They are nuts. Hot damn.

Tara: Wow, okay. Trader Joe's Maple Brown Butter Flavored Almonds. Don't sleep on these. These-

Matt: Those are worth finding.

Tara: ... these, wow, okay. I'm really glad we decided to talk about those today.

Matt: When do those come into stores?

Tara: Those are in stores now. They showed up the first week of September.

Matt: And you know what? Looking at the wheel, it's stuck on maple-

Tara: Okay, where are we going?

Matt: ... and so am I.

Tara: We also have pumpkin, and wait, how did bacon get in there?

Matt: This, I got to hear about.

Tara: Trader Joe's Pumpkin Maple Bacon Flavored Stuffies Dog Treats.

Matt: Now, that is a mouthful for your hound or otherwise.

Tara: These are not new. These are returning dog treats. We've had them every autumn since 2021.

Matt: We've come to understand that people like to give their pets different treats throughout the course of the year. So the Pumpkin Maple Bacon Flavored Stuffies, those dog treats, they're coming back. They'd only come back if they were popular.

Tara: There's a chewy center that's like molasses-y, maple, and bacon-flavored, and it's wrapped in a soft, pumpkin-flavored shell. It's not a crunchy treat. It really is a soft treat. They're a good size for most dogs, but I can see if you have a super tiny dog, you might want to break it in half. Easy to do.

Matt: Dogs apparently like pumpkin.

Tara: Love. A lot of dog owners that I know buy canned pumpkin in the fall so that they can feed their dog with it all year long and they might put a spoonful in the dog's food every day and it's supposed to be good for their coat and that kind of thing. I'm not saying that these treats

are good for their coat, but it's a little bit sweet naturally, and I guess if you're used to eating kibble...

Matt: They're not sweet by way of a human-

Tara: No, no.

Matt: ... palate.

Tara: No, for sure.

Matt: But I'm sure for dogs they must taste like a real treat-y treat.

Tara: My dogs do enjoy them. I can't speak for every dog, but dogs around the country have decided that these are worth howling for.

Matt: Absolutely.

[Music transition.]

Tara: All right, Matt, let's stick with maple. Trader Joe's Maple Leaf Ice Cream Sandwiches.

Matt: Oh, man. You know what these look like at first glance? Like our Maple Leaf-Shaped Cream Sandwich Cookies.

Tara: Well, that was the inspiration. Here, I'm going to give you one. Let's try them.

[Bag crinkling.]

Matt: They're cute.

Tara: They're just big enough that you-

Matt: You can have three.

Tara: (laughs) Well, I don't think that's the intention, but okay. They're maple-flavored cookies and they are sandwiching maple-flavored ice cream, which to me, if you're going to eat ice cream in the fall, maple ice cream is the perfect ice cream to eat in the fall.

Matt: I'd call that subtly maple-infused. It's not screamingly maple.

Tara: No, but it settles in. I love these. They're not complicated.

Matt: I like them.

Tara: They are what they are. They're Maple Leaf Ice Cream Sandwiches. Period, the end. And the outside cookie is soft enough that it's easy to eat but not so soft that it winds up all over your fingers like some of the classic ice cream sandwiches do.

Matt: Mm-hmm. Nice ratio of cookie to ice cream.

Tara: Mm-hmm.

Matt: Because the cookie is on the softer side, you don't bite into it and create that force field of pressure that squishes out the ice cream.

Tara: No, that's true.

Matt: This kind of works. This was almost designed to be eaten. Imagine that.

Tara: This was. Love those. Limited time. They're not quite in stores yet, but they should be there towards the end of September.

Matt: You know, perfect. Yeah, if you can't make it on a leaf-peeping tour, you can at least have these ice cream sandwiches.

Tara: All you have to do for leaf peeping is open up your freezer.

Matt: Done.

Tara: Okay. You want to keep going on the maple train?

Matt: I think we should.

Tara: I'd like to bring in our friend Hasmik to talk about a really interesting and delicious addition to the freezer case this fall.

[Music transition. Transition to Hasmik.]

Hasmik: Hi.

Tara: How are you?

Hasmik: I'm doing well. How are you both?

Tara: We are great. We're excited about fall.

Matt: A little sugared up, just to be completely candid, because we've had a lot of treats.

Tara: We're going to stick with treats for now.

Hasmik: Well, we're here to talk about the Teeny Tiny Maple Butter Tarts.

Tara: What are they and where did this come from?

Hasmik: I was in Prince Edward Island and it's this beautiful, beautiful island on the eastern part of Canada.

Tara: Yeah.

Hasmik: It's beautiful. The air quality was literally zero. You just wanted to take-

Tara: What does that mean?

Matt: There was no air.

Hasmik: Well, you know how when you look at the Air Quality Index-

Matt: There's stuff in it.

Hasmik: ... it's in the hundreds usually. Yeah, yeah.

Matt: You're on Prince Edward Island-

Hasmik: Prince Edward Island.

Matt: ... for the Anne of Green Gables Cosplay Convention. How did all that go?

Hasmik: There you go. Yeah, I was there- (laughs)

Tara: That's a work trip? (laughs)

Hasmik: ... trying to find a new supplier for our hash browns.

Matt: Well, for some of us it would be a work trip.

Hasmik: Yeah, there you go. Not for me though. I was out there to try to identify a secondary supplier for our hash browns, which are-

Matt: Literally to the ends of the earth.

Hasmik: I mean, yes. Yeah, yeah.

Matt: If not, at least just the North American continent.

Tara: Yeah, not the earth.

Matt: I appreciate the spirit. So you're looking for hash browns, but what happened?

Hasmik: I was looking for hash browns. I was literally there for, I think, 48 hours. So I was at this tiny little airport sitting in this little boarding area.

Matt: Boring or boarding?

Hasmik: Probably-

Matt: Was it both?

Hasmik: A little bit of both. So I had just finished this delicious lobster roll and I was hankering for something sweet, and I walked up to the little kiosk where the lady was selling bagged tea and there was this plastic-wrapped, beautiful-looking tart, like palm-sized butter tart filled with ooey, gooey, sweet filling. The crust was very, very buttery. The filling was kind of brown and oozy. It was the perfect accompaniment to the savory thing that I had just tasted, and

I'm sitting there, and I wanted to stop eating it, but I couldn't. I just literally finished the whole thing. It was probably seven or 800 calories.

Matt: It's okay. You had a long flight ahead.

Hasmik: And then I got back home and I'm thinking we needed to bring something like this to our customers, but there is no way a typical person could probably eat that ginormous of a beautiful tart.

Matt: You said it was like it could fit in the palm of your hand.

Hasmik: But I mean, it was hefty. It was weighty. It was sugar and butter and maple syrup.

Tara: It sounds delicious.

Hasmik: Just ooey, gooey deliciousness. Yeah. The way we approached the teeny tiny ones, I think the ratio of the sweetness to the buttery crust really results in a snacky kind of an experience where you can eat four or five at a time.

Tara: There's 12 of these little minis in a box. Each of these is 80 calories. It doesn't come across as overly sweet, even though it's really sweet.

Hasmik: It's very sweet.

Tara: It's maple, right? But the butter, it's like-

Hasmik: It's so good.

Tara: ... these are really good.

Hasmik: Yeah, we had actually done a photo shoot with a little bit of salt on them, like little salt granules, but that's not version that we chose to move forward with.

Matt: You were just taking glamour shots?

Hasmik: We were.

Matt: What was this, like for your little tart calendar?

Hasmik: I had asked Winnie- (laughs)

Tara: That's a whole different conversation.

Hasmik: ... but I thought, I think-

Matt: I feel like I should apologize to all the little tarts out there.

Hasmik: (laughs) I think they taste, like the sweetness in it, is enhanced because there is salt in it, but I think it's enhanced by the addition of a little bit of a flaky crust.

Tara: So you would say if you are going to heat these up in your home-

Hasmik: Yeah, before or after.

Tara: Oh, right when you take them out?

Hasmik: Yeah.

Tara: Put just a tiny little bit of flaky sea salt?

Hasmik: Teeny, teeny bit. Yeah, yeah. And actually, the salted maple foam, I was going to say you could even probably put that, but it might melt too much, but it would also pair really well with a little bit of whipped cream, but I think they're perfect just on their own.

Tara: You know what? Because you just mentioned it-

Matt: Spoiler.

Hasmik: Sorry, guys.

Tara: Okay. Trader Joe's Salted Maple Cold Foam Creamer. Cold foam is all the rage at coffee shops. It's a little bit lighter than whipped cream because the first ingredient instead of being heavy cream is skim milk. And this one is a salted maple flavor. I want to taste it right now.

Hasmik: No, now every coffee shop you go to has the option of an added cold foam.

Tara: Oh, yeah.

Hasmik: And they charge you like \$2 just with the-

Matt: That's the operative part of the equation. It'd be one thing if it was like, "Cold foam's on us," but...

Hasmik: Or like 25 cents or something. I'm like, "Why did my coffee just cost \$9?"

Tara: I'm going back to the calorie conversation. Teeny Tiny Maple Butter Tart, 80 calories. One tablespoon Salted Maple Cold Foam, 10 calories.

Hasmik: I like it.

Tara: You can have your little something sweet for less than 100 calories. I'm all in on this.

Matt: We should have a tea party.

Tara: Here we go.

[Hissing from pressurized can.]

Hasmik: Whoa. Whoa! I thought it-

Matt: It sounded like the barber shop.

Tara: (laughs) It's kind of the same idea.

Matt: Shave and the haircut, two bits. All right.

Tara: Can I have one of those spoons over there?

[Clanking of spoons.]

Hasmik: Yeah.

Matt: It's like eating a cloud.

Tara: It's so good!

Hasmik: (laughs)

Tara: It's like it's eating a maple-flavored cloud. I have no notes.

Hasmik: Mmm. Gee, it's delicious, but-

Matt: It packs way more flavor than I was expecting.

Hasmik: A lot.

Tara: It's very sweet, but it has not a lot of sugar in it. I mean-

Matt: Wow, because that is like-

Tara: So one tablespoon has two grams of sugar.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: That's not a lot. And you're not going to use much more than a tablespoon because it's just too much. If you're putting it in coffee, you're just not going to use that much.

Matt: Ah, I don't know.

Tara: I mean, you might. I wouldn't, but...

Matt: I think people will go a little heavy-handed with this.

Tara: Anybody want another spoonful?

Hasmik: I'm good.

Matt: So Trader Joe's Cold Foam Creamer, the salted maple version. This is a special seasonal appearance, I take it. I think this is going to be a hit though.

Tara: A hundred percent agree with that.

Matt: We'll just have to see.

Tara: Really good. I want to get back to-

Hasmik: Yes.

Matt: This tangent brought to you by Cold Foam Creamer.

Tara: I know, sorry.

Matt: Have we covered all the maple things?

Tara: Finally.

Matt: Here we go.

[Music ends. Clacking of a spinning wheel.]

Tara: Maple, apple, pumpkin.

Matt: Maple, pumpkin, butternut squash, honey.

Tara: Here comes honey.

[Ding. Upbeat music begins.]]

Tara: Yes! Butternut squash.

Matt: For the win.

Tara: It's almost like we planned it.

Matt: Crazy how this works.

Hasmik: (laughs)

Tara: It is.

Matt: Talk about serendipity.

Tara: It is something savory.

Matt: When it comes down to it, there's a lot of thought behind every product that makes its way into your Trader Joe's, so this is not just a new frozen thing. This is an idea turned into a real product.

Tara: And it smells so good. It's wafting through the room right now.

Hasmik: What we're about to taste is a Butternut Squash Risotto. I was in Italy last year. Americans still absolutely love Italian food. And we have the Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese, and I think butternut squash is kind of... I said this about maple, I think, several years ago. I said, "It's the next pumpkin." I feel like butternut squash is the next pumpkin. After pumpkin, it's probably the next most popular flavor that we offer in a savory option.

Matt: I mean, squash is always great, and squash is an important aspect to component of Italian cooking.

Hasmik: Yeah, and this product uses Carnaroli rice, which is Italian rice. In this product, the second ingredient is actually butternut squash. To me, it just tastes like fall in my mouth. What rounds out the product is the addition of what they call hard grating cheese. It's what a lot of Italian suppliers use as a means to impart a really delicious cheesy flavor.

[Music transition.]

Hasmik: We did play around with it a little bit, and I think sometimes for Italian suppliers it's hard to nail that American palate. They did an absolute great job with this.

Matt: I think it's important to clarify that this is not in any way a reduced or diminished version of the recipe or the idea. I mean, this is really a nice way to build on a customer favorite, the Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese. How long did this take to even heat up?

Hasmik: This one was five minutes.

Matt: Five minutes?

Tara: You did it in the microwave?

Hasmik: Yeah.

Matt: Oh, wow. Microwave?

Tara: And it tastes really good out of the microwave.

Hasmik: It tastes wonderful.

Tara: I'm really impressed with that. But you can also pop it on the stovetop. Easy-peasy.

Matt: I'm going to have some more.

Hasmik: The other thing I love about it is how clean the ingredient listing is. There are no unpronounceables. It's like traditional Italian cooking.

Tara: There is an excellent combination of flavors. You come up with a recipe in the kitchen and it tastes delicious. But scaling it up, it's not like you can just say, "Okay, use 20 times this and 30 times that." And the reality is we buy in huge quantities because our customers want us to have these products in stock.

Matt: I would think cooking that rice as well as it's done here at that scale would be really challenging.

Hasmik: They still effectively do this in small batches. Commercialization doesn't really look like what one would anticipate it would look like. It's still just maybe a larger pan, but it's still mimicking what one would do at home.

Tara: So this should be landing in stores today, the day this podcast lands.

Hasmik: Yeah.

Tara: Folks who like Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese, jump all over this-

Hasmik: Yes, I hope so.

Tara: ... because it won't be around forever. It is a limited-time product. I might like this a little more than I like Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese.

Hasmik: (laughs)

Matt: Absolutely. I'm thinking this-

Tara: I'm love the texture of it. I love-

Matt: ... with roasted vegetables. Get some parsnips and some carrots and roast them up and have this alongside those and-

Hasmik: I feel like it's something you'd see an upscale restaurant when they bring the roast chicken over and it's sitting over a bed of this beautifully cooked mashed turnips or something like that. But this would-

Matt: Mashed turnips?

Hasmik: I don't know, just-

Matt: I really, I was along for the ride, and I just jumped out, even though the car-

Hasmik: Some kind of a puree!

Tara: I'm sorry, you should have said parsnips.

Hasmik: Parsnips. I'm just going with the root vegetable.

Tara: We got parsnips. We got turnips.

Matt: On a scale of one to awesome, parsnips? Awesome. Turnips? Mmm.

Hasmik: Really? I love all of root vegetables.

Matt: Even turnips?

Hasmik: Yeah, I like all of them.

Matt: You're here for the rutabaga?

Hasmik: (laughs)

Tara: She's rooting for the rutabaga.

Hasmik: Fall is my favorite time of year.

Matt: It's not the same thing as saying, "I love turnips," but okay. I like fall too.

Tara: (laughs) All right, we're getting off course again.

Matt: Quick note. Hasmik, about your trips, whether it's the maritime provinces of Eastern Canada or the heart of Italian rice growing, you're looking for things on a list, but you're open to new ideas and bringing those back, so thank you.

Hasmik: Yeah, I think one of my favorite things just growing up was like if I tasted something wonderful, I wanted to share it with other people because I want to give them a taste of what I had just experienced. Now I get to do it on a much larger scale.

Matt: Keep up the great work.

Tara: Thanks for feeding us.

Hasmik: (mouth full of food) You're welcome. (laughs)

[Music ends.]

Tara: Are we spinning the wheel?

Matt: Ah, what's left?

Tara: Other.

Matt: Other?

[Light upbeat music begins.]

Matt: All right, let's take a break on the shtick and just do the rest of the list.

Tara: Ready? Trader Joe's Loaded Mashed Potatoes made with sharp cheddar cheese, sour cream, uncured bacon, and scallions.

Matt: Yeah, I'm remembering the tasting panel when we finally landed on this formulation. This is like the twice-baked potato of my childhood with no prep time.

Tara: And no potato skins to get in the way.

Matt: Oh, I like the potato skins.

Tara: Yeah, but when you're eating a twice-baked potato, by the time you get to the skin, you're like, "Oh, I've already had too much." This is a 16-ounce container of mashed potatoes with all that good stuff already mixed up inside it.

Matt: So in the fridge section, that refrigerated part of the store with other side dishes. This is so easy.

Tara: You can put it in the oven if you want to take some time and make a real, authentic, homemade style.

Matt: Get that sort of crunchy top and browning.

Tara: Yeah, and it might take about 20 minutes, but if you really need your mashed potatoes quickly, it's two and a half, three minutes in the microwave. They're so delicious. They're already in stores. It is a limited availability product. It's really just for fall and early winter.

Matt: Of course we're thinking about dinner, but I would like to propose for consideration brunch or a late breakfast, or heck, an early breakfast. These would be great at breakfast, I think.

Tara: Interesting. At breakfast, I think I would want it a little spicy. Do you have a hot sauce for breakfast?

Matt: I like our Green Dragon Hot Sauce-

Tara: Oh, yeah. Okay.

Matt: ... a lot because it's got a range of flavors. We have been working on bringing back what was a short-lived product, a taco sauce.

Tara: Oh, yes. There's been a lot of talk about that being gone.

Matt: Kind of a classic. Just tasted with Elena and the Grocery Team a version that I thought was right down the middle like a fastball. Perfect. So I'm looking forward to that. That would be nice.

Tara: Okay.

[Music transition.]

Tara: All right, Matt, we are nearing the end of our list but will we get accused of talking about too many treats, too many sweet things, right?

Matt: Well, if the shoe fits.

Tara: I know, but right now we have greens.

Matt: Hey!

Tara: And greens that are so exciting and delicious that I really want to talk about them. The Cranberry Orange Spinach Salad Kit. Maybe from the front in the store, you might look at it and say, "It's a bag of spinach."

Matt: Baby spinach.

[Bag crinkling.]

Tara: And in the back of the bag is a little pouch (bag crinkling) with a bunch of other stuff in it.

Matt: You've got some crunchy components (bag crinkling), certainly a dressing.

Tara: We have dried cranberries (bag crinkling). We have-

Matt: Pecans.

Tara: ... pecans. Pecans, pecans.

Matt: Pecans.

Tara: Okay. Blue cheese.

Matt: A very finely crumbled blue cheese crumble.

Tara: And it's like an orange vinaigrette. Oh, that's good.

Matt: Is that a sesame seed I see swimming around in there? Some nice fall flavors.

Tara: You want a quick spinach salad at home? Here it is, all your components.

Matt: I've been looking forward to talking about this. And this is in the fridge section, Thai Style Red Curry Soup with pumpkin and chicken, a little ginger, lemongrass. Wonderful, wonderful soup.

Tara: I might serve this as not necessarily a soup.

Matt: Oh.

Tara: I might pour it over rice, or you could serve it over noodles.

Matt: If you were wanting to make a really cozy lunch or dinner for a great friend, if you took that Apple Cinnamon Sliced Sourdough Bread and made a grilled cheese with Unexpected Cheddar and dipped it into this Thai Style Red Curry Soup, that would be fantastic.

Tara: We should have this one through what people call soup season, fall-winterish kind of thing. That's the plan right now. You'll be happy to find that in our soup section.

Matt: In the fridge.

Tara: In the fridge.

Matt: Next to all the other great soups that we've got.

Tara: Absolutely. We're getting in the home stretch here, Matt.

Matt: Let's hydrate.

[Transition to upbeat music.]

Tara: We're going to hydrate, honey. Oh, I mean, we're going to honey hydrate. Here's what we have. Honey Hydration Face Mask, this is a warming face mask. Do you know what that is?

Matt: No.

Tara: Okay.

Matt: I feel like I'm always warm enough.

Tara: It's this absolutely adorable glass jar. One, two, three, four-

Matt: It's hexagonal.

Tara: ... five, six. Yes, it has six sides, so it's a-

Matt: It looks like the cell within a honeycomb that bees make.

Tara: Look at that.

Matt: How clever of us, or somebody.

Tara: Our customers have been really happy with our Honey Hydration Kit that has the different skincare products in it. Well, this one we're selling on its own as a standalone product just for a limited time. It is a warming face mask. So you open it up, right?

Matt: Does it make you feel tingly?

Tara: You rub it into your skin. It gets warm as you put it on and it does feel a little tingly on your skin. You want to try it? See what happens?

Matt: With great trepidation.

Tara: No, no, it's not scary at all. So here's the instructions. I'm going to read them to you.

Matt: It smells nice.

Tara: "Apply generously to a clean face and neck." Are you clean?

Matt: No.

Tara: "Massage into skin for one to two minutes while it warms and transforms into a white cream." So over time, as you are massaging it into your skin, the appearance of it will change.

Matt: I mean, truth be told, if you massage anything for two minutes, it's going to warm up, right? I got it.

Tara: But then you're supposed to leave it on for 10 to 15 minutes and then rinse it off.

Matt: Oh. Is that kind of how most masks work?

Tara: Yeah. Yep.

Matt: But you don't leave them on?

Tara: Not for too long. You leave them on for a bit and then you rinse them off. And when you rinse them off, off go all of those impurities in your skin and your skin is left feeling really fresh and rejuvenated. At least that's the idea. It has niacinamide in it. It has sea buckthorn and ceramide. I have seen similar types of things out there in bath and beauty shops. You know the specialty places?

Matt: Sure.

Tara: For like \$40 to \$50. You won't pay anywhere near that at Trader Joe's for this, but it is not an everyday product. It has arrived in stores. You'll see it. The actual name, Trader Joe's Honey Hydration Face Mask. And for what it's worth, it's sized in such a way that you can carry it on an airplane. It is fewer than three ounces or 100 grams.

Matt: Traveling home for the holidays, needing to look your best and brightest.

Tara: There you go. Yeah, or buying gifts to bring to others as you travel and you-

Matt: And you decided not to check a bag.

Tara: Yep. There you go.

Matt: You still have this covered. Wow, okay. Heck. Well, that's handy.

Tara: You know what else we have covered, Matt?

Matt: Hmm?

Tara: This entire list.

[Transition to close. Closing music begins.]

Matt: Well, that's a relief for some, I'm sure.

Tara: We have covered all 13 products on our Fall Shopping List. Our wheel is coming off its axle.

Matt: I guess I just don't know my own strength.

Tara: There are lots more fall products for your shopping list at your neighborhood Trader Joe's. And there are more podcasts coming soon, so 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.

Tara: Have a great fall.