

# Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 67.5: A Happy Thanksgiving Wish From Trader Joe's

*[Light upbeat music.]*

Matt: It's Thanksgiving time and as we have always done, we gather on that fourth Thursday in November to share food, give thanks, and show appreciation.

Tara: Actually Matt, it's only been a national holiday set on that date since 1941.

Matt: But we can agree that at Trader Joe's, Thanksgiving is about wonderful food. And I mean, not just turkey, but the stuffing and...

Tara: Hey, Matt. Matt, Thanksgiving at Trader Joe's actually is really about so much more than food, and we have two special guests with us today to explain.

*[Music ends.]*

Matt: Let's go Inside Trader Joe's.

*[Theme music begins and 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. You know, Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the many things and people for which we're so thankful.

Tara: Absolutely, Matt. And on this mini episode of Inside Trader Joe's, we are so happy to welcome our Chairman and CEO Bryan Palbaum, and our Vice CEO and President Jon Basalone. Welcome!

*[Opening theme music ends. Light upbeat music begins.]*

Bryan: Thank you.

Matt: Jon, always good to see you.

Jon: Hello, thanks for having me once again.

Tara: It's 2023, it's Thanksgiving week. What are you thankful for this year?

Jon: It's a long list.

Bryan: Well, I'm certainly thankful for my family. They're in good health. I'm thankful for my friends. And really when I think about Thanksgiving and I think about Trader Joe's, I'm thankful that I get to be part of an organization of so many crew members, both in our stores and in our office that share my passion for really making sure that our customers are having a great experience. And I'm thankful that I get to work along with Jon Basalone in making sure that we're taking care of our crew members in the stores. We're supporting them so that they can do the best job that they can.

Jon: Usually when I think of Thanksgiving and really reflect on stuff, it's groups of people that come to mind, you know, family and friends. Certainly our customers, crew members, the people that supply us our products and do all the work that support what we do at Trader Joe's. You know, I've been working with crew members for 33 years, and worked in stores for over 10 years with Trader Joe's, and I know that at any given moment, whether it's four in the morning or midnight, somebody's out there unloading a truck, stocking shelves, helping customers do things. I really like Thanksgiving day because it's one of only three days where we're closed as a company. And I know that on that day, all of our crew members have a chance to just take a breath, relax, be with friends and family, and take a day off, a true day off and just, hopefully relax and reflect on things they're thankful for too.

Tara: What really strikes me about listening to you and Jon talk about what you're thankful for is it's so similar. Like you're really in sync.

Bryan: It doesn't happen by accident. I think it's interesting. I don't think it's just Jon and myself. I really think it is everybody at Trader Joe's. We share a passion. It creates a really rewarding environment within which to work.

Jon: I'm kind of going with a more of a Trader Joe's thankfulness theme. I won't get too personal.

Tara: Okay, but you can. I mean, you know.

Jon: Well, I mean, I am thankful that the Super Sour Scandinavian Swimmers are doing well because that happens to be my wife's favorite product, and I don't ever want to have to break the news to her that that product's at risk of being discontinued, but...(laughs)

Tara: I thought you weren't going to use the D word for a second.

Jon: Even saying the product name out loud probably isn't a good thing.

Matt: It's a form of a jinx.

Jon: Yes.

*[Music transition.]*

Tara: I saw a photo on some social media site the other day of a crew member at one of our stores dressed for Halloween. And his t-shirt said, "Discontinued Product Grief Counselor."

Jon: Oh, that is good! (chuckles)

Tara: And some of the...

Bryan: That's fantastic.

Jon: That's fantastic.

Matt: That's good.

Tara: Some of the comments on the post that I saw were, "You would make a fortune." I just loved that a crew member would take that upon themselves to say, "Come on, I can commiserate with you and I can probably help you find something else that you're going to love." And that's part of the grief process.

Bryan: It absolutely is. In order for us to create room for new products, unfortunately, some of the products that customers are not buying as much of have to go away. But we certainly are sympathetic to eventually everyone will have a product discontinued. I remember when my shaving cream was discontinued, and it was a shock to the system, but I got over it and I found another shaving cream at Trader Joe's that I'm very loyal to right now.

Tara: Anything else you want to add for Thanksgiving?

Bryan: I am thankful that the kimbap is back in stock because it has become a favorite of mine at the house.

Tara: Really?

Bryan: Absolutely.

Tara: I would not have pegged you as a kimbap lover.

Bryan: Love it.

Tara: Okay.

Bryan: And it's along with the frozen Chicken Tikka Masala. If I have those two products, I'm pretty much set.

Tara: I'm thankful for that Pretzel Bread Pudding. Oh, my goodness.

Bryan: I don't think I've had that.

Tara: It is absolutely extraordinary.

Jon: I'll be really thankful if I can get the Tangerine Cream Bar to be a year-round product. I'm working on that for next year's Thanksgiving.

Tara: Okay.

Jon: (laughs)

Tara: We'll see. That would be a good one to be year-round.

Jon: And I can't leave without saying thanks to all of our customers for showing up every day. We appreciate them. Obviously, there wouldn't be a Trader Joe's without them as well, so.

Bryan: Yeah, I would absolutely agree.

Tara: I don't think I could say it better than that. I won't even try.

Jon: And thanks for having me here.

Bryan: It's great to be here.

Jon: I'm thankful for this podcast.

Tara: I'm thankful that you're thankful for this podcast. (laughs)

Matt: As am I.

Tara: Bryan and Jon, thank you so much for coming in here. I mean, I think about major companies in this country and, you know, if there's a message that's going to come from the CEO, it's going to be a very carefully worded, three paragraph message written by a PR firm and there's a bunch of people who have edits and it goes through a whole bunch of machinations and then it finally gets to the leadership and they edit it some more. And I just walked by your offices and said, "Hey, you want to come talk to us for the podcast?"

Jon: Happy to help!

Tara: It's really nice.

Matt: And that illustrates why we're so thankful for you.

Tara: And thanks for all you do every day. We really appreciate you.

Bryan: Happy Thanksgiving to everybody!

*[Music ends. Closing music begins.]*

Tara: We'll be back in everyone's podcast apps next week with another full-length episode. So, please make sure you get it by hitting that free subscribe or follow button.

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

Tara: Until next week, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.

Tara: And Happy Thanksgiving, too.

Matt: And Happy Thanksgiving, too.