

Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 51: Trader Joe's Spectacular Summertime Shopping List

[Classical music in background.]

Tara: It's nearly summertime and we hope your living is easy.

Matt: Uh, George Gershwin, of course, that makes me think of "Come to the Moon" his big hit from 1919. And you know, it's almost time for June's full moon, the Strawberry Moon, which will be in full effect on June 14th. I hope you can check it out. The second supermoon of the year. That's when the moon is closest to the earth, it'll be this giant Moon moon up in the sky. You know, June's moon has also been called the Mead Moon and the honeymoon, maybe that's because of all those June weddings, the honeymoon, but I'm over the moon and ready for this episode to get going.

Tara: Uhhh, okay.

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 marketing product guy.

Tara: So it's summer shopping list time. You actually might want to listen to this episode while driving to your neighborhood Trader Joe's. It'll get you dreaming about ice cream and pineapples and nectarines and cherries and salad dressing and sparkling water and...

Matt: But please...please, don't dream and drive.

[Theme music ends.]

Tara: So where do we start?

Matt: How's about I make you a dill?

Tara: Oh, good grief.

Matt: Pickle, that is.

[Light upbeat music begins.]

Tara: We're making pickle a thing. Last year we introduced our Dill Pickle Mustard. It was a big success. People loved it.

Matt: Which at first I thought this is craziness to find, right? Like, do we really need this? But this is such a good mustard and the combo is so perfect. And it's all about acidity

and it's all about acidity working with, if it's a hot dog or even like on a pastrami sandwich, man, this is the ticket. It's so, so good. It's back. It's seasonal. People went mad for it last year.

Tara: It's just a good, simple, tasty yellow mustard with pickles in it, like actual pickles.

Matt: And you know, if you use mustard to make summery things like potato salad, this would be a great candidate for that. Or actually, you know, mustard is the secret weapon in a good vinaigrette.

Tara: Yep.

Matt: And this would be really fun to add to that. Make a summery vinaigrette that kinda has a little dill pickle angle to it.

Tara: That's a pretty cool idea. All right, what else is here in pickle land?

Matt: Well, it's pickle powder time. It's Seasoning In A Pickle, a seasoning blend. So this is carrying on what is now become a tradition for us to make great spice blends approachable, and fun. And this is both of those. It's pickle seasoning. So if you've loved our Popcorn In A Pickle, if you've loved our Pickle Potato Chips, this is basically that seasoning, that essence, in a little shaker jar.

Tara: It just smells so good. I feel like pickles, I mean, if you don't like pickles, then you don't have to listen to this part of the podcast.

Matt: Sure, sure. Just hum quietly to yourself. But if that Dill Pickle Mustard was all about acidity, so is this pickle, the Seasoning In A Pickle Spice Blend, because it's really the backbone is based on vinegar powder. And then you have dill and a little garlic, some aromatics going on there, but this is a pucker power seasoning kind of thing.

Tara: You could sprinkle it over popcorn if you wanted to make your own.

Matt: French fries. French fries are screaming for this. Or even if you were doing something like garlic bread, like instead of salt, or like you might do a garlic salt, try this on garlic bread and make like weird pickle bread. I think that would be good.

Tara: I'm thinking egg salad. I think that would be really delicious.

Matt: Yes, Seasoning In A Pickle.

Tara: Yep. As soon as this episode launches, you should be able to find this product in the store. Another one of those ingredients that we love in summertime products is ube and I'll admit it was only a few years ago that I learned what ube was. It's like a purple yam that originates in the Philippines and it has a sweet flavor and you combine it with a bunch of other ingredients and make other delicious things. So returning this summer is Ube Ice Cream.

Matt: For those of you been waiting on pins and needles for yam ice cream, this is actual yam ice cream and ube, its flavor, I would say it's subtle, it's sweet.

Tara: It's like not overwhelmingly sweet, but you want to try some while we're here?

Matt: Sure.

Tara: It's just yummy and it's really creamy.

Matt: That is really great. I can see why it's so, so popular, right? Because it's just so easy.

Tara: Yep.

Matt: It's that is, is easy to eat that ice cream.

Tara: Too easy. We have another ice cream to talk about but we're going to save that until closer to the end.

Matt: Well, that was a tease.

Tara: It was a tease.

Matt: Way to set the hook.

Tara: So we have a new ube product coming.

Matt: A new bay.

Tara: Tell us about that one, Matt.

Matt: Well, this is kind of like the ube version of lemon curd. It's a spread, it is thick, unctuous, sweet. You could certainly put this on toast, on top of a cheesecake, in a thumbprint cookie. This actually is made with dairy. There is coconut in this. It is that incredible purple color. This is really fun.

Tara: I might put that, like on, on a waffle

Matt: I think we need to come up with like a way to make a sweet ube spread Panini. And I think we need some fruit in there.

Tara: That sounds good.

Matt: That would be interesting.

Tara: Right now I want to go into something, it's sort of a companion product to our Crunchy Chili Onion. And instead of being red, it's really green in a jar, and it's Crunchy Jalapeño Lime. So I want to open this and stir it up and I'm willing to just take a bite.

Matt: I remember this being slightly less spicy than the everyday Crunchy Chili Onion, but this has got a great deep, rich, green color. And it's got a nice pop of lime, lime zest. The jalapeño heat is balanced, it's moderated, it's easy to open.

Tara: (laughs) Thank you. I'm having a heck of a time opening...you know, it's amazing how strong this thin little plastic seal is.

Matt: Or...

Tara: Or I'm just so weak? (unwrapping jar)

Matt: Lots of lime.

Tara: Oh my gosh, that smells so good. All right, I'm going to grab a spoon here cause I'm going to, I mean, it's really oily at the top, so you have to give it a good stir and just sort of pull up all those herbs and all of that deliciousness.

[Mixing jar.]

Matt: The sound is like making a sand castle with a bucket and wet sand.

Tara: It is, this is the ASMR edition Inside Trader Joe's.

Matt: That sounds good. It was like the sound of like zombies, feasting.

Tara: (laughing) That's one of the most delicious things I've had in a really long time. Right up front is like lime, lime, lime, and then you get some jalapeño heat, and then you get some onion and then the heat kicks in again.

Matt: It's spicy, but it's not as spicy as the other one, says the guy about to choke on it.

Tara: So I put the other one on scrambled eggs a lot.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: This will be my summertime replacement for that. I love the idea of it going into a potato salad. I would put this on top of a burger that just came off the grill and it would add texture and flavor. This product is not going to show up on shelves probably until early July or later in July.

Matt: That's really delicious. Well, we had Crunchy Jalapeño Lime, let's go another jalapeño lime product. Jalapeño Limeade, it's coming back. People love this. I will admit that I thought it was a wacky idea when we were first working on it, years back. Organic Jalapeño Limeade, it is spicy limeade. I like to make ice cubes out of this actually, you know, freeze them up and then drop those Jalapeño Limeade ice cubes into other things. I know that people make mixed drinks, margarita type things, I guess, with this.

Tara: Yea, I do that.

Matt: Okay.

Tara: I'll sometimes put a little Chili Lime Seasoning on the rim of the glass when I do that instead of salt.

Matt: Well, I'm thinking if you were to make like a frozen margarita, like a slushy margarita...

Tara: Yeah, that would be really good. But it's also really good and really interesting flavors just to drink it on its own.

Matt: This is really fun.

Tara: Yeah, and I think this is like the fifth year that we've had it in the summertime.

Matt: I, you know, it might even be more, but it's certainly getting up there. And so that's back by overwhelming customer demand, the customer favorite, for sure.

Tara: It's like a, sort of a sign that summer is coming when I see that in the store now, so yay! Go Jalapeño Limeade! And it's organic.

[Small transition.]

Tara: All right, more fun, vibrant, summertime flavors. This is something I've seen recipes for all over the internet for the last couple of years, and we've managed to get it into a bottle in a really nice way. It's a Strawberry Basil Vinaigrette.

Matt: And not as sweet as you might expect. So there's some good bracing acidity as you would expect from a vinaigrette.

Tara: And that standard two tablespoon serving size of this dressing. There's only four grams of sugar.

Matt: I do think that this tart dressing would work really well with fruit. I think you could actually dress strawberries with it. I think it would be really interesting on a watermelon salad that had some sharp salty cheese like a feta or grilled halloumi. I think that this could be fun on a coleslaw.

Tara: I'm thinking of salad of like mixed greens and maybe some arugula with chopped walnuts and goat cheese with this dressing. I think that would really, that would make me happy. I think that's going to be on my list.

Tara: Okay, speaking of lists.

[Transition to upbeat music.]

Matt: We're on it.

Tara: Something that's on everybody's list, that everyone's looking forward to coming back this season is the Brazil Nut Body Butter that we introduced last season.

Matt: Oh man, there are people ever excited. I mean, this is incredible.

Tara: Okay, so we can tell you here you will find that in your neighborhood Trader Joe's this summer.

Matt: Thank goodness.

Tara: Just as exciting, is that we have a companion product that our product developers worked on for a number of months to get it exactly right and it is a Brazil Nut Body Scrub that features the same scents that everyone loved about the Brazil Nut Body Butter, but this time in a scrub format.

Matt: It's a body scrub, but it does smell delicious.

Tara: All right, I'm going to open it up. (opening jar) Smells so good.

Matt: So this is a scrub, it's a body scrub and it's kind of a chunky crystal. What's it made out of?

Tara: It's a sugar-based scrub. That's really where all the texture is coming from. So no micro plastics, none of that nonsense that you don't want out in the world. It has, um, Guaraná and aloe leaf in it.

Matt: And the actual Brazil nut oil, right?

Tara: It does. You might look at the ingredients and say, I don't see Brazil nut right off the bat, but it is the scientific name, which I'm not going to pronounce because it's going to be bad.

Matt: Oh, give it a shot.

Tara: Uh, all right. Bertholletia? Bertholletia excelsa seed oil.

Matt: I mean, people are going to be glowing with radiance after this.

Tara: It's looking like end of July for this one. This'll be super limited also like the Brazil Nut Body Butter was last year. There's only so much of this we can get at a time. When you see it, grab it. So if it's not there, it's not because we didn't want to get more, it's because this is what we could get right now.

Matt: And in meanwhile, scrub.

Tara: Right, scrub, scrub, scrub.

[Music ends.]

Matt: In the summertime, I always think of thank goodness for watermelon.

[Light music begins.]

Matt: The flavor, the texture, it's so refreshing. People have been eating watermelon for thousands of years. Ancient Egyptians enjoyed watermelon and that melon that originated on the African continent was then hybridized, starting in actually Japan in the 1930s to come up with the quote unquote seedless varieties that we're now planting and enjoying. Every time I cut up on a seedless watermelon, there's always a few seeds, right?

Tara: Sure.

Matt: So what makes it like officially a seedless watermelon seedless? A seedless watermelon must have fewer than 10 mature seeds visible when you cut that melon into four equal parts.

Tara: That's a good fun fact. In my house the favorite thing to do with summertime watermelon is it's not really just to eat it straight out. Cut up a bunch of watermelon and we throw it in the blender. We take some fresh or frozen strawberries, it's up to you, and squeeze a few fresh lemons, put all that in a blender, and you have instant strawberry watermelon lemonade with no sugar needed. And if you're so inclined, that's also good with some tequila or with a little vodka.

Matt: Absolutely. And the good news there, watermelon loaded with lycopene. So with every adult beverage, you're doing yourself some other type of favor, I guess.

Tara: (laughs)

[Small transition.]

Matt: Okay, what's next on the list?

Tara: Watermelon and Peach Macarons. And so this is a, just a summertime only version of macarons. I think it's going to show up in stores like right around the end of July somewhere. I'm going to open this box (opening box). They come in the freezer, you take them out for about an hour and they're just perfect, fresh. They're made for us in Belgium.

Matt: And the thing that's cool about this package, there's no plastic in this package.

Tara: No, it's really cool.

Matt: That's kind of fun.

Tara: It's a paperboard box and inside is a paperboard sleeve with space for 10 macarons.

Matt: They look like little hamburgers but they're not.

Tara: Yeah, five are peach and five are watermelon. I'm going to try the watermelon one.

Matt: The cookies have that classic macaron texture, a little bit of chewiness from the almond flour and these are sweet. Certainly they taste like their namesake fruit.

Tara: That watermelon one is pretty fantastic actually. You know what the best way to know it's summertime at Trader Joe's is?

Matt: I was going to say like when that one guy is wearing shorts, but he's always wearing shorts.

Tara: Right, totally always wearing shorts. No, it's when the big boxes of peaches and nectarines start to arrive.

Matt: That is the signal.

Tara: Those big four pound boxes of peaches and nectarines, and we only have them at peak peach and nectarine season.

Matt: Basically now, and as long as we can get them, as long as they're up to snuff, as long as they're great. They are packaged as carefully as they are to protect the fruit because they are softer than a lot of other stone fruit when harvested, when packed and shipped.

Tara: They're softer than a lot of other stone fruit, but these they still generally need a day or two when you get them home to be like perfect.

Matt: So it's really fun because on the boxes they'll, there are printed the different varieties, so you can kind of pick and choose and figure out which one you love and then be heartbroken when it's not there anymore. But something else great is going to be coming along in its place.

Tara: Okay, so speaking of tartness and sweet, summertime cherries. There's nothing like summertime cherries. Like you can buy frozen cherries, they're fine, they do the job, they, you know, you can make a pie, you can make a smoothie, you can do all those things, but fresh summertime cherries that you have to pit yourself, they're perfect.

Matt: These things are so, so, so good. I am going to, I can't help myself. It's an early season plug, apricots. We need to eat more apricots. They are so good and there used to be parts of California, in particular, that just had miles and miles and miles of apricots. And those have been plowed under for something else, who knows what, something I'm sure, but still, apricots.

Tara: The biggest challenge with apricot, is it äpricot or is it āpricot?

Matt: I say äpricot.

Tara: I do too, but there are people who will vehemently disagree with us and, uh, they'll be wrong. Looking at the list. We have four more products.

Matt: Pineapple. We love pineapple. We've been thinking about ways to get the pineapple flavor into other beverages. We have in a really handy pack, an eight pack of cans, Sparkling Pineapple Flavored Water. No calories, no sugar added. But this really incredible essence and aroma of pineapple when you open it up. It's so, so fun. It's kind of like a brain tweak when you taste this because you think it's going to be sugary, sugary sweet, like pineapple juice, and it's not.

Tara: This is in stores now. I'm kind of obsessing over all of these flavored sparkling waters that we have right now because the flavors are so good. All the refreshment and all the satisfaction of a soda, but it's actually more refreshing because there's no sugar, there's nothing added in there. What else do we have, Matt?

Matt: And then there were three. So this is like where we thought like one sparkling pineapple thing was good, two must be great. We have Sparkling Pineapple Juice Beverage because it's not just juice and it's made with sparkling water so we have to use that juice beverage, Sparkling Pineapple Juice Beverage.

Tara: That's a regulatory thing, right?

Matt: Yes, thank goodness someone is regulating that. But so that it's clear, so that it's not confusing. That's the whole spirit, that's the intent cause you would think like, was it just sparkling pineapple juice?

Tara: Right.

Matt: It could be, but this is different so we name it different.

Tara: Okay, that makes sense.

Matt: Um, so this is in keeping with some of our other sparkling juices that are a blend of juice and sparkling water. So a little lighter flavor, not so heavy sweet, absolutely refreshing. Just about half the calories, half the sugar of like say full strength pineapple juice.

Tara: And that's in stores now so if you want it, go get it. It is there for you. We are in the home stretch, Matt.

Matt: If you're still listening, there are only two left.

Tara: (laughs) Our parents are still listening.

Matt: Yeah, actually my mom doesn't.

Tara: Oh, (laughs) this isn't therapy.

Matt: Of course she doesn't.

Tara: You might've noticed that there's an assortment of ice cream that shows up in our freezers and then it's gone and then something else comes in and then it's gone and then something else comes in and then it's gone. Eventually some of that stuff may come back if people responded to it well, but we just want to keep it fresh and make sure that every time you come in, you see something that makes you go, "Ooh, I have to try that."

Matt: This is new. This is really fun. This is a take on...

Tara: Horchata. And for those who don't know what horchata is, Matt, what's horchata?

Matt: Well, it's a beverage. It's often made with rice. Some versions are made with a type of nut called the tiger nut. Lots of cinnamon, sort of this creamy, almost dairy-like, but not necessarily made with dairy mouthfeel and this ice cream, this is actual ice cream. It's ice cream with some cookies.

Tara: And those are sort of horchata flavored cookie pieces. So there's, they have a cinnamon forward flavor. You want to try some of this, Matt?

Matt: Oh, heck yeah.

Tara: Okay, there you go. You need another spoon?

Matt: I could just use my hands.

Tara: The cinnamon is so perfect. It's just enough. The ice cream is really creamy. The cookies have really good texture. Sometimes when you put cookies and ice cream, they just get kind of funky texture wise.

Matt: Lots of cinnamon speckles.

Tara: We're really big horchata fans in our family. Whenever we go to a Mexican restaurant or we find a, um, agua fresca stand at, um, at a farmer's market, it's so delicious.

Matt: Man, I can really, um, I could live in a bomb shelter just with that.

Tara: It's a full impact ice cream, just like be clear, it's not dairy free. It's not light. It's super satisfying. It's really creamy. It's all those things that the best ice cream is.

Matt: I think people are going to love this flavor. It's so good.

Tara: Yeah, you should see this in our freezers about the end of June.

Matt: I'm going to be hanging out and waiting in the frozen aisle for that delivery.

Tara: Seriously. We have one product left on our list to talk about. If you've tried our Almond Butter Coated Almonds, these are Cashew Butter Coated Cashews.

Matt: Category Manager Alison for the candy category, after those Almond Butter Almonds launched and customers loved them, Alison was thinking of like, "Well, you know, cashews are so good, what could we do that's with a cashew that's similar?" Yes, there is a candy team. They really dug in on this and this was a multi-step, many iterations long

process, and so we wound up with honey roasted cashews covered in this cashew butter coating. So talk about gilding the lily.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: We're always looking for ways to turn people onto new-fangled versions of cashews. This is it. This is really cool.

Tara: (crunching) Those are really good. They're sweet.

Matt: And salty.

Tara: It's got all kinds of flavors going on all at once and you don't really expect it when you look at it, it's kind of an innocuous looking thing, right?

Matt: Yeah, I mean, no offense Cashew Butter Cashews, but you're not much to look at.

Tara: I think folks are gonna enjoy those. That is not a seasonal item. That is not a summertime only item. So the plan for those is that they'll sit alongside those Almond Butter Almonds as a regular everyday product. They'll be in the stores right around the end of June, maybe, you know, a week or so after this podcast launches, they should show up in stores.

Matt: Okay. So that's our plan and customers will either make it so or not.

Tara: Yeah.

Matt: Um, so my fingers are crossed for them.

Tara: Yeah, Matt, I think maybe this seems like a good time to end the podcast.

[Closing music begins.]

Matt: Why?

Tara: Because that's the end of our list. But there are a huge number of additional seasonally available products that we didn't get to in this episode and we hope that in the spirit of adventure and discovery, you'll give some of them a try.

Matt: And we hope you'll try leaving us a rating or even a review on your podcast app.

Tara: Or hit that free subscribe button.

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

Tara: Until next time, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.