

What's in Store

2009



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DELI DEPARTMENT

Ethnic Foods on the Rise

America loves ethnic food. According to FMI's *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends 2008*, more than one-fifth of all consumers prepare or eat ethnic meals once a week or more.¹⁵⁷ A May 2007 Technomic Consumer Survey found:

- 64% of consumers enjoy sampling unfamiliar foods.
- 82% were attracted by authentic ethnic flavors.
- 72% were interested in new ethnic flavors.
- 76% placed a high importance on bold and unusual flavors.¹⁵⁸

In a survey of 283 consumers, 93% of whom were non-Hispanic Caucasians, food marketing firm Olson Communications confirmed that the most popular ethnic cuisines among this group were Chinese, Mexican, and Italian, followed by Greek and Thai. Younger consumers were familiar with the broadest array of ethnic cuisines. Sixty percent of respondents said they purchased ethnic foods at restaurants, 55% at grocery stores and 43% at specialty ethnic grocers (participants could list more than one venue). Consumers most frequently purchase ethnic foods that are “fully prepared and fresh,” according to the

Of the people surveyed, 33% were familiar with Thai food, 31% with Japanese, 25% with Indian and 11% with Vietnamese. Soy, ginger, green tea, curry, and wasabi were the top flavors that respondents identified with Asian foods.¹⁶⁰

When asked to identify Latin American flavors, respondents most often chose chile pepper, cilantro, tomato, and lime.¹⁶¹

Garlic, basil, and Parmesan were the three flavors most affiliated with Mediterranean food.¹⁶²

Among the top flavors for trendy foods ranked by the American Culinary Federation are Mediterranean, Latin American, and Pan-Asian.¹⁶³ Emerging flavors in supermarket delis include Indian, Cajun, and Caribbean, according to Jacqueline Ross Lieberman of *Deli Business*. And consumers are exploring new flavors within their favorite ethnic cuisines—for example, sweet plantain slices or cassava fries within Hispanic and Caribbean cuisine.¹⁶⁴