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In search of the next Avocado Toast

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Produce mavens are often asked, “What is going to be the new kiwi?” or “What is the new kale?” Marketers want to take advantage of promising trends, to be on the forefront and in some cases to be the impetus of changes in consumer behavior. An ongoing question for the team at the California Avocado Commission is, “What’s the next avocado toast?”



CAC’s marketing team, including foodservice and retail professionals as well as California avocado

brand ambassadors (registered dietitian nutritionists, chefs and bloggers), continually develops new recipes and usage ideas while scanning for avocado culinary trends.

California Avocado Toast was a concept they pushed hard starting in 2013, seeking to expand avocado consumption for breakfast. From a simple smashed avocado on toasted bread that avocado growers enjoyed long before it was trendy to a breakfast favorite topped with bacon, egg, tahini or even trout, avocado toast has leaped beyond breakfast to fit into meals and snacks around the clock.

“This year the industry news is mostly about demand for avocados exceeding supply, but every year is different and it is critical to continuously encourage demand,” said Jan DeLyser, vice president marketing for the CAC. DeLyser spoke with The Produce News about four big trends for avocados that go beyond avocado toast.

The first is avocado as edible art. Ideas such as an avocado cut and rolled to resemble a rose abound on Pinterest and Instagram. The CAC featured a “how-to” for creating an avocado rose in a retail recipe booklet this year and also produced a video showing consumers how to “ribbonize” an avocado. New avocado-centric restaurants use avocado art as a central showcase, doing for avocados what baristas do for a café latte.

Avocado also is being used to bring creaminess to dishes with no cream or no dairy products. Vegan avocado smoothies are a prime example of that, as are sauces. The commission is promoting recipes such as Creamy Avocado Pesto Pasta that showcase the versatility of California avocados in creating creamy sauces.

Sandwiches and salads have included avocados as an ingredient for a long time. But lately CAC has noticed an increase in the use of avocados in place of traditional sauces and sandwich spreads for egg salads and deviled eggs, chicken, turkey and tuna salads, and a host of sandwiches. A CAC chef ambassador recently developed a recipe for avocado aioli that leverages this consumer interest.

The fourth trend DeLyser mentioned is avocados in chocolate. Dietitians and bloggers are making avocado brownies, chocolate avocado mousse and pudding, cake -- including the Chocolate Avocado Lava Cakes on the California Avocado Commission blog — and vegan fudge. This month CAC partnered with Los Angeles-based artisan chocolatier Compartes, which created a limited edition White Chocolate Avocado bar. The candy is featured at Compartes stores and sold online. The day the new avocado chocolate was announced there was a buzz of social media heralding its arrival.

Time will tell if any of these trends will yield the next avocado toast. In the meantime, they all contribute to keeping demand for avocados strong.

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