
Peruvian Asparagus



Importers Association

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Asparagus buyers upping consumption

By

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During the first pandemic year of 2020, U.S. consumers increased their per capita consumption of asparagus by 4 percent, with all that increase, and then some, coming from fresh channels.

For 2020, the last year for which total consumption statistics are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, per capita consumption in the United States increased to just shy of two pounds at 1.98 pounds. "Per capita consumption is still increasing," said Priscilla Lleras, director of the Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association.

Per capita consumption figures released by PAIA in its 2022 category management presentation show that in the six-year period comprising 2010 through 2015, consumption stayed consistent, fluctuating between 1.58 and 1.68 pounds per person, with only 2014 being an outlier with 1.82 pounds of total consumption. The following year (2016) saw a 9 percent increase and there has been steady growth ever since with processed consumption declining and fresh consumption increasing. From 2015 through 2020, fresh consumption rose from 1.46 pounds per person to 1.83 pounds, notching more than a 25 percent jump.

A look at other demographic statistics shows that asparagus consumers are a consistent group, though there are geographic, age and wage differentials that point to increased consumption. Consumers in the 11 most western states, stretching from the Pacific Coast to Colorado, are the most likely group to buy asparagus. A full 36 percent of shoppers from that region purchased asparagus in 2022. Northeast is next most prolific with 32 percent purchasing asparagus in 2022, according to PAIA. Both the South and the Midwest lag behind, with only 21 percent and 23 percent likely to make an asparagus purchase.

Age appears to play an important role. About 34-35 percent of consumers above 50 are likely to purchase asparagus with that number dropping to 24 percent for shoppers in their 40s. A silver lining is that shoppers in their 30s are registering a slight uptick at 26 percent. That seemingly reflects a resurgence in asparagus aficionados in the Millennial age group. Lleras noted that Millennials are attracted to a healthier lifestyle, including healthier eating options, and asparagus certainly packs a nutritious punch.

Income of shoppers has an impact on likelihood to purchase asparagus, but it does not appear to be a major factor. About 35 percent of consumers that identify their income levels between \$50,000 and \$100,000 have purchased asparagus in the past 12 months. That is the same percentage for shoppers who list their income at above \$100,000. But even 27 percent shoppers in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 range report an asparagus purchase in the time frame.

Shoppers with and without children purchase at a similar level, and Asian, Hispanic and Caucasian shoppers are also very consistent in the numbers who purchase. Black shoppers tend to under-index

while the “other” category over-indexes.

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About Tim Linden | 

Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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