



The Pizza Factory marketing and culinary team sampling California avocado flavor pairings at FoodOvation

Showcasing California Avocados in Unique Foodservice Menu Presentations

To effectively expand foodservice decision-makers' understanding of how California avocados can be an integral ingredient in restaurant menu items — not simply a garnish or afterthought addition to a dish — the California Avocado Commission foodservice team engages with industry members at targeted in-person events. There they showcase menu items that inspire culinary creativity with targeted operators. These events also provide the Commission with the opportunity to demonstrate expertise of the product and category as well as share valuable resources and educational tools it has developed to build demand for and loyalty to the California Avocados brand.

The Commission foodservice team attends industry events throughout the year, with particular emphasis placed on spring events that highlight the onset of California avocado season. This year, for example, the Commission participated at and sponsored the National Association of Colleges and Universities Food Service Pacific/Continental Regional conference, FoodOvation and the Marketing Executive Group. At these events, the Commission's foodservice team met one-on-one with marketing, culinary and purchasing executives of chains, as well as foodservice directors and managers of colleges' and universities' foodservice outlets.

During the two-day FoodOvation event held in Sun Valley, Idaho, CAC's foodservice team met with 14 chains during 45-minute in-person sessions. The sessions began with a flavor-building exercise in which attendees tasted a slice of fresh California avocado to identify and appreciate its creamy buttery texture, mild taste and slightly nutty flavor. Next, the attendees tasted a few selected spices to discover their specific flavors. Finally, each spice was added to a slice of avocado — allowing attendees to experience how an avocado's flavor components alter the spice. The exercise demonstrated how an avocado can balance the sharpness — or enhance the subtlety — of a particular spice. In doing so, the foodservice team helped decision-makers reframe California avocados as an essential ingredient in menu items that can balance hot or spicy flavors and enhance the flavor profile of a dish. During the first day of the event attendees circulated their positive impressions of CAC's flavor building exercise via word



Representatives from Cal Poly speaking with CAC's Kim Kurata at NACUFS about collegiate menu options and California avocados

A graphic with a teal background and a decorative border of orange and yellow leaves. In the top right corner is the Del Rey Avocado Company logo, which features a stylized sun and the text "AVOCADO DEL REY COMPANY". In the center, the text "THANK YOU TO OUR" is in white, "California" is in a large, yellow, cursive font, and "GROWERS" is in a large, white, bold sans-serif font. Below this, it says "Wishing you all a wonderful Holiday season." in white. At the bottom center is the website "delreyavocado.com" in white. In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code and the text "Scan to see our Field Staff" in white. On the left side, there is a close-up image of a sliced avocado.



CAC foodservice team member Alexei Rudolph joined Fat Shack's Albano Latifi at MEG

of mouth. As a result, the team was greeted by several chain representatives on the second day who expressed how much they were looking forward to the flavor pairing and food tasting experience.

After a two-year hiatus, both NACUFS and MEG hosted in-person events — the former in Reno, Nevada and the latter in Chicago, Illinois. At NACUFS, the Commission worked with foodservice directors, residential dining directors, chefs and dietitians from 22 colleges and universities to demonstrate how California avocados can be integrated into college students' meal plans, especially those adapted for dietary restrictions.

Prior to the National Restaurant Association expo, the Commission joined chief marketing officers and marketing managers of regional and national chains at MEG where attendees enjoyed tasting fresh California avocados in a variety of menu applications.

During both the NACUFS and MEG, most of the Commission's sampled dishes were 'sold out' during the 15-20 minute break. To showcase global flavors, the Commission served the versatile *California Avocado Neapolitan Pizza* (which is a combined pizza, flatbread and sandwich) and the Asian-inspired *California Avocado Roll Bowl*. 🥑



Chef Jason Hernandez, of the CAC foodservice team, answers questions from the Portland, Oregon based McMenamins culinary team at FoodOvation