



World cuisines inspired these recipe concepts for guacamoles and dips featuring California avocados.

Gelson's Extends Avocados Beyond Produce Department

This April, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) bridged the traditional gap between retail and foodservice, inspiring California supermarket chain Gelson's to promote California avocados beyond the produce department, through flavorful menu concepts that could be offered in the chain's prepared foods programs (deli and catering).

Motivated by foodservice research data points that indicate the growth of prepared foods in grocery stores and foodservice menu items featuring California avocados positively impact California avocado sales at retail stores, the Commission reached out to Gelson's with an offer to provide innovative ideas that could be implemented into the chain's prepared foods program.

A cross-functional CAC team, including participants from

the marketing staff, the foodservice team and the retail dietitian group, had two objectives for the project. First, to inspire Gelson's executive director and his team to think outside of the box with California avocados and also to strengthen the retail partnership through foodservice activities. The team put together a plan that encourages additional sales via usage of California avocados at various touchpoints in the retailer's operations.

CAC's chef spent time in a typical Gelson's store observing available equipment, prep space and layout, as well as team member culinary skill levels. Based on the information gathered, and Gelson's request to provide blue sky ideas, CAC's chef prepared a list of 20 concepts that could be prepared on-site in each store and would appeal to Gelson's customer profile. The concept list was pared down to about seven items

based on input from Gelson's corporate chef.

The foodservice team spent a day and a half shopping for and preparing all the ingredients for the final presentation at Gelson's corporate office in Santa Fe Springs, CA. From the list of seven items, a total of 11 dishes were prepared and presented to the Gelson's team. As the Gelson's representatives sampled the dishes, the culinary team described the taste profile and suggested alternative ways to present or prepare the dishes in order to avoid menu fatigue among Gelson's customers.

An interdisciplinary group from Gelson's attended the presentation, including Executive Director Paul Kneeland; Senior Director of Service Deli/Bakery Mark Morton; Senior Director of Floral and Produce John Savidan; Corporate Executive Chef Abraham Van Beek; Senior Buyer John Fujii and Staff Dietitian Sarah Wright.

The final dishes presented to the Gelson's team were:

Guacamoles of the World – global flavors melded with California avocados for inspired Waldorf, Hawaiian, Mediterranean, Asian and Korean-Kimchi guacamoles

California Sopos – Beyond Burger® “chorizo” incorporated with California avocado radish salsa, over a sope with arugula

Chicken al Pastor Salad – al pastor marinated chicken, California avocado chunks, charred pineapple, pickled red onion, lime aioli, cilantro and cotija cheese topped with crispy tortilla strips

LoboAvo (Lobster Avocado Rangoon) – butter braised lobster and California avocado stuffed crispy rangoon

Sikil P'ak – a Yucatecan toasted pumpkin seed dip with roasted garlic, dried chiles, onion, dried tomatoes, cilantro and blended California avocado

Med-East Roasted Turkey Shawarma with Pickled California Avocado – grilled turkey breast spiced with black pepper, coriander, cumin, paprika, cinnamon, turmeric then stuffed into a pita with cabbage, pickled California avocado, yogurt, feta and roasted peppers

Avocado and Prosciutto Pizza Rose – thin pieces of pizza dough layered with tomato, California avocado, parmesan, prosciutto and basil then rolled into a rose shape and baked

California Avocado Chocolate Mousse – a bonus dish using chocolate mousse mix and replacing milk with pureed California avocados

During the presentation the teams noted that consumers often try new recipe ideas in the Service Deli because the dishes are already prepared. These new ideas can inspire



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The advertisement features a large, vibrant image of a sliced avocado with a dark brown, map-like shape cut out of its center. The background is a soft-focus green. A circular icon with a checkmark and a downward arrow is positioned to the left of the avocado. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout, with the main headline in large, bold, white and green letters. The West Pak Avocado, Inc. logo is at the bottom left of the image.

CAC Retail Marketing Director Connie Stukenberg sharing the value of California avocados and the positive impact on retail sales.



repurchase in the Service Deli and additional sales of California avocados in the produce section. The Gelson's team was very appreciative of the Commission's efforts to help Gelson's capitalize on the growth of fresh prepared foods that satisfy consumer demand for the convenience of restaurant quality meals that do not need preparation at home.

Key insights from this program will be utilized to build a case study that can be used for CAC's retail and foodservice teams as they seek to partner with other retail grocery chains interested in expanding their prepared foods programs. 🥑

The versatility of California avocados was demonstrated in hot and cold applications; snacks to entrees, salads to beverages.

Gelson's team members help themselves to Guac around the World — five different guacamoles with various ingredients.

