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TASTY TROPICALS AND FLAVOR-BOMB FRUITS LEAD THE LIST OF THE FRESH MARKET'S TOP PRODUCE PREDICTIONS FOR 2019

GREENSBORO, NC, Dec. 19, 2018 – First it was kale, then came cauliflower. Will 2019 be the year of yellow dragon fruit or purple Brussels Sprouts?

Vic Savanello, The Fresh Market's Vice President of Produce Merchandising, predicts that in the New Year consumers will discover new, flavorful twists of traditional fruit and vegetable varieties, where taste takes a premium over price. Convenience, plant-based meals and accessibility to tropical fruits are some other major trends driving sales in the produce section.

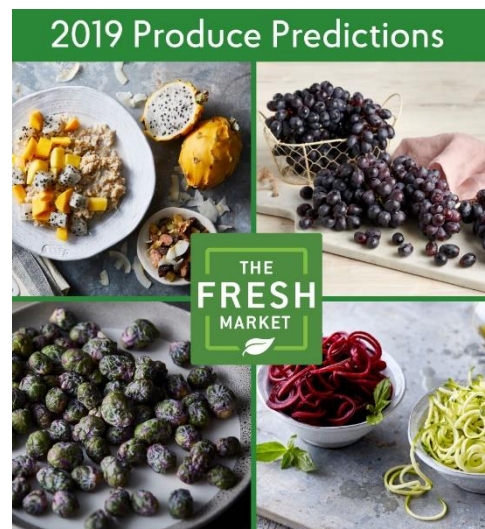
Elevating Extraordinary Flavor

The Fresh Market's mission is to inspire people to make every day eating extraordinary. To achieve this, the mandate for all merchandisers is to curate their category, offering products that guests would be hard-pressed to find anywhere other than at this specialty grocery store, and ones that will surprise and delight guests to try new products, cook with confidence and assemble easy meals.

On trend and towards this mission are new and limited varieties of produce that Vic has brought in. While most everyone has tasted a strawberry before, few have tasted *Harry's Berries*, a limited variety strawberry sold at The Fresh Market with double the sweetness of a typical strawberry. While grapes are a staple in produce, The Fresh Market carries three-times the variety, including *Cotton Candy Grapes* and *Jam Grapes* that taste just like their names.

Here are some other new, more flavorful varieties that The Fresh Market is offering in 2019:

- *Jumbo blueberries* from Peru that are twice the size of regular ones. They are a new variety that is the result of a 20-year natural breeding project aimed at boosting the superfood's size but also the flavor and goodness.
- *Purple Brussels sprouts* that have a slightly nuttier and much sweeter flavor than their green counterpart. They contain anthocyanin flavonoids (the same as red wine) which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. When cooking, keep in mind that purple brussels sprouts heads are packed slightly looser than their green counterparts, so they require a slightly shorter cooking time as a result.



- *Fioretto*, also known as flowering cauliflower, is a new, tender, cauliflower variety similar to what broccolini is to broccoli, with no peeling and minimal chopping necessary!
- *Kishu mandarins* will be mom's new lunchbox staple, as they are the size of a walnut, super-easy for kids to peel, and the best part – no seeds!
- *Butterscotch Pears*, a Korean pear variety that are large, plump and blemish-free because they are hand-wrapped to preserve moisture. Prized for their paper-thin skin, they are crisp but lack the bitterness of other varieties.
- *Green Dragon* apples, the most aromatic of all the apple varieties that are a cross between the Golden Delicious and Indo apple variety of Japan, with a somewhat pineapple/pear flavor and subtle tartness.

Taste of the Tropics

Previously, tropical fruits had extremely limited availability, in addition to being intimidating to prepare. As consumers become more inspired to experiment with cultural cuisine and authentic flavors in 2019, Vic predicts that passion fruit, lychees, rambutan, jackfruit and soursop will become as commonplace as mango and papaya.

“Yellow dragon fruit, considered the sweetest of all dragon fruit varieties, will become a darling in the tropical fruit category for its sweet floral flavor and crunchy, edible seeds,” said Vic. “The Fresh Market is also taking out the intimidation factor to trying tropicals by offering them in value-added formats, such as pre-cut and ready-to-eat jackfruit.”

Vegging-Out with Convenient Produce Preparations

Meatless meals and convenient ways to add more vegetables in the diet will continue to trend in 2019. Freshly prepared spiralized and riced vegetables, including squash noodles, sweet potato linguini, spaghetti squash angel hair and riced cauliflower offer lighter alternatives to pasta and rice.

“Our guests are looking for easy and convenient ways to serve their families a fresh-prepared meal. The biggest growth area in produce for The Fresh Market is our pre-cut and prepped vegetable dishes, such as halved and seasoned Brussels Sprouts or asparagus tips that are ready-to-roast, or faster cooking alternatives like baby potatoes,” said Vic.

With so many new varieties, wider availability, and pre-prepped options, 2019 could be the year to be adventurous with produce. For example, if you are a fan of navel oranges, try a *sumo* or *cara cara* variety. Break out of your apple rut and bite into a *sweet green dragon* or an *autumn glory apple*, that tastes like an apple pie. It has never been easier to try something new while expanding your produce repertoire.

About The Fresh Market, Inc.

Since 1982, The Fresh Market, Inc. has helped guests make every day eating extraordinary with time-saving meal solutions, unique ingredients and delicious food for any occasion. From fresh produce and exceptional meat and seafood, to signature baked goods and thousands of organic options, this specialty grocery retailer has something to please every palate. The Fresh Market currently operates 161 stores in 22 states across the U.S., inspiring guests to discover new flavors and cook with confidence. For more information, please visit www.thefreshmarket.com or follow the company on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

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