

MAY **20** TREND INSIGHT
13 REPORT

MEDITERRANEAN FLAVORS



Elisabeth Rozin, in her three-volume series *Ethnic Cuisine: The Flavor-Principle Cookbook*, describes the signature flavor profiles of several different Mediterranean countries as such:

- Southern France and Southern Italy: garlic, olive oil, parsley and/or anchovy, tomato
- Spain: olive oil, garlic, nut, onion, pepper, and tomato
- Morocco: cumin, coriander, cinnamon, ginger, onion, tomato, and fruit
- Greece: tomato and cinnamon

With ethnic cuisine and regional flavors so popular with consumers, let's use this framework to take a look at Mediterranean-inspired products, recipes and internet chatter.

**All product launch data: Jan. 2010 - April 2013, North America, Food & Drink*

SOUTHERN FRANCE AND SOUTHERN ITALY

Cooking in the southeastern region of France is known as Provençal and its Mediterranean influences differentiate it from the rest of the country. Famous “herbes de Provence” add the flavor of the region to dishes: Rosemary, sage, marjoram, basil, thyme and savory. Dishes from southern Italy are described as “riotous” “in color and combination” by epicurean.com, which also cites “an abundance of white truffle” as a regional mainstay. Cooking classes abound in both of these regions, but for those of us who can’t make the trip, market products can bring these flavor experiences closer to home.

Product Examples

- Belle Chèvre Marinated Discs of Goat Cheese with herbs de Provence
- Harry & David Dry Salami with Herbes de Provence
- Isle of Capri Bell Pepper & Herb Seasoned Sea Salt is “inspired by the rugged beauty of Capri and the zesty cooking of rustic Southern Italy.”
- Splendido La Cucina Italiana Funghi Stone Baked Thin Crust Pizza features mozzarella and gorgonzola cheeses and a medley of grilled and wild mushrooms, extra virgin olive oil and parsley.



Pinterest Finds

- *Better Homes and Gardens'* Salad Nicoise Sandwich (Tuna sandwich with the “bold flavors of southern France”) with cherry tomatoes, green beans, pitted noise or Kalamata olives, fresh mint leaves, lemon juice and olive oil.
- Food writer Emiko Davies' Fig, Honey & Ricotta recipe inspired by the Calabria and Salento regions in southern Italy. (Calabria is the toe of the boot and Salento is the heel!)

A Closer Look: Fresh Parsley

Parsley has a spicy, fresh, green flavor and can be used to make a pesto or an Italian salsa verde, as well as a garnish. Parsley is a key ingredient in persillade (a French mixture of garlic and parsley used frequently in Greek cooking, as well).

Pinterest Finds

- Lemon and Parsley Couscous
- Grilled Squid with Miner's Lettuce Salad & Mint, Parsley, Anchovy Pesto
- Mozzarella Caramelized Onion, Fennel, Picholine, White Anchovy & Parsley Pizza



MOROCCO

From olives and couscous to macaroons, more than 250 products were launched referencing this north African country where food is characterized by warm spices. In a recent article about Mediterranean flavors, Marc Halperin of *QSR Magazine* suggests bringing Moroccan flavors to consumers by “sprinkling a powder made of cinnamon, ginger, cumin, and coriander over standard-issue French fries, which could turn an American favorite into an exotic North African variant.”

Product Examples

- Moroccan Blend Dipping Oil with oregano, chilies, fennel, cumin and salt
- Moroccan Olive Bread
- Effie's Homemade Roasted Garlic & Coriander Semolina Crackers
- Eat Well Enjoy Life Edamame Hummus with Yellow Lentil Hummus Sunflower Seeds & Apricot. Other varieties: Roasted Red Peppers and Toasted Sesame; Yellow Peppers, Black Sesame & Ginger



Pinterest Finds

- Chicken Tagine : Apricots, ginger, cinnamon, and cumin
- Moroccan Mint Roasted Vegetables: Mint, cumin, cinnamon and ginger

Top 5 flavors

1. Mint
2. Spice/Spicy
3. Barbecue
4. Lemon
5. Tomato

A Closer Look: Preserved Lemons

Preserved lemons are a tradition in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines. They are created by salting lemons and storing them in a jar of water for about a month. T. Susan Chang, who reviews cookbooks for *The Boston Globe*, describes preserved lemons this way: "The flavor of a preserved lemon needs no justification. It's mellow yet intensely lemony, with none of the nose-tickling bright high notes of the fresh lemon."

The food blogger at www.mycookinglifebypatty excitedly describes the flavor this way: "What a wonderful flash of zing! What a refreshing, piquant, tart highlight to bring simple dishes alive!" She also encourages her readers to experiment with flavors by adding spices and herbs such as coriander, fennel, cloves, cinnamon stick, peppercorn and bay leaf to the sea salt.

Mourad's Moroccan Preserved Lemons are hand packed into jars. They are said to be a versatile seasoning and provide an immediate boost of flavor to everything from tagines, braises, soups, sauces and vinaigrettes to vegetables, pastas and meats.



SPAIN

141 new product launches reference Spain and 34% are alcoholic beverages such as Guancho Ron Miel (Rum with Honey Added), a specialty of Canary Islands in Spain, and Marie Brizard Parfait Amour Orange Liqueur made from “a careful selection of fresh oranges from Spain.”

Sauces & Seasonings were 41% of the launches, including 32 olive oils, none of which were flavored. A product certainly with flavor is Memories of Spain Smoked Paprika Marinade made with sweet smoked paprika and fire-roasted tomatoes. The marinade is described as “paella-inspired,” referring to the rice dish from Valencia on the east coast of Spain.

Marc Halperin of *QSR Magazine* has another idea for introducing consumers to flavors of Spain. He says, “Romesco, composed largely of roasted red peppers, almonds, and garlic, is an exceptionally flavorful Spanish sauce native to the Catalonia region that could also do incredible things for burgers and chicken sandwiches.”

Product Examples

- Lizbeth Lane All Natural Mediterranean Tomato Simmer Sauce is described as a tangy blend of diced tomatoes, white wine, olive oil, garlic, red peppers, seafood stock, herbs and spices.
- Tolón-Tolón Leche Merengada (Sweet Milk Liqueur) is an original cream liqueur from Spain's Mediterranean region and is based on cinnamon and lemon.
- Victoria Marinated Artichoke Hearts are quartered and marinated in oil and vinegar and enhanced with a delicate blend of spices for added taste. They are said to have been selected from the best artichokes grown in Spain and are ideal in salads, or as a garnish or appetizer.



MEDITERRANEAN

Millennials are adventurous investigators of new flavors and international foods, so it isn't surprising to learn that the Sodexo 2011 "College Food Trends" report found that college students today crave Mediterranean food, particularly offerings such as grilled chicken souvlaki kabobs, paella, spanakopita, couscous chicken stew, pesto pasta bowls, and Spanish tomato bread with Manchego cheese.



Top Flavors: Flavored Oils

1. Garlic
2. Lemon
3. Basil
4. Truffle
5. Rosemary

From bright flavors like lemon, parsley, apricot and mint, to warm, savory flavors like garlic, cumin and black/red pepper, Mediterranean flavors offer consumers a range of tastes for a variety of categories. With consumer interest in authentic flavors and regional taste experiences, opening the doors to Mediterranean flavors provides product developers with incredible possibilities.

791 food and beverage launches in North America referenced general Mediterranean cuisine.

Top 15 flavors:

1. Black Pepper
2. Sea Salt
3. Cucumber & Dill
4. Roasted Garlic
5. Apricot
6. Cheese
7. Tomato
8. Lemon
9. Roasted Red Peppers
10. Jalapeno Pepper
11. Eggplant
12. Spinach
13. Plum
14. Mushroom
15. Onion

Product Examples

- Mediterranean Snacks Hummuz Crispz Roasted Red Pepper Snack is also available in Olive Tapenade, and Roasted Garlic.
- Kent & Fraser Lemon Butter Shortbread is described as a delicate, melt-in-the-mouth buttery shortbread infused with sun-kissed Mediterranean lemons.
- Mediterranean Snacks Cucumber Dill Baked Lentil Chips.
- H-E-B Central Market Parmesan Garlic & Herb Pita Chips.
- Olivier Napa Valley Three-Olive with Feta Cheese Bruschetta Topper is described as the perfect pairing of Mediterranean flavors, combining the richness of Sevillano, Manzanilla and Kalamata olives with tangy Greek feta cheese.
- From The Olive Branch Rosemary Pecan Biscottini



Pinterest Finds

- Mediterranean Olive Oil and Lemon Vinaigrette
- Mediterranean Olive Spread with pepperoncini, garlic, black pepper, red pepper and Italian seasonings
- Mediterranean Eggplant Skillet Pie with onion, garlic, paprika, ginger, cumin parsley, ginger

FONA CAN HELP!

Let FONA's market insight and research experts translate these trends into product category ideas for your brand. They can help you with concept and flavor pipeline development, ideation, consumer studies and white space analysis to pinpoint opportunities in the market.

Our flavor and product development experts are also at your service to help meet the labeling and flavor profile needs for your products to capitalize on this consumer trend. We understand how to mesh the complexities of flavor with your brand development, technical requirements and regulatory needs to deliver a complete taste solution.

From concept to manufacturing, we're here every step of the way. Contact our Sales Service Department at 630.578.8600 to request a flavor sample or visit www.fona.com.

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