

Bigger Avocados at Meijer Reveal Grocery Trend as Big Game Approaches

Midwestern retailer's fresh idea results in 1 million avocados sold in the weeks leading to biggest sporting event of the year

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – As the Big Game approaches, produce experts at Meijer say avocados are already the leading MVP candidate on grocery lists this year. The retailer reports that large avocados began trending in November with a surprising sale surge doubling 2021 and continue to be a top grocery choice in the early months this year, with customers adding more than 1 million avocados to shopping carts across the Midwest prior to the Big Game.

While a surge is common for Big Game gatherings – [an estimated 48,000 metric tons](#) of guacamole are consumed annually on game day, according to FreshPlaza.com – confusion over how to open them or tell when they're ripe continued for many consumers.

Seeing an opportunity to innovate, the retailer's produce team recently took their avocado game to the next level, aiming to make choosing avocados easier for customers.

"When customers buy avocados, they want to enjoy them immediately or within few days, so our team is excited our new approach is beginning to make a difference," said Kris Pedres, Produce Buyer for Meijer. "Many customers understand the benefits, but there are others who are hesitant or only order guacamole in a restaurant. We wanted to remove the guesswork and frustration. We wanted to make sure any customer choosing an avocado can always find one consistent in quality, size and taste."

It was Pedres' passion that sparked his team to work with avocado suppliers and leverage its distribution facilities to establish a new approach that provides more consistency to which stage of ripeness avocados arrive at the 258 Meijer stores in six states.

The retailer established new criteria with suppliers and began to leverage its distribution facilities to regulate various storing conditions, so every avocado delivered to Meijer stores has a better chance of arriving at an earlier stage of ripeness. Meijer Quality Control team members check avocado suppliers for the preferred ripeness. Then the Quality Control team continues monitoring progress in controlled environments until they are loaded onto Meijer fleet trucks for delivery to stores. That means each avocado a customer considers is within optimal levels of ripeness depending on the customer's need: either early in ripeness, at its peak and ready for consumption, or ready for making guacamole when reaching their kitchen.

The new approach also addresses the size of the avocado and how it correlates to serving sizes for customers counting calories or determining how many they need to make enough guacamole for the Big Game. While other retailers typically carry smaller sizes or a random selection, Meijer now offers two consistent sizes – small avocados that average 5-6 ounces for portioning single servings for baby food or smoothies and large 10- to 11-oz. avocados that are perfect for a big bowl of guacamole – to give customers options when meal planning.

"This new approach is just one more example of Meijer team members thinking like a customer to enhance the Meijer shopping experience," said Ron Lovelace, Director of Produce for Meijer. "In the spirit of continuing to offer solutions for a customer's everyday needs, we believe this is just the first step in making avocados a healthy option for anyone who walks into one of our stores."

About Meijer: Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 258 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys, and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter at twitter.com/Meijer and twitter.com/MeijerPR or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

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