



Bluegrass
INGREDIENTS™

Soaring Demand for Avocado Flavor – and Color – Drives New Innovations in Applications

The alligator pear has come a long way.

Today, the alligator pear is better known as the avocado, and it has cemented its place as a luxury upcharge on menus and a must-have flavor. Americans consume upwards of 2.45 billion pounds of avocados a week, according to 2018 research, and its popularity is only increasing.

Americans today are eating twice as many avocados as they were a decade ago.

Thanks to a major marketing push beginning in the 1980s from industry groups that continues to this day, avocados enjoy a vaulted position few other foods or flavors occupy in the market. They're lauded as a healthy superfood and an indulgent splurge in avocado toast and many other trending products. A recent survey dug into the main reasons why US consumers purchase avocados:

- ✔ 76 percent said they believe avocados are healthy
- ✔ 71 percent said the fruit contains "good fats"

The Super Bowl Introduces a Superfood

Avocados have been cultivated for centuries, but it was the 1992 Super Bowl that really launched the fruit into the national consciousness in the US. Avocado growers and distributors dubbed the big game the "Guacamole Bowl." They handed out guacamole samples and got NFL players to publish their favorite recipes.

With guacamole, consumers now had a versatile, delicious way to enjoy avocados, and they haven't stopped buying them since

Guacamole remains an essential gameday snack. In fact, the week leading up to Super Bowl LIV in 2020 saw the most avocado sales in history. Guacamole is a key product application and a driving force in the avocado market.

Handling Challenges Prompt Opportunities for Innovation

The meteoric rise of guacamole underscores a key challenge for food manufacturers.

Avocados are notoriously difficult to handle.

They're prone to bruising and becoming overripe. There's a sweet spot to when they're best to use, and many consumers struggle to get the timing right from store shelves to final dish. What's more, their shelf life is shorter still once they're cut open. That fresh, bright green color quickly turns to an unappetizing brown. Of that survey of consumers who listed avocados' health benefits, nearly six in 10 said the fact that the fruits are "too perishable" is a main barrier to purchasing them.

Nowhere is that more evident than in guacamole, which has to be mixed, sold and consumed quickly before it turns brown. Avocados' reputation as a fresh, healthy food compounds this challenge. Consumers who seek out avocados and guacamole are more likely to reject preservatives that could maintain the product's color and freshness.

Applications that Deliver Flavor — and Preserve Color

As the avocado sector has matured and expanded over the last few decades, these market trends are converging. The demand for avocado flavors in a wider range of products has grown, and food producers are eager for solutions to the fruit's limited shelf life. As a leading food powder producer, Bluegrass Ingredients saw opportunity in these market demands. It recognized its unique position to develop an avocado application that could be incorporated into more foods and easier to use without sacrificing flavor or appearance.

Bluegrass' innovative product development process takes a comprehensive approach to developing a full profile and considering all aspects of the finished product, including flavor, texture and appearance.

With avocado, the Bluegrass team recognized a unique challenge in maintaining the green color.

Far from an afterthought, getting the color right was essential – an avocado's color is instantly recognizable. It makes the bowl of guacamole stand out on a crowded party spread and adds a bright pop to sandwiches and tacos. Just as critically, the vibrant green of an avocado is a sign of freshness.

Through its proprietary product development approach, Bluegrass was able to use custom spray drying and blending processes to capture the green color and the distinctive flavor in a powder formulation that lasts far longer than a fresh-cut avocado.





Applications that Match a Growing Appetite

Brands that were once limited by handling and shelf-life challenges of avocado now have an opportunity to incorporate the booming flavor trend into a wide range of products. Avocado powder is a far easier proposition when it comes to shipping and logistics. An avocado fruit is three quarters water and requires refrigeration. Those considerations increase cost, and there's often still a degree of waste in limited storage times and damaged products.

This convenience has prompted new interest in a wide range of applications, including:

- ✔ Seasonings and snacks
- ✔ Shakes and smoothies
- ✔ Guacamoles, dressings and dips
- ✔ Salsa and sauces
- ✔ Dry Rubs

Avocado now has a versatile formulation that expands its applications without sacrificing taste or color. From healthy smoothies to loaded burritos, unexpected dessert combinations to exciting new snack flavors, the potential for avocado flavor has never been greater.

Color as a Competitive Advantage

Bluegrass' success in formulating an avocado powder highlights just how important color has become when it comes to product development and satisfying consumer expectations. There was a time when recognizable color in products equated to fake flavor and over-processing – the bright orange hue of mac 'n' cheese or the pale green of mint chocolate chip ice cream.

That trend has shifted as consumers have started paying more attention to ingredients and labels and food manufacturers start to pay more attention to the broader food experience – including what products look like and feel like. Versatile applications such as powders offer an opportunity to infuse foods with recognizable ingredients and flavors that help complete the branding and overall appeal of the finished product.

It's one part of Bluegrass' overarching commitment to develop and distribute formulations that meet shifting market demands and give customers the flavors they crave in more versatile, affordable and sustainable ways.



To learn more about Bluegrass' plant-based powders and other market-driven flavor solutions, [Contact Us.](#)