

## Consumers Go With the Grain

Claims relating to the benefits of whole grains are now the most sought after health claims on food packages, followed by claims about dietary fiber, according to the Food Marketing Institute's (FMI) 2011 *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends* report.

Restaurants feature exotic rice, spelt, faro, amaranth, and other lesser known grains in everything from salads and pancakes to pizza crusts, soups, cocktails, and desserts. Most exciting, a 2009 Kellogg's survey found that more than one-third of adults were eating more whole grains simply

consumers look for the "100% whole wheat" descriptor at retail. That's more than the number who seek out "a full serving of vegetables" (56%) or "a full serving of fruit" (54%), notes Technomic Inc.'s 2010 *Healthy Eating Consumer Trend Report*.

More than half of grocery shoppers bought more whole grain products in the past year; 56% switched to whole grain bread, and 42% switched to whole grain pasta, according to FMI's 2011 *Shopping for Health* report. For the first time, sales of whole wheat bread sur-

A 2010 Quaker Oats survey found that 50% of adults selected whole grain as the most sought after attribute when choosing breakfast foods, followed by fiber (47%). Whole grain was a very important snack characteristic for 96% of frequent snackers in Mintel's 2011 *Salty Snack—U.S.* report.

Use of whole grain home baking flours is on the rise. King Arthur Flour Co. reports that in the last year, unit sales of its *Traditional Whole Wheat Flour* were up 11.4% and sales of *White Whole Wheat Flour* climbed by 24.4%.

croissant, pita, bagel, Kaiser roll, tortilla, flatbread, and white bread top the list of breads consumers would consider ordering for their lunch sandwich, per Technomic's 2010 *Sandwich Consumer* report.

According to a 2011 FMI survey, nearly half (47%) of shoppers say that the inclusion of whole grains on the nutrition panel is very important to them. HealthFocus International reported last year that 64% of consumers choose foods because they contain whole grains, and 47% maintain a high fiber diet. More than one-third (37%) are extremely interested in whole grains for reducing the risk of cancer, 36% for both weight management and heart health, and 35% to reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes.

Innova Market Insights reports that breads and cereals are among the most active categories for sodium reduction product innovation. In 2010, 23% of consumers were vegetarian-inclined, according to a *Vegetarian Times* survey; 15% made a strong effort to eat more vegetarian foods, notes the 2010 *Gallup Study of Nutrient Knowledge & Composition*. And finally, according to a SPINS May 2011 report, the Whole Grain Stamp helped sales of products rise an impressive 13.3% in 2010. **FT**

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because they enjoyed the taste—36% in 2009 vs 13% in 2006.

Supermarket sales of foods and beverages carrying a whole grain claim reached \$8.8 billion for the year ended 4/16/11, according to the Nielsen Co. The number of new whole grain products increased nearly twenty-fold between 2000 and 2010; in 2010, 3,272 new products formulated with whole grains were introduced, 9% more than in 2009, according to Mintel's Global New Products Database. General Mills and Post cereal lines now offer only whole grain recipes; Kraft Foods has doubled the whole grain content of its Nabisco crackers, and Nestlé's *Lean Cuisine Spa* line remains focused on grains.

Three-quarters (74%) of

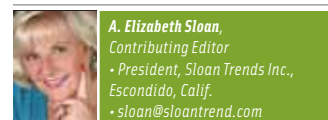
passed sliced white bread in 2010, and 9% of shoppers purchased quinoa in 2010, per FMI.

Whole grain tops the list of bread/sandwich types consumers would be interested in buying in the deli, reports the International Dairy, Deli, Bakery Assn.'s *Innovation Trends, Attitudes, and Opportunities 2012* report. Other popular breads among deli shoppers include cheese breads, (e.g., Asiago, parmesan), croissants, and sourdough bread.

Rice is America's fastest-growing side dish, according to Mintel's 2009 *Side Dish—U.S.* report. Whole grain brown rice is enjoying double-digit sales growth, the USA Rice Federation reports. Also, watch for mounting interest in U.S. grown specialty rice (e.g., basmati, jasmine).

Black/forbidden rice, quinoa, and red rice top the list of sides/starches that American Culinary Federation (ACF) chefs surveyed by the National Restaurant Assn. in November 2010 cited as "hot" for 2011. Ancient grains such as kamut, spelt, and amaranth are fourth among the trendy new foods/ingredients in 2011, according to ACF chefs. Flatbreads (e.g., naan, pappadum, lavash, pita, and tortilla) ranked sixth among the trendy items/ingredients; whole grain breads are considered a hot trend by 46% of ACF chefs.

Bread is the new ingredient/food added most frequently to menus, according to the Foodservice Research Institute's MenuMine Database. Italian, whole wheat/whole grain, French, sourdough, multigrain, regular bun,



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