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2021 Trend Focus: Immunity

Consumers seek foods and ingredients that support personal health

The pandemic has spurred new focus on health, personalized nutrition, and the role food plays in building a strong immune system that helps protect and fight against disease. Demand for nutrient-dense foods with natural ingredients that deliver pre-, pro-, and post-biotics, antioxidants, vitamins, and other functional benefits is skyrocketing. In addition, sensory factors like color and flavor play an increasingly important role in signaling immunity benefits: think bright colors, bold flavors, and distinctive textures. This accelerated demand for immunity-boosting foods is expected to accelerate through 2021 and beyond.

Consumers immediately recognize the superfruit status of **cherries, cranberries, and blueberries**. Dried or fresh, they are whole food ingredients that deliver antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and bioactive compounds that strengthen immunity, promote cardiovascular and cognitive health, aid post-workout recovery, and promote better sleep. Graceland Fruit **infused dried fruit ingredients** contribute delicious nutrition, flavor, and texture, as well as important visual health cues, to a wide variety of food applications that support immune health, longevity, and well-being.





Nutrition Spotlight*: Cherries

Montmorency cherries are packed with natural antioxidants and bioactive compounds

- Are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and copper
- Provide 3g of fiber 56 mg of flavonoids
- Are one of the few natural food sources of melatonin
- Are emerging as meaningful aid in post-exercise recovery
- Soothe symptoms of arthritis and gout
- Support heart health and blood pressure regulations

*Per 1-cup serving; See ChooseCherries.com/ Our Nutrition Story and [ChooseCherries.com/The Trend of the Tart](https://ChooseCherries.com/TheTrendoftheTart) for more details

Ingredient Spotlight*: Cherries

February is National Cherry Month. Celebrate this boldly tart, deep red, on-trend superfruit!

Consistent with the growing demand for immunity boosting foods is heightened interest in more tart, less sweet flavors. Dubbed “sophisticated sour” by flavor house **Virginia Dare**, consumers connect tart flavor profiles with health and wellness. This is where delicious Montmorency cherries shine. These superfruits offer a multi-faceted sweet-tart flavor profile to a wide variety of foods and beverages sought out by today’s health-conscious consumer. Versatile and nutritious, consumers enjoy the distinctively delicious flavor of tart cherries in products that range from functional to permissibly indulgent, from sweet to savory, and from appetizers to desserts.

The distinctive sweet-tart flavor, bold color, and delightful texture of **dried Montmorency cherries** check all the food innovation boxes:

- **Flavor versatility:** Pairs well with sweet, savory, and spicy notes. Adds complexity and balance to sauces, dairy products, trail mixes, nutrition bars/bites, breakfast cereals, confectionery, and even meat snacks.
- **Functional:** Tart cherries are recognized as a superfruit. The scientific evidence supporting the health benefits of these deeply hued gems is immense and additional research is currently underway, especially related to sleep and exercise recovery.
- **Premium Appeal:** Tart cherries help elevate the eating experience, adding a touch of elegance to a recipe or processed product and enhancing its perceived quality.
- **Pop of Color:** The distinctive bold, bright red of tart cherries is due to their high concentration of natural anthocyanins. Consumers associate bright colors with high nutrition content, as well as visual interest and Instagram-worthy appeal. Red is also a top color trend in food, evoking vitality, passion, and positive energy.
- **Michigan-grown:** Consumers increasingly care about food origins, with US-grown and connection to specific geographic regions increasingly preferred.

Application Inspiration: Snacks

Consumers are snacking more than ever and looking for healthy options

Snack category growth continues to outpace other food segments. With work and school from home still the norm, consumers are increasingly shifting from the traditional “3 meals a day” to more frequent “mini meals” throughout the day that can provide essential vitamins, minerals, nutrients, and satisfaction. As many as 26% of US consumers snack multiple times a day, and another third snack once a day; 38% replace meals (usually lunch) with snacks at least occasionally (IFIC). According to NPD, consumption of snack foods as meals grew to 26% in 2020, and The Hartman Group research reports that 48% of all food and beverage occasions are snacking occasions.

Delicious, healthy snacks that support immunity and overall health and well-being are top choices. Consumers want snacks that provide real health benefits, especially parents purchasing snacks for their children. Formulations that prioritize real, simple, whole food, and wholesome ingredients lead the pack. Nutrition bars, snack bars, and trail mixes fit the bill. They can be personalized for functionality, taste, variety, and format. Dried superfruits, like cherries, cranberries, and blueberries, add nutritional value, along with bold pops of color, deliciously intense flavor, and moist, chewy texture. Also trending: snack clusters and bites, and dried fruit jerky.

Achieving balanced bar and trail mix blends requires ounce-perfect mixes, piece integrity, size precision, and flowability. Graceland Fruit infused dried fruit ingredients deliver that and more: vibrant color throughout processing, easy handling and storage, and extended shelf life. Not to mention exceptional flavor, texture, and nutrition.

Want to brainstorm ideas for new snack products? Have a new snack concept you want to explore? Need help with process improvements? Our innovation team is here to help.

Did you know?

- 85% of Americans made changes in how they eat due to the pandemic (IFIC)
- 31% of consumers are buying more products tailored for their health (ADM)
- 50% of consumers prefer foods and beverages that naturally contain beneficial ingredients (ADM)
- 48% of consumers plan to purchase more health and wellness products (Softengine)
- Immunity-boosting food sales are projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2023 (The Food Institute)
- February is National Snack Food month
- 2/3 of adults are snacking at home more often (Harris Poll)
- 3/5 of adults are choosing better-for-you snacks; 56% buy trail mixes; 55% buy snack bars (Harris Poll)



Upcoming Industry Events

We look forward to connecting with food manufacturers, providers, and innovators around the world. Will you be there? We'd love to set up a meeting. **Let's connect!**

- **Taipei International Bakery Show**
Taipei City Taiwan
March 26-29, 2021
- **Bakery China**
Shanghai China
April 27-30, 2021
- **IFT Nor-Cal Section Suppliers Night Expo**
Pleasanton, CA
May 11, 2021
- **SIAL China**
Shanghai, China
May 18-20, 2021
- **Northeast Section IFT Supplier Expo**
Worcester, MA
May 19, 2021



What's New at Graceland Fruit

Graceland Fruit® Starts 2021 with Renewed Focus, Brand, and Website

Welcome to the fresh new look of Graceland Fruit® Exceptional Ingredients, and to the first edition of our monthly newsletter, Bits 'n Pieces! We're excited to unveil our updated brand identity, **website**, newsletter, and more, all created to better reflect our renewed focus on the commercial ingredient market and our heritage of exceptional product and service performance.

Refocused: In 2020, we ceased selling Graceland Fruit branded consumer products at retail. We are once again 100% laser-focused on delivering delight™ by supplying exceptional ingredients to innovative consumer packaged food, foodservice, and other food companies who develop, manufacture, and market their own products and brands.

Rebranded: With renewed channel and customer focus, we undertook a rigorous and comprehensive review of our brand positioning and visual identity. The Graceland Fruit logo had not changed since the company was founded in 1973. Our new brand identity features a more contemporary logo that pays homage to our Company's heritage while adding prominence to the brand name, better communicating our expertise, and providing a design architecture and visual system that supports future growth and innovation. Coupled with our new tagline, We deliver delight™, the new Graceland Fruit brand identity now serves as the foundation for all our touchpoints.

Renewed website: We are excited to have you explore our completely reimaged, redesigned, and restructured digital home base, **GracelandFruit.com**! We've enhanced functionality to make it easy for you to learn more about our **products**, our **process**, our **growers**, and our **services**. It also serves as an on-demand resource center for product information, industry trends and insights, and other tools to help you delight your consumers and profitably grow your business. Most importantly, we hope you find it is a source of inspiration for use **applications** and innovation. We invite you to explore our new site and learn more about how we deliver delight™ through exceptional product and service performance.

Learn more about Graceland Fruit and our new brand identity **here**.

2021: The Year of Fruits & Vegetables

United Nations Designation Recognizes Importance to Human Nutrition, Health, Food Security

The United Nations has designated 2021 the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (#IYFV), a year-long celebration to raise awareness around the globe of the importance of fruits and vegetables to both human and planetary health. The objectives of IYFV 2021 include:

- Raising awareness of and directing policy attention to the nutrition and health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption
- Promoting diversified, balanced, and healthy diets and lifestyles through fruit and vegetable consumption
- Reducing losses and waste in the fruit and vegetable food system
- Sharing best practices on promotion of consumption, sustainable production and supply chains, integration of small farm holders, and food waste reduction

Fruit and vegetable ingredients play an important role in this global initiative. They're nutrient-dense, versatile, and offer extended shelf life. Learn more about #IYFV and how you can participate [here](#).



Grower Spotlight: Lutz Farms

Located in Northwest Michigan, **Lutz Farms** has supplied Graceland Fruit with high-quality Montmorency cherries since 1988. Lutz Farms serves the community with the best in freshly farmed fruits and vegetables, along with Christmas trees and wreaths. The Lutz Farms cherry orchard is Michigan Agriculture Environment Assurance Program (MAEAP) verified. A fourth-generation family farm, Lutz Farms was founded in 1895 as a cattle ranch by Matthew Lutz when he moved to the US from Germany. Today, Lutz Farms covers 975 acres and grows cherries, strawberries, pumpkins, other assorted garden vegetables, and Christmas trees. The operation is run by Calvin II and his wife Julie, with help from their three children.



We deliver *delight*

Graceland Fruit, Inc. is a leading producer and global distributor of premium quality dried fruit ingredients for the food industry. Our exceptional product and service performance make it easy for innovative food manufacturers and providers to create delicious, on-trend products to surprise and delight their consumers.

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