

Gourmet extravaganza shows sweet heat, organic everything

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NEW YORK – Imagine 300,000 square feet of exhibit space, filled with 2,300 booths – all pitching food products, all wooing you with tempting tastes, sniffs, sips and nibbles.

Cubes of cheese, blocks of bacon, bottles of olive oil, cans of cola. Jars of salsas, bags of chips, boxes of crackers and hunks of jerky. Chunks of chocolate, seas of salt, oceans of water, pounds of pasta. And more sauces than you can shake a breadstick at.

Welcome to the Summer Fancy Food Show, folks.

We spent three days goggling at this literal World's Fair of consumables, the largest of three U.S. trade shows put on each year by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade Inc.

This one, at the Jacob Javits Convention Center on Manhattan's West Side, attracted some 500 international exhibitors as well as 1,800 domestic ones. Amid them were more than 30 exhibitors from the Lone Star State, including a number of businesses from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Not to mention the Texas Department of Agriculture team at the "Go Texan!" pavilion, plus Mozzarella Co. founder Paula Lambert, an NASFT board member.

Summer is always hot in New York – but at the Fancy Food Show it was even hotter, thanks to the number of chile-enhanced products and fiery spices on display. In particular, we noticed plenty of edibles combining heat with sweet.

There was also a noticeable turn toward organic foods and beverages (though not all bore "Certified Organic" labels) and more "Fair Trade" notations on foods with Third World origins. We saw lots of exotic salts in gorgeous shades of pink, red and black. Innovative sweeteners, infused oils, gourmet snacks and convenience foods seemed to be everywhere.

And as usual, Texas food producers are right on top of the trends.

While Texans were neither as numerous nor as noisy as other national contingents (particularly the huge Italian delegation, which went mad with joy over its victorious World Cup team), our compatriots got plenty of notice for the new wares they were showcasing. Here are some of the most interesting products, coming soon to a store near you.

HEAT MEETS SWEET

This year, mango's the hot fruit, replacing longtime sweetie the raspberry. And it gets extra heat from chiles.



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From left: Olivado Cold: Pressed Ev Avocado Oil; Nirmala's Kitchen Salts; Squirrel Brand Nuts; Mrs. Renfro's Mango Habanero Salsa; Bronco Bob's Roasted Mango Chipotle Sauce; Comida Loca: Gringo Dumpling Soup.

From Dallas, **Bronco Bob's Roasted Mango Chipotle Sauce**, \$5.99 at Whole Foods Market, or online at lwcbrandsinc.com

From Fort Worth, Texas, **Mrs. Renfro's Mango Habanero Salsa**, \$3 at most Albertson's stores and soon at Kroger and Central Market, or online at renfrofoods.com

ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

Honest Tea's Just Green Tea is USDA Organic and Fair Trade Certified – but what really sets it apart from other bottled teas is the fact that it's unsweetened. \$1.19 at Whole Foods Market; honesttea.com

For centuries, South Americans have been enjoying teas made from leaves of yerba maté, an evergreen tree. Now the popular drink goes mainstream and organic with **Pixie Maté Chai Latte Concentrate**, \$4.50 at Whole Foods Market, Vitamins Plus and Healthy Approach stores. Other flavors include Maté Original, Maté Mocha, Maté Limón and Lush Tropics Maté. Available soon at Central Market; online at baristaproshop.com

MODERN SHORTCUTS

From San Saba: the **Great San Saba River Pecan Co.'s Pecan Pie in a Jar**. Of course, you still have to add your own eggs and butter and a pie shell. But the "perfect filling" is \$12.95 (plus \$7 shipping) from greatpecans.com or call 1-800-621-8121. Also at Whole Foods Market, and selected gift shops.

Comida Loca adds **Gringo Dumpling soup** to its award-winning line of spicy, single-serving packets. \$4.99 at Central Market. Also in Green Chile Chicken, Smokin' Chipotle Potato and Corn Tortilla soups. Online at comidaloca.com

FANCY SNACKS

McKinney's **Squirrel Brand Co.** introduces **Five-Pepper Cashews** (\$45.99/36 oz.) and **Gourmet Peanut Butter** (\$14.99/16 oz.) and Crème-Brûlée Almonds (\$39.99/36 oz.). Available in September. Wood gift boxes are a hallmark of this company, which has been around since 1888. Also available: Cracked Mammoth Choctaw Pecans and Fresh Roasted Virginia Peanuts. Online at squirrelbrand.com



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From left: Pixie Mate: Chai Latte Concentrate; Honest Tea: Just Green Tea; San Saba: River Pecan Co. Pecan In A Jar; Bakla Bites; New Canaan Farms: Cranberry Cabernet.

From Arlington: **Phoenicia International's Bakla Bites** are individual servings of baklava, blending pistachios, pine nuts and cashews with phyllo. \$1.99 for a 3-piece bar at World Market and at Market Street in Colleyville and McKinney. Seasonally available at Central Market. Online at baklabites.com or call 1-866-572-7879.