

MERCHANDISING REVIEW

Asian Foods — From Ethnic To Mainstream

More and more consumers are turning to the supermarket deli for these popular cuisines.

By Barbara Robison

Asian Foods are growing in popularity throughout North America, offering special marketing opportunities for supermarket deli operations. While Chinese is still the most popular Asian cuisine, more consumers are trying many of the other cuisines within the Asian category.

Chinese, Japanese and Korean are the Asian cuisines that spring to mind for most people. However, interest in the cuisines of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and India is growing. By examining all the Asian cuisines and products available, deli operations can develop new and exciting opportunities, especially for highly sought-after younger customers.

What's In Store 2007 from the International Dairy, Deli, Bakery Association (IDDBA), Madison, WI, cites a report in *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends 2006* from the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), Arlington, VA, that grab-and-go is the mindset of 18- to 25-year-old consumers. They spend the most on away-from-home foods of any age group, according to the report. In the same IDDBA publication, Y-Pulse, LLC (a youth foodservice research company), Chicago, IL, suggests that global cuisines, including Indian, Chinese and Thai, are becoming increasingly popular with the young crowd.

For the grab-and-go customer, Lee Kum Kee (USA), Inc., City of Industry, CA, is promoting its authentic Chinese sauces for dipping sandwiches, similar to the popular French dips. Gregorius Haradiran, marketing executive, explains, "A mainstream market might offer a Vietnamese sandwich with a dipping sauce mixture of hoisin and fish sauces or perhaps a Thai sweet chili sauce and rice vinegar mixture.

"A market in Texas is successfully selling a marinated meat sandwich, using a mixture of one-half oyster sauce and one-half soy sauce. Our chili garlic sauce is another alternative for sandwich dipping. It provides a spicy flavor and garlic aroma," he continues.

"The Asian dipped sandwiches give a market a distinct advantage over the regular,



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