

PRODUCE PULSE

AIR-FRIED

OPPORTUNITIES

By Peggy Packer



still remember the first day I introduced my air fryer to its new home on my counter.

What appeared to be just a shiny new kitchen appliance soon revealed itself to be a portal to delicious possibilities. Truth be told, I definitely wasn't eating as many fruits and vegetables as I should have been a year ago, but my air fryer has since metaphorically grabbed me by the hand and guided me to increased produce consumption—and I'm sure it's doing the same for many of your shoppers.

Appealing to shoppers who don't typically purchase large amounts of produce by demonstrating an easy way to incorporate it into meals they already love will widen the produce department's reach and drive overall basket share.

The air fryer effortlessly meets the common consumer's desire for convenience and access to foods that may be time-consuming to prepare or might not immediately spark their interest flavor-wise. Opening up the door to opportunities in terms of recipes and preparation is a simple way to introduce shoppers to categories they otherwise wouldn't have sought out before.

Think mouthwatering apple fritters; egg rolls stuffed with carrots, mushrooms, and cabbage; or, my personal favorite, homemade french fries. With each enticing recipe comes a list of fresh products to add to shoppers' baskets, and the repeat purchases will follow once the consumer has fully realized the glory of each category they encounter.

This is especially important as research shows that people are consuming fruits and vegetables less frequently, with the most significant contributor being a 16 percent decrease in vegetable consumption frequency*. However, veggies deemed handy and

easy-to-use are increasing in popularity amongst shoppers over the past few years. If I'm putting two and two together, driving produce sales could boil down to showcasing just how simple a product is to prepare. What's easier than popping an item in the tray, seasoning it up real nice, and pressing start?

An increasing focus on healthy eating and oil-free diets have considerably driven the adoption of air fryer products**, and it seems like, nowadays, more households own one than those that don't. Placing mouth-watering air fryer recipes throughout the department will surely catch the attention of these shoppers, while also inspiring them to pick up fresh products they might have previously overlooked.

While some may argue that the air fryer could challenge the nutritious attributes that we all value so much about fresh produce, I can honestly say that the journey toward a healthier lifestyle begins with small steps. And getting more fresh fruits and veggies into the carts of consumers who wouldn't typically purchase them sounds like a pretty good step to take.

The air fryer is more than a convenient kitchen appliance. If you harness its rising popularity, it can be a gateway to higher fresh produce sales from untapped demographics. 

