

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: February 09, 2022

Report Number: IN2022-0014

Report Name: Expanding Consumer Awareness of US Food through the Nature's Basket Taste of America Food Festival

Country: India

Post: New Delhi

Report Category: SP1 - Expand International Marketing Opportunities, Retail Foods, Market Promotion/Competition, Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events and Shows, MISC-Commodity, Snack Foods, Promotion Opportunities, Beverages, Tree Nuts, Dried Fruit, Fresh Fruit

Prepared By: Shivani Pandey

Approved By: Mark Rosmann

Report Highlights:

From October 28-December 31, 2021, FAS New Delhi (Post) organized an 8-week, “Taste of America Food Festival” with Indian retailer, Nature’s Basket. The promotion focused on gourmet U.S. food and beverage products in 36 Nature’s Basket stores throughout India. The campaign included a vibrant display of in-store grocery promotions and e-retail advertising that concentrated on select U.S. fresh, frozen, and packaged foods and beverages. The retail campaign attained \$400,000 in U.S. food product sales and reached 16 million consumers through print and digital media.

Report Overview

India's rapidly growing food and beverage retail sector has weathered various supply-chain challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite increased food inflation and reduced consumption, the emergence of modern retail food outlets throughout Tier-I-III¹ cities, along with the uptick in e-commerce (grocery delivery), continues to fuel strong demand for imported gourmet foods. Consumer demand for convenience, high quality, safe/hygienic, and healthy foods will continue to give opportunities for U.S. consumer-oriented product exports, including tree nuts, fruits, and packaged/processed foods. Modern grocery retailers along with e-commerce represent 10 percent of India's food and grocery market (See GAIN: [IN2021-0079](#)).

To capture this unique market opportunity, Post, in partnership with Nature's Basket, organized a "Taste of America Food Festival" from October 28-December 31, 2021, at 36 stores located in six Tier-I cities. Store locations included the cities of Mumbai, New Delhi/National Capital Region, Kolkata, Bangalore, and Pune. The campaign promoted a range of U.S. consumer food products, taking advantage of two major holidays (Diwali and Christmas), and advertised American food recipes that focused on current food trends like vegan cuisines, healthy eating, and fusion foods (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Advertisements



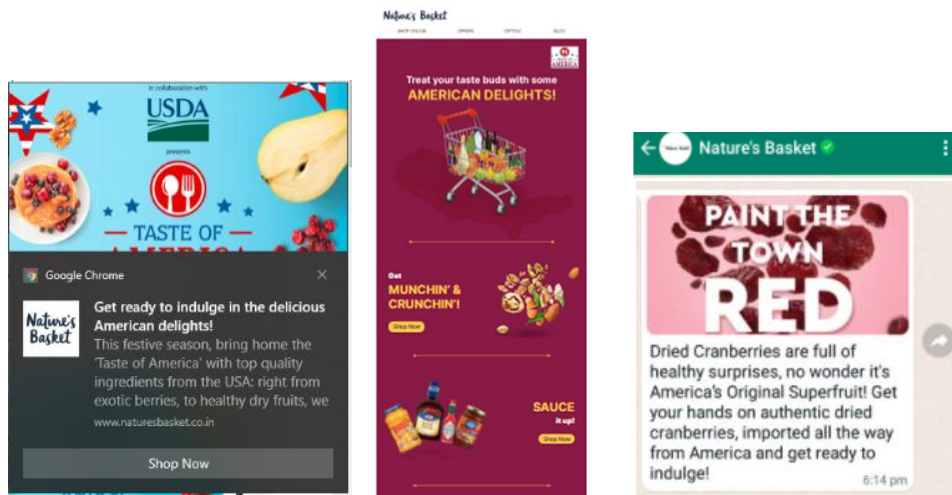
Clockwise from top-left: Digital advertisement announcing the campaign, holiday contest promotion, marketing U.S. tree nuts, print/digital ad that ran in major news publications.

¹ The Indian government classifies the country's cities based on their population size, with Tier I cities representing major metropolitan areas (e.g., New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, etc.).

E-Retail

With over 500 million internet users, Indian consumers are expected to increasingly rely on e-commerce for their grocery purchases. In addition to in-store advertisements, the Taste of America promotion included e-retail and grocery delivery service options, a growing consumer trend in the last two years accelerated both by the pandemic and the Indian consumer's pursuit for convenience, health, and value. During the promotional period, Nature's Basket included delivery options for purchasing U.S. products on WhatsApp, daily *push notifications* on the retailer's app, and pop-up browser ads (Figure 2). These lucrative, low-cost advertisements made a significant sales impact in the cities where access to quality American food brands is slowly increasing.

Figure 2. E-Retail Advertisements



(From left: Pop-up campaign ad, screenshot of Nature's Basket e-retail app, WhatsApp advertisement)

Sales Performance

The "Taste of America Food Festival" demonstrated the rapid demand for U.S. products for both the in-store and e-retail sector. During the eight-week period, combined U.S. food product and beverage product sales totaled approximately \$400,000 from 272 U.S.-origin stock-keeping units (SKUs). By product category, consumer-oriented packaged foods represented 65 percent of sales, followed by fresh fruits (20 percent), dry/processed fruits (12 percent), meats (2 percent), and beverages (1 percent). The most successful stores by state were in Maharashtra, where 23 outlets sold products valued at \$257,000, or an average of \$11,160 per store. Additionally, southern India is emerging as a strong market for U.S. food products, where eight Nature's Basket stores in Karnataka generated a combined \$100,000 in U.S. food sales, or \$12,500 per store.

Table 1. Notable High-Sales Performance Products by Category²

Product Category	Family Name	Gross Sales (USD)
Fresh Fruit	Apples (all varieties)	\$55,379
Fresh Fruit	Pears (all varieties)	\$15,217
Beverages	Almond Beverage	\$4,256
Tree Nuts	Walnuts	\$19,729
Processed Foods	Corn Snacks	\$40,137
Processed Foods	Potato Chips	\$30,389
Processed Foods	Breakfast Cereals	\$4,232
Processed Foods	Condiments and Sauces	\$49,745
Processed Foods	Baking Mixes/Flour	\$17,060
Other	Mixed Fruit/Tree Nut Products ³	\$49,833
Other	Plant-Based Meat Substitutes	\$9,190

Power of Social Media

Social media made a significant contribution to build consumer awareness of the campaign. Nature’s Basket maintains a wide social media reach, which included Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, and during the eight-week period, the Taste of America campaign produced 12 social media posts, ten reels (videos), and more than 200 hundred stories, reaching more than a million end consumers (approximately 800,000 Instagram and 200,000 Facebook users). Instagram was the most widely utilized platform and maintained the highest level of consumer interaction (Table 2). In addition to digital marketing and print advertisements (Table 3), Nature’s Basket broadcasted live cooking demonstrations (Figure 3) that featured professional chefs preparing regional dishes that incorporated U.S. food ingredients.⁴

Table 2. Top Performing Instagram Posts

Title	Description	Likes/Views ⁵	Accounts ⁶ reached	Impressions ⁷
<u>Campaign concluding Post</u>	Static	390	272,000	327,000
<u>Duck Samosa</u>	Video	7,900	66,000	76,000
<u>Sandesh Stuffed Apple Cobbler</u>	Video	870	55,600	80,000
<u>Go Gaga over Nutty Delights</u>	Static	1,800	48,500	50,000
<u>Campaign Reel</u>	Video	4,900	8,500	100,000

² List is not exhaustive of total U.S. product SKUs or categories. Gross sales are subject to rupee conversion factors/fluctuation. For purposes of this report, Indian Rupee 74.0 = USD \$1.00.

³ Includes a combination of trail mixes, and dried fruit (e.g., cranberry, blueberry, apricot) SKUs.

⁴ The live cooking demonstration in Bangalore repeatedly broadcasted on the regional *Kannada TV* news channel along with their YouTube channel, “Asianet Suvarna News.”

⁵ Figures are rounded to the nearest tenth. Static posts area measured by “likes” and reels (video posts) are measured by “views.”

⁶ Figures are rounded to the nearest hundredth.

⁷ Figures are rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Table 3. Other Taste of America Campaign Promotions

Platform	Description
Instagram	Contest on Christmas
Instagram	Friends Turkey Post
Instagram	Washington Apples Post
Instagram	Campaign Launch
Facebook	Food Contest
Facebook	MasterChef Live
YouTube	Interview on Asian Net TV Channel

Figure 3. Promotions in Five Demonstrations Major Indian Cities



Clockwise, from top left: Chargé d'affaires Patricia Lacina launching the campaign at South Point (Gurugram), Senior Attaché Mariano Beillard with Chef Juhi in Koramangala (Bangalore), preparing apple cobbler *sandesh* at Park Street (Kolkata), Consul General Ranz preparing U.S. duck at Bandra West (Mumbai), Attaché Mark Rosmann at DLF Saket (New Delhi).

It’s all about the Fusion Food

Fusion foods, which incorporate Western food ingredients to Indian cuisines, represent a growing trend in the restaurant sector. In the last few years, Indian chefs have expanded their offerings by creating fusion barbeque dishes, mithai (sweets), and other savory foods. To align with this trend, the campaign focused on the wide range of American food ingredients for sale that can be used in preparing traditional Indian dishes. Five renowned “Home Chefs” from New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, and Kolkata shared their innovative

fusion recipes through an online cooking event. For example, in one demonstration in Kolkata, a chef prepared traditional samosas featuring U.S. duck, and a *Sandesh*⁸ apple cobbler (Figure 4). During these events, Post invited food bloggers, food enthusiasts, chefs, and shoppers to experience different cuisines.

Figure 4. Fusion Food Advertisements on social media



From left: *Sandesh* stuffed apple cobbler and Duck Samosas.

Next Steps

In the next 1-3 years, Post will continue to implement market promotion activities that focus on U.S. food products and emphasize how American ingredients can be utilized in traditional Indian cooking. With an overall retail market size of \$810 billion in 2021, India’s e-retail market is expected to grow to \$120-140 billion by 2026.⁹ India is also home to the third-largest online shopper base, a massive, untapped market of 140 million consumers located throughout India’s Tier I-III cities who are tech savvy and desire high quality products. In the coming years, both traditional brick-and-mortar stores and e-retail will continue to be key market segments for targeting U.S. consumer-oriented food sales, as this food promotion activity demonstrated. To take advantage of these opportunities, creating greater awareness through the digital ecosystem on the diversity of American gourmet, high-value food, and beverage products, and continually introducing new SKUs to gauge consumer interest will be critical to sustain market growth in India.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

⁸ *Sandesh* is a traditional Bengali confectionary using milk and sugar.

⁹ See: Bain & Company; August 17, 2021. [How India Shops Online 2021](#).