

— U.S. MONTMORENCY TART CHERRIES —

A RED HOT INGREDIENT FOR FOODSERVICE OPERATORS

The appetite for tart cherries continues to grow as a sought-after superfruit that delivers on today's food and beverage trends. In fact, more than half of consumers wish there were more tart cherry menu items.¹

No longer limited to desserts, U.S.-grown tart cherries are cropping up on more menus given their unique sweet-tart flavor, pop of bright color and in-demand nutrition benefits. This ruby-red stone fruit is gaining attention with chefs and operators given it's incredibly versatile for both savory and sweet offerings in multiple dayparts.



80% of operators have experience with tart cherries or are open to future use.¹

5 REASONS TO CHOOSE TART CHERRIES FOR MENU INNOVATIONS

1 POP OF BRIGHT RED COLOR

With 72% of TikTok users visiting a restaurant for an appetizing-looking menu item², more than 80 percent of operators agree that the bright ruby-red color of tart cherries makes them an appealing option to add color in dishes.³ The bold, vibrant red color of tart cherries brings visual interest and social media-worthy appeal to a variety of options and is quickly becoming a favorite among operators seeking colorful menu additions.

More than **60%** of consumers like the “pop of red” that tart cherries bring to a menu item.¹

2 YEAR-ROUND FLAVOR VERSATILITY

As consumers seek sour, less sweet foods and beverages, the unique sweet-tart taste of tart cherries can add the right flavor profile to a diverse range of menu applications year-round.

Nearly **70%** of operators agree tart cherries are versatile for a variety of dishes and flavor combinations.³

The pleasing acidic notes of tart cherries can brighten up sweet and savory offerings and are a welcome addition to dressings, sauces, reductions and glazes. In sandwiches and appetizers, tart cherries are often used as a spread, chutney or relish – adding a sweet-tart zing.

Dried tart cherries are frequently featured in salads on menus are often paired with pungent cheese, nuts, vinaigrettes, chicken and apples.

Tart cherries also shine in desserts – from classic cherry pie and cheesecake to cakes, cookies, and frozen desserts.



3 U.S. GROWN

Tart cherries are a specialty crop in the United States, primarily grown on small, generations-old family farms. About 70% of the nation's tart cherries are grown in Michigan. Other tart-cherry producing states include Utah, Washington, Oregon, New York, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

Montmorency is the variety of tart cherry most commonly grown in America, which can be a meaningful attribute for patrons who increasingly care about food origins and want to support local agriculture.

92% of consumers prefer a U.S. grown tart cherry vs. imported tart cherries.²

4 SUPERFOOD BENEFITS

Tart cherries are a nutrient-dense superfruit and are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and copper. As more establishments gear menu items to specific health benefits, most operators (62%) agree that calling out tart cherries as a superfruit could spark consumer interest.³

U.S.-grown Montmorency tart cherries, which contain natural melatonin, have been the focus of multiple sleep studies exploring the quality and duration of sleep, insomnia and sleep efficiency. Other studies have explored tart cherry consumption on exercise recovery, gout attacks, arthritis symptoms, heart health, blood pressure and gut health.

Learn more about the science-based benefits of tart cherries at choosecherries.com

5 PREMIUM APPEAL

The addition of tart cherries helps elevate eating and drinking occasions – offering a more premium quality to a variety of daypart applications. Montmorency is the varietal of tart cherries most commonly grown in the United States. Calling out specific varietals of fruit or local origin on the menu can help communicate the ingredient's authenticity and premium qualities.



TART CHERRIES TAP INTO TODAY'S MENU TRENDS

PLANT-FORWARD MENU INNOVATION

Demand for plant-forward food is pushing foodservice establishments to change the products they serve.

With 40 percent of consumers planning to purchase plant-based meat substitutes in 2023, and Millennials even more likely (48%)⁴, operators are taking advantage in the growing interest to attract flexitarians, vegetarians, vegans and those choosing to reduce meat consumption due to health or sustainability concerns.



Tart cherries can add plant-based flavor and color like The Elm's Kale Salad with dried tart cherries.

HEALTH-FOCUSED FUNCTIONAL FOODS AND BEVERAGES

Many operators are striving to meet the needs of consumers by developing menu items that are delicious yet health conscious. With decades of scientific research exploring tart cherry consumption on sleep, exercise recovery, gut health, heart health, blood pressure, arthritis symptoms and gout attacks, tart cherries are homegrown superfruits with science-based benefits.



Operators can tap into this health halo like national chain Smoothie King with the Tart Cherry X-Treme Smoothie.

MOCKTAILS MENU EXPANSION

As consumers' focus on health rises, many look to mocktails or non-alcoholic beverages to stay part of cocktail culture sans alcohol. **With nearly 60% of consumers believing tart cherries would complement a non-alcoholic beverage¹,** foodservice operators are experimenting with new tart cherry sophisticated sips.



Burton's Grill & Bar features their Tart Cherry Mocktail as consumers are seeking zero alcohol options.

PERMISSIBLE INDULGENCE

With nearly 40% of consumers motivated to try baked goods with healthier ingredients⁵, tart cherries can help increase purchase intent. **Nearly 65% of consumers would feel better about purchasing an indulgent food containing tart cherries.¹**



Foodservice operators are leveraging this opportunity like local Florida café Mindful Vegan Co. featuring Cherry Pie Bars and family-owned Colorado pie bakery featuring Tart Cherry Pie.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit ChooseCherries.com for a list of tart cherry suppliers and further tart cherry nutrition research.

SOURCES

1. Datassential. Custom Research fielded November 2022, an online survey of 1,500 consumers representing the general population.
2. MGH TikTok Study, July 2022.
3. Datassential. Custom Research fielded November 2022, an online survey of 415+ operators representing restaurant operators and on-site operators.
4. Datassential 2023 Food Trends Report.
5. T. Hasegawa 2022 Food and Beverage Flavor Trends Report