

The Sweet, the Spicy, and the Just Plain Yummy: Kosherfest 2012

It was a tough job, but someone had to do it: travel to the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey, where more than 300 exhibitors representing the best in kosher food and beverages were waiting to show off their wares. I joined the more than 6,000 food professionals and amateur noshers who attended the 24th annual Kosherfest last week, being forced to taste and sample my way through dozens of baked goods, candies, entrées, and sauces and dips to bring you the crème de la kosher crème: *Mishpacha's* Popular Choice Awards.



Best Pesach Product: Matzolah

If you're looking for a Pesach snack that is versatile and delicious, this is it. Matzolah's granola is made from matzoh, almonds, raisins, and natural sweeteners. It tastes just like a traditional sweet-and-salty trail mix, but without the rough chewiness of regular oats. A great source of fiber that can be eaten as a cereal, snack, or topping for yogurt and ice cream, Matzolah will definitely come in handy on Chol HaMoed hikes, trips to the zoo, and those mornings when the kids are clamoring for a breakfast treat.

Our taste of Matzolah came in a three-ounce plastic cup, but after crunching down on a small handful, we were definitely ready for more.



Most Ethnic: Del Campo Tortillas

Explore south-of-the-border cooking without leaving your kitchen. Del Campo Tortillas are made from fresh corn and taste like a round bite of Mexican sunshine. The authentic Latin flavor of these soft corn tortillas can be used to create tacos, nachos, quesadillas, and mini pizzas.

Del Campo's owner is a native of Mexico City, and he enjoys watching Americans like us savor the crispy corn taste of his tortillas. Our serving was folded over gooey melted cheese and dipped in spicy salsa. Can you say *delicioso*?



Easiest-to-Use Product: Simply Add Water

We thought there was nothing simple about baking challah until we met this red box. Simply Add Water offers a full line of bread mixes from premium challah to heavenly pumpernickel. The carefully measured mixture of ingredients ensures a perfect loaf every time. No more sifting and mixing, pinching and prepping — this box contains all you need for your challah to come out just right. It even has a bottle of water included, so you don't need to take out your measuring cup. Just add the water to the mix and voilà! If you're wondering about the finished product, it tastes just like what you would expect of standard challah: fresh, fragrant, and scrumptious.

Most Heartwarming: Zermatok Sweet Bouquets

Zermatok's sweet arrangements are made with chocolate and other candies, which are wrapped in rainbow-colored flowers, which are wrapped in rainbow-colored gift for birthdays, Yamim Tovim, or special occasions. But these bouquets don't just taste great — since they're made by handicapped employees with special needs, they also do good. Zermatok works with Enosh (the Israeli Association for Mental Health), The Association for the Blind and Prevention of Blindness in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and Shekulo Tov to hire handicapped employees and integrate them into the working community, making these chocolate flower bouquets a treat for the taste buds that also warms the heart.





Best Imitation: Klein's Sushi and Cream

Whether you're a sushi connoisseur, or just following the trend and trying to get by with cucumbers in soy sauce, this is one brand of sushi that will be enjoyed by all.

Sushi and Cream is modeled after the fishy favorite. But Klein's tricolor dessert arranged in bite-sized morsels features vanilla, pistachio, and strawberry ice cream wrapped in chocolate cake that is covered with white sprinkles.

Gochisōsama deshita, as the Japanese would say — which is *es gezunterheyt* for the rest of us.



'Tastiest Healthy Dessert: KOV Frozen Dessert

If you've spent a lifetime avoiding fat-free and sugar-free treats, here's a reason to finally buy some. KOV's frozen desserts, which are made with organic coconut milk and organic agave, are tempting servings of soft and creamy sweetness. Available in health food stores, this organic and vegan dessert is as good as the calorie-loaded version, and it's good for you.

Nondairy frozen yogurt may sound like an oxymoron, but this is one that works.

Best Flavors: Sweet Tammy's

What's a snickerdoodle?

It's a mouthful of vanilla sugar, crispy cornflakes, and pungent cinnamon. This cookie tastes homemade for a good reason: the flavors are authentic. There are no additives or counterfeit ingredients.

Sweet Tammy's cookies come in a range of flavors from ginger chewy to double-stuffed chocolate chip, and are all made from scratch for a genuine home-baked flavor. Sweet Tammy's also offers a wide variety of breads, from traditional challah to cranberry walnut for a sweet breakfast, or roasted onion challah to enjoy with soup or savory dips.

Anyone care for a bite of caramel crunch?



Best Kid-Friendly Food: MacaBites

Who knew that pizza could be fried?

MacaBites pizza bites have taken the spicy flavor of pizza and fried it in oil for a crunchy, cheesy sensation. The crust forms a light, crisp shell that encases the thick, melted mozzarella and spicy chunks of sauce. We came back for seconds, and we're sure that the kids and adults in your family will enjoy this snack, too.

(Okay, in the interest of journalistic honesty, we'll admit we had a third portion.)

