

Exotic ingredients starting to prove popular with manufacturers

By Catherine Boal

30/06/2006 - **Exotic ingredients are starting to grow in demand from European manufacturers as they target the healthy end of the bakery market.**

Last year 81 new bakery products containing [exotic fruits](#) were launched in Europe and 13 of these from UK companies alone.

The emergence in the bakery industry of more unusual varieties of fruit such as coconut, pomegranate, mango, papaya, [acai](#), and guava is widely attributed to increasing consumer awareness of health-related concerns.

Pomegranates contain polyphenols and it has been suggested that they are effective in reducing the risk of contracting certain cancers and lowering blood pressure while the acai berry, originally found in Brazil, is supposedly used to improve sleep, aid digestion and increase mental acuity.

Nutrition is high on the consumer agenda and, according to US product trackers, the Centre for Culinary Development (CCD), European firms are sourcing more fruits from far-flung destinations, such as Latin America and Asia, in order to meet climbing demand.

The boom in exotic fruits is in line with predictions made by the CCD at the start of the year when their research showed that exotic ingredients were becoming more mainstream.

According to Mintel's Global New Product Database (GNPD), [\(GNPD\)](#), the British chain, Marks and Spencer, released a lemon and passion fruit shortbread range, priced at £1.30 (€1.87) containing lemon, passion fruit and maracuja extracts.

Tesco and Sainsbury's also followed the trend. Coconut delights, by Tesco, were released in June of last year, priced at £0.85 (€1.25) and Sainsbury's brought out a coconut and cherry loaf cake, retail price £0.99 (€1.45).

Supermarket chain, Somerfield have also released Coconut Rings in the last year, priced at £0.64 (€0.93).

And it is not just bakery products – the move towards incorporating more fruit and providing a greater range of healthier options has been seen across the board in the food industry.

Chair of the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA), Deirdre Hutton said in a speech to industry bodies last month that she believed there were three main reasons for this trend.

She explained: *"Firstly, people are becoming better informed – and they are making better use of that information. Second, the food industry has taken its head out of the sand and is recognizing that it has a responsibility towards public health. And third, the combined effect of those two reasons is actually shifting our food environment in a healthier direction."*

<http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?id=68797>