

## Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Episode 79: What's In Your Trader Joe's Cart?

*[Light upbeat music begins.]*

Tara: When customers shop at their neighborhood Trader Joe's, our crew loves to talk about new products, about their favorites or just, "Hey, how's your day going?"

Matt: Absolutely. We are here to help, and a lot of that help comes through conversation.

Tara: Okay, so if we take our podcast microphones to a Trader Joe's store, do you think customers would talk to us?

Matt: To you, probably. I might frighten them. It's called resting Matt face.

Tara: (chuckles) Just to be safe, we could have somebody they already know ask them to be on the podcast, like one of our captains.

Matt: Like JayJay, captain of our store in Studio City right here in Southern California. This could be a special... (clears throat)

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Matt: episode of Inside Trader Joe's.

Tara: Wait, how'd you do that?

*[Theme music begins with two bells at a neighborhood Trader Joe's.]*

Tara: I'm Tara Miller, Director of Words & Phrases & Clauses.

Matt: And I'm Matt Sloan, the culture and innovation guy at Trader Joe's.

Tara: But we don't really matter in this episode.

Matt: We never do. And yes, Trader Joe's customers are truly the stars of this episode... and Captain JayJay.

Tara: In Trader Joe's lingo, captain is equivalent – kind of - to store manager.

Matt: They steer the ship and they have great snacks.

Tara: Through the magic of podcasting, we now take you to the neighborhood Trader Joe's in Studio City, California.

*[Theme music ends.]*

*[Radio interference sounds.]*

Matt: Captain JayJay, come in. JayJay, do you copy?

JayJay: 10-4, coming in loud and clear. How are things and the mothership over in Monrovia?

*[Light music begins.]*

Tara: All good here in Monrovia, JayJay. For people who aren't familiar with the area, you're about 40 minutes west of us in good traffic.

Matt: Good traffic. What's that?

Tara: Studio City is in LA's San Fernando Valley. So like Moon Unit Zappa, I guess that makes you a valley girl.

JayJay: Total valley girl.

Tara: Like totally!

Matt: Oh, my God, for sure.

JayJay: But don't gag me with a spoon.

Tara: JayJay, listeners may remember you from one of our previous episodes.

*[Customers and crew at a Trader Joe's store are heard in distant conversation.]*

JayJay: I was the captain of Sherman Oaks during one of our first episodes. I've been with Trader Joe's, numerous stores, mostly Southern California, close to 23 in 33 years.

Matt: We are calling this episode...

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

JayJay: What's in *my* cart?

Matt: No, what's in their cart and why?

JayJay: I can ask some of our customers what's in their cart.

Tara: Okay. Well, don't bother customers if they're in a hurry or just, you know, not in the mood.

Matt: I think our crew are really good at sensing when customers are open to conversation or not feeling it.

JayJay: Let's go get this person.

Tara: Okay. Have fun talking with people, JayJay. And we'll check back in with you a little later.

*[Sound of footsteps.]*

JayJay: Come on this way. Good morning.

Nora: Good morning.

JayJay: What is your name?

Nora: My name is Nora.

JayJay: Hi, Nora. I'm JayJay.

Nora: Hi, nice to meet you.

JayJay: Obviously, this is your neighborhood store.

Nora: I am obsessed with this store. I've been shopping here since we moved to the valley, so about eight years. But I've been shopping at Trader Joe's since... the early '90s. Let's just call it that.

JayJay: Well, we have a question for you.

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Nora: What's in my cart? Oh my gosh. Some of the stuff that I have in my cart today that we always have in our freezer are the truffle pizza. It's a flatbread actually, and we make two at a time because it goes fast. The Gnocchi a la Sorrento is, yes. Ahh! And then so that gets warmed up and put in kids' lunches because that's delish, as are the, oh my gosh, the cheese and chili tamales and the beef tamales, both excellent. When I first walk in, I'm always just taken by the flower display. I also am sort of a sucker for if there's a succulent that is in the shape of a cat or a dove, I pick that up. So those go in first and then I have to protect them in the side of my cart. After flowers, I generally go straight to the new arrivals because I want to be getting the new things for the first time. Sometimes when I check out-

JayJay: Before it gets on TikTok.

Nora: Yeah, sometimes when I check out, even the person helping me check out goes, "Ah, I've never seen this before. Tell me how it is."

*[Music transition.]*

Nora: I'm a mom. I have two kids. I have a husband, so it's like three kids really. I get the Cosmic Crisp apples, citrus cuties. Then the cheese section, oh my gosh, that's my dream section.

JayJay: If there was one cheese in our cheese section that it's the only cheese you can have for the rest of your life, what cheese would that be?

Nora: The Italian Truffle.

JayJay: Okay. What's your absolute favorite snack at Trader Joe's?

Nora: Hmm. Oh boy. Are we going sweet? Are we going savory?

JayJay: Let's do sweet.

Nora: That's an easy one. It's the Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups. Can you call that a snack? It's kind of a dessert.

JayJay: It's kind of a necessity of life.

Nora: Savory, I just love the Herb Popcorn and I can just mow down one of those bags in an embarrassingly short amount of time.

JayJay: Pumpkin season.

Nora: Pumpkin season.

JayJay: High season. Favorite pumpkin item?

Nora: Well, there's so many good pumpkin items. The Pumpkin JoJo's.

JayJay: Amazing. How about your kids, they go to school locally?

Nora: Yeah.

JayJay: What school?

Nora: Carpenter Community Charter. When my daughter was in first grade, they did a project on community helpers and we came into our lovely local Trader Joe's and found Dan, the Trader Joe's man. She did a huge poster about him and then both kids have had field trips with each of their classes to this store.

JayJay: So much fun, not only for the kids, but for us.

Nora: Was it really? (chuckles)

JayJay: It really was. It really was.

Nora: Good to hear.

JayJay: That planning and anticipating and how cute they are and their questions.

Nora: They had a lot of good questions, didn't they?

JayJay: Yes.

Nora: They wanted to know what the most popular product was, which I believe is still the Mandarin Chicken, unless it changed.

JayJay: One of the most, yes. Next to your Unexpected Cheddar probably.

Nora: Oh.

JayJay: Yeah.

Nora: We're so happy that now started in a shredded form and a goopy glob form.

JayJay: And just about everything else.

Nora: I'll just take it in any form. There's going to be an Unexpected Cheddar candle soon. (laughs)

JayJay: Huh. Idea! So, Nora, I got some new items coming our way for Halloween and I'm going to listen to you tell me what you think of them. Okay?

*[Transition to spooky Halloween music.]*

Nora: Okay.

JayJay: Pumpkin Spice Pretzel With Seeds.

Nora: Wait, really?

JayJay: Gummy Spooky Sour Cats and Bats.

Nora: Oh, any seasonal gummy, there's three of them in my cart because then we've got to get them while we can.

JayJay: Maple Fudge.

Nora: Oh, I was going to mention the maple situation here. It is so spot-on. Maple Fudge and then that Salted Maple Ice Cream.

JayJay: Halloween Chocolate Caramel Drumstick. It's a kit. It's a Chocolate Caramel Drumstick lit.

Nora: My kids are going to go nuts. No, seriously, those are amazing items.

JayJay: Thank you.

Nora: Thank you, JayJay. I just want to say that it is my dream being on Inside Trader Joe's. That was so fun.

JayJay: I'm looking forward to the next field trip.

Nora: This place makes me so happy.

*[Music transition]*

Yo: So all right,

JayJay: You have five minutes?

Yo: Yeah.

JayJay: Okay.

Yo: I do. Good thing it's audio because I just came from the gym.

JayJay: (chuckles) Beautiful. Well, first, I'm going to introduce myself. I'm JayJay, your name?

Yo: Yoaquin. Everyone calls me Yo, like Yo, Yo, like Joaquin.

JayJay: Do people yell across the place and go, "Hey Yo?"

Yo: Nice to meet you.

JayJay: Nice to meet you. So, Yo, my question to you today is...

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Yo: Well, I'm having a bunch of family up to Lake Arrowhead this weekend, so we're getting a bunch of meat that we can barbecue and I got some challah bread, which I use with burger meat to be honest, because it's really sweet and it tastes better. And I grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts, which has the best challah bread in America and maybe this is a close second.

JayJay: Wow.

Yo: And we've got strawberries, bananas, and I'm on my way to get some eggs and just pretty much going to be a dynamite weekend of eating.

JayJay: That's amazing. What are some of the snacks you're taking with you from Trader Joe's?

Yo: Snacks, sometimes we do the Zbars. Those are big snacks with my kids who are 13, 14. Sometimes we do peanut butter, almond butter and peanuts.

JayJay: If you could shop at only one aisle in this store the rest of your life, what aisle would it be?

Yo: That'd be very difficult. I guess it would probably be in the meat section because I think the best thing in the store is the organic chicken. I don't know where you guys source it, but, to me, it tastes great.

JayJay: Amazing. You should try our heirloom chicken.

Yo: Yeah?

JayJay: It is phenomenal. The difference is tremendous and I only use our organic for myself and my family, but the heirloom, it's a standout.

Yo: Really?

JayJay: Give it a shot, I'm telling you.

Yo: Okay, all right. I believe it.

JayJay: Tell me a little bit about what your favorite produce items in a store. What do you get on a regular basis that you enjoy?

Yo: I would say bananas, avocados, green apples, red apples. I think that's the best produce in the store. *chuckles*

JayJay: Have you ever taken one of our pre-made meals and passed it off as your own?

Yo: I have not done that.

JayJay: I do all the time.

Yo: But I'm going to do that now.

JayJay: (Laughs)

Yo: That's a good idea.

JayJay: Thank you.

Yo: You're so welcome. Good luck with the podcast.

JayJay: Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

*[Music transition.]*

JayJay: Hi, what's your name?

Xander: I'm Xander.

JayJay: Xander, do you go to school locally?

Xander: Yeah, I go to school at Notre Dame in Sherman Oaks.

JayJay: That's awesome.

Xander: But I live probably a couple minutes away.

JayJay: So, this is your store, you've grown up in this area?

Xander: Yeah, as a kid, middle school, I used to bike around with my friends. We used to stop in here and get a lot of ice cream.

JayJay: So, I have a few questions for you.

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Xander: Right now, I have the Chili Lime Rolled Corn Tortilla Chips. I eat too many of those. It's not good. I was scared about a year ago that they were discontinued. I saw a TikTok of where they're supposed to be on the shelves, not there at all. So I started texting a lot of my friends and they're like, "What? No way!" I ended up walking over to Trader Joe's, and I came and I was looking for them and I couldn't find them. I was like, "Oh my God." So I biked from here all the way to the Sherman Oaks location, and I ended up finding them. I got five bags maybe, and I ate them all that same night.

JayJay: That's commitment right there. So, rumors are rumors, but they were just out of stock in our warehouse, and that happens sometimes.

Xander: Yeah. I'm glad it was just that, because I don't think I'd be able to live without them.

JayJay: Do you have any questions for me, Xander?

Xander: Do you ever hire teenagers like me for a first job?

JayJay: Absolutely. We have an amazing first job program where we hire within our communities. We also make sure that school is their priority and work alongside them to make sure that they're successful both here and school.

Xander: Thank you.



*[Music transition.]*

JayJay: I'm JayJay. What's your name?

Christine: Christine.

JayJay: Christine, a pleasure. So, I got a series of questions. First question is...

Group Shout: What in your cart?

*[Sound of packages rustling]*

Christine: Oh, gosh. Some Pico de Gallo because it's a nice snack. Cucumbers. Also, some bell peppers for my kids because they're really into that right now.

JayJay: What are some tricks you do to get your kids to eat vegetables and eat healthy?

Christine: They love hummus. So if I can get the carrots in the hummus and the bell peppers, that's an easy win. I think just introducing it when they're young, and they've been open to it so they actually ask for it now. And the little one actually asked for figs recently too.

JayJay: Oh yeah, fig season is upon us.

Christine: It's fig season. Yeah, so she loves that. This is our favorite. This sunblock, my brother-in-law researches sunblock so this is like a clean one that is good for everyone.

JayJay: Consumer Reports, one of the top.

Christine: Yeah

JayJay: A little vino.

Christine: Vino, white.

JayJay: Is that for the kids or you?

Christine: That's for me.

JayJay: Okay. (laughs)

Christine: And then some yogurt for my husband. So a little of everything.

JayJay: What's your favorite aisle to shop down in the store?

Christine: Probably the snack aisle. I'm a big snacker.

JayJay: So, what is your favorite item to snack on?

Christine: Ooh, probably avocados, always a staple, these organic avocados. What are these rice mochi or rice square snack things?

JayJay: Yes. The tempura.

Christine: I think, yes.

JayJay: The Tempura Seaweed Snack.

Christine: Yes.

JayJay: Amazing, right?

Christine: Delicious.

JayJay: Open a bag, it's gone.

Christine: Yep, for sure.

JayJay: Holiday season is rolling around, lots of pumpkin stuff.

Christine: (Laughs)

JayJay: What's your favorite holiday item that you've had in the past that you hope is returning this year?

Christine: Oh, you have this beautiful felt decoration thing that we love. We have a few of them in our house in different colors and so I hope that's back so we can get another one.

JayJay: They'll be back. Sweet potato fries, regular fries?

Christine: Sweet potato fries.

*[Gameshow bell rings followed by applause]*

JayJay: Okay. Savory, sweet?

Christine: Savory.

*[Gameshow bell rings followed by applause]*

JayJay: Okay. Which savory from Trader Joe's and which sweet from Trader Joe's is your favorite?

Christine: Right now, the vanilla ice cream is our favorite in our house for the sweet.

*[Gameshow bell rings followed by applause]*

JayJay: Best vanilla ice cream ever.

Christine: Simple but good. Savory, the organic tortilla chips.

*[Gameshow bell rings followed by applause]*

JayJay: Do you have any questions for me?

Christine: What's your favorite thing here?

JayJay: Oh my gosh. Snacks, the umami, anything umami, any of the crackers, chips, any of those. Down the frozen aisle, our new Pad See Ew. Oh my God. Amazing. I can't get enough of it.

Christine: Nice.

JayJay: Our Barbecue Almonds. I can go on, but lots of favorites.

Christine: I need to go look for those things. I don't know those.

JayJay: What?!

Christine: I know.

JayJay: I'll show you as soon as we're done.

Christine: Okay, perfect. Sounds good.

JayJay: If you were any item in this store, which item would you be and why?

Christine: Good question. The unsalted white corn tortilla chips because I'm a little crunchy, but I'm also healthy because I'm unsalted.

JayJay: Awesome. Thank you again for participating. I appreciate it.

Christine: Sure, of course.

*[Music transition.]*

JayJay: I'm JayJay, I'm the store captain here. What's your name?

Martin: Martin. Nice, nice to meet you.

JayJay: Nice meeting you, Martin. So this is your local Trader Joe's?

Martin: Yes, I'm here at least twice, three times a week.

JayJay: So first question is...

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Martin: Right now, I have flowers. I always come here for the flowers. This is my number one place. I also have some meats and some vegetables, some salad. And I love the almond cookies.

JayJay: Yes, the chocolate almond cookies or the square almond cookies, the butter almond cookies?

Martin: The square ones.

JayJay: What's your favorite item down our frozen aisle?

Martin: Frozen aisle, my kids love the Orange Chicken, and I see that's super popular because I always see people gathered around it.

JayJay: Still one of our definitely bestsellers, hands down. If you could be any item in this store, what would it be and why?

Martin: The octopus that's hiding somewhere around here.

JayJay: I love it. In our stores, each one of our stores kind of selects a mascot and for the kids as they're shopping with their parents, it helps keep them busy so you can do your shopping. We hide it throughout the store and when the kids find it, we offer them stickers or a lollipop with the parents' permission.

Martin: Where is it today?

JayJay: He's right there.

Martin: (Chuckles) Oh there he is!

JayJay: That's Josie the Octopus. Holiday season is coming up really soon, right around the corner. What are some of your favorite items that you're hoping to return?

Martin: I love anything pumpkin. I love the pumpkin bars, Pumpkin Walked Into A Bar bars. I usually will come in here because they go really fast, so I'll grab five or six boxes just to make sure I have enough for at least a month or so. And then I try to keep it stocked for my kids because they love it.

JayJay: Quick tip, put cream cheese on it next time and then-

Martin: Oh, my goodness. Oh, you can make a dessert?

JayJay: You can warm it up too if you've ever not done it. Stick it in the toaster, out, put cream cheese on it. It's amazing.

Martin: I love that. I'm going to do it, for sure. All right, thank you. Pleasure meeting you.

JayJay: Thank you. Pleasure meeting you. We'll see you soon.

Martin: Yeah.

*[Music transition.]*

JayJay: I'm JayJay. What's your name?

Tamara: Hi, I'm Tamara. Nice to meet you.

JayJay: Nice meeting you, Tamara. And who's this little beauty?

Tamara: This is Salem.

JayJay: Hi, Salem. So, Tamara, I have a couple questions for you. First question is...

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Tamara: Well, I just got here, but so far, I have string cheese because my son loves that and some fruit. And what are these called? Dragon fruits, which I haven't seen before.

JayJay: Those are a limited buy. They come around a few times during the year and that's it. So, we have to enjoy them when they're here.

Tamara: And I really like the mac and cheese. It's really cheesy. I really like the samosas, the veggie ones.

JayJay: Have you ever had our pumpkin samosas?

Tamara: No.

JayJay: You got to check them out.

Tamara: Pumpkin everything, I can't wait.

JayJay: Yes, pumpkin, everything. With that said, what's your favorite holiday item?

Tamara: I think it was a fig spread you guys have. You might have it now, I don't know.

JayJay: Right down there.

Tamara: Yeah.

JayJay: There it is.

Tamara: Maybe that's all year long.

JayJay: Yeah, it is.

Tamara: The pumpkin bread's really good too, the one you make out of the box.

JayJay: And that's limited. What's Salem going to dress up as this year during Halloween?

*[Toddler's voice is heard in the background.]*

Tamara: He's 16 months old. Last Halloween, he was too little, and I was really lazy, so we didn't even dress up. But he walks now, so I am planning on taking him trick or treating. I want to dress him in '70s, like in a '70s outfit because he has really long hair and it flips out.

JayJay: That's awesome. Thank you so much. Really appreciate it.

Tamara: You're very welcome.

*[Transition to light holiday music.]*

JayJay: We are so looking forward to the holidays. It's right upon us. I have the best crew in the valley. They're all rock stars. Let me ask you guys, what are some of your favorite products coming our way in the next few months? Jennifer?

Jennifer: Apple Cider Donuts because they just came in.

JayJay: Yes, absolutely. Lacey, what's your favorite item?

Lacey: The Rosemary Tree.

JayJay: Oh, yes. Chris?

Chris: Yes, I love the chocolate assortment boxes always, assortments of candies and gift boxes.

JayJay: Kenny, what's your favorite item coming our way soon?

Kenny: Cinnamon sticks.

JayJay: (Laughs) Because you're a baker, huh?

Kenny: Yeah.

JayJay: Sadie, what's your favorite item coming away this holiday season?

Sadie: Pumpkin Batons.

JayJay: Yes. Diane?

Diane: Pumpkin Cream cheese.

JayJay: Yes. AJ?

AJ: Pumpkin Kringle.

JayJay: Oh, 100%.

Kenny: Good one.

JayJay: Greg?

Greg: The Jingle Jangle.

JayJay: Yes!

*[Radio interference noise.]*

*[Music transition.]*

JayJay: Thanks for visiting us today, guys. I think we should let our customers get on with their day.

Matt: Thank you.

Tara: Nicely done, JayJay.

Matt: Our customers are the best and we're so glad that they show up ready to talk with us.

JayJay: I appreciate you guys allowing us to do that.

*[Closing theme music begins.]*

Tara: This has been a special...

Group Shout: What's in your cart?

Tara: episode of Inside Trader Joe's. We have more episodes on the way soon, so make sure they show up in your inbox. Click that free subscribe or follow button.

Matt: It is free and worth every penny.

Tara: Until next time, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.

JayJay: And thanks for listening.

*[Music ends.]*