

Consumer Corner

Food Shopping: What's In A Name?

(NAPSA)—The foods you choose may be a matter of taste, but what you actually have a taste for might surprise you. A study found Americans are just as likely to prefer the taste of their local supermarket's own private label products as that of a well-known national brand.

The study, conducted by Meyers Research Center, gave double blind taste tests to consumers in ten locations from Boston to Los Angeles. Consumers showed a preference of 51 to 49 percent for the taste of the private label over the national brand version of products in twelve categories that are part of everyday meals. Private label or store brand products are items that an individual retailer puts its own name or brand on and are available only at that chain's stores. Here's a look at some results:

Rise And Shine

For a "typical" breakfast of raisin bran cereal, orange juice and French roast coffee, the consumers preferred the taste of the store brand products by a considerable margin. They selected private label raisin bran over national brand versions by a 62 to 38 percent margin; and showed narrower but still significant preference for store brand orange juice and French roast coffee.

Snack Attack

Among snack foods, consumers scored private label about the same as national brands across several categories. Store brand chocolate chip cookies were favored 56 to 44 percent. The national brand potato chips came out on top by 53 to 47 percent.

Drink Up

When deciding on a beverage to

A Matter Of Taste

Results from a taste test comparing private label (store brands) with national brands:

	PL	NB
Raisin Bran	62%	38%
Orange Juice	52%	48%
French Roast Coffee	52%	48%
Chocolate Chip Cookies	56%	44%
Frozen Broccoli	64%	36%
Iced Tea Mix	51%	49%

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go along with their meals, consumers gave the two giant national brands of cola only a slim 52 to 48 percent margin over the taste of private label cola—and by a 51 to 49 percent margin preferred the taste of the store brand iced tea mix over that of the national brands.

Checkout

The growing consumer preference for store brands is also reflected at the checkout lanes. According to Information Resources, Inc., sales of private label products over the past five years have grown impressively and even faster than their national brand counterparts. Total sales of store brands in the U.S. now exceed \$50 billion a year in supermarkets, drug chains and discounters.

Who Participated

"This was an extraordinary test of consumers of all types," said Brian Sharoff, President of the Private Label Manufacturers Assn., which sponsored the study. "That makes the strong showing for the taste of store brands all the more noteworthy."