

NCGA Debuts Co+op Kitchen Videos

BY NATIONAL COOPERATIVE GROCERS ASSOCIATION

When it comes to cooking at home, choosing the right ingredients and understanding basic kitchen skills can make the difference between a good meal and an amazing one. In the National Cooperative Grocers Association's new video series, "Co+op Kitchen," co-op shoppers will find handy hints from chefs and food enthusiasts who love sharing their passion for great food, plus easy recipes for delicious homemade meals.

The series, which launched in March, includes 44 segments covering topics ranging from learning about alternative sweeteners and how to grow sprouts to step-by-step instructional videos on making a delicious mixed-vegetable Indian curry and cooking the perfect steak.

Co+op Kitchen was developed on behalf of NCGA's 134 cooperatives. The Wedge Co-op's membership and marketing manager, Elizabeth Archerd, summarized the sector's desire for a co-op-generated cooking series in a January 2013 post on the CGN Membership and Marketing Listserv, saying, "Basic natural foods cooking lessons are already out there, but we could probably do a better job... things like how to peel and cut fruits and veggies for new cooks and for people unused to a wide variety of produce. I'm interested in the idea of having a collection of co-op-generated cooking class and food preparation videos online and easy to access. We're several decades into widespread culinary illiteracy. It would be a great service."

More and more consumers want to make fresh meals at home, and co-ops are perfectly positioned to assist them in their quest. The

coop kitchen

Try this at home!



Find easy how-to videos and recipes at
www.strongertogether.coop/coop-kitchen.



coop kitchen + Imagine

Shelf-talkers direct shoppers to the videos.

Co+op Kitchen series covers basic kitchen skills, such as whipping and folding ingredients and basic knife cuts, and provides overviews of healthy and affordable ingredients such as beans, rice and alternative sweeteners—and how to use them. Presenters demonstrate how

Engaging Millennial Consumers

Millennials make up a quarter of the U.S. population. They're undeniably an important segment of the market for co-ops to capture. Not only are many of their values well aligned with those of food co-ops in areas such as the importance of organic, sustainable, and local—these young adults, ages approximately 19 to 30, are forming their shopping and eating habits; they're interested in new and exciting foods; and they're learning to cook.

Many Millennials have grown up without having learned to cook, unlike generations before them, who learned from their parents or grandparents. This generation of digital natives is less likely to use cookbooks, instead finding recipes and other food information online to fill the void. Millennials look for speed, convenience and efficiency in their transactions. NCGA's Co+op Kitchen video series delivers this information via three convenient channels: the Co+op Kitchen free iPad app and online at strongertogether.coop and YouTube.



Dana Tomlin, Wheatsville Co-op's deli manager, is one of the co-op cooks featured in the video series.

to make a wide variety of delicious dishes, from pasta primavera and veggie burgers to miso-glazed salmon with ginger beurre blanc sauce. With an approachable and friendly tone, the message underlying the video series is definitely, "Do try this at home!"

Series topics and scripts were developed by NCGA's marketing team, which then worked with Austin, Texas-based creative content company, Arts+Labor, to identify on-screen talent and begin filming. The chefs and culinary professionals featured include Dana Tomlin, Wheatsville Co-op's deli manager; Johnny Livesay, kitchen manager of Austin's cooperative brewpub, Black Star; and NCGA's National Perishables Manager, Chris Ryding; as well as an array of talented food bloggers, cooking instructors, and professional chefs.

In addition to making the videos available on NCGA's consumer-facing website, www.strongertogether.coop and on YouTube (www.youtube.coop/coopstrongertogether), Co+op Kitchen is also available as a free iPad app for iOS6 compatible devices (iPad2 and higher). The app includes:

- Each of the 44 episodes viewable directly inside the app.
- Recipe cards.
- A food co-op locator that allows shoppers to search for NCGA co-ops by zip code and includes co-op name, address, phone number and website.
- Ability to share episodes with friends and family via email, Facebook and Twitter.
- Direct link to StrongerTogether.coop for more great recipes and food information.

Creating the series also allowed NCGA to engage with several flagship natural foods manufacturers, who generously agreed to sponsor episodes related to their products. Series sponsors include Organic Valley, Frontier Natural Products Co-op/Simply Organic, Imagine Foods, and Wisdom/Sweet Leaf Stevia.

NCGA is providing co-ops with a variety of tools to help promote the series, including posters, shelf-talkers, web banners and ads, newsletter articles and suggested social media content. QR codes have been created for each video and made available for stores to download and use on product signage, at their demo station, or in print advertising. Scanning the code will take shoppers directly to the linked video on the StrongerTogether.coop website. Besides promoting the videos to consumers and to enhance in-store demo or cooking class programs, stores are also encouraged to use Co+op Kitchen videos as part of staff trainings on product knowledge and cooking techniques.

Find out what's cooking in the Co+op Kitchen—when it comes to great cooking, there's no place like home! ■

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