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## ecoStick SWEETENERS: CHANGING THE WORLD ONE TABLE AT A TIME

### *Sugar Foods Supports the National Park Foundation*

As part of its commitment to help build a sustainable future, Sugar Foods Corporation announces a new initiative to support the National Park Foundation (NPF), the official charity of America's national parks, by raising awareness and funds for its mission to protect America's special places, connect people to parks, and inspire the next generation of park stewards.



The announcement coincides with the recent launch of ecoStick sweeteners, a new product and package design for Sugar Foods family of zero-calorie sweeteners.

"What makes our new ecoStick ecologically sustainable is its lower impact on the environment," said Krista Locke, Sugar Foods Marketing Manager. "Specifically, its packaging uses less paper while reducing its overall carbon footprint. That makes National Park Foundation a perfect fit because we have a common goal of preserving and protecting America's natural treasures for current and future generations."

The ecoStick sweeteners offer the same great taste of the other zero-calorie sweeteners –minus the GMOs and excess fillers – in elegant space-saving packets and use the same sweetener ingredient as the retail brands. They are better for the planet because they use 46% less paper.

For the first time, a full line of zero-calorie sweeteners

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*The art of eating healthy*  
**PITA JUNGLE**

### *Customer Profile*

## PITA JUNGLE PERFECTS THE ART OF EATING HEALTHY

*Remember when food choices at college cafeterias were fried, fast or fatty, or combinations of all three?*

Bassel Osmani sure does. That's why he and his two partners, Nelly Kohsok and Fouad Khodr, created Pita Jungle, a wild and wholesome restaurant chain with a global menu that is surely one-of-a-kind.

"We were all at Arizona State University and the restaurant landscape was basically unhealthy, fatty and fast," said Bassel, who holds a Masters Degree in Bio-Engineering from ASU. "We had all worked in hospitality either in hotels or restaurants during our college years and we came up with the concept where students could get healthy meals on a regular basis."

Having invested so much time in their education, the idea was to open Pita Jungle, flip it, and go back to their respective fields. But, Pita Jungle was a big success and 21 years later they have 19 locations, including nine that are franchised.

Don't confuse Pita Jungle with some of those fast food pita sandwich joints – it's a full-service restau-

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## PITA JUNGLE PERFECTS THE ART OF EATING HEALTHY

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rant that includes alcoholic beverages and a menu that goes way beyond hummus and tabouli.

"We literally engineered our menu to reflect a very simple idea: for less than \$6 (this was in the mid-1990s remember) a customer could get a meal that had all of the important food groups that constitute a healthy meal including protein, veggies, fruit, grains and carbs," recalled Bassel.

Today, Pita Jungle menu applies the principles of the Mediterranean diet to global cuisines. "In other words," says Bassel, "we interpret global recipes through the the Mediterra-

Even a quick Jungle menu ent it is from oth- may be Mediter- with touches of and Morocco, see Asian and influences.



"If I had it to do again, I probably wouldn't have the word 'Pita' in the name because people expect us to be all about pita and hummus," he said with a smile. "We are all about making everything from scratch every day and that alone makes us different from a lot of concepts.

"Our idea is to provide the best products at the best price with the most quantity. Our customers never leave hungry," noted Bassel.

Pita Jungle does a lot of things different from its competition. Its message is one of purity, quality and sustainability which is why they love ecoStick Sweeteners.

"It was love at Bassel. "They samples, put and we all said, fits our message, perfectly. And its our brand. Both staff have em-



Mediterranean Chicken Salad

The ecoStick's sustainable design, uniquely elegant, so different from traditional sweetener packs, also fits Pita Kitchen's design concept. "We never wanted to project a cookie-cutter feel in our restaurants," said Bassel.

In fact, every Pita Kitchen looks different and servers are not required to wear a uniform. Each location is designed to reflect its individual neighborhood. All are adorned with local art which is available for sale with all proceeds returning to the artist.

## ecoStick SWEETENERS

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in the most popular varieties: sucralose, saccharin, aspartame, and stevia are GMO-free and designed with the environment in mind.

"We're thinking about the right way to do things, not the traditional way," said Marty Wilson, President and CEO of Sugar Foods. "Few times in our lives do we have the opportunity to make a simple change with a tremendous impact, and now with ecoStick sweeteners we have one of those such opportunities."

The ecological effect of ecoStick sweeteners vs. traditional sweetener packets is quite impactful: In one year the savings would amount to over 27 million pounds of corn, five million pounds of paper, one million pounds of cardboard and 3,800 gas-guzzling truck-loads.

Help us change the world for the better.



## Product Showcase

### MUSSO'S™ CHEESE CRISPS ADD FLAIR AND VARIETY TO MENUS



For restaurants looking for a unique way to differentiate their dishes and add more flavor, Musso's™ Cheese Crisps provide an innovative solution.

Cheese has always been a popular way to add flavor to food. On everything from salads to chili to soups, sandwiches, baked potatoes and pizza, you probably add cheese to add zest, aroma and piquancy to a favorite dish.

Instead of restaurants having to make cheese crisps in the oven, Sugar Foods introduces shelf-stable Musso's Cheese Crisps, which are made with 100 percent baked cheese. The cheese crisps, which are available in Parmesan and Asiago varieties, bring an old-world heritage of authenticity and superior quality to every flavorful, crunchy bite.

Today's health-conscious consumers appreciate Musso's – there are no fillers and have only 35 calories per serving, as well as four percent fat and zero trans fats.

The beauty of the cheese crisps are their versatility – add to thick soups and replace croutons in all types of salads. In pastas, on burgers, omelets and chili, cheese crisps offer intense flavor without a messy meltdown on the griddle. Another favorite at restaurants are the cheese crisps with macaroni and cheese dishes.

You can also turn a one-cheese pizza into a three-cheese pizza simply by adding cheese crisps to the top. Because they can withstand 450 degrees for 15 minutes, they can be added to pizzas and even remain crunchy after they cool down.



### CHECK OUT MUSSO'S™ CHEESE CRISPS AT PIZZA EXPO

As a business-to-business convention for pizzeria owners and operators seeking new products and information about their industry, there may be no better place to survey the market than the upcoming International Pizza Expo.



Held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on March 7-10, the Expo has grown into the most prominent exhibition of pizza product vendors in the world, featuring 473 exhibiting companies. Last year, the Expo drew 6,800 attendees from across the globe.

Of course, a must-stop is the **Sugar Foods' booth #1445**, where we will be showcasing Musso's Cheese Crisps (available in Parmesan and Asiago flavors). We'll hand out sampler packs, so be ready to taste the 100% cheese toppings that are great on pizzas, salads, soups and more.

Begun in 1985, the Expo puts buyers from independent and chain pizza restaurants in touch with manufacturers and service providers representing the \$43 billion pizza industry. In addition to a wide variety of workshops and seminars, the Expo features annual competitions including Pizza Maker of the Year, World Pizza Games and the International Pizza Challenge.





## CARIBOU COFFEE GOES CLEAN IN 2016

Caribou Coffee is committing to a “clean label” beverage platform that will take effect throughout 2016, beginning with the launch today of a “real vanilla syrup.”

“Clean label offerings are increasingly important to our consumers and meet the taste standards we set for ourselves as a premier coffee brand,” Caribou Coffee Chief Marketing Officer Michele Vig said in a company announcement today, adding that the company will be working toward using all-natural ingredients in its menu items “whenever possible.”

Clean label ingredients of course are a possibility all the time when bottom-line interests aren’t primarily concerned, but the Caribou campaign nonetheless reflects a trend among some of the country’s largest food-and-drink purveyors to move away from offerings that include long lists of ingredients that smack of artificiality or are not clearly recognizable as human food.

## BREAKFAST & COFFEE ALL DAY LONG

Breakfast is the only restaurant day-part with sustained visit growth over the last several years, according to The NPD Group, a Port Washington, N.Y.-based research firm. It’s a style of eating so popular that it is on the menu all day in a growing number of eateries.

Not surprisingly, coffee, as a high-margin add-on sale or a destination driver itself, is poised to play an important role whenever breakfast is served. [To read more – http://bit.ly/1UmBEuY](http://bit.ly/1UmBEuY)

## COFFEE POD SALES DECLINING

Coffee pod machines may be going out of style, according to the latest sales for companies like Keurig. In recent years, sales of pod-based coffee makers grew from 1.8 million units in 2008 to 11.6 million units in 2013, according to Euromonitor. Now, the trend is reversing, with Keurig reporting negative sales growth for the sixth consecutive quarter for its coffee machines.

Keurig coffee pod sales are dropping as the U.S. economy is improving. With more money to spend, consumers are increasingly willing to buy coffee from coffee shops.

Customers are also more concerned with the amount of waste created by the pods, the majority of which were not recyclable as of 2014, reported The Washington Post.

## ABOUT US

Sugar Foods is a multi-national food products company serving all segments of the food industry. Founded in 1948, Sugar Foods started as a local bulk sugar distributor in the New York metro area. Today, Sugar Foods product portfolio continues to expand and boasts mainstream commodity items and popular consumer brands, such as Fresh Gourmet® and Blue Diamond® Almonds.



For the foodservice market, the company offers a wide range of

products to include its branded NJoy® line of sweeteners and non-dairy creamers. Sugar Foods works with restaurant chains, hotels and institutional foodservice operators to offer private label and contract packaging services. As a healthy milk alternative, Sugar Foods distributes in foodservice America’s no. 1 selling almond milk: Almond Breeze®.



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