

# Bigger Avocados at Meijer Reveal Grocery Trend as Big Game Approaches

Midwestern retailer's innovative idea results in 1 million avocados sold in the weeks leading to biggest sporting event of the year

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Feb. 10, 2022 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- As the Big Game approaches, produce experts at Meijer say avocados are already the leading MVP candidate on grocery lists this year. The retailer reports that large avocados trended in December with a surprising sale surge doubling 2021 and continue to be a top grocery trend in the early months this year, with customers adding more than 1 million avocados per week to shopping carts across the Midwest.

While a surge is common for Big Game gatherings – [an estimated 48,000 metric tons](#) of guacamole are consumed annually on game day, according to FreshPlaza.com – confusion over how to open them or tell when they're ripe continued for many consumers.

Seeing an opportunity to innovate, the retailer's produce team recently took their avocado game to the next level, aiming to make choosing avocados easier for customers.

"When a customer buys avocados, they want to enjoy them within few days, so our team is excited our new approach is beginning to make a difference," said Kris Pedres, Produce Buyer for Meijer. "Many customers understand the benefits, but there are others who are hesitant or would only order guacamole in a restaurant. We wanted to remove the guesswork and frustration. We wanted to make sure any customer choosing an avocado can always find one consistent in quality, size and taste."

It was Pedres' fresh idea that sparked his team to work with avocado suppliers to establish a pilot program that perfects the ripening process.

The retailer designed a process for large ripening rooms at its Distribution Center in Lansing, Mich., where it can regulate conditions, so every avocado ripens consistently. That means each avocado delivered to Meijer stores at the earliest stage of ripeness has a better chance of reaching customers' kitchens just as they're ready for consumption. Meijer Quality Control team members monitor progress in the controlled environments from the time the avocados arrive at the Distribution Center to the time they're loaded onto Meijer fleet trucks for delivery to stores participating in the pilot. Currently, they can manage the streamlined process for as many as 500,000 unripe avocados.

The other issue the new pilot program addresses are the size of the avocado and how it correlates to serving sizes for customers counting calories or determining how many they need to make enough guacamole for the Big Game. While other retailers typically carry smaller sizes or a random selection, Meijer offers two consistent sizes – small avocados that average 5-6 ounces for portioning single servings for single portions, such as in smoothies, and large 10- to 11-oz. avocados that are a perfect start toward a big bowl of guacamole – to give customers options when meal planning.

"This pilot program is just one more example of Meijer team members innovating to enhance the Meijer shopping experience," said Ron Lovelace, Director of Produce for Meijer. "In the spirit of continuing to offer solutions for our customers' everyday needs, we believe this pilot program is a first step in making avocados a healthy option for anyone who walks into one of our stores."


**About Meijer:** Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 258 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys, and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please

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