

FOOD news & notes

Cooling Off More Than Your Mouth

(NAPSA)—Mint is hitting the food scene as the cool flavor that's hot—popping up on candy shelves and in many of today's most popular restaurants and trendiest bars. Mint does more than cover bad breath—it has recently become one of the most popular flavors available.

While Greek, Indian and Thai cuisines have traditionally incorporated mint leaves into their recipes, these authentic dishes are now making their way onto menus all over the world.

Greek salads topped with mint and feta cheese and Thai mainstays such as *Nue Gra Pao* (also known as beef stir-fry with garlic and mint) are found on menus in some of today's hottest restaurants. In addition, some of New York City's most popular watering holes are now serving their own minty-fresh martini renditions, such as raspberry *mojitos*, to savvy club goers.

Even some of today's favorite confectionery brands are joining the mint craze. For example, Skittles have been known for their fruit flavor for years. Recently, Masterfoods USA added new Mint Skittles to the mix. These chewy candies have a variety of mint flavors and intensities in each package, and come in peppermint and spearmint varieties. The new mints come in a reclosable, pocket-sized pack, great for people on the go.

There are over 600 varieties of mint and the mint leaf has a long history and a variety of uses. Cool mint facts include:

- In the fourteenth century



TURNING OVER A COOL LEAF: Mint, which is a traditional ingredient in many cultures, has become a popular addition to a number of American dishes.

mint was used to whiten teeth, hence, toothpaste's mint flavor today.

- Greek mythology tells of two travelers who were lost and had trouble getting help. Finally, an old couple took them into their humble home, scrubbed a dining board with mint to refresh it, and then served them a hot meal. The travelers were gods in disguise, and they rewarded the old couple by turning their modest house into a magnificent home. Ever since, mint has been considered a symbol of hospitality.

- Mice are so adverse to the smell of mint (either fresh or dried) that they will leave food untouched if mint is nearby.

- Mint pouches are now being used to help people stop smoking.

For more information and a fun activity about new kinds of mint-flavored candies, visit the Web site www.skittles.com.