

## Vegetable paste with spirulina (Latvia)

### Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Spreads appear on our tables during most meals. Many of them are full of unhealthy ingredients such as trans fats which may lead to serious problems with the circulatory and cardiac systems. Older consumers are especially susceptible to high blood pressure and heart conditions, therefore it is crucial to offer them spreads that are nutritious, low-fat, and, last but not least, palatable.

To find out what kind of food products answer the needs of older adults, the EIT Food project team invited older adults in Latvia to participate in co-creation workshops. The participants developed an idea of an innovative vegetable paste that proved particularly attractive for older consumers.

#### Innovative food product

*Dāržeņu pasta ar spirulīnu* contains spirulina – the ingredient rarely used in food products manufactured in Latvia. Other products usually contain dried spirulina powders, while the paste is based on fresh (frozen) spirulina which makes the product innovative.

#### Good for health

A key aspect of the vegetable spread is its simplicity. The product does not contain artificial additives or preservatives. Spirulina is a source of protein, vitamins, and minerals. The paste offers consumers a new sensory experience owing to the product's colour, taste, and the way it can be used in an everyday diet. The paste also contains Jerusalem artichoke, an increasingly popular and healthy vegetable, which is known for its inulin content.

#### Preferred by older adults / Designed by older adults for older adults

The vegetable paste answers the needs of older consumers because of its nutritional value and attractive taste. It can be consumed as a starter or a dip during meals; during outside activities, it may serve as a snack with a piece of bread or a cracker.

#### Different from existing products

Compared to popular spreads such as nut butter, hummus or fruit jams, *Dāržeņu pasta ar spirulīnu* is less calorific, which helps consumers keep fit and healthy. Furthermore, vegan food with low fat, sugar, and salt content is with rising popularity in Latvian and EU markets.

### Additional information about the project:

Vegetable paste with spirulina a product designed during the co-creation workshops, held as part of the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project. The project is coordinated by the University of Warsaw and financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), under the Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. The project's main aim is to address the needs of older consumers in the food and beverage market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates their creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The product concept was designed in 2020 in Latvia during co-creation sessions which gathered older consumers, scientists from the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, the representatives of food producer SIA KEEFA and the start-up company SpirulinaNord. Following the co-creation process, the innovative product was developed and introduced to the market in 2021.

Find out more about the project at: <http://timo.wz.uw.edu.pl/cel>