

Tuna pâté with piquillo peppers (Spain)

Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Sea, sun, and soil – this is what food we find every day on our plates originates from. Nature meets the culture of the region in tradition-inspired dishes. Small red peppers – piquillo peppers – stuffed with cheese or meat are one of many appetizers – *tapas* – that Spaniards love to eat. Tuna belongs to the most frequently eaten fish in a country with the 8 000 kilometres of the coastline and the biggest fish market in the European Union. The combination of the two ingredients results in creating an innovative product with significant reference to the tradition and the environment of the region.

To find out what kind of food products answer the needs of the elderly the EIT Food project team invited seniors in Spain to participate in a co-creation workshop. Its participants developed an idea of a product being an innovation on the market of crème spreads that is to fulfil the needs of senior customers who want to eat healthily and have pleasure out of it at the same time.

Innovative food product

Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún (eng. *Tuna pâté with piquillos pepper*) may seem similar to several dishes that belong to the broad category of *tapas*, small plates served in Spanish bars and restaurants with a glass of wine. However, there is no product such as this one on the Spanish market. Packed in a small jar in a portion suitable for two people, it is a perfect appetizer or snack for small households, such as many seniors'. Piquillo peppers are hard to prepare at home; its attractive smoky sweet-spicy taste originates to a great extent from a specific way of processing. Packaging and readiness-to-eat of *Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún* (eng. *Tuna pate with piquillos pepper*) underlie its innovativeness – it is the details that make the product a novelty.

Good for health

Piquillo peppers are called *red gold* of Lodosa, a town situated in the Navarra region when the pepper is grown. The pepper deserves the name not only because of its extraordinary taste but also its health benefits. It contains fibre, and vitamins E, A, and B. Piquillo is also a rich source of vitamin C, a strong antioxidant that slows down ageing processes. Tuna provides the consumer with Omega 3 acids. They are indispensable for seniors since they prevent cancer, heart problems (e.g. high blood pressure, stroke or atherosclerosis), and support the functioning of the immune system. Tuna is also low in calories there therefore the cream can be eaten by those who need to control their energy intake. The product also lacks only what is harmful to one's health: gluten, artificial colourings, and flavour enhancers.

Preferred by seniors/ Designed by seniors for seniors

Many seniors experience lack of appetite therefore it is essential to stimulate the craving of seniors. Food served to them should be both nourishing and tasty. Seniors want to enjoy a full palette of flavours without breaking the doctor's recommendations they should follow – and which they want to follow, as the participants of our co-creation workshop proved. The strong distinct taste of piquillo peppers complements the subtle flavour of tuna and adds a spicy element to the everyday diet as well as holiday menu.

Different from existing products

Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún (eng. *Tuna pâté with piquillos pepper*) has no equivalent among Spanish products of this kind. The combination of tuna and piquillo is unique at the Spanish market. Similar products are usually half-products that involve preparing the dish at home. Many seniors live alone or only with their partners, which may deter them from preparing complicated dishes only for themselves. Therefore *Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún* (eng. *Tuna pâté with piquillos pepper*) is a convenient answer to the demands of the senior age group.

Additional information about the project:

Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún (eng. *Tuna pâté with piquillos pepper*) is 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, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, as part of EIT Regional Innovation Scheme. The project's main aim is to address the needs of elderly consumers in the food and beverage market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The concept of *Crema de pimientos de piquillo con atún* (eng. *Tuna pâté with piquillos pepper*) was designed in 2019 in Spain during such co-creation sessions which gathered: senior consumers, representatives of food retailers – Lider Aliment S.A., food producers - Iberitos, and startups – BRAIN_CO. Following the co-creation process, the actual product was developed and introduced to the market by the Spanish consortium in 2020.

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