

Choosing a Sustainable Salsa

Amy's Salsa (Organic)

Company History

Amy's Kitchen is a family business... with every member of the family taking part. The company was started in 1987, when Amy was born. Her mom and dad, Rachel and Andy Berliner, carefully nurtured the company as well as the child, paying constant attention to every aspect of its day-to-day activities.

We didn't set out to become the nation's leading natural frozen food brand. All we wanted to do was create a business that would allow us to earn a living by providing convenient and tasty natural vegetarian meals for people like ourselves, who appreciated good food, but were often too busy to cook "from scratch."

We started on a "shoestring," using our own house and barn as headquarters. The founding meetings were held in the same room where we were married and where our daughter Amy was born. This was in 1987, before the idea of "organic" food had become well known, and when there were very few frozen meals available for vegetarians to eat, either in health food stores or supermarkets. We were, however, very fortunate in being in the right place at the right time. The number of vegetarians had increased dramatically, as had consumer awareness of the harmful effects on their health and the environment of chemicals in the food supply.

Amy's has created over 88 frozen meals. In 1999, we introduced a grocery line that now includes canned soups, beans and chili as well as jarred pasta sauces and salsas. Our foods are carried by natural food stores, supermarkets and some club stores in the United States, Canada and abroad.

Both Andy and Rachel like to keep in touch with the needs and interests of the company's more than 1,600 employees and with Amy's customers. In spite of the fact that many companies now produce similar products, Amy's is still #1 in popularity and sales. Our total commitment to quality has made the difference.

Production

At Amy's we value the notion of creating communities. One of the ways we do this is with the farmers who grow our fruits and vegetables. We know most of our growers by name and have been working with some of them since our humble beginnings.

Amy's is fortunate to be nestled into one of the world's premier growing regions for many crops. Over fifty percent of our vegetables are grown within 200 miles of our "kitchen". Our onions are sourced from 15 local organic growers. Most of these are family farms that have been with us for many years. The onions are delivered to Amy's fresh, and a small group of people from our kitchen peels them by hand. Organic leeks are another crop that is grown by local family farmers, just a few miles to the west of Amy's. Our produce managers will visit the farms throughout the growing season and discuss ideas for new crops and new ways of using fresh ingredients in our food. This is truly a "sustainable" approach to the community.



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Salsa Timoteo (Local)

Company History

Timoteo was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. All through high school and college, Timoteo worked in the restaurant business specializing in Mexican Food. After Graduating college and getting trabajo (work) in the medical field, Timoteo still held on to his passion of cooking and started “Tim Willhite Foods” featuring “Salsa Timoteo”. Timoteo has always had a dream of opening up his own Mexican Food Restaurant some day so he can share his many recipes with the customers he serves.

Now living in Glendale, Arizona with his Senorita Julia, together they continue the family tradition of “Salsa Timoteo”. Hopefully someday Timoteo and Julia will make enough Pesos to open up “Timoteo’s” and their hijos (kids) will be able to carry on Timoteo’s legacy.

Production

Prepared in Tempe, Arizona, Salsa Timoteo contains real tomatoes, fresh green chiles, onions, jalapenos, cilantro, and a multitude of spices that are a family secret. Salsa Timoteo contains no artificial colors, flavorings, or chemicals. The salsa is canned in the same way that grandma used to make salsa.

Salsa Timoteo is made by Timoteo and his wife Senorita Julia. They have no other employees so you can be sure that every jar is made with special care by the founders of this company. They do not have a separate production factory; the salsa is made in their home kitchen. When you buy the salsa, you are purchasing it from local Phoenicians, not from a company or factory (this could help funnel money back into the local economy). The label and graphics for the salsa jar were also made by a local Phoenician; a close friend of Timoteo.

Salsa Timoteo is shipped to retailers (grocery stores) in Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Tucson. Salsa Timoteo is AJ’s Fine Food’s best selling salsa! Due to their success, they have even diversified to tortilla chips. If you are not in the Phoenix area, you can order Salsa Timoteo online and they will ship it directly to you. When you buy the salsa, you are purchasing it from local Phoenicians, not from a company or factory (this could help funnel money back into the local economy). They also attend special events, where you can meet Timoteo and buy the salsa directly from him!

Salsa Timoteo is a truly local product. However, Salsa Timoteo is made from non-organic food products and therefore contributes to some environmental degradation associated with the use of petroleum-based chemicals. But because of the small, local scale of the product, Timoteo did not have to buy large processing equipment or build a factory to produce the salsa so that saves both land, materials, and energy. Additionally, the glass jars are made in the United States.



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Pace Picante Sauce (Conventional)

Company History

In 1947, a young Texan named David Pace had a passion for producing the freshest tasting picante sauce. Determined to create a product that lived up to his expectations, David experimented with ingredients and bottling techniques. The final product became Pace Picante Sauce. After WWII, David went into business creating the first commercially available picante sauce.

In 1990, Pace Foods sent 2,000 bottles of their Pace Picante Sauce to U.S. troops in the Saudi Arabian desert. "Many of the soldiers complain about their bland C-rations," said president Rod Sands. In 1991, Mexican sauces famously overtook ketchup as the top-selling condiment in the United States in total dollar sales, with Pace salsa and Picante sauce leading the trend.

For years, Pace and its major rival brand, Old El Paso, had legal battles over marketing and packaging. When David Pace died in 1993, his invention claimed a 27 percent share of the salsa market, with Old El Paso at 21 percent.

Kit Goldsbury, David Pace's former son-in-law, had bought out the Pace family's interest in the business and was its chief executive officer in November 1994. That's when Campbell, a company dating to 1869 with more than 44,000 employees, announced it would buy the Pace picante brand for \$1.1 billion. Closure of the sale in 1995 gave Pace the soup company's marketing power and helped get the salsa to more stores on the East Coast. Pace reported \$250 million in sales in 1996, up from \$13 million in 1982.

In 1998, Campbell announced it would move production of the salsa from San Antonio, Texas to Paris, in East Texas, where it already had about 1,000 employees producing Prego spaghetti sauce and other products. About 370 local Pace workers were left without jobs, but given severance deals that included four weeks' pay, plus one week for each year with the company, the Express-News reported.

Currently, Americans consume nearly 170 million pounds of "Pace" salsas each year and one-quarter of U.S. households have a bottle of "Pace" picante sauce or chunky salsa in their homes.

Production

Today, Pace Foods still uses David's original recipe. Pace uses over 25 million jalapeños a year to make the Pace Picante Salsa. These jalapeños are produced across the Southern U.S. and Mexico. The jalapeños, tomatoes, onions, and other ingredients in Pace Salsa are grown using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers (both derived from petroleum products). Pace products are shipped throughout the globe.

